

Christ and Him Crucified

by Stephen Kaung

The sermon emphasizes the importance of knowing Jesus Christ and Him crucified as the testimony of God, and how this knowledge leads to a fellowship with God's Son and a life of divine power.

Duration: 57:29

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 2:2-4, 1 Corinthians 2:6, 1 Corinthians 2:16, 2 Corinthians 1:12, 2 Corinthians 1:21

Topics: "Christ Crucified", "Fellowship In Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the fellowship of believers and how it is shaped by our calling in Christ. The apostle Paul's experience in Corinth is used as an example. Paul initially came to Corinth in fear and weakness, but God encouraged him to continue preaching the testimony of God. The speaker emphasizes that the testimony of God is centered on Jesus Christ and his crucifixion, as he came to deliver people from their sins and redeem them. The sermon encourages believers to fellowship in a way that aligns with this calling and the testimony of God.

Transcript

Will you please turn to 1 Corinthians, 1 Corinthians chapter 2. We will read the whole chapter. But I have judged this with myself, and I, when I came to you, brethren, I came not in excellency of word or wisdom, announcing to you the testimony of God. For I did not judge it well to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. And my word and my preaching, not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith might not stand in man's wisdom, but in God's power. But we speak wisdom among the perfect, but wisdom not of this world, nor of the rulers of the world, who come to naught.

But we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, that hidden wisdom which God has predetermined before the ages for our glory, which none of the princes of this age knew, for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But according as it is written, things which I had not seen, and ear not heard, and which have not come into man's heart, which God has prepared for them that love Him. But God has revealed to us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.

For who of man has known the things of a man except the Spirit of the man which is in him? Thus also the things of God knows no one except the Spirit of God. But we have received not the Spirit of the world, but

the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things which have been freely given to us of God, which also we speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, communicating spiritual things by spiritual means. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

But the spiritual discerns all things, and he is discerned of no one. For who has known the mind of the Lord? Who shall instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ. Let's have a little prayer.

Dear Lord, how we praise and thank Thee for Thy amazing love towards us. Thou love us to the uttermost. Lord, we are always amazed at Thy love.

We do praise and thank Thee that because of Thy love Thou has drawn us together unto Thyself. O Lord, open our understanding, lead us into Thy very presence, reveal Thyself to us, and draw us that we may run after Thee. We ask Thy blessing upon Thy Word, send Thy Word into our heart, and transform and conform us to Thy beloved image.

We ask all for the glory of God, and in Thy name, amen. A few weeks ago, I shared on the first chapter of the first letter to the Corinthians. As I mentioned that time, that we often think of 1 Corinthians as a very negative letter.

There are many things that we do not like even to mention. But thank God, when you really look into this letter, you find that it really begins with the most positive note. Because in 1 Corinthians 1, verse 9, it is said, God is faithful, by whom ye have been called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Man may be unfaithful, but God is always faithful. He is always faithful to Himself, always faithful to His own Word, always faithful to His own promise, and always faithful to His calling. And here we are told that God has called us.

Even people like us, like the Corinthians, He has called us into something which is tremendously glorious. I do not have the words to describe it, but if you really meditate on it, you will be amazed what a calling God has called us. He has called us into the fellowship, into sharing in common, into participating in the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now, brothers and sisters, there is a fellowship which is called the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ. And whom does our Lord Jesus, the Son of God, fellowship with? The Father, of course. So you'll find in 1 John it is said, our fellowship is with the Father and with the Son.

And now this fellowship between the Father and the Son, this sharing together, participating together of the Father and of the Son in the Spirit is now being extended to us. He has called us into His own fellowship. Brothers and sisters, remember this.

This is a tremendous statement. This is a calling on high, a holy calling, a heavenly calling. And we are all called into that.

And because we are called into that fellowship, that fellowship measures everything in our lives, personally and corporately. The Apostle Paul actually spans four chapters. The first four chapters of 1 Corinthians on this matter.

So we would like to continue on this morning on chapter 2 because chapter 2 actually explains to us how do we come into this fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ. And if we are joined into that fellowship, now how are we going to fellowship that will really be in tune with the calling that we are in? Now in 1 Corinthians chapter 2, the Apostle Paul said, When I came to you, brethren, I came not in excellency of words or wisdom, announcing to you the testimony of God. He came to Corinth to announce the testimony of God.

