

Preach Christ Crucified

1 Corinthians 1:22-24



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FOCAL Read Responsively 1 Corinthians 1:22-24
For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: {23} But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; {24} But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

Humans spend many precious hours of their lives doing things that really don't – in the long run – matter. When I was young the concept of “time” meant very little to me. But as I grow older every moment of every day becomes much more precious.

It is the devil's intention to have everyone who will wasting their lives rather than living their lives in the Lord. Our text tells us that **“the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom”**. God has clearly made Himself known. He has clearly presented Himself as Creator in all that our eyes see. He has clearly presented Himself as Savior in the Person of Jesus Christ. And yet people still linger, refusing to give themselves to **Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God**. My prayer is that the Holy Spirit of God will open your eyes so that you can see beyond this moment. My prayer is that God will draw you away from a closed mind, and will “open the eyes of your hearts” so that you can see how much He loves you.

Psalms 33:6 By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.

God made all things **by His Word**. This God loves you. He's not calling you to get something out of you, but He's calling you to give something to you. He isn't, by the way, standing *hat in hand* at the altar hoping you'll cast a glance in His direction. You need what God has.

You need to be forgiven. You need to be empowered. You need to be adopted into the family of God. You need what God has for. You need to believe in Jesus Christ!

On Sunday, January 6 in 1850 a young man of fifteen years old wanted to go to chapel. His heart was heavy, for God the Holy Spirit had been working in his life. This young man was tired of seeking God – now he was ready to be saved! No one knows how many chapels this youth went to as he heard – over the course of several weeks – many different preachers. These men of God, like many of our preachers today, focused on great spiritual truths. Their sermons were elegant, but oddly unsatisfying. This young man had become convinced that he was a sinner who needed to be forgiven by God. One Sunday the young man stumbled upon a small chapel where the old and somewhat illiterate preacher spoke from the text of:

Isaiah 45:22 Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.

“**Look unto God and be saved**”. As the old man preached He focused on Jesus. “**Jesus said 'Look unto**

Me, I am sweating great drops of Blood. Look unto Me, I am hanging on the Cross. Look unto Me, I ascend to Heaven. Look unto Me, I am sitting at the Father's right hand. O poor sinner, look unto Me! Look unto Me!”

The young man said, “**I had been waiting to do fifty things. But when I heard that word, Look!, what a charming word it seemed to me. Oh I looked until I could almost have looked my eyes away. That happy day when I found the Savior and learned to cling to His dear feet was a day never to be forgotten by me. An obscure child, unknown, unheard of, I listened to the Word of God; and that precious text led me to the Cross of Christ.**” This young man would grow up to be **C.H. Spurgeon**, one of the greatest preachers of all time.

Dear friends, turn from your doubts and look. Do not look unto me. I am nothing – I am but dust – but look unto Jesus. As you look unto Him ask Him to be your Lord and Savior. Stop looking for signs, stop looking for human logic. **Look unto Him Who loved you, and gave Himself for you. Look unto Jesus the Author and finisher of our faith.**

My God touch your hearts with His Word.

**1. The Jews Seek A Sign,
Though A Sign Has Been Given**

FOCAL 1 Corinthians 1:22 **For the Jews require a sign ...**

In our lifetimes we waste a *great deal* of our lives doing mundane things. **Pastor Greg Laurie** states that:¹

“In a lifetime the average American will spend six months sitting at traffic lights waiting for them to change, one year searching through desk clutter looking for misplaced objects, eight months opening junk mail, two years trying to call people who aren't in or whose line is busy, five years waiting in lines, and three years in meetings. In addition the average American will watch 1700 hours of television every year, commute forty five minutes every day, and receive 600 advertising messages every day (including television, newspapers, radio, and billboards).”

That's an awful lot of wasted time. If you add into this that the average American will **sleep 2920 hours every year of his life** – approximately *one third* of your lifespan. The Bible tells us that **“our life is a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away” (James 4:14)**. Over a lifetime of seventy or even eighty years you have very little quality time left.

Rather than wasting what's left of our lives on trivialities we need to see what God has clearly shown us. **The Jews require a sign.** God has given them a sign. **The Gentiles seek after wisdom.** God has given us wisdom. He has given us Jesus Christ!

