

“Him We Preach”

Colossians 1:28

“Him we preach,

*warning every man and teaching every man
in all wisdom, that we may present every man
perfect in Christ Jesus.”*

Many preachers are known for *what* they preach. In fact, entire sects are known for what they preach regarding such things as the church, baptism, the Law of Moses, the Sabbath, charismatic gifts, prophecies, new revelations, creeds and confessions, Calvinism or Freewillism, and other such things.

Other preachers are known for preaching a *person*, not a *thing*.

But not every preacher of a *person* preaches the *right* person. Paul the apostle indicated this when he said “we do not preach *ourselves*” (2 Corinthians 4:5). Preachers of themselves are like Simon Magus the sorcerer in “claiming that he was someone great” and accepting his hearers’ praise “This man is the great power of God” (Acts 8:9f). Preachers of this sort abound today.

God’s preachers are not of such a sort. Yes, we preach a *person*, but not *ourselves*. There is nothing in us nor of us worth preaching. Rather, we point you to the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and declare to you (as in our present text), “Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.”

Paul here speaks for preachers of Christ Jesus in setting forth these three points: 1. the *person* we preach, 2. the *manner* in which we preach Him, and 3. the *reason* we preach Him.

I. The person we preach: Of whom does Paul speak when he declares “Him we preach”?

1. *He is identified as “Christ Jesus”*. This is the title and name by which He is identified in the last part of this text.

i. The title *Christ* (cp. Hebrew “Messiah” [John 1:41; 4:25]) means “Anointed One” (as in Psalm 2:2). It identifies Him as Jehovah’s Son by an eternal generation (Psalm 2:7), eternally “the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16), the One anointed by Jehovah to be the mediatorial Prophet, Priest, and King of His people.

ii. The name *Jesus* means “Jehovah Is Salvation”. This name was given to Him at His birth (Matthew 1:21): “you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” Jesus is both our Savior and

our salvation. “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Act 4:12).

2. *Christ Jesus is worthy of being preached*. When Paul here writes “Him we preach” he refers to what he had just written regarding Him, including these fifteen facts:

- 1st (v.2), He is the bringer of divine grace and peace to His people: “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”.
- 2nd (v.4), He is the object of believers’ faith: “we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus.”
- 3rd (v.13), He is the king of God’s people: “He [God the Father] has delivered us from the power of darkness [Satan] and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.”
- 4th (v.14), He is the redeemer of God’s people: “in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.”
- 5th (v.15a), “He is the image of the invisible God” (cp. Hebrews 1:3; John 14:9; 2 Corinthians 4:4, 6).
- 6th (v.15b), “He is ... the firstborn over all creation” (cp. Psalm 89:27; also Romans 8:29).
- 7th (v.16), He is the creator of all things: “For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth”
- 8th (v.17a), He exists from eternity: “He is before all things.”
- 9th (v.17b), He is the preserver of all things: “in Him all things consist” (i.e., cohere or hold together).
- 10th (v.18a), “He is the head of the body, the church.”
- 11th (v.18b), “He is the beginning [Greek *archē*], the firstborn from the dead” – the One who laid the foundation for the resurrected life, and the chief of all who enjoy that resurrected life.
- 12th (v.18c), He is the first in rank over the universe and in His church: “in all things He may have the preeminence.”
- 13th (v.19), He is co-equal with His Father in divinity: “For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell.”
- 14th (vv.19-22), He is the reconciler of God’s people: “... you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight.”
- 15th (v.27), He is to believers “Christ in you, the hope of glory”.

“Him we preach!”

II. The manner in which we preach Him: “Him we

preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom".

1. *We are proclaiming Christ Jesus*. When Paul declares "Him we *preach*", he employs the verb (Greek *katangellō*, pronounced kat-ang-gel'-lo) meaning "1) to announce, declare, promulgate, make known; 2) to proclaim publicly, publish" (*Thayer's Greek Definitions*).

Many preach *about* Christ without *proclaiming* Christ:

- Some preach the church of Christ without proclaiming the Christ of the church.
- Some preach the return of Christ without proclaiming the Christ who is returning.
- Some preach the atonement made by Christ without proclaiming the Christ who made the atonement.
- Some merely mention Christ from time to time while preaching.

However, preachers of Christ proclaim Him – and Him alone – every time they preach. Their preaching is a proclamation of Christ.

2. *We are "warning" and "teaching" – or admonishing and instructing*. These two must be taken together, for one must not be unaccompanied by the other.

i. We *warn* people that they cannot be saved by any works they perform; we *teach* them that salvation is by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ and the work He finished for their salvation.

ii. We *warn* people that they are incapable of keeping God's law; we *teach* them that Jesus Christ fulfilled the law for all who believe in Him, and that His righteousness is imputed to them.

iii. We *warn* people of their need of a savior; we *teach* them that Jesus Christ is the only and all-sufficient Savior.

iv. We *teach* people that they will be saved if they believe the gospel of Jesus Christ and trust in Him; we *warn* them that will be doomed if they do not do so.

3. *We are warning and teaching "every man"*. (Note that Paul uses this term thrice in this one verse.) We are indiscriminate in our warning and teaching.

i. We acknowledge that "there is no distinction between Jew and Greek [or Gentile], for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For 'Whoever calls on the name of Jehovah shall be saved'" (Romans 10:12f, quoting Joel 2:32).

ii. We obey our Lord's commission to "Go into *all* the world and preach the gospel to *every* creature" (Mark 16:15).

iii. We warn *every man* that "God ... commands all men everywhere to repent", and teach *every man* "that they should seek the Lord" (Acts 17:30, 27).

4. *We are warning and teaching every man "in all wisdom"* – in the all-wise manner. We would follow Paul's example when he said "we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children. ... you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory" (1 Thessalonians 2:7-12).

III. The reason we preach Him: "that we may present every man *perfect in Christ Jesus*".

1. God's preachers are *presenters*. First, we present Christ to you as the perfect Savior. Second, we will present to Christ those to whom we minister. Paul elsewhere spoke of this when he said "I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:2).

2. To be *perfect* is to be complete, lacking nothing.

3. To be "*perfect in Christ Jesus*" is to be perfect in Him alone, in self not all:

- perfect in the *doctrine* of Christ Jesus, believing all that is true regarding Him;
- perfect in the *practice* of Christ Jesus, living according to His precepts and example;
- perfect in the *person* of Christ Jesus, having Him alone for our standing before God.

Furthermore, we would present you to Christ as Christ will present us to His Father: "holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight" (v.22).

We join Paul in concluding "To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily" (v.29).

I pray you will heed my warning and obey my teaching.

– Daniel E. Parks