

I suppose that most gospel preachers have been admonished to “Just preach Jesus!” And some critics are more specific than that. They say, “preach the man, not the plan.” Just what motivates these comments I cannot say for certain. However, I do know that some want to eliminate any instructions that pertain to commands or corrections. Many are only interested in the fact that Jesus came, died and was raised from the grave. Of course, any true preaching of Christ will contain these things. However, preaching Jesus does not confine itself to that topic only. To preach Jesus is to preach the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:26-27).

Throughout the New Testament the charge was given to preach. The Greek word for preach is *kerruso*, meaning to publish, proclaim or declare. This word is found sixty-one times. The phrase “preach Christ” is found four times, “preached Christ” two times, and “preach the gospel” eleven times. These are not an exhaustive listing of the various terms associated with the command to proclaim the “good news” of man’s salvation. Every time a gospel sermon was given the speaker was preaching Jesus.

Jesus Was Preached in Acts 2

In Luke 24 Jesus told His disciples that He would die and be raised on the third day and that “repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:46-47). He also instructed them to tarry in the city of Jerusalem, until they were given power from on high (Vs. 49). Carefully notice that He said, “repentance and remission of sins” was to be preached in His name. From these verses we can easily see an emphasis upon His death, burial and resurrection. However, it is equally as easy to see that there was to be additional information given so that the hearers could obtain forgiveness of sins.

Acts chapter 2 records the first gospel sermon. They were all together in Jerusalem, as they had

been commanded. The Holy Spirit fell on each of them. This was the “power from on high,” that had been promised in Luke 24. In Acts 2:22-36; Peter preached the message of salvation to men in the name of Jesus Christ. Those who heard this sermon (the Jews) had been party to the crucifixion of Jesus (Matthew 27:20-25).

Peter had clearly and forcefully preached the death, burial and resurrection of the Savior (Verses 16-36). Scripture then tells us, “when they HEARD this, they were pricked in their heart...” (Acts 2:37a). By this statement we realize they understood their guilt. At this point they recognize that Christ was the Messiah and the Son of God. Their guilt caused them to ask, “what shall we DO?” Peter **did not say**, “There is nothing further for you to do. I have preached Jesus unto you and you now believe so there is nothing more for you to hear and do.” He answered them, “repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...” (Vs. 38). The passage continues by saying, “And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls” (Vs. 40-41).

Peter did preach Jesus unto them but he also preached the gospel plan for man’s salvation. To preach Jesus is to preach **BOTH** the manner and the means of salvation in its entirety.

Jesus Was Preached in Acts 8

Again we will observe a passage that tells of the preaching of Jesus. In Acts chapter 8 Phillip went down to Samaria and “preached Christ” unto them (Acts 8:5). From verse 5 we know only that Christ was preached unto those people. The verse does not tell us exactly what was entailed in this message, only that Christ was preached. However, we can know what that message entailed by observing what the hearer believed. The hearer

could only believe that which was taught. Verse 12 gives the answer, “But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the **kingdom of God**, and the **name of Jesus Christ**, they were **baptized**, both men and women.” When Jesus was preached the people believed...

1. **The Things Concerning the Kingdom of God.** The kingdom and the church are one in the same, “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son” (Colossians 1:13). Jesus told Peter that He would build His church and that the apostle would have the keys of the kingdom. We read that Peter opened the doors of the kingdom in Acts chapter two. After the sermon in Acts 2 the church grew and developed as “the Lord added to the church daily” (Acts 2:47). The prophets of old had foretold of the coming kingdom (Isaiah 2:1-3; Daniel 2; Joel 2). When Jesus is preached the church is included. The two cannot be separated (Acts 20:28). When Phillip preached Christ, they understood and believed in the kingdom.
2. **The Name of Jesus Christ.** Clearly one must believe WHO He is (John 8:24; Romans 10:9-10). One must believe WHAT He has done (Luke 19:10; John 3:16; Ephesians 1:7). One must accept HIS AUTHORITY in all matters of faith (Matthew 28:18; 17:5). One must also believe WHAT He taught and commanded! It is hard to imagine someone saying I believe in Jesus as The Son of God but I cannot believe the things He said and taught (Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:45-47). How could anyone accept Him and reject His teachings?
3. **Finally, One Must Be Baptized for Remission of Sins.** Many say, “Oh, yes I believe that Jesus came and died for me and that He is the Son of God but I do not believe that baptism is necessary.” What does verse 12 tell us? When they believed in the kingdom and in the name of Jesus Christ they

were BAPTIZED. Why? Because they believed all the facts which had been set forth, now they were to act upon what they believed. Jesus said, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:15-16). Remember those in Acts 2:37 asked what they were to do. The answer coincides with what we read in Acts 8:5, 12. The message did not differ from one person to the next. When Jesus is preached the hearer is to believe and obey.

In Acts 8 we also read of the Ethiopian eunuch who was reading from the prophet Esaias (Isaiah 53:1-7). Phillip came to him and opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and **preached unto him Jesus**” (Acts 8:35). Again we note that Jesus was preached. What did that message contain? Without doubt the deity of Jesus was proclaimed. The message also contained the necessity of obeying the gospel of Christ. Verses 36-38 says, “And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.” The eunuch could not have requested baptism if it had not been included in the preaching of Jesus. Albert Barnes noted the phrase: **What doth hinder me ...**” This shows that he had been instructed by Philip on the nature and design of baptism. Barnes says, “It evinces also a purpose at once to give himself to Christ, to profess his name, and to be dedicated to his service” (Albert Barnes Notes on the Bible from e-sword).

We cannot miss the clear teaching found in these verses. When Jesus was preached, the message contained instructions concerning the kingdom and

the name of Jesus Christ. Based upon that understanding they were baptized. Why was this the message? Because that is exactly what Jesus had commanded (Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:45-47). For anyone to have done otherwise would have been in disobedience of the Great Commission.

Conclusion

What is meant by “just preach Jesus and not the church,” or “preach Jesus and not baptism” or any other thing that can folk want to add to the end of their request? I do not know the motive or reasons behind such statements. What I do know is that when Jesus is preached the whole counsel of God is to be proclaimed (Acts 20:20, 27; 1 Thessalonians 2:4).

Question: What would be the benefit if one preached Jesus and left out baptism for the remission of sins, the necessity of the church or godly living? Many in the religious world say they believe in Jesus but do not believe what He said. That statement really is the dividing line between salvation and damnation. One hears, believes and obeys, while the other may hear and believe the message and never obey. Obedience has always been necessary to ones salvation, “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Hebrews 5:8-9).

This tract is condensed from a lesson presented at the
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“They Shall Be Turned
Unto Fables”

“Just Preach Jesus”

by
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