But when or before he came to Corinth, he made a judgment. He made a decision. It is not something careless, casual.

But he actually deliberated it and determined it before the Lord. He made a judgment. And the judgment was when he came to Corinth, he will know nothing among them but Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Now that is the judgment he made. Now why is it so? Because we know the Corinthians, they were noted for their intelligence and their eloquence. The proverb says, You speak like a Corinthian.

It means that you are very eloquent. And at the same time, there is another probable saying. You live like a Corinthian.

That is to say, you live in a morally corrupt life. So in other words, the Corinthians, they can talk beautifully and yet they live ugly. That's the Corinthians.

So before Paul came to their midst, he determined. He made a decision. He knew what he was doing.

He said, when I came to you, I will know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified. Because that's the one and only thing that can deliver them. This is the testimony of God.

If you want to know what the testimony of God is, what does God testify to us? He testifies to us, Jesus Christ and him crucified. This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. This is the gospel.

This is the testimony of God. Jesus. His name shall be called Jesus because he shall deliver his people from their sins.

He is Christ because he is the anointed one. The one sent by the Father on a mission to save. To redeem the sinners.

And he is our Lord. The Son of God came into this world to deliver the Corinthians from their corrupt lives. And turn them into saints of God.

And the same thing he does to us. Jesus Christ and him crucified. Why? Because if our Lord Jesus should come into this world representing fully, beautifully, totally what God was, that will not save us.

Because his life is so perfect. His life on earth actually will condemn us instead of justifies us. And how is it that he came into this world, live such a perfect life, and yet he was able to save us, sinners.

How did he do it? Him crucified. It is through his crucifixion. But brothers and sisters, we all know that the cross is a symbol of shame, of curse, of death.

We do not worship the cross itself. We worship him who was crucified on the cross. It is because our Lord Jesus, he who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might become God's righteousness in him.

So this is salvation. This is the testimony of God. To put it another way, God has called us into the fellowship of his son Jesus Christ.

Now how are we going to join that fellowship? We mentioned before that that fellowship between the father and the son is a fellowship in life, in divine life. It is a fellowship in the spirit. It is a perfect, harmonious, beautiful, heavenly, spiritual fellowship.

So the only condition that anyone can join that fellowship of God's son Jesus Christ is through life. Not our natural life, created life, Adamic life, fallen life. No, it is by his divine life.

It is a fellowship of life. It is a fellowship in life. Now how are we going to receive divine life? God's life? So that we may be able to join into that heavenly fellowship.

Well, the only way that we may have life is because on the cross, he released his life. And out of the finished work of Christ on the cross, not only are our sins forgiven, but that life that was released through death, in resurrection, has been given to all who believe. So that's the way that we come into life.

Now what is eternal life? In John chapter 17, verse 3, we are told, and this is eternal life, to know thee the only true God, and the one whom you have sent. This is eternal life. Eternal life is a living, experiential knowledge of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ, because in him was life, and the life was the light of man.

So dear brothers and sisters, how do we answer God's calling? What is the way that we can join into that fellowship? God has provided. It is not a man-made way. No matter how men try, men will never be able to be in that divine fellowship of the Father and the Son in the Spirit.

It is because God has provided the way for us to enter into the fellowship. And by the grace of God, brothers and sisters, all of us here, not because of what we are, but because of what he has done for us, Jesus Christ and him crucified. That's why we are all in that one fellowship, that divine fellowship, holy, spiritual, heavenly fellowship.

That's where we are. Remember one thing. Our fellowship can never rise above our life.

The kind of life you have, the kind of sharing you have. If the life that one has is a sinful, selfish, corrupt, natural life, then your sharing with one another will also be earthly, worldly, sinful, corrupt. But if the life that you receive is a divine life, then that delivers you out of that which is earthly and puts you into that which is heavenly.

So, in other words, it is this life not only brings us into that fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ, but it is the same life that enables us to fellowship on a higher ground. That's how important life is. The Apostle Paul made the right decision because he said, I know nothing among you but Jesus Christ and him crucified.

And if the Corinthian believers will really accept all that is involved in Jesus Christ and him crucified, they will really be in that fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ. And their spiritual condition will really be different from what you read from that letter that Paul wrote to them. But unfortunately, we find that their receiving of Jesus Christ and him crucified was rather incomplete.

