

## *“The Centerpiece of Biblical Preaching”*

Prepared by Patrick J. Griffiths © - [pastorpat@waukeshabile.org](mailto:pastorpat@waukeshabile.org)

June 3, 2007

First Corinthians 15:12 begins with a simple statement, “Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead...” There is a marked simplicity in the statement, “Christ is preached.” Perhaps the strength of the statement can be addressed by asking it in the form of a question, “Is Christ preached?”

Earlier in the chapter, Paul defines the resurrection of Jesus as the bulwark on which the Christian “good news” rests (v. 4). In the absence of this resurrection all hope is lost.

Much earlier in the letter (1:18-25; 2:2) Paul establishes the theology of the cross. Here (in 1 Corinthians 15:1-11) he welds together the theology of the cross and the theology of the resurrection and in so doing shows them to be indivisible. How many times is a theology of the cross and resurrection heard from the pulpits of today’s church? It is undeniable that our culture is rife with a consumer mindset. Consumerism or the need to purchase is either a necessary slave or a horrible master. When “I shop to live” becomes “I live to shop” we have crossed over into a dark abyss. The church has not been left unscathed by such thinking. Everything from ministry to message has fallen prey to a market driven mindset. The congregant, as a consumer, dictates what many churches become.

Equally compelling is the prevailing ignorance of the general population. I find myself ensnared by such tantalizing tidbits offered by the Hollywood elite. We have become a world inhabited by the unthinking. Our attention span is deficient and our ability to think is significantly hampered by a consuming, non-desire to learn. We bend and conform to whatever pressures exist. We bow before whatever weight is most pressing. Does this have any significance in ministry and message?

I do not fault too harshly the need to meet the “needs” of growing families. When we had small children, we were compelled by employment to have our children go to the church where I was employed. Our choice was made for us. Today, the church has become a superstore of options whereby the congregant can pick whatever ministry expression (i.e. entertainment) best appeals to their appetites. What is said by the church sits in a position of secondary importance to how it is said and in what context it is said.

**We are not so much concerned by truth as we are by attraction.** The same is true with reference to the message taught on Sunday mornings. We forget that worship is truth driven. It is driven by an unfolding and revealing of God and His work, not by us and our needs. Modern technology has caused us to

*Continued on the other side...*

“need” something more than the “mere” preaching of Christ crucified. We fail to see or we have failed to make Christ relevant to the modern consumer. We do not ask questions that strike at the heart of biblical worship but rather, “What can He do for me?”

The relevance of preaching Christ to my job, my home, my spouse, my friends, my surroundings, in short, my life cannot be overestimated. In the absence of this message all ministry expression is vain. It becomes mere entertainment and the cuddling of the overfed and under-active. In the absence of this message, faith is empty. There is nothing left to drive self-sacrificing service. There is nothing that drives the courageous to offer up their lives in death for Him who loved them and gave Himself for them. In the absence of this message we are still in bondage to sin. There is no deliverance, no freedom, and no hope. We still exist under the penalty of sin, the power of sin, and the very presence of sin. In the absence of this message, we mourn the death of loved ones knowing that nothing awaits us but darkness and separation. There will never be an ultimate reunion, if Christ is not preached.

How do we make Christ relevant in a consumer driven age? How do we make Him appealing when everyone wants cookies, ice cream, and Kool-aid? Friend, it is not our responsibility to make Christ relevant. What we are to do is preach Christ crucified. Let us proclaim Him as God. Let us believe He is enough in this life and in the life to come. And let us never stop preaching Him to a world that is blinded by and in bondage to their appetites and pleasures.