

A Message That Must Be Heard

by William Carrol

The message that must be heard is a message of forgiveness, salvation, and hope, preached from the cross of Jesus Christ.

Duration: 43:10

Scripture: Matthew 5:1-2, Matthew 27:51-53, Luke 23:43, John 19:26-27, Acts 2:2-4, Hebrews 12:2

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares his personal experiences of being ridiculed, mocked, and growing up without a father. However, he transitions to preaching about paradise and the faithful God who keeps his promises. He emphasizes that this message of paradise cannot be ignored, especially in times of difficulty. The preacher encourages the audience to be a message themselves by living a life of forgiveness, love, and selflessness, just as Jesus did on the cross.

Transcript

I have good news for you. If you happen to be going through the worst time in your life, if you happen to be in a position where you can honestly say that I am like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego thrown into a fire seven times hotter than anything I've ever been in, and if you are, if you will, feeling as though you are on a cross, then I have really good news for you. This is your time.

This is the time that you will speak a word that cannot be denied. I want to talk to you this afternoon on the topic, a message that must be heard. A message that must be heard.

Father, in the name of Jesus, we thank you so very much. We love you because you are to be loved. We love you because you are love.

We love you because you demonstrated that love for us on Calvary's tree. We love you because you poured out love and he now lives in our heart. We love you because you've given us your word and taught us how to love you.

We love you because you've given us opportunity after opportunity to love you not only directly but indirectly as we reach out to those who are in need. We love you, God, because you are altogether lovely. We thank you and ask you to simply be glorified in the midst.

In Jesus' holy name we pray. Amen. Amen.

We live in a society where one of the goals of certain political groups, whether they consider themselves political or legal or whatever, the bottom line is they have a goal to shut the mouth of God and to do whatever they can to close people's testimony off at the very fountainhead. And we live in a society besides that. It doesn't have much time for the gospel.

Many other obligations, many other opportunities, many other obstacles that stand in their way of hearing the gospel. And we would think that our times are unique times because of this. But this is not the case.

There have always been such times. Now, are these times more extreme? Yes. But they are a more extreme strain of the same disease.

This has been going on forever. Now, you might think that you are the only person that's finding it difficult to get the word out or to get your message across or to reach people for God. But I want to assure you, you are not the only person that's finding it difficult to reach people in your home or in your job or at your school or wherever else you might be trying to be a witness.

In fact, I would remind you that even Jesus in his earthly sojourn found it difficult on many occasions to get people to hear him when he spoke. He would speak and there might be a gathering of one kind of people but another kind of people would flat out reject him. So maybe one day he's speaking to publicans and sinners but Pharisees are rejecting him.

Or one day he might be speaking to Israelites but Gentiles are not hearing him. Or one day he might be speaking to civilians but soldiers are not hearing him. And it goes on and on.

Some days he is so popular that thousands are coming to him. Others so unpopular that he has to say even to his disciples, are you also going to turn away from me? It wasn't easy for Jesus to get all of the world together to hear one message. As glorious as the Sermon on the Mount was, there was a separation even then of people that he was able to speak to.

The Bible says initially that he is working signs and wonders and he's doing great healings and he's speaking some words but for the most part, when he began to do the Sermon on the Mount, the Bible says that he called his disciples to himself. So even then, the multitudes that he had healed and the multitudes that he had fed and so on and so forth, they had a certain amount of attention. They listened to a certain degree but at a certain point, they didn't hear.

But there was a time in the life of Jesus Christ where everybody heard his message. There was a time where every demographic was represented in his audience. There was a pulpit from which he preached that made it so that his voice reverberated in every province, in every corner, in every home, in every heart.

There was no one who did not hear his voice. Whether they accepted or not was another thing but they heard it. Now, that pulpit was the cross.

We remind ourselves that from the cross, Jesus spoke seven words, seven sayings that were heard by every particular demographic of his time. In fact, the Bible says with regard to the accusation that was placed above his head, it was written in the major languages of the time. It was to be spoken to every demographic.

Latin for the Romans, Greek for those who spoke Greek in that vicinity, in that region and most people did, and Hebrew for those people who lived in Palestine. Everybody was to hear that Jesus is the Christ, the King of the Jews. Everybody heard him.

