

Series: *Colossians – Christ Above All*

Title: "What is Genuine Preaching?" (Colossians 1:28)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 4/11/2010

Page 1 of 12

---

## **Introduction**

We've come to the point in our series on the book of Colossians where we are dealing with chapter one, verse twenty eight. This verse is the climax of chapter one. The Apostle Paul has been building up to this point. He has declared the preeminence of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospel, in the creation, in the church, and in genuine Gospel ministry. And now in verse twenty-eight he says that it is this Christ whom we preach – "Him we preach," he says, "warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect [or complete] in Christ Jesus."

In this verse, Paul is telling us what it means to really preach Christ. There are many churches and many preachers who claim that they preach Christ. And some of them have a right to say that, because they are preaching Christ – the genuine Christ – the way that Paul by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit says that Christ must be preached. But there are also many other churches and preachers in our time, many of which bear the label Evangelical, or even Fundamental, or Bible-believing, where Christ is not preached according to the prescribed pattern that Paul gives us here.

In many churches, there is no preaching at all today. There is a "conversation" – that's the big fad in many churches today. At least the man up front is honest enough not to pretend to be preaching. But the conversation that has taken the place

---

Series: *Colossians – Christ Above All*

Title: "What is Genuine Preaching?" (Colossians 1:28)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 4/11/2010

Page 2 of 12

---

of preaching is all about what man thinks about spiritual things, it's not about what God's Word says.

In many churches, there is story-telling. The so-called preacher stands up front and spins out some kind of a yarn or a fable and tries to give you some kind of moral application, but there's never anything from the Bible. Nobody ever tells you how to be saved.

And in many churches today you find that there is some kind of a psychological presentation instead of preaching. I was talking with a man recently about spiritual things. This man goes to an Evangelical church. And he said to me, "You know, much of the time when I go to church, I don't feel like I'm in church. I feel like I'm in a rehab meeting. The pastor is telling me how to do three things or ten steps that are supposed to help me deal with my problems. But none of it comes from the Bible. It's just psychology." And that is the sad situation in many churches today.

The Apostle Paul tells us that the true preaching of Christ is different from all of these things. And last time I gave you four propositions from Colossians 1:28, that tell why and how Christ must be preached. And I want to begin today by giving you those four propositions once again.

Proposition Number One: Christ must be preached, because He is the only hope of sinners. To preach Jesus Christ is to proclaim the person and work of Jesus Christ as the Creator of the Universe, the Savior of sinners, and the Lord of the Church.

---

Series: *Colossians – Christ Above All*

Title: "What is Genuine Preaching?" (Colossians 1:28)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 4/11/2010

Page 3 of 12

---

Proposition Number Two is this: Christ must be preached, because every Christian needs to be warned.

Proposition Number Three: Christ must be preached, because every Christian needs to be taught.

And finally, Proposition Number Four: Christ must be preached, because every Christian needs to become mature in Christ.

Notice once again that Paul says that it is "Him" that we preach. The genuine preaching of Christ preaches a *Person*. The primary focus is on the person of Christ. The primary focus is on *who He is*. I said this last time, and I want to say it again today, and I hope you'll listen carefully: The primary focus is not on what Christ has done. The primary focus is on who Jesus Christ is. That needs to be the order. Christ's person first, Christ's work second. And here's the reason for that. Jesus Christ could not have done what He has done, unless He is who He is. Only God could create the universe. Only God could sustain the universe at this present moment. Only God could do what was necessary to save sinners. Only God could be the Head of the Church, and bring all of His redeemed people to glory and perfection. No one else could do what Jesus Christ has done because no one else is who Jesus Christ is. Jesus Christ is God Himself.

That is why we preach Him, Paul says. That is why we preach Jesus Christ. He is the One who is the image, the exact representation, of the invisible God. He is the One who existed before anything else existed. He is the One for whom everything

---

Series: *Colossians – Christ Above All*

Title: "What is Genuine Preaching?" (Colossians 1:28)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 4/11/2010

Page 4 of 12

---

was created, and that includes you and me. He is the One who is the Head of the church. He is the one on whom you must believe in order to be saved, because He is the only One who is qualified to save you.