And that is the reason why. In other words, they received the finished work of our Lord Jesus on the cross for their sins. They came to the Lord.

They accepted him as their Savior. And because of that, they were saved. They received the Lord Jesus as their Savior, but not the Lord Jesus as their life.

Even though they received that life, but they do not allow the Lord Jesus' life to rule over them. They still live in their own natural life. The world, even sin, has such power over them that you find they live still on the lower plane.

And because they live on the lower plane, their fellowship with one another was on the lower plane. That's the way they treated one another. They shared with one another.

They could not rise above to that which is heavenly, spiritual. Or to put it in another way, they received Jesus Christ and him crucified in an objective way. In other words, what Christ has done for them on the cross, they receive it.

But it is for them, for their sins to be forgiven. They are still self-centered. They still live for themselves.

They have not received Jesus Christ and him crucified into their very being and allowing the cross to work subjectively in their lives. And because of this, you'll find, even though they have eternal life, they still live by their natural life. And that's the way you'll find in the church in Corinth.

You cannot rise above the life that you live with. But with Apostle Paul, it is different. Now let us see how he illustrates it.

Now he said in verse 2, For I did not judge it well to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified. Then in verse 3, Now when you read these two verses, I wonder if you feel there is a contradiction. He came to the midst of the Corinthians, announcing to them the testimony of God.

And the testimony of God was Jesus Christ and him crucified. There is nothing more wonderful, more powerful, more glorious than Jesus Christ and him crucified. It is such a glorious gospel.

Now it is true, in 2 Corinthians chapter 13, we are told that Jesus was crucified in weakness. But he lives by the power of God. When our Lord Jesus was crucified, it appears to be weak.

And yet, before he passed away, he shouted, it is finished. It is a shout of victory. So in other words, Jesus Christ and him crucified, the testimony of God, is a strong, glorious, powerful announcement.

And yet, look at the messenger. Weak, fear, trembling. That's a contradiction.

Now some people think that's because when the apostle Paul came to Corinth, he had traveled through places like Galatia and all these other places. And these were places full of malaria. And Paul caught malaria.

And because he had malaria, you know what malaria will do for you. When the attack comes, you tremble. Right? So he said, I'm much trembling.

And fear. Weak. Malaria makes you very weak.

And if the malaria really doesn't work, it affects your eyesight. And that's the reason why Paul said, when I look at what I write, I have to write big words because his eyesight was so poor. Now some people say it's because when he arrived at Corinth, he was physically down.

And that's the reason why. But brothers and sisters, I believe there's more than that. Why? Because you remember, in Acts chapter 18, when he came to Corinth, he preached the gospel, announced the testimony of God.

And many turned to the Lord. But the Bible says, Paul was afraid. And God had to appear to him in a vision, in a dream, and said, fear not.

Do not stop speaking. Do not be silent. Because I have many people in this city.

So here you'll find the fear, the trembling, the weakness, that Apostle Paul felt at the time was more than physical. More than physical. There is a spiritual context in it.

He was really afraid of his life. He was trembling. And he was really weak.

And you read on. And he said, And my word and my preaching, not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. Now you remember Paul.

He was eloquent, naturally. He was a Pharisee. And a Pharisee was trained to speak, to argue.

And Paul was very eloquent. If you turn to Acts chapter 17, when he was in Athens, and he was speaking, how eloquent he was. He can match the Corinthians with eloquence, with his intelligence.

But he made a determination. He made a judgment. And the judgment was, he will not speak in persuasive words of wisdom.

He will not speak beautifully, trying to match intelligence with the intelligence of the Corinthians, with the eloquence of the Corinthians. He would rather let the cross work in his life, deliver him from what he would like to say beautifully and logically and powerfully. He would give up himself and just trust the Lord, trust his Holy Spirit to demonstrate God's power.

So in other words, you'll find he not only preached Jesus Christ and him crucified, he allowed Jesus Christ and him crucified to so work in his life that he was a crucified messenger. Of the crucified message. Paul, as a person himself, was crucified.

And Christ became his life. And here you'll find even in announcing the testimony of God, it is not in man's wisdom, but in God's power. It is all of God and none of Paul.

So in other words, Jesus Christ and him crucified is not only an objective truth, but it's a subjective experience. Not only that Jesus Christ was crucified in Calvary, but that cross has entered into the very life of Paul. Put him into death and allow the life of Christ to take charge.