Not only that but the people who were close to him, his disciples, sometimes they would hear him talk about the cross, other times they wouldn't hear him, even if he was speaking directly to him, but now they had to listen. His family, as he began to talk about the things of God, sometimes the Bible said they would say that he's beside himself and they would look to put him away, but now they had to hear his message. The soldiers who at one point were mocking and scoffing and were gambling for his garments, now they had to hear his message.

The two men on either side of the cross that were being crucified with him, who had initially cursed him, if you will, and had blasphemed him, now they too had to hear his message. But not only that, the religious had to hear his message. Because when he spoke from that place, and when he did what he did from that cross, the Bible says that even the veil in the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

Moreover, the dead had to hear his message. The dead had to hear his voice. The Bible says when he began to preach from that cross, and when he began to do that thing that God had called him to do, the very graves began to open, and the dead began to rise.

I suggest to you that the very heavens had to hear that message. Because the Bible says that for a certain amount of time, even the sun was shaken in its glory, and the darkness filled the air. For a certain amount of time, the heavens were shaken, as Jesus preached from that pulpit.

Death itself had to hear that message as well, and give up its captives. Because when this kind of a pulpit is being used, there is no way to deny this message. When the gospel message is preached from the cross, the message cannot be silenced.

It does not matter what political group tries to shut the mouth of God. It does not matter what laws are being passed. It does not matter what the climate of the society happens to be.

It does not matter whether or not men and women are in the mood to hear the voice of God. When men and women begin to preach from the cross, when we preach from a place of suffering, when we preach from a place of hardship, when we preach from a place of trial, men and women must listen. The heavens must listen.

Hell must listen. The living must listen, and the dead in spirit must give attention. So Jesus recognized that he had a pulpit that could not be silenced, and he began to preach.

The Bible says he first began to say something like, Forgive them, Father, because they don't know what they are doing. Now there is forgiveness, and there is forgiveness. There's a kind of forgiveness that says, I am not going to retaliate, but you will never get another chance to hurt me.

And then there is forgiveness from the cross. Forgiveness from the cross says, I am not only going to forgive you, but I'm going to do everything that I can to save you. I'm not only going to forgive you, I'm going to do everything that I can to make sure that that forgiveness is fully communicated to you.

When Jesus forgave us, he died so that we could receive forgiveness. He laid his life down to make sure that we would reap the full benefits of forgiveness. I saw a witness to that about 14 or 15 years ago here in

this church, when there were some people who rose up and spoke some things and did some things that were not nice.

And I watched Pastor David, I watched forgiveness incarnate. I watched a man who didn't just say, I forgive you, or who didn't just say, I'm not going to retaliate. But a man who poured out his life so that people who had hurt him would have somebody who would stand for them.

Somebody who would pour out for them. Somebody who would care for them. And I watched one or two or three or four come back, hat in hand, if you will.

And he received them with tender love, with open arms, and said, how can I help you? What can I do to make you better? That's what forgiveness from the cross does. I saw that with Pastor Carter as well. Where he stretched out his hands to people.

People who hurt him. People who attacked his family. And I watched him make them better.

Pouring out his life so that they could be better. That's forgiveness from the cross. That's the kind of message that cannot be stifled.

That cannot be stymied by our society. See, that's the kind of message that they can't tell you, you can't preach on your job. Because you can choose on your job to forgive people who you know hurt you.

And then to give them your right hand of fellowship. And to say, what can I do to help you? As that person says, what I did was wrong. And as that person says, I need to be better.

I need to do better. You put yourself in a position where you say, how can I help you? What can I do? And even if they don't say that, you find yourself pouring out for them in the prayer closet. Saying, God help me to help them.

Give me an opportunity to make a difference. That's the kind of message that must be heard. People cannot deny that kind of preaching.

Again, we hear Jesus speaking to a man who had spoken evil against Him. Who had mocked Him. Who had said, if you're the Christ, why don't you take yourself down from this cross? Basically saying, you can't be who you say you are.

Because if you were who you say you are, you wouldn't be here with me. And sometimes people say that to the Christian who happens to be suffering. The Christian who happens to be struggling.

The Christian who decides that instead of crawling on hands and knees in corporate America, they would rather stand tall even if it's on an unemployment line. They would rather maintain themselves in godly integrity rather than lying and cooking the book somewhere because they believe that God had given them a call. And somebody might say, but why are you going through this struggle? Why are you going through this suffering? If you're a Christian, what are you doing here with me? And Jesus began to preach paradise from a place of suffering.

