

**Colossians 1: 28 and 29; “Presenting Every Man Perfect”, A Sermon Delivered
at the Premier Estates Nursing Home by Pastor Paul Rendall,
on the afternoon of May 14th, 2017.**

As a preacher of the word of God, it is my regular and joyful task to preach Christ to all who will listen to me. I am not called to preach much about myself. Rather, I am called to direct my hearers to the only One who can give them spiritual life, and save them from their sins – the Lord Jesus Christ. These verses are describing for us how a person is saved; which is, through the preaching of Christ. “Him we preach”, Paul says. To preach is to declare in a straightforward, direct, and bold manner, the truth of the word of the God, in order to persuade the hearers to faith in Christ, and to obedience to God’s word. The written word of God is the Bible. This is what a man who is called to the Christian ministry is to preach; the whole counsel of God. And yet his special focus is to be upon Christ Himself, for it is in Christ alone that any person finds salvation from their sins and a new life of living unto God, in Him. Here in these verses we find the apostle Paul telling us what his great object was, in preaching Christ. It was, 1st of all – That every man would be warned. It was 2nd – That every man would be taught in all wisdom. And it was 3rd – It was Paul’s highest aim in regard to his ministry that he might present every man perfect in Christ. In all of his preaching, Paul labored, striving according to Christ’s working, which was working mightily in him. Let us examine these truths more carefully. I pray that I will be able to open them up for you in a way that you will be persuaded of the importance of faith in Christ and obedience to His word.

1st – In the apostle Paul’s preaching, his object was that every man would be warned.

The word “warned” as we find it in the New King James Translation, is, in the original Greek – “νουθετεω” (noutheteo), and it can mean “admonished” as it is translated in the King James and New American Standard Translations. It means literally – “To put in mind”. Bishop Davenant in his commentary on Colossians says this: “The ministry of the gospel recognizes two separate offices, he says: Warning, and Teaching.” He says: “The word νουθετειν, which the apostle adopts in this place, seems to me more extensive in its meaning than the Latin word admonendi, warning or admonishing.” “For it is literally, “to put a good mind into a man”; which is effected, not only by warning, but by rebuking, comforting, and many other means.” *Every means which a minister might use*, which is calculated to regulate the affections, and is found practically conducive to that effect, so “that the doctrine of salvation may take deep root in men’s hearts, is included in the term νουθεσιαν.” (end of quote) So, these words – “To warn every man” mean that the minister is to address the affections and the will of the persons that he is preaching to. He is not simply to instruct and inform the mind, but to press upon their conscience their duty, with the hope that they might see their need to change from their present course of living, thoughts and actions, and turn unto God through Christ, for grace to be saved. The object of warning people is to tell them that they need to repent.

What does a preacher of the gospel warn men of? He warns them of the danger of remaining in their lost estate and condition by nature; the nature they were born with. He tells his listeners that they are by nature fallen creatures in the sight of God. He warns them and tells them what happened at the beginning of time, with regard to our first forefather Adam and his wife Eve, has affected them; that even though God created Adam and Eve spiritually righteous and upright in their hearts, minds, and affections, that they fell from their original righteousness. Satan, or the Devil, disguised himself as a serpent and entered the Garden of Eden, after his own fall from original righteousness. He was guilty of the sin of pride; of wanting to place Himself on the same level as God, and receive the worship of men, but God cast him down from his original

high position. And so, Satan's next thought was to defile and ruin our whole race through his tempting Eve to sin; that she would doubt God's good word and good intention to her, so that she would eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and die. In eating of this fruit she would die both spiritually and eventually physically as well.

Well, Eve did believe Satan's lie that she would not die if she ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. She also believed the half-truth that she would become like God, knowing the difference between good and evil. When she ate of the fruit, her eyes were indeed opened and she had come to know the difference between good and evil, but she did not know that she had spiritually died in that very moment. She did not realize that she was now separated and estranged from God, and under His wrath and displeasure. She did not feel bad immediately, and so she did not think that she could be under God's displeasure. She had been deceived. And so, she gave some of the fruit to her husband, and probably said something like this to him – "You see, Adam, I have not died; I am fine." "I am now a wiser person, just like the serpent said." "So why don't you eat as well." And so, Adam ate too, and he too, fell from His original righteousness. What was truly awful fall it was, because Adam was the representative head of our whole race of people. And so, we all fell in him. If he would have stood in his original righteousness, and had passed the test by not eating of the forbidden fruit, we would have stood with him. But since he failed, and did not pass the test of obedience by his own free will, all of us, who are descended from Adam, fell with him, and now we are by nature unable and unwilling at many points, to keep God's commandments.

This is why we all need to be saved and this is why we need to be warned. It is because this is the true story of why each of us was born into this world as a sinner in our nature and heart. It is because sin was passed through our father's seed in conception, and so each of us who is born is conceived as a person with Adam's corrupt and sinful nature in our nature. Therefore, since Adam died, both spiritually and physically, we also are born into this world spiritually dead in our trespasses and sins, and we will eventually die physically as well. And so now, we find ourselves in the position of being under God's wrath. This is why Paul warned every man; it was because every man is in danger of remaining forever under God's wrath unless they repent of their sins and believe in Jesus Christ. Each of us must be warned to flee from the wrath that we are now under, by believing in Jesus Christ. And each of us must flee from the eternal wrath which is to come, and it will come upon us, if we die without having Christ as our Savior. This is what I warn you of, today, as well. If you do not flee from God's wrath, and spiritually seek to find shelter and refuge in the merits of the Lord Jesus, you will perish in your sins.

