

Preaching is the Voice of Jesus

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[0 : 00] Acts chapter 19, we'll be reading verses 8 to 22, where Paul boldly preaches in Ephesus.

Starting at verse 8. Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God.

But some of them became obstinate. They refused to believe and publicly maligned the way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus.

This went on for two years so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord. God did extraordinary miracles through Paul so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick and their illnesses were cured and evil spirits left them.

Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out.

[1 : 20] Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. One day the evil spirit answered them, Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?

Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding. When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor.

Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds. A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly.

When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to 50,000 drachmas. In this way, the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.

After all this had happened, Paul decided to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. After I have been there, he said, I must visit Rome also.

[2 : 33] Let's hear as God's words preached. I'd ask you to turn to Ephesians chapter 2. You just had read for us here in the book of Acts, the account of Paul and his missionary team when they first came to Ephesus in 54 AD on their second missionary journey.

He stayed for two and a half years. And now, as we turn to this letter to the church at Ephesus, it's a letter that was written just three years later.

The church in Asia Minor is modern day Isra, Turkey. And it was comprised predominantly of Gentiles, but there were also some converted Jews, as we just read.

Now, here we pick up the account in Ephesians 2, verse 11 to the end. Paul says to this church, Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called uncircumcised by those who called themselves circumcision, the circumcision that done in the body by the hands of men. Remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel, and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.

[3 : 59] But now in Christ Jesus, you who were once far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations.

His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace. And in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him, we both have access to the Father by one spirit.

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.

In him, the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him, too, you are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his spirit.

[5 : 22] Our text tonight is really just one verse. It's verse 17. We notice the Gentile believers described here as you who were far away.

And the Jewish believers described as those who were near. Now, both were outside of Christ, but the Jews were described as nearer in that they were not as far off as the Gentiles.

Remember, the Jews were the one nation out of all the nations of the earth that God had chosen to enter into covenant with. And it made promises to and said, you will be my people and I will be your God.

They were a privileged people. They were the people to whom belong the fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to whom the promises and the scriptures were given.

And all of these privileges, you remember the temple with God dwelling in the midst of them. All these privileges meant that they were nearer to God compared to the Gentiles who were far away.

[6 : 34] Verses 12 and 13. Remember that at that time, you Gentiles, you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel, foreigners to the covenants of the promise without hope and without God in the world.

But now in Christ, you who were once far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. And so in verse 16, he says that Christ reconciled both Jew and Gentile to God through the cross. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him, that is Christ, we both have access to the father by one spirit.

The him of verse 18 is the same he of verse 17. It's clearly Christ who is himself our peace with God.

And so our text, verse 17 says, he Christ came and preached peace to you Gentiles and Jews. He was like a one man envoy of peace who came into Ephesus coming from their powerful enemy, the almighty God against whom they had sinned.

[7 : 55] He comes not declaring war for they were already at war with him. But he comes rather bearing an olive branch. Offering peace to both Gentiles and Jews.

It was a war that the Ephesians could never win. And yet Christ comes not to destroy them and to finish them off. But he comes proclaiming peace, holding out a peace treaty that if they would only make an unconditional surrender of repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus, they would have peace with God.

And those who did were reconciled to God and enjoyed peace with God through the cross of Christ. And in being reconciled to God, both Jew and Gentile, they were placed in one body so that the two became one body of Christ.

Well, this is the glorious good news that. That Christ is our peace with God. And it's such good news that we may have overlooked something of a problem or at least a puzzle in verse 17.

The problem is this. When did Christ ever come and preach peace in Ephesus? As verse 17 says.

[9 : 19] When did Christ travel to Ephesus and preach peace? Well, he can't be talking about Christ's incarnation when he came from heaven into this world.

And for three years went about preaching the gospel of peace. Because we never read of him anywhere in the gospels or in the New Testament, for that matter, ever coming anywhere near to Ephesus in Asia Minor.

If you have a Bible with a map in the back, you can see just how far Ephesus is from Palestine.

Other than a short stay in Egypt during his infancy when they were fleeing the hatred of Herod, our Lord's life and ministry was confined to the land of the Jews, Palestine.

He did make it up to the Gentile territory of Tyre and Sidon. But even this was called Upper Galilee, Galilee of the Gentiles.

And is nowhere close to Ephesus, which was an 800 mile journey to the west. So what then does Paul mean when he says that Christ came and preached peace to you Jews and Gentiles?

[10 : 40] Clearly, as I said, not what he did in his incarnation. Rather, it was through his gospel messenger, Paul, that Christ came to Ephesus and preached peace to them.

Just as we read in Acts chapter 19, how Paul came to this very area on his second missionary journey and there boldly preached in the Jewish synagogue for three months.

And when opposition came, he left, took some of the disciples with him and taught daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. That went on for two years so that all the Jews, those who were near, and all the Greeks, those who were far away, who lived in the province of Asia, heard the word of the Lord.

In other words, what Paul is telling us now or telling them now three years later. In his letter here to the Ephesians, is that what they heard was more than just Paul's voice.

