

Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

You Must be Born Again!

True repentance begins with knowledge of sin. The eyes of the repentant person are opened. He sees the length and breadth of God's holy law with distress and confusion. He sees the extent, the enormous extent, of his own transgressions. To his surprise, he discovers that he has been under a huge delusion by thinking of himself as a good person with a good heart. He learns that in reality he is wicked, guilty, corrupt, and evil in God's sight. His pride breaks down. His high thoughts melt away. He sees that he is a great sinner. This is the first step in true repentance.

Ryle, J. C.. Repentance - What it Means to Repent and Why We Must Do So (pp. 3-5). Aneko Press. Kindle Edition.

www.sermonaudio.com/crc

www.unholycharade.com (blog)

www.lightfordarktimes.com (blog)

Christ Reformation Church – YouTube Channel (Light for Dark Times)

Have You Heard Him?

August 11, 2024

Sermon Text: 1 Corinthians 2-3

Scripture Reading: John 10:1-21

1Co 2:12-16 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that

we might understand the things freely given us by God. (13) **And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit**, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. (14) The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. (15) The

spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. (16) “For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.

The world’s wisdom, or the wisdom of God? This is the great contrast which the Apostle Paul has been emphasizing in this letter to the Corinthian church. They were haughty and arrogant. They were buying into the world’s wisdom and it was alienating them from Paul and from the gospel preached to them, by which they were saved. They were divided among themselves. They tolerated sin among them. They promoted themselves, striving to be the greatest. Arrogance. This terrible pride which led them to fall prey to the philosophers and false teachers. It was a mess.

Paul admonished them and he told them things like this:

1Co 1:18-19 For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being

saved it is the power of God. (19) For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

1Co 2:1-5 And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. (2) For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. (3) And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, (4) and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, (5) so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

1Co 3:18-19 Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. (19) For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, “He catches the wise in their craftiness,”

True wisdom, *taught by the Spirit*. This is the subject I want us to carefully consider this morning. Truths which only those to whom the Spirit reveals them. Truths which the natural man cannot accept. Every real Christian, every person who has been born again through faith in Christ, without exception, is taught by the Spirit so that the word of the cross, the truth of Christ crucified – a truth regarded as foolishness by the world – is seen to be the wisdom and power of God to salvation.

And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit...

In our mid-week online study through the book of Ephesians, we have come to this passage:

Eph 4:20-21 But that is not the way you learned Christ!— (21) assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus,

This is precisely the same thing that Paul wrote to the Corinthians. *Taught by the Spirit*.

- You learned Christ
- You heard Him (the ESV adds “about” here and this is erroneous. The KJV and NASB have “heard Him,” not “heart *about* Him.”)
- You were taught in Him
- The truth in Jesus

Let’s permit Paul’s words here to the Ephesians expand upon what we are seeing here in 1 Corinthians regarding this *teaching by the Spirit*. This is one of the most important truths for us to grasp and it is a means by which we can examine ourselves to see if we are really born again or not. Just to get everyone’s attention, let’s note this:

If right now your mind is wandering off, focusing upon other things- what you plan to do this afternoon, what the problem is with your car, what you are going to buy...this all indicates that something is terribly wrong. Paul,

inspired by God Himself, is telling us here what happens to us when Christ saves us. And that if these things have NOT happened to us, we are still dead in our sins, traveling moment by moment ever closer to an eternity in hell. And yet we give our thoughts to what we will do later today, what we will buy, what we will sell. See it? Something is terribly wrong if we leave this place and in a matter of minutes we absolutely forget everything we just heard straight from God's own word. I know what that is like because that was true of me for years and years as I was growing up. There is nothing more important for you right now than this subject we are looking at.

Have you learned Christ? Have you heard Him? Have you been taught in Him, the truth that is in Jesus? If you have not then you are still a natural man, still dead in your sins, and if you remain in that condition you will perish in hell. If these things ARE true of you, that you HAVE learned Christ, that you HAVE heard Him and been taught by Him, then these truths will serve as a great

encouragement and source of assurance to you.

The Natural Man's Condition

Man is dead, blind, deaf, in sin the moment he enters this world. That was your condition and mine. *The natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.* The Word of God, the word of the cross, the word of Christ crucified, bounces right off the surface of his mind like a flat rock skipping on water. The gospel is repugnant to the natural man. It stinks to him-

2Co 2:15-16 For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, (16) to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things?