But 2nd – Paul said that the preacher of the gospel should teach every man, as well.

And you can now see why every person needs to be taught with all wisdom if they would be complete in Christ. The wisdom which God has displayed in Christ is manifold. It has many aspects to it, and each one should be carefully considered. It is God's wisdom which is found in the gospel. And it must be believed if any person is to be saved. And, we can say further, it is the wisdom which is found in the Holy Scriptures, which God conveys to us through the preaching of the word which will transform us from sinful people into holy and righteous people. This is the sense of the words of Paul – "That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. The first sense of these words is that when you believe in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, you are believing in His perfect righteousness, instead of your own imperfect righteousness. You are believing that He has obeyed all the commandments of God where you have only obeyed them very imperfectly. Who has loved God with all of their heart, soul, mind, and strength, and loved their neighbor as themselves, perfectly or even consistently? No one. But when you believe in Jesus, a great transaction takes place. You believe in Jesus because He as a righteous substitute has borne your sins and iniquities at the cross. You are believing in His righteousness and not your own. You are believing in His sufferings on your behalf for the

forgiveness of your sins. The Father sees that you are trusting in His son, and He justifies you freely; He declares you righteous for Jesus' sake. He casts your sins behind His back and chooses to remember them no more. He looks at you now as He looks upon His only-begotten Son; with perfect favor and acceptance. You are complete in Him; you are accepted in the Beloved. That relationship of loving approval will never change.

There is a second sense which Paul would have us to understand if we are to see ourselves as God sees us; complete in Christ. Paul says that through his preaching he would present every man complete in Christ. He would comfort, strengthen, and refresh those who have already believed in Christ for their salvation, and in this holy way he would present them complete before the Lord on the final day because he had preached to them and had taught them with all wisdom. It takes great wisdom to preach the word of God in such a way that people grow up into Christ; that they become mature and complete in this sense that we are talking about. To believe in Jesus Christ is more than being converted to Christ. It is growing up into all the truth related to Christ and His word. Sometimes Christians live a rather stunted Christian life because they do not come to church and hear the word preached on a regular basis. Sometimes they grow very little because they do not see the importance of sound doctrine. When this happens, they will often be tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of people who really would lead them astray, if they only knew.

But this is why Ephesians 4: 15 says: "But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all things into Him who is the Head – Christ – from whom the whole body, (that is, the church) is joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love." He goes on to say – "This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk in the futility of your mind, having your understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance which is in you." Verse 20 of Ephesians 4 says – "You have not learned Christ in this way." There is, he is saying, a being converted to Christ, and then there is a learning of Christ, where you grow up to be mature and complete in this sense of practical holiness and righteousness that I am trying to describe for you. This requires two basic things; a knowledge of sound doctrine, and an on-going desire to live out all the good truth of the word of God in your life.

This kind of good teaching will go on, not only in a church which is committed to preaching the word of God, but it should go on in families; a father teaching his children. Proverbs 4: 1-11. Listen how Solomon would have his children be complete in this holy sense that we are talking about. Proverbs 4: 1 – "Hear, my children, the instruction of a father, and give attention to know understanding; for I give you good doctrine: Do not forsake my law." "When I was my father's son, tender and the only one in the sight of my mother, He also taught me, and said to me: 'Let you heart retain my words; keep my commands, and live.'" "Get wisdom!" "Get understanding!" "Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth." "Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you; love her, and she will keep you." "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom." "And in all your getting, get understanding." "Exalt her, and she will promote you; she will bring you honor when you embrace her." "She will place on your head an ornament of grace; a crown of glory she will deliver to you."

You see, this is the great importance of listening to good preachers of the word of God. As they preach and apply the truth of the word of God with all wisdom, you the listener will grow if you receive it, for he will give you good doctrine. And what will come from paying attention to that good teaching and doctrine? You, the listener, will become wise, and you will seek for yourself to be wise, having heard of the wisdom of the Scriptures which is presented to you. Proverbs 4: 10 goes on to say: "Hear, my son, and receive my sayings, and the years of your life will be many." "I have taught you in the way of wisdom; I have led you in right paths." "When

you walk your steps will not be hindered.” “And when you run, you will not stumble.” “Take firm hold of instruction, do not let her go; keep her, for she is your life.”

3rd – It was Paul’s highest aim to make every man perfect (or complete) in Christ.

“Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” I have wanted you to see today, the importance of listening to good preachers preaching Christ to you; preaching the whole word of God to you, so that you would come to the place where you will be perfect in Christ. You not going to need anything else. You will be equipped. You will be complete. You will have grown up sufficiently so that you will be mature, and you will be wise. Not that you would become perfect in the sense that you are without sin in this life, for that will not happen until you die and remnants of the flesh are removed from your being. But you will be perfect in the sense that you are moving on to maturity; that you are complete in totally resting in the grace of Christ and making use of all of the good grace of Christ that is given to you. Listen to what Paul says in Colossians 4: 12 about one of the most spiritually-minded men in the church that he was writing to. “Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.” You see, Epaphras was praying that he would see this kind of perfection and completeness in his fellow-believers; that they would see that it is not only important that they listen to good preaching from the word of God on a regular basis, but it would also be important that they pray for themselves and others so that everyone in the church at Colosse might stand perfect and complete in the all the will of God. They would have a perfect knowledge of the revealed will of God, both as to doctrine and practice, and they would be able to live this out in their lives. This is what I pray for all of you here today as well.