So many people say “If Jesus Christ is indeed the Savior of mankind, show me a sign”. God has shown us many

signs! The first sign God has clearly shown us is that Christ, when He came to this earth, was to be **born of Israel, of a virgin mother**. The Lord told Israel following their release from Egypt:

Deuteronomy 7:8 But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of ... Egypt.

God said **“I didn't save Israel out of Egypt because you are all great people. I saved you because of a promise I made to Abraham many years ago”**. God always keeps His promises.

God promised Abraham that a mighty nation would come from his line, and that – through nation – all the nations of the world would be blessed. Israel is a sign, the Law given to Israel is a sign, the prophecies of the Coming Savior is a sign.

God saved Israel out of Egypt, and gave them the Law through Moses at Mount Sinai. **The giving of the Law is significant for two reasons: it teaches Israel that they cannot save themselves from their sins, while at the same time foretells the coming of Jesus Christ.** God would teach His people through the Levitical sacrifices that blood would have to be shed – punishment given – for every violation of the Law. The Israelite would, year after year, come to either tabernacle or temple and shed the blood of bulls and sheep.

¹ From his book *10 Things You Should Know*, page 58

The constant blood letting of the Mosaic Law would teach every Israelite that all men are sinners, and that every sin must be punished.

The fact that every Israelite, year after year, shed animal blood was proof that we are all inherent sinners. The sinner cannot please God. That which is corrupt cannot shed his blood to make payment for his own sins, much less for the sins of the whole world.

God would have to come and make payment for our sins! God would come because the same God who – for His promise sake - preserved the hard headed and stone hearted Israel – this same God promised to make a way whereby we might all be saved.

God gave Israel prophetic signs. God told His Israel “**I shall**

Isaiah 7:14 ... give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel”.

What a wonderful sign! A **virgin would conceive** not just any child, but she would **bear a Son, and call His Name Immanuel**. This is no mere mortal, for **Immanuel** literally means “**God with us**”. The Child born of a virgin would be called “**God with us**”! God would take on humanity, take on flesh and blood. He would come and live among we who are fallen *without sin*. The **Holy Spirit of God**, speaking through the Prophet, would go

on to say to Israel that the Messiah Who was coming:

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

His NAME – not His “names” (plural) but **His NAME shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace**. The Messiah – when He came – would be all of these. Though He would be born of a virgin, He would be no mere mortal Man. He would be **Mighty God, Immanuel, God with us**. He would be **Everlasting Father**.

The Messiah – when He came to earth – would be born miraculously of a virgin, of the Tribe of Judah. He would not just be mere mortal, but He would be “**Emmanuel – God with us**”.

Though He proceeded from God the Father the Messiah would be equal with the Father. He would be no lesser god – no godlet – but fully equal with God. He would be able to say:

John 14:9-10 ... he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? {10} Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that

dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

When Messiah came, God would be with Him and in Him. Not only that, God would **be Him**. God walked among the Jews. The Bible says of Jesus Christ that:

John 1:10-11 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. {11} He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

God came into the world that He made. Born of a virgin of the Tribe of Judah of the nation Israel Jesus Christ was a direct fulfillment of Biblical prophecy. The Jews said “**give us a sign**” - and **Jesus was that sign**. They had signs a plenty! When the wind and the waves roared:

Mark 4:39 ... He arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

There was a great calm. The disciples asked “**Who is this Man that the sea and the wind obeys Him?**” Who indeed but *Almighty God walking amongst us*.

Who is this Jesus? Can't you see the signs? The lame come leaping, the deaf come hearing, the dumb come singing, and the dead come rising. Oh Israel, Oh sign seeker, look unto Jesus and live!

Then there are those who are *quite refined*, those who seek after wisdom. **The Greeks seek after wisdom.** You need look no further than Christ. The Bible tells us

that He Who took on humanity stood *three days* before the **wise men of the Temple**. We read in the Gospels that the virgin found Jesus

Luke 2:46-47 ... sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. {47} And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

The sign that you seek is clearly evident: Jesus Christ is God in the flesh, come to earth to be your Savior.

2. The Gentiles Seek Wisdom, And Show Themselves To Be Fools

FOCAL 1 Corinthians 1:22 ... and the Greeks seek after wisdom:

The **Greeks** – that's the ever wise **Gentiles** – deny Jesus Christ as Savior because they say “that just doesn't make sense that God could – or would – make payment for our sins. Many **Greeks** – also called **Scientists, Atheists, and Doctors of Philosophy** – deny the existence of God. They look at the wondrous mechanism of nature all around us and believe that it *just happened*. Hogwash! The Bible tells us that

Psalms 14:1 ... The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.