Anybody can preach paradise from an ivory tower. Anybody can preach paradise when the going is good. But nobody listens when you preach paradise from paradise.

Sometimes you hear somebody say, if God would just crack the heavens as it were, if he would just open up the sky and preach from where he is and just tell me that everything is going to be alright, I would fall on my face and so on and so forth. But the truth of the matter is, nobody listens when paradise is preached from paradise. It's when God came down and when God hung on a cross, when he suffered with us.

And as we heard this morning, when he wept with us, when he grieved with us, when he groaned with us, when he was able to say, I know what it is to be oppressed too. And I know what it is to be humiliated too. And I know what it is to be stripped down and whipped too.

And I know what it is to be raised in a society where what I believe and what I hold dear is ridiculed and mocked too. I know what it is to be poor too. I know what it is to work hard with my hands too.

I know what it is to grow up without an earthly father too. I understand these things too. When he was able to say, I understand these things too, but now let me tell you about paradise.

Let me tell you from this perspective about the faithful God. Let me tell you from where I am about the goodness of God. Let me tell you from where I am about the God who keeps his promises.

Let me tell you from a place of suffering about the God who is able to bring joy and peace and wholeness, even in the midst of difficulty. Let me preach paradise to you from the cross. That's the kind of message that cannot be denied.

The kind of message that cannot be ignored. When men and women are going through a fire that is seven times hotter than ever before and yet they cannot stop talking about the goodness of God and about the praise of our Savior and about the glories of heaven and about the faithfulness of our Father and about the covenant of our Christ. When they cannot stop preaching paradise.

When they don't say tomorrow we're going to be in paradise together, but today you will be with me in paradise. People that talk about a paradise that's here and now, even though we look forward to that glorious place, we know that the kingdom of God has come and lives in us and works himself outwardly through us, no matter what kind of a situation we happen to be in. No matter how difficult the trial.

Preaching paradise from the cross, preaching forgiveness from the cross. But not only that, from that same cross, he looked and he saw his mother and he saw one of his disciples and he was able to facilitate family and facilitate unity. But from the cross.

It's one thing to try to facilitate love and community and unity if we are trying to do it from a place of maybe administrative savvy or maybe a place of social facility where we say let's all get together because it makes things better and that kind of a thing. It's another thing to do it the way Jesus did it. Bible talks about him presenting his church whole, one, unblemished, untarnished, pure.

And then the Bible tells us how he went about doing it. He gave himself for her. Sometimes we'll hear people talking about in say for instance a counseling session how this person that they're married to is not this and not that and not the other thing and they should be this and they should be that and they should be the other thing.

And basically what they're saying is I want to present this person to myself in such and such a way. The Bible gives clear instructions on how to do that. Die.

Just that simple. Bible says husbands love your wife as Christ loved the church and he what? Gave himself for her that he might do what? Present her to himself how? Unblemished. You want to present? This is the sidebar now.

I'm just going to give you a freebie over here. You want a good wife? I'm talking to the men now for half a second. You want a good wife? Die.

It's just that simple. It's pretty easy. I have really short marriage sessions.

Do you understand what I'm saying? Really quick counseling sessions. Present yourself with a good wife by dying for her. And I can say the same thing to wives.

You know what I mean? Present yourself with a good husband by dying. Well Jesus presents himself with one church. A unified church.

By dying. We facilitate love. This is basically what I'm trying to say.

By loving. It's a message that people cannot deny. You ever notice that when you smile at people they tend to smile back? Now one or two might think you're a little weird.

But for the most part. You know what I mean? When you smile at people they tend to smile back. And I found that if you love people they tend to love back.

They might not know how. We talked about love earlier. Even when we're praying.

We can love because the Holy Spirit lives in us. And we can love because we know love because we've seen the cross. And we have the word and so on.

They might not be able to do all that. They might not know what love is. But what they have, they give.

And sometimes that love can be a little weird. A little perverse and so on and so forth. So you kind of back up and say You understand what I'm saying? It's just enough for you to bring them to the word.

They want to love. People don't want to hate. People don't want to hurt.

How do we facilitate love? We facilitate love by loving. We exemplify love. We show people what love looks like.

It's a message that must be heard. Again, from the cross. Jesus was able to say My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? I want to suggest to you that sometimes in your time of difficulty you are allowed to express your pain.

It's the kind of message that touches people who are in pain. Let's them know that our faith again is not on an ivory tower. But when we express our pain we do it again from the perspective of the cross.