Now I want to tell you how I plan to approach this verse, in the rest of this message and in the ones to follow. First of all, today I want to give an exposition of the meaning of the key words in this verse. Paul uses the phrase "every man" three times in verse twenty-eight. What does he mean by that? What does he mean when he speaks of "warning every man"? What does he mean when he speaks of "teaching every man"? What about this phrase, "in all wisdom"? What does that mean? And what does Paul mean when he says that the goal is "that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus"?

And then in subsequent messages, I want to go into more depth and specifics on some of these points, the area of application. In what ways should the genuine preaching of Christ from the Word of God warn you as a believer? In what ways should the genuine preaching of Christ from the Word of God teach or instruct you as a believer? And how does the genuine preaching of Christ from the Word of God prepare you for that Day when you will stand before the Lord Jesus Christ – when you will stand before Him, if you are a believer, not as a condemning Judge, but as your loving Savior? So we're going to go into greater depth, from the standpoint of application, on all of those things.

Series: *Colossians – Christ Above All*

Title: "What is Genuine Preaching?" (Colossians 1:28)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 4/11/2010

Page 5 of 12

---

Let me draw your attention right now to some key words and phrases in Colossians 1:28. We'll look at six points, and some matters of application along the way.

First of all, Paul says, "Him we preach." An expanded translation of the words from the original Greek would read like this: "We proclaim the emphatic meaning of that which has been fulfilled in the person of Christ." Let me say that again: "We proclaim the emphatic meaning of that which has been fulfilled in the person of Christ." The word for preaching here is related to the Greek word that is used for the proclamation of the Gospel, the word that is used for evangelism. But it is a different word, with a different focus.

In the context of this part of Colossians chapter one, Paul speaks about evangelism – the proclamation of the good news of the Gospel. But he is speaking more specifically about the preaching that must occur in the church, if those who are already saved, those who have already believed the Gospel and received Christ, are to grow to spiritual maturity in Christ. He's speaking of the kind of preaching that you as a believer need to hear, week in and week out, year in and year out, in order to grow to maturity and completion in Christ. That's the focus when Paul says, "Him we preach." We proclaim the emphatic meaning of that which has been fulfilled in the person of Christ. Genuine preaching proclaims Christ to Christians in such a way that the end result will be that Christians will grow and mature.

Series: *Colossians – Christ Above All*

Title: “What is Genuine Preaching?” (Colossians 1:28)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 4/11/2010

Page 6 of 12

---

Secondly, Paul says, we preach Christ, “warning every man.” “Warning every man.” What does he mean by “warning”? The word that he uses here means to impart understanding, to instill a way of thinking, and to do that in such a way that this new understanding, this new way of thinking, will have a corrective influence on someone. In other words, it’s going to set someone right in his thinking, in areas where his thinking has been wrong. It’s the same thought that is behind the Greek word for repentance – *metanoia*, a change of mind. It’s the same thought that is behind Paul’s exhortation in Romans chapter twelve, verse two: “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” – literally, the renovation of your mind, a complete change in your way of thinking.

Thirdly, Paul uses the phrase “every man” three times in this verse: “warning *every man* and teaching *every man* that we may present *every man*.” Who does he mean by “every man”? Who is it that he is warning and teaching through the preaching of Christ? Who is it that is going to be presented complete in Christ? The focus in the grammar of the original Greek of this verse is not on all mankind, but on a particular class of individuals, determined by context. And in this case, the context is clear from verses 27 and 28. Obviously, not “every man” in the entire human race is going to be presented complete in Christ Jesus. Paul is speaking of “every man” among those of you who have “Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

Paul is speaking of those to whom he addressed this letter in chapter one, verse two: “To the saints and faithful brethren who are in Christ.” In other words, “every man” in this context means “every believer.” The preaching of Christ within the

---

Series: *Colossians – Christ Above All*

Title: "What is Genuine Preaching?" (Colossians 1:28)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 4/11/2010

Page 7 of 12

---

church is to be aimed primarily at the believer. The preaching of Christ within the church is, first of all, so that every believer may be warned – so that every believer will undergo a renovation of his thinking, a change from thinking after the ways of the world, to thinking after the way of Christ.