Jer 5:21-23 "Hear this, O foolish and senseless people, who have eyes, but see not, who have ears,

but hear not. (22) Do you not fear me? declares the LORD. Do you not tremble before me? I placed the sand as the boundary for the sea, a perpetual barrier that it cannot pass; though the waves toss, they cannot prevail; though they roar, they cannot pass over it. (23) But this people has a stubborn and rebellious heart; they have turned aside and gone away.

That was YOU and ME before we knew Christ. And this is YOU if you are still dead in your sins, unconverted, a natural man. Eyes but do not see. Ears but do not hear.

You Learned Christ, Heard Christ, Taught in Christ

As I was studying for the Ephesians study last week, I read Lloyd-Jones' sermon on 4:20-21 and his description of what Paul is talking about really struck me. I cannot explain it in clearer terms than MLJ did, so here is what he said. Give your attention carefully now:

“If a person is living a sinful life (ie, someone who claims to be a Christian in particular), the question to ask him is, ‘Have you learned Christ, have you heard Him?’

Hearing Christ, knowing the truth as it is in Jesus, depends upon two things. They are very simple and very practical; at the same time they are very profound. The first is, to hear Christ. ‘...if so be that you have *heard* Him.’ What does Paul mean? Obviously he does not mean to say, ‘If you Ephesians really did hear the Lord Jesus Christ preaching...’ because he knew perfectly well that they had not heard Him (ie, in person). They had never been in Palestine, they had never seen the Lord Jesus, they had never heard His message as such from His own lips. These were pagans, Gentiles, far away from Jerusalem and from Palestine. So it does not mean that.

It does mean however, that they had heard the message of the gospel. They probably had not heard any of the apostles apart

from Paul himself, *so learning Christ and hearing Him refer here to the apostolic message.* Paul says, ‘I am an ambassador for Christ,’ so that as you hear me you are hearing Him.’ The ambassador speaks for the king, and Paul is an ambassador...So hearing the Apostle is hearing Christ.

What the does the word *hearing* actually mean? ‘...if so be that you have *heard* Him?’ The words of the Apostle Paul imply *a difference between listening and hearing*, which can best be illustrated by words that our Lord Himself spoke. You will find it in John’s Gospel, chapter 5:

Joh 5:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

‘He that *hears* my words.’ The people to whom He was preaching were ALL listening to Him, but despite their listening, they did not HEAR Him.

Hearing is a tremendous thing. (Consider) that wonderful story of the first convert that Paul had in Europe – Lydia:

Act 16:14-15 One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. **The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.** (15) And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.” And she prevailed upon us.

[The Lord *opened her heart to pay attention* and she HEARD for the first time. She had been listening, but now the Spirit enabled her to hear].

MLJ continues:

Men and women can listen to gospel sermons without hearing Christ. There are people who can sit and listen to the gospel *the*

whole of their lives and never hear it. They do not attend to it.

It is the same distinction as we make between *seeing* and *perceiving*. You can look at a thing and see nothing but the thing itself. You can look at a marvelous landscape and see trees and grass and animals and mountains and rivers, and no more. One man looks at a little violet and he sees the mighty Creator, and he worships Him. The other man – Huh?! Or if he is a botanist he comes and dissects it – petals, stamens and the rest. You see my point? To *hear* Christ does not just mean that you listen to sermons or to the gospel. *It does not even mean enjoying them.*

You can enjoy preaching and still not hear Christ. There is a danger here – you can enjoy the preaching and not *hear* Christ. [That is why Paul told the Corinthians he did not come to them with flowery oratory. There were no doubt people who came just to listen to Charles Spurgeon preach to be entertained, but they never *heard* the Christ Spurgeon was preaching].

We can be aware of what Christ has said in the four Gospels and still not hear Christ. It is possible for a man to take this subject up intellectually; there is nothing to stop a natural man from doing so; and if he has got a good intellect, he can divide up the books of the Bible perfectly easily. *But he may never hear Christ.* I go further, and say that to accept the truth with the intellect alone *is not the same thing as hearing Christ.*

To hear Christ goes beyond all these things. It means that a listener to the gospel not only listens, *but he believes it to be the truth, he understands what it says, and even understand what it implies.* Furthermore, it includes the anointing, the unction that the Holy Ghost gives, that gives us a spiritual apprehension. It is not a glib and facile (easy) believism; it is something that takes up the whole personality.