So everything that comes out of Paul, it is Christ. It is not Paul himself. And that's fellowship.

And that kind of fellowship is powerful because it brings life to people. So dear brothers and sisters, here we find what the Corinthians lack is they receive Jesus Christ and him crucified in an objective way. And they are benefited because they are saved.

They did receive life, but that life is not able to take charge over them. They are still living by their own life. And that's why their fellowship was in a low state.

So brothers and sisters, what do we have here? Jesus Christ and him crucified is not only the way that leads us into the fellowship, but it's also the way for our fellowship. If we want to enjoy that fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ, we cannot enjoy it if we still live our own self-life. We have to allow the cross to work deeply in each one of us.

Then out of his life, there will be that heavenly, spiritual, glorious fellowship. Again, I would like to emphasize our fellowship cannot rise above what our life really is. That determines the kind of fellowship we are having.

And if we really live by the life of Christ daily and allow Christ to be our life, then what will happen? You will find our joy may be full. So that is in 1 John 1. The apostle John says, we are having fellowship with you. We are sharing Christ, sharing God the Father with you, because that's our fellowship with the Father and with the Son.

And if you too will all share the Father and the Son, what will be the result? Our joy may be full. There is nothing that gives you joy among God's people more than when you're really having that fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ. The reason why we are not filled with joy is because we fellowship with ourselves.

And if we only can fellowship with Christ, with his life, what he means to us, what he has revealed to us, what he has done in our life, and that's what we fellowship with one another. Then we will all grow in grace. We will grow in the life of Christ and there will be much joy.

That's what it is. But more than that, in chapter 2, verse 6, but when Paul came to their midst, he said, I made a judgment to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified. Is that all? He said, but we speak wisdom among the perfect.

Now here you'll find two things. Number one, wisdom. You know, in chapter 1, Paul already says, the Greeks, they seek for wisdom.

The Jews, they seek for sign, power. But Paul said, we preach Christ crucified. To the Jews, it's weakness.

To the Greeks, it is foolishness. But Jesus Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. So you'll find there are two kinds of wisdom.

There's one wisdom which is the wisdom of this world and the wisdom of this world, crucify the Lord. It is a wisdom from beneath. It is carnal, worldly, even devilish.

But there is a wisdom which is from above. And here Paul said, now we will talk about that wisdom. There is a wisdom, but it is a different kind of wisdom.

It is God's wisdom in a mystery. Now we will leave it for a while. And then you have another word, perfect.

He said, but among the perfect, we also speak wisdom. Now who are the perfect? The word perfect in the scripture does not mean seamless perfect. Because there is only one man in the whole world that is seamless perfect.

It is our Lord Jesus. But the word perfect in the scripture is used in such a way. It means the grown up, the matured, those who are no longer babes.

With the babes, all you can talk about is Jesus Christ and Him crucified. That's the foundation. But in that foundation there is a wisdom.

But you do not talk about the wisdom until you talk among the perfect. In other words, when God's people are growing up. And how do they grow up? They grow up through fellowship.

You grow up spiritually by your fellowshiping with Christ. Your fellowshiping with God. And we grow up together by our fellowshiping together in Christ and with Christ.

Now that's the way that we grow up. And if we are growing up, then God will open our eyes to see His wisdom. Now let us see what that wisdom is.

The apostle Paul here described this God's wisdom in mystery. And he said that is a hidden mystery. A hidden wisdom.

This is the wisdom of God. It is hidden. Even before the ages.

Even before God created anything. In eternity past, there is a wisdom of God. And what is that wisdom? He said in verse 7. But we speak God's wisdom in a mystery.

That hidden wisdom which God has predetermined before the ages for our glory. Now think of that. This hidden wisdom of God in a mystery is something that God has predetermined before the ages.

Before He created anything. God already has determined for one thing. And that thing is for our glory.

Brothers and sisters, oftentimes we think if only we can be saved out of hell and into heaven, that will be glorious. But God said that's nothing. What I have prepared for you for glory is something that is really glorious.

As glory as God. Can you think of that? That's God's wisdom. Number 2. Not only predetermined, but it is something in verse 9. Things which eyes have not seen and ear not heard and have not come into man's heart which God has prepared for them that love Him.

It is something that I have never seen. Ear has never heard. And it never even comes to man's heart.