Fourthly, Paul says that the genuine preaching of Christ is for the purpose of “teaching every man.” “Teaching every man.” What does he mean by teaching? The word that he uses means to impart doctrine. Doctrine about the person of Christ and about His work of salvation first of all, and then doctrine about the life that the saint is to live in light of the doctrine of Christ and salvation. The life that you are to live in your relationships with other believers and with the world.

Now, you can teach an unbeliever how to live a moral life from the pages of the Bible. And there are many churches that do that, and many people who take the moral precepts that we find in the Bible as a guide for life. But teaching people how to live a moral life in any way that is not built on the foundation of regeneration in Jesus Christ does them absolutely no eternal good. That does not save a sinner. Faith in Christ – salvation – must come first, and only then can a genuine change from a world-centered way of thinking to a Christ-centered way of thinking come about. It is only then, as Matthew chapter three, verse eight tells us, that we can truly “bear fruits [that are] worthy of repentance” – that is, works that are congruous with, in accord with, in agreement with, the fact of repentance.

Series: *Colossians – Christ Above All*

Title: "What is Genuine Preaching?" (Colossians 1:28)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 4/11/2010

Page 8 of 12

---

Fifthly, Paul uses the phrase “in all wisdom.” What does this mean? It means, “in every form of wisdom” – “in every kind of wisdom” – “in every area of wisdom.” And the grammatical reference is both to “warning every man” and to “teaching every man.” Paul says, “We warn every man in every area of wisdom, and we teach every man in every area of wisdom.” Now I’ve mentioned several times before in this series that Paul uses words that the pagans and the false teachers had misappropriated for their own evil purposes. And here we have another case of that. The false teachers at Colosse claimed that there was higher knowledge for the few, for the spiritually elite, for the smart people, for the initiated, for the people who were of a philosophic turn of mind. And for the dummies, everybody else, for the ignorant masses, all that remained for them was an un-thinking kind of faith that just went along with whatever the so-called spiritual elites said was true.

But this is not what the Bible teaches, Paul says. This is not what I am declaring to you Colossians. What I am telling you, Paul says, is that the highest wisdom, the wisdom that is in Christ and His Word, every bit of it, is freely open to all. And Paul expresses the same thing at the beginning of the next chapter: “For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” (Colossians 2:1-3)

---



Series: *Colossians – Christ Above All*

Title: "What is Genuine Preaching?" (Colossians 1:28)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 4/11/2010

Page 9 of 12

---

And then, point number six, Paul says that the end goal of preaching Christ in the church, is “that we may present every man” – every believer – “perfect in Christ Jesus.” Notice the use of that same word, “present,” back at verse twenty-two: “And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He [Jesus] has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight.”

And, Paul says, the goal is that we may present you “perfect.” What does he mean by that? The word that is translated “perfect” signifies being complete, being a finished product, lacking nothing. The idea is that at the Last Judgment, the fact that we are complete in Christ, finished, lacking nothing, fully initiated into all that He has done and all that He is – that perfection and that completeness is going to be exhibited and put on display before the entire watching universe. There will be nothing lacking in us, because there is nothing lacking in Christ. He is all in all, He is preeminent, and as Paul will say later in Colossians, you are complete in Him.