In other words, when we hear Christ, we realize its significance, and its significance for US. A man who *hears* Christ is a man who says-

This is the most important thing in the world, this is everything; I know many other things and I am not detracting from their value, but this, THIS is truth, this is THE TRUTH!

He has *heard Christ!* He says, 'I will let everything go rather than this; I will sacrifice everything as long as I can have the eternal life which this gospel promises the believers.'

Mat 13:45-46 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, (46) who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

The message has gripped him, it has apprehended him, and he is apprehending it. It means that he surrenders himself to it. When a man has *heard Christ, Christ and His gospel become the chief things in his life, he is mastered by them. He is governed and controlled by them, he surrenders himself to them, he lives to obey Christ and to obey the gospel.*

Indeed, it is quite obvious from the whole context and from the whole of the New Testament, that to *hear Christ* means that Christ controls and determines our lives. It cannot mean less than that! 'If so be that you have heard Him.' I know who He is, says the believer, and I know why He has come, and I know that the gospel of Christ is truth, the truth of GOD; this, then, must be first and supreme in my life. THAT is what is meant by hearing Him."

Lloyd Jones then continues to Paul's second condition which is true of the man who has *heard Christ, namely, and have been TAUGHT in Him.*

"What does the Apostle mean? He does not merely mean, 'taught in the doctrine concerning Him. This is an addition, meaning that we have been taught *in union* with Him. In other words, the teaching about which he is speaking is not a detached kind of kind of teaching. To hear Christ and to be taught in Christ means that *you are no longer an outsider, you are IN Christ.*

A man can lecture to you on history, or poetry, or on science, or anything else, and of course the whole time there is this detachment, not only as between the people listening and the one who is speaking, but between those who are listening and even believing what is taught; you are not IN it.

But the meaning conveyed to us by Paul here is, that if you have *heard* Christ, you are IN Christ, and so you are learning from the inside. This is a tremendous thing!

The Apostle introduces this kind of learning at the end of Ephesians chapter 1. He prays for the Ephesian Christians –

Eph 1:16-21 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, (17) that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, (18) having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you,

what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, (19) and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might (20) that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, (21) far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

What does it all mean? It means that we are being taught IN Christ! The life of Christ is in us! It is not theory, it is a life-giving teaching, it is a life-imparting teaching....

It is all the result of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit within us....Therefore, says Paul, if you really have heard Christ and have been taught in Him, you cannot possibly go on living according to the course of this world....His life comes percolating right through the bands of supply to you and if that life is in you, how is it possible for you to go on living as do the

unbelievers? You have not so learned Christ.

I sum up the Apostle's teaching then, in the following way. To HEAR Christ and to be taught IN HIM means that I have learned that God has so loved me that at a given point in time He sent His only begotten Son into the world, out of eternity into the virgin's womb. He humbled Himself and was born as a helpless Babe and laid in a manger. He lived and He taught; He rendered a perfect obedience to His Father and His most holy law. And then, though He might have commanded more than 12 legions of angels to attend Him, and might have returned to heaven immediately, He deliberately went to the cross and suffered the shame and spitting and the indignity of it all; and this He did to bear MY sins; to receive MY punishment; to suffer the penalty that MY guilt had deserved; and infinitely more important, to deliver me from the bondage of sin and of Satan; to separate me to Himself; and to make of me a man zealous of good works, delighting in holiness. He dies; He was raised from the dead;

He returned to heaven, and He sent down the Holy Spirit in order that I might have the assurance of my faith, and the joy and the power. He has given me a new life and a new nature. He has joined me to Himself; I am a member of His mystical body; I am a child of God, I am an heir of heaven.

THAT is what knowing christ means, learning Him, hearing Him, being taught in Him. If you believe these things, says Paul, you will have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. If you believe these things, says Johm, if you have this hope in you, you purify yourself, even as He is pure.

The logic is inevitable and only one deduction is possible, namely, everything about Christ and our relationship with Him makes the old life unthinkable as well as impossible."

[Darkness and Light, an Exposition of Ephesians 4:17 – 5:17, Banner of Truth Trust]