The **fool** rejects God on the basis that we all *evolved* by some freak chance of nature. **Dr. W.A. Criswell** quoted

a little poem that illustrates the foolishness of this concept:

**“Once I was a tadpole, beginning to begin;
Then I was a frog with my tail tucked in;
Then I was a monkey in a banyon tree;
And now I'm a professor with a PhD!”**

If we descended from slop, then by what basis do we determine *morality*? You can't! If you base morality on popular opinion (and I believe that's the basis of *Roe vs Wade abortion as well as Hitler's death camps*), then the cannibalistic tribes in Africa are just as moral as a Church social!

ILLUSTRATION God knows best. There's not a person here that can explain how a **black cow** eating **green grass** produces **white milk** which can be churned into **yellow butter**. God made the cow! Many of these so called scientists are like the woman who fancied herself to be an art critic. While visiting the studio of a famous artist one day she saw a canvas filled with colors. **“What is this! What breathtaking colors! What depth of feeling, beauty and form. What do you call this piece?”** The artist, looking at her, smiled and said **“I call this the place where I clean my paint brushes”!**

FOCAL 1 Corinthians 1:22 ... **and the Greeks seek after wisdom:**

FOCAL 1 Corinthians 1:24 **But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of**

God, and the wisdom of God.

Do you seek wisdom? Then seek Christ, the power of God AND the wisdom of God.

If you seek wisdom, then you seek Jesus Christ. Never did Jesus ever answer a question with stupidity. Attacked by the wiliest for who ever lived – **Satan himself** – Jesus defeated every argument that old slewfoot made by quoting Scripture at him. The Pharisees and Priests plotted together to ask Jesus questions that would show Him to be a fool. He answered their question, and it was they who ended up with egg on their faces. Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, is

Luke 2:32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

If you are a believer in Christ then

Colossians 3:16-17 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. {17} And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

If you are not a believer in Jesus Christ then you will never find wisdom. Wisdom is in Christ, in knowing Him, in submitting your lives to Him, in living for Him. **The foolishness of God is greater than the wisdom of**

man. I would rather be considered a fool for Christ's sake than the most brilliant but godless philosopher in all the world.

CONTEXT 1 Corinthians 1:27-31 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; {28} And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: {29} That no flesh should glory in his presence. {30} But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: {31} That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Where is the wise man? He is the man who has chosen to follow Christ!

3. Though All The World Mock Us, We Preach Christ Crucified

FOCAL 1 Corinthians 1:23 ... But we preach Christ crucified ...

We preach Christ crucified because this and this alone is what will save – and uplift - the soul.

ILLUSTRATION A momma tucked her little girl in for the night. The child asked “Mommy, will you bring me

a glass of water? I'm thirsty!” The mother replied, “No honey, you've had enough water. Go to sleep”. The mother went and laid down to sleep. Just as she was about asleep the child cried out to her momma. “Momma, will you get me a glass of water? I'm thirsty!” The mother, exasperated, yelled back to her child. “If you ask for water one more time, I'm going to spank you!” A moment passed, then the child said “Mommy, when you get up to spank me, will you get me a glass of water?”

That little girl had a need, recognized her need, and was willing to take a spanking – if necessary – to satisfy her thirst. Dear friends, are you thirsty for God today? Aren't you tired of trying to live your lives in your own power?

It is very unfashionable to preach Christ today. Preachers in pulpits all across America preach without mentioning Christ. Some will stand in funeral parlors looking at grieving families and will preach *comfortless messages*, offering platitudes and human comfort for those marching through the valley of the shadow of death. Dear friends, we **preach Christ crucified** because this alone brings comfort to our souls.

When we **preach Christ crucified** we recognize the *reason* He was crucified. It hurts our feelings to know that the Bible declares us to be sinners. But hurt feelings or not, we will never get better until we **focus on Christ crucified**.

We preach Christ crucified because Jesus Christ took

my penalty upon Himself. The Bible says that God the Father

2 Corinthians 5:21 ... hath made {Christ} to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

He Who knew no sin **became sin** as our sin was poured out on Him and judged. He Who knew no death **drank of death in our place** so that

John 11:26 ... whosoever liveth and believeth in {Christ} shall never die. Believest thou this?