Here again, as he has many times before in chapter one, Paul is using language that the Colossians would have heard from the false teachers. They said that you needed to be gradually initiated into the mysteries of their religion, much in the same way that the Masonic lodge, which is actually a religion itself, says that you have to go through 32 or 33 degrees of initiation before you reach the top of the ladder in their religion, before you can know its deepest secrets. But Paul is saying that although Christian doctrine needs to be learned, and Christian doctrine has its mysteries – things that were hidden in times past but are now revealed – although

---

Series: *Colossians – Christ Above All*

Title: "What is Genuine Preaching?" (Colossians 1:28)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 4/11/2010

Page 10 of 12

---

that is true, all of these things are open to every Christian, not just to some elite group. In Christ the goal is for every believer to be complete in Christ, to be fully initiated into all the wisdom that is in Christ. These things are the purpose of preaching in the church.

Recognize that all wisdom, all truth, has its source in Christ. Don't go looking for the source of wisdom anywhere else. Don't look for it in lodge religion, or philosophy, or psychology, or in the cults, or in a feel-good church. You won't find it there. You'll only find it in Christ and His Word. And understand that you have to look at all of human knowledge and all of human wisdom through the lens of Scripture. That is the key to proper discernment. And this goes for every discipline and walk of life, not just the things that we normally categorize as spiritual things. This is what it means to be a Scripture-driven Christian and a Scripture-driven church. God's inspired, inerrant Word must be your sole authority, and your infallible critic, in every area of life and ministry.

If you work behind the counter at McDonald's, the Word of God should affect the way you approach your job and the way you do your job. It should affect how you deal with your boss and your coworkers, how you deal with customers, how you deal with the product.

If you're a medical doctor, the Word of God should affect the way you approach your job and the way you do your job. It should affect your ethics, it should affect

Series: *Colossians – Christ Above All*

Title: "What is Genuine Preaching?" (Colossians 1:28)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 4/11/2010

Page 11 of 12

---

how you apply your scientific and clinical knowledge to your patients, it should affect your thinking about the preservation of life.

If you're a salesman, the Word of God should convict you of right and wrong so that you always deliver an honest sales pitch, you never cheat a customer, you never fill out a dishonest expense report.

If you're a wife working long hours to take care of your home, and to take care of your husband and your children if you have children, the same thing. The Word of God should affect how you love and submit to your husband in the Lord, whether he's a believer or not; it should affect how you love and teach and discipline your children; the Word of God should be your resource and your guide in the most difficult and trying circumstances that come with the very hard work of home-making.

And moms and dads, this means that the Word of God should govern how you deal with each other and the kind of a godly example of a loving relationship you place before your children and before others outside your home. It should inform and influence the things that you let your children watch on television and on their computers. And the Word of God should also govern the things that you let yourself watch on television and on your computer. The kinds of music your family listens to. The kinds of things you read and don't read. The kinds of places you go and don't go. And the influence of the wisdom of the Word of God should cause Christian parents to place great priority on the family, on the importance of the

---

Series: *Colossians – Christ Above All*

Title: "What is Genuine Preaching?" (Colossians 1:28)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 4/11/2010

Page 12 of 12

---

family unit, on the importance of family relationships – something that is so much missing even in Christian families today.

Whoever you are and whatever you do, the Word of God should affect the way you approach what you do and the way that you do it, because all wisdom has its source in Jesus Christ and in Holy Scripture.

#### **About the Broadcast**

***The Scripture-Driven Church*** airs each week across the United States and around the world. Our goal is to preach the Gospel to the lost, and to equip believers to stand upon and live by the sole authority of God's Word, to the glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The prayers of our listeners and supporters are vital to this ministry. Thank you for praying for us.

The broadcast is supported entirely by the gifts of God's people. If the Lord leads you to help us, you can do so in any of these ways:

- Call us toll-free at 888-804-9655 to give a gift using your credit card
- Give a gift by credit card at our secure website, [www.teachingtheword.org](http://www.teachingtheword.org)
- Mail your contribution to TTW, Box 2533, Westminster, Maryland 21158

**TeachingtheWord Ministries** is recognized as a tax-exempt religious organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the U. S. Internal Revenue Code. Your gifts are fully tax deductible.

**May the Lord richly bless your personal study  
of His inspired, infallible, inerrant Word.**