

The most diabolic ploy of Satan would be for churches to be bulging at the seams, but no proclamation of Christ and Him crucified. With this deadly silence, people would never learn of Christ. Thus, they could never know or follow him. (Steve Lawson)

Background to Corinth:

- What would Paul do when he arrived in Corinth? After all, he had already preached in Thessalonika, Berea, Athens, Philippi. And he had been met with sweeping rejections!
- **So now Paul enters this entertainment-driven capital (Corinth):**
 - ✓ Corinth's strategic location brought commerce, and all that goes with it, to its populace: wealth, a steady stream of travelers and merchants, and vice.
 - ✓ In Paul's day, many of the pagan religions included prostitution as part of the worship of their god or goddess. Consequently fornication flourished in Corinth.
 - ✓ As a wealthy commercial capital, Corinth prided itself as a prosperous city that boasted of the best Greek culture. The city had an outdoor theater that accommodated 20,000 people. And, some of the most skilled ancient actors, dramatists, orators gathered to form & parade their talents. The Corinthians were accustomed to & drawn to the most polished communications in antiquity.

THESIS — I want to assure you CFBC family: **we will unflinchingly preach Jesus Christ & Him crucified!** -- *Simply. Plainly. Powerfully.*

I'll give **4 phrases** from vv.1-5 that'll serve as guardrails for us preachers!

I. THE PLOYS WE REJECT! (1)

II. THE PERSON WE PURSUE! (2)

1. Jesus Christ - (1) **MAN** - Jesus; (2) **MESSIAH** - Christ

2. And Him **crucified** - Cross-work

III. THE POWER WE NEED! (3-4)

- True preaching is emphatically *impossible*. **We need power!**

V.3 **his humble affirmation**

In Acts 16, he was prevented from going to Bithynia, he met the demonic slave girl, was dragged into the Philippian marketplace and beaten with rods, thrown into prison. In Acts 17, he passed to Thessalonika and set the city in an uproar, with large mobs attacking believers, shouting, screaming & accusing. Then he went to Berea and was hounded by violent opponents who forced them out. Then they went to Athens & preached on Mars hill. In Acts 18, when he arrived in Corinth & preached, some resisted & blasphemed him & many Jews rose up against Paul & other believers were beaten (Acts 16-18)! He's bloody, torn, emotionally drained, been rejected, mocked, tried, sentenced, imprisoned, pursued, mistreated, accused & WEAK.

V.4 - **his holy ambition -**

“In your preaching, aim NOT to let off ‘fireworks’ but at preaching, aim at that which will do lasting good to souls. Let us beware of fireworks in our preaching. ‘beautiful sermons, brilliant sermons, clever sermons, popular sermons are often sermons which have NO effect on the congregation and do not draw men to Jesus Christ.’ (JC Ryle)

IV. THE PURPOSE WE SEEK! (5)

From a lecture from Charles Spurgeon to his students in the pastor's college:

Brethren, first and above all things, keep to PLAIN evangelical doctrines; whatever else you do or do not preach, be sure incessantly to bring forth the soul-saving truth of CHRIST and him crucified. Hence I urge you to keep to the old fashioned gospel, and to that only, for assuredly IT IS THE POWER OF GOD unto salvation. Of all I would wish to say that this is the summary: My brethren, PREACH CHRIST, always and evermore. He is the whole gospel. His person, offices, and work must be out one great, all-comprehending theme. The world needs still to be told of its Savior, and of the way to reach him. We are not called to proclaim a philosophy and metaphysics, but the simple gospel. Man's FALL, his need of a new birth, forgiveness through an atonement, and salvation as the result of faith, these are our battle-axe and weapons of war. I AM GREEDY AFTER WITNESSES for the glorious gospel of the blessed God. O that Christ crucified were the universal burden of men of God. Your guess at the number of the beast, your conjectures concerning the AntiChrist – FORGIVE ME, I count them but mere bones for dogs; while men are dying and hell is filling, we must preach CHRIST crucified. BLESSED IS THAT MINISTRY of which CHRIST IS ALL!!

This **strong** church is only **strong** because it preaches a **STRONG** Christ.

"A man cannot be a faithful minister until he preaches Christ for Christ's sake -- until he gives up striving to attract people to himself, and seeks only to attract them to Christ." (Robert Murray McCheyne)