What does that mean? I don't talk about my pain unless I am allowing myself to be reminded of His pain. And I take it in that kind of perspective. So I look at my struggle or I look at my pain or I look at my hardship and then I compare it, if you will, to His cross.

But I don't just compare it to His cross. I recognize that any grace that I have to deal with my pain is based upon His cross. Now you remember that story in the book of Acts.

A certain man is reading the book of Isaiah and one of the Lord's disciples is supernaturally brought to that man and this man is reading Isaiah and he's reading about suffering and pain. And he asks the disciple of the Lord, who is this man talking about? In other words, as this man is talking about pain and suffering, who is he talking about? And Christ's disciple was able to show him that he was talking about the sufferings of Christ. Now, what's going on here is twofold.

On the one side, Isaiah is talking about Israel as a whole and Israel as a suffering servant and so on, but more specifically talking about Christ as the embodiment of Israel and as the person who ultimately knows suffering. So I can talk about my pain, but men and women are not going to be saved by the fact that I talk about my pain. They're going to be saved by the fact that I am able to ultimately bring everything back to the sufferings of Christ.

So they don't see me as somebody who is impervious to suffering. They don't see me as somebody who doesn't know what it is to go through hardship. But they see me as somebody who takes it all in perspective.

I understand that the God that I serve knows what it is to cry. The God that I serve knows what it is to sweat so profusely as He's going to this place of suffering. The Bible says, it was as though it was great drops of blood.

Who knows what it is to say sometimes, take this cup away from me. See, I can go to God with my sufferings, but I can't go to Him with my sufferings unless I understand that He knows what it is to suffer. What does that do? It keeps me from accusing, as we heard this morning.

It keeps me from an accusation. See, if I talk about my sufferings without considering Christ's sufferings, then when I speak out, it sounds to people like I'm accusing God. People close their ears to that kind of a message.

But if it sounds to people like I'm identifying with God, and I am saying along with the disciples after they came back from being beaten in the book of Acts, after they came back from being beaten, it says that they began to lift up their voice and cry out to God and give glory to God, that they were counted worthy of suffering for His name. So we can either have an accusatory voice as we talk about our struggles, because someone in the background, it's like, God is allowing me to suffer, and He doesn't know anything about this kind of pain, or God has allowed me to identify with His cross. He's allowed me to identify with His sufferings.

As Paul was talking about that, I may know Him in the power of His resurrection and in the fellowship of His sufferings. God has allowed me to feel His pain. Again, that's the kind of message that cannot be silenced.

Not only that, but He says, I thirst. I'm thirsty. We live in a world where many people are being told now that if you're a Christian, you have to be in some sort of a cocoon, and basically what you're saying to everybody else around you is, I really don't need you.

You need me, but I don't need you. I have something for you, but you got nothing for me. Why did Jesus sit on that well one day and speak to a Samaritan woman and tell her that He had a need? This is the one, if He wanted to, He could have called rain down from heaven and drank as much as He wanted.

Why did He tell her He had a need? I'll tell you why He told her He had a need. Because He had a need. It's alright for us to be vulnerable in our society.

Because people don't listen to an impervious people, a people who can't be touched. A people who walk around in bubbles. Basically what they will say to us is what they're saying in postmodernism anyway, in a relativistic society anyway, which basically means, that's good for you, this is good for me, never the twain shall meet.

That's your little bubble over there, this is my little bubble over here. You do what you like, I'll do what I like. And when we perpetuate that, all it does is strengthen their argument.

So we go to them, and we say, you matter to me. And what you bring to the table actually matters to me. Your talents matter to me, your contribution matters to me, your life matters.

I don't have to agree with what a person says to agree with the fact that that person is loved by God and they matter. And so even if I disagree with what a person says, I will do it respectfully, I will do it lovingly, but I will say, you matter. I will say to them, that this world would not be the same without you.

I will say to them, that you have something to offer to me, your life matters to me. The fact that you exist matters to me. That's what the Bible says about Jesus.

He came because the world mattered to God. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. So Jesus speaks and says, I thirst, and somebody offers Him something.

They listened. They heard Him. Because He simply made Himself vulnerable.

Again, He begins to talk about how He commits His Spirit into the hands of God. There is no more resounding message than a message of trust. It says, God I trust you in all times, but particularly in the difficult times.

People will wait to see how you suffer. My father, before he died, he died of cancer. Before he died, he gave his life to the Lord a couple years before he died.