The Bible tells us that

Isaiah 53:4-6 Surely {Christ} hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. {5} But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. {6} All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Though He suffered in our place, never once did He cry against the injustice of it all. It was all of justice. We are sinners, lost and undone, unable to pay for the evil we have done and continue to do. Jesus Christ

Isaiah 53:7-9 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb

to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. {8} He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. {9} And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

It pleased God to save us by bruising the Son.

Isaiah 53:10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, ...

The devil despises the Cross of Christ. He despises the Gospel of the Shed Blood of Jesus. When the early preachers were caught by Satan's henchmen they were beaten – then warned - to *cease preaching Christ crucified*. “**Do not speak in the Name of Jesus!**” (Acts 5:40). What did the disciples do? They **departed from the council, and preached Christ all the more in the Temple and in every place. “They ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ”** (Acts 5:42). We preach Christ crucified for this is the only thing that will change a life, the only thing that will save a soul.

God shed His Blood upon the cross of Calvary (Acts 20:28). God had to do it, for only God is innocent. God must pay for sin, for only God can bear the weight of human guilt.

FOCAL 1 Corinthians 1:23 ... **But we preach Christ crucified unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness ...**

ILLUSTRATE The unbelieving world – whether Jew or Greek – will mock the Cross of Christ. **The Jews consider Christ a stumblingblock, and the Greeks consider Him to be foolishness.** Yet let a man hear and dare believe that Jesus Christ died for him. The prison bars of sin and addiction to evil – bars that at one time seemed impenetrable – now melt to the ground. **Christ crucified** means that my debt before God is gone. **Christ crucified** means that I cannot be punished for sin, for Christ was punished in my place. We sing

Revelation 1:5 .. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

We preach Christ crucified – a thing that is past tense – for He is crucified no more. When Christ was crucified on Calvary, wounded and bleeding for you and for me, He died. Yet three days later He rose again, and ascended unto Heaven to make intercession for all Who love Him.

I would not dare live another day in this present age without Jesus. I would certainly never cross the dark river of death without knowing that my Lord and Savior crossed before me.

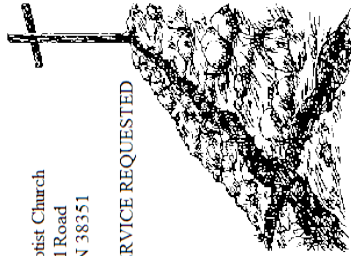
ILLUSTRATE Sooner or later in your life you will approach the river death. If you have not believed on

Jesus that dark water river will frighten you. I heard of a mother and a father who lost a very young child to death. The mother was a believer, the father was not. As the father wandered from room to room he tore at his hair, beat on his arms, screamed at the heavens. Yet the mother, tears on her face, looked heavenward saying **“the Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away – blessed be the Name of the Lord”**. In time the father calmed down and asked his dear wife why she could be so strong while he, a strong man, could be so weak. She quietly replied **“as King David in faith said to God 'my child cannot come to me, but I can go to him', so do I say. My God has never failed me – He will not fail me ever!”** That father became a believer that very day. Dear friends, you are as arrogant as the armies of Pharaoh to step from this life into the river of death without the comfort of knowing that Christ was crucified for you. When a believer steps into that river he knows that **“Christ crossed here”**, and He will be on the other side waiting for you. **We preach Christ crucified.** Death did not hold Jesus, and neither will it hold those who have His promise!

May God lead you to Him Who gave Himself for you!

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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Though A Sign Has Been Given**

1 Corinthians 1:22; Deuteronomy 7:8; Isaiah 7:14;
Isaiah 9:6; John 14:9-10; John 1:10-11; Mark 4:39;
Luke 2:46-47

**2. The Gentiles Seek Wisdom,
And Show Themselves To Be Fools**

1 Corinthians 1:22; Psalms 14:1; 1 Corinthians 1:24;
Luke 2:32; Colossians 3:16-17; 1 Corinthians 1:27-31

**3. Though All The World Mock Us,
We Preach Christ Crucified**

1 Corinthians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:21; John 11:26;
Isaiah 53:4-6; Isaiah 53:7-9; Isaiah 53:10; Acts 5:40;
Acts 5:42; 1 Corinthians 1:23; Revelation 1:5

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