Nobody has ever thought of that. Confucius hasn't thought of that. Socrates has not thought about that.

No man has ever thought about that. Why? Because it's beyond man's imagination. It is something God not only predetermined, but He prepared.

Now think of that. Predetermined is He decided to do something. But it's more than that.

He also prepared for it for those who love Him. He already has in His mind those who are constrained by His love and love Him as He loved them. Number 3. But this is something in the heart of God.

In the mind of God. Nobody knows. It's a mystery.

Now how can this secret be opened up? By searching? It's beyond our intelligence. Revealed by the Spirit of God. Now think of that.

Predetermined, prepared, and now being revealed. God makes it known to us by His Spirit. You remember the apostle Paul in Ephesians chapter 3 said, I know the mystery of the Christ.

Why? Because this mystery has been hidden through the ages, but now has been revealed to the prophets and the apostles. It has been opened up. It's an open secret now.

Now do you know it? It has been revealed. And number 4. That we may know the things which have been freely given to us of God. Not only revealed, but it is to be freely given to us.

You don't need to pay anything. Freely given to you. Now who has the mind of God? But we have the mind of Christ.

In other words, what God has predetermined before the ages, and which He has prepared for those who love Him, has now been revealed. And we have the mind of Christ. We know it.

Now do you know what it is? Of course. The Church. That's what it is.

You know, Paul was not able to come out openly and say, I'm going to share with you the mystery of the Christ, which is the Church. Like Ephesians. He cannot say that.

Because they are still babes. They won't understand. And they may even misunderstand.

What is the Church about? Why is it so important? Is it not that our personal life is more important than the Church? Our family life is more important than the Church? Our social life is more important than the Church? What is the Church? Ah, brothers and sisters. If you really grow in the Lord, you grow into this mystery. How do you grow into it? By fellowship.

When you really are fellowshiping in Christ Jesus, sharing with one another the Christ you know, the Father you know, not only will you be filled with joy, but your understanding will be opened and see that God's purpose is more than personal. It is the body. It is the Church.

That's what fellowship is. Unfortunately today, we come to know what we call the Church by hearing the truth about the Church. Now nothing wrong with the truth.

So in our mind, we all know what the Church is. Hopefully we all know. Hopefully we will not say the Church is a building like this, a physical building.

I go to church. Where do you go to church? Where is the Church? A building like this? This is the Church? No. This is where the Church meets.

This is not the Church. I hope we all know the truth about the Church, that the Church is the body of Christ. The called are ones gathered together under the name of the Lord Jesus with His presence there.

Strictly speaking, fellowship is just another word for the Church. It is the active word of the Church. Because when you talk about the Church, you think more of the truth.

When you talk about fellowship, you think more of experience. But it is one and the same thing. If you love the Church, you love fellowship.

If you live a life just by yourself and think that this is all you need, you do not know what you miss. So brothers and sisters, here you find in this second chapter, the Apostle Paul is trying to show the Corinthian

believers how glorious if we really enter into the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ. Instead of fellowshiping with one another, with ourselves, that would be disastrous.

Or fellowshiping with another, so-called, with the world. Or even fellowshiping with another with what we have heard and not first-hand experience. But no.

If, brothers and sisters, we really realize we are called into the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ. And we are willing to accept the cross working in our lives to take away ourselves and allow Christ to be the fellowship. We fellowship with nothing but Christ.

What joy it will be. What enlightenment it will be. Our eyes will be opened and we will begin to realize, wow, that is the church.

And we will be brought into the reality of the eternal purpose of God. So sometimes I think, in a way, the way we come to the church probably is from the truth side instead of the experience side. And if you come to the church through the truth side, probably joy will not fill your heart.

Sometimes sadness. But if you come to the church from the experiential side, from the fellowshiping side, you will be filled with joy. So may the Lord help us.

Dear Lord, how we praise and thank Thee for being so kind, so gracious to us as extending Thy own fellowship with the Father with us. And Lord, do forgive us for not knowing how glorious is the fellowship. Pray that Thou will deliver us from still fellowshiping on the lower ground.

But Lord, pray that Thou will do such a work in our lives that Christ may be shared one with another, that we may really grow up spiritually and see the beauty, the glory of the church, the body of Christ, the bride of the Lamb. And we give Thee glory. In Thy precious name we pray.

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