



Cape Coral Church of Christ

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<http://www.thelordsway.com/capecoralfl>

Schedule of Services

Sunday: Bible Study: 9:30 A.M.

Worship: 10:30 A.M. and 5:00 P.M.

Wednesday: Bible Study: 6:00 P.M.

Vol. 38, No. 49

December 15, 2024

We Preach Christ

Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Corinthians 4:5).

It is remarkable how little of a personal nature we know about the early disciples. Paul is a good example. Who were his parents? What kind of home life did he have? What about brothers and sisters? Did he contemplate marriage? Did he have any hobbies? What was his favorite sport? Why do we have so many questions and so few answers? It is because the focus of Paul's writing was on Christ and not himself!

Paul also wrote, "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:1,2). Jesus mattered! Paul didn't!

John the baptizer expressed the right attitude when he said of himself and of Christ, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30). Try to imagine, if you can, what would happen in Christendom

if we all had that attitude. We would not see ourselves in competition but in partnership to bring glory to Christ. There would be no jockeying for power positions. There would be no effort to put one man above another. All would seek to exalt Christ!

It is Christ who is to be exalted. It is written of him, "... he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence" (Colossians 1:18). One modern version translates this verse to read, "that he might have first place!" In the New Testament, he does have first place. He was declared to be virgin born (Matthew 1:18-24). He was identified as the Son of God (Matthew 16:13-19). He was crucified for our sins (1 Peter 2:21-25). He conquered death (1 Corinthians 15:1-21). He is coming again to receive the saints (1 Corinthians 15:22-24).

Do you know **HIM**? Have you obeyed **HIM**? Is **HE** the focus of your life? **HE** ought to be, and toward that end, we preach Christ!

Will You Count the Cost?

"For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it – lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build and was not able to finish..." (Luke 14:28- 29).

The above is the first of two scenarios Jesus poses to would-be-disciples regarding what it takes to truly follow Him. Jesus did not want half-hearted followers. The task of serving Him was too demanding for the casual believer! He warns us to count the cost of commitment before enlisting in His cause.

This was not a case of Jesus demanding of others what He was not willing to do Himself. Jesus had already counted the cost demanded of Him in regard to establishing the kingdom. This was not something He entered into lightly! He knew what it would take, and although He wished it could be otherwise (Matthew 26:39), He was determined to follow through at any cost (John 12:27).

The demands of discipleship can sometimes be quite severe! Jesus points out in Luke 14:25-33 that following Him may well cost us our family (14:26) and possibly our very life (14:27). In fact, He

makes it very plain that we must be willing to "forsake all" or we cannot be His disciples (14:33).

Jesus is not trying to discourage us from following after Him. He is trying to encourage us to be realistic about doing so. It is right for Him to do so because far too many obey the Gospel, begin their Christian walk, and then discover that it is more difficult than they thought it would be; and in the wake of the difficulty, they desert the faith (Matthew 13:20-21). Others, who come to the Lord with selfish motives rather than a desire to serve (John 6:26-27) quickly abandon Him when their more worldly expectations are not met.

Count the cost! Jesus did! He decided that He would rather have fewer, but more dedicated followers than more but less committed. Come to Him; but come ready to pay the full price of discipleship!

We Can Never Leave the Fundamentals

A builder will lay a foundation, and then build his superstructure. However, when the building is completed, he does not remove the foundation. If anything, he will strengthen it.

In like manner, in the field of mathematics, the student may study algebra, geometry, trigonometry, and calculus: but he never forsakes the fundamentals of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.

Similarly, in studying our Bibles, we must "go on unto perfection" (Hebrews 6:1). We must "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord" (2 Peter 3:18). We must learn the meat of the word (Hebrews 5:12-14). But, we must never forsake or depreciate the basic fundamentals of the doctrine of Christ. Rather, we must emphasize and re-emphasize them. If we do not know what the Bible teaches on basic Bible themes, we need to learn such. If we have studied them extensively, we still need to have our minds stirred up by way of remembrance (2 Peter 1:12-15). After years of thorough and extensive study of the sacred text, David Lipscomb was found studying the subject of baptism by a student. Upon expressing surprise that he would be studying such a fundamental theme, Brother Lipscomb replied to the young man, "I'm afraid there is still something about the subject I do not know." We can never leave the fundamentals.

Then let us never forget that each new generation must be taught anew the fundamentals. Only herein does our safety lie! Seriously, may we remain cognizant that we are only one generation from apostasy.

Great by Design

God's gifts are always beautiful (James 1:17). His creation is always marvelous. It is no wonder that the idea of meeting the human need of companionship led God to establish the first home. Although often flawed under the burden of sin borne by modern society, the home is still sweet. It is a great idea, not because of human contributions; it is great by God's design.

It is no surprise that the idea of meeting the human need of salvation led God to establish the New Testament church. It also often labors under the weight of human imperfections. Yet, the church retains its beauty as the Divine, blood-bought Kingdom of Jesus Christ (Acts 20:28). The church is a great idea, not because of human contributions; it is great by God's design.

Both of these concepts were born of necessity. Neither can survive without the other. The home needs the church to provide direction through life and into eternity. The church needs the home. It is here that the basic truths of Christianity are examined, applied, and found worthwhile. Both must be patterned after God's design. Only then will they be great.

An Appeal for Faithful Obedience

The appeal in 1st and 2nd Kings is for faithful obedience to God. The chief aim of both books is to teach great moral lessons exemplified by events in the history of the Jewish nation.

In studying these two Old Testament books, we see that every king was judged by his obedience or disobedience to God's law. His success was measured by his adherence to the law and by his God-honoring testimony before the heathen (Deut. 17:14-20).

The good of the nation depended upon its faithfulness to God – our nation needs to give strict adherence to this fact as well. Idolatry and compromise caused the decline and eventual fall of both Israel and Judah. Idolatry and all sin inevitably brings defeat and punishment (Psa. 106:34-38; Jer. 19:3-11) while faith and righteousness bring victory and joy (Psa. 33:12; Prov. 14:34).

Events in Jewish history are lessons in the righteousness, justice, lovingkindness, mercy, and faithfulness of God (Hosea 2:18-20). They also serve as a constant warning and example of the consequences of disobedience (1 Cor. 10:1-12; Rom. 15:4).