Before that, he wasn't doing so well. Before he got sick, he was really sick. He was ill with sin.

And I didn't really hear much of what he had to say. In fact, I didn't listen to him at all. I didn't respect him.

Do you understand? He spent all of his time drinking and this, that, and the other. Then he got sick. And then he got well.

And I watched him die for two years. And I would watch him pace back and forth all night long because the pain was so much and he'd be praying to God. And this is over 25 years ago and I still pray that same exact way.

Because I watched him. I watched him commit his spirit to God. And for two years, he preached to me from the cross.

For two years, he didn't say a whole lot. But he had my full attention. I listened to every single thing he did.

I listened with my eyes. I listened with my ears. I listened with my heart.

I watched him every single step of the way. He committed his life to Jesus. And that's why my life is committed to Jesus.

He could never have spoken to me in the earlier days. And when he first gave his life to the Lord, I wasn't really interested in everything that he had to say. But then I watched him.

I realized this was not just another thing he was doing. Not just another trend. Not just another way of turning over a leaf and making things a little bit better so that his life could... No, I realized he was actually a new man.

And what spoke to me was that he trusted God. Basically, what he said to me in those two years was this. For the rest of your life, you can trust God.

Now, I know without a doubt, without equivocation, that God can be trusted. Because I heard a message one day. A message preached from the cross.

And I've never forgotten that message. I live by that message. My life is what it is because of that message.

My life is dedicated to that message. And finally, Jesus was able to say, it is finished. This is a man announcing victory while he is still on the cross.

He could have said it is finished on Easter morning. The sin was paid for on the cross. No question about that.

Once and for all. But while he was still on the cross, he started talking about victory. God has given you an opportunity to preach a message that cannot be denied.

You might say I'm sick. You might say I'm unemployed and I just don't know what's going to happen now. You might say my family is in disarray.

You might say I'm sad and I can't explain why. You might say I'm pulled in so many directions, I feel like I'm about to be split in two. You are in the perfect place to preach a message that will reach every single demographic.

There are messages in our generation that can only be spoken among the affluent, can only be spoken among the rich, can only be spoken... But then there is a message, a gospel message that can be spoken everywhere. That message is being written in you now. And I have a prophetic word for you.

You will preach victory from the cross. You will prove the victory of Christ by your life. As the Holy Spirit lives in you, He will preach a message through you, through your life that will shake the world.

That will change family members and loved ones and will resound throughout your workplace and in your school. That will be undeniable. If you're in that place and you're saying, God, I want to be a message that must be heard.

I want to be a message that reaches all peoples. We talk about speaking in other tongues as Pentecostals and this is basically the idea. A message that cuts across every demographic.

If you want to be that message, I'm going to ask you in a moment to come and pray with me. Because I want to be that message. I want to see God again in this generation.

I want to see God. Let's stand together in the house of the Lord. If God has spoken to you, you're going through a difficult time, you're going through a difficult trial, and you're saying, I do not want this to be a waste.

I don't want to suffer for nothing. I want to help somebody. I want to make a difference.

I want to give glory to God. I want to bless His name. Would you come to the front of this auditorium, my dearly beloved? Join me here.

We'll pray together. In the name of the Holy Savior. Amen.

Amen. Hallelujah. Would you lift up your hands with me, please? Oh, Jesus, we thank you so much.

We love you in this house. Oh, God, we love you with all of our heart. God, we pray that you cause us, in times of difficulty and hardship, to so bear witness to your faithfulness and your goodness.

We can't do this in our own strength. God, by your grace, would you cause us to be a message in this society? A message that cannot be silenced. A word that no law can legislate against.

That no judge can cast his vote against. A message, Jesus, that permeates walls, that permeates cultures, that permeates societies, that permeates fences, and that moves out into the world. It moves out into society.

It cuts across every kind of line. A message that must be heard. A message of trust.

A message of hope. A message of love. A message of forgiveness.

A message of unity. Lord God, in Jesus' holy name, would you bless my brothers and my sisters now, oh God, and would you strengthen each one, oh Jesus, for your glory and for your praise. Lord, bring comfort in times of hardship, in times of suffering, and in times of pain, but Lord Jesus, don't let these times be in vain.

Use us. Help us. Glorify your name in us.

We thank you for this, oh Jesus. We love you for it, oh God. We believe you for it, oh Jesus.

Hallelujah.

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