Yes, they heard Paul's voice, but according to our text in chapter 2 and verse 17, he tells them, he, Christ, came and preached peace to you.

[11:53] So the doctrine that we draw from this verse is this, that the voice of the living Christ is being heard in all faithful preaching of his word. The voice of the living, risen Christ is being heard any time a preacher, someone stands and proclaims faithfully the word of God.

The spirit of Christ himself is both present and preaching. He came, presence, and preached peace to you.

Preaching, presence and preaching. Now, I believe this is the teaching of this text, but let's consider, secondly, some supporting evidence then.

Can it be that Christ is actually both present and preaching through his preachers today? So number two, we've seen the doctrine stated. Here's the doctrine supported. Consider what Jesus told his apostles just before he ascended into heaven.

We call it the Great Commission. Remember, he said that all authority is given to me in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

[13:07] And behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. So in this task of making disciples, by preaching my gospel, by baptizing according to my word, and teaching them to obey all that I've commanded, I'm with you always in this work.

With you. That's the presence of Christ. So when Peter stood on the day of Pentecost, just some 50 days later and preached, really just 10 days later, I should say, after Jesus' ascension and preached the gospel, Christ came to Jerusalem and preached peace.

And when Paul came to Ephesus and preached the gospel, Christ came there too and was preaching through his servant Paul. So that Great Commission is not something that's only true of the apostles.

It's not limited to them. It was given to them initially. They were the ones that heard him say, I am with you to the end of the age. Oh, but to the end of the age.

You see, that extends the promise beyond the apostles. They died. But Jesus promised to be with his church to the end of the age. And as we proclaim the truth, once for all delivered to the saints, Christ comes and he preaches peace through us.

[14:37] You see, he's with us. Present and preaching. We have a hymn in our hymnal that says, Christ in his word draws near.

He comes speaking peace to our souls. Let us arise and meet him who comes forth to greet our souls with peace. We meet him in his preached word.

Hear the Redeemer's welcome voice. Spreads heavenly peace around and life and everlasting joy attends the blissful sound.

Hear. Hear the Redeemer's welcome voice. Spreads heavenly peace around. So what a new light that should cast upon listening to preaching.

And should cast upon those words of our great shepherd in John chapter 10. How do we know who Jesus' sheep are? Well, Jesus tells us that my sheep hear my voice.

[15:42] And I know them. And they follow me. They hear my voice. My voice. Yes, Jesus says. And they heed it.

They believe it. But the voice of the good shepherd was not only heard for three years of ministry. John 10 and verse 16.

Jesus says in that context, I have other sheep. That are not of this sheep fold. It was to the Jews first. But he's saying, I've got other sheep.

Those Gentiles out there. I must bring them also. They too will hear my voice. And there shall be one flock and one shepherd.

25 years later. Paul came to Ephesus. And began to preach the gospel. And Jesus came.
[16:39] And preached peace through him. That was the gathering of these other sheep. Not of this sheep fold. They too must hear my voice.

Jesus had said, I must bring them. Why must he bring them? Because the father chose them and gave them to him before the creation of the world.

I must also bring them. They are the sheep he laid down his life for. I must bring them. I must. Bring them. But to be brought to Christ. They would need to hear Christ's voice. And that's what he says.

They too will hear my voice. And be added to the one flock. That's exactly what happened in Ephesians. Chapter. What Paul is saying happened.

[17:39] When he says that Christ came and preached peace to you. They heard his voice. And surrendered in repentance and faith. Turn over to Romans chapter 10.

We have another scripture that lends its support. To our doctrine that we're drawing out. That Christ preaches and is present.

Whenever the gospel is presented faithfully. We've seen John 10. Now we're in Romans 10. In Romans 10. 13 through 15.

We have this golden chain. Of a saving response to the gospel message of Christ. And it's all linked together like dominoes. One depending upon the other.

And so 10. 13 says that whoever. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How then can they call. On the one they have not believed in.

[18:37] And how can they believe in the one. Of whom they have not heard. And how can they hear without someone preaching to them. And how can they preach.

Unless they are sent. You see this golden chain. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. But they can't call on the Lord.

Save me. Unless they've believed in him. And they can't believe in him. Of whom they have not heard.

Now it's that of whom they have not heard. That I want you to look at. There is no of. In the original. Greek. Copy of the scripture.

The ASV. And the ESV footnote. Realizes the word of is not there. And that it's just been supplied by the translators. So that it reads. How shall they believe in him.

[19:38] Of whom they have not heard. But the ASV. And the footnote of the ESV. Says. How shall they believe on him. Whom they have not heard.

In other words. Whose voice they have not heard. Because his sheep must hear his voice. As we saw from John 10. Not merely saying they must hear about Christ.

In order to believe. That's true enough. But could it not. Be that what. Paul really meant. Was here in Romans 10. What he said in Roman. Or in Ephesians 2.

That Christ comes and speaks. In the preaching of the word. And. How can they believe in him. Whom they have not heard. Whose voice they have not heard. How can they hear.

Unless someone preaches. How can they preach. Unless. They be sent. So again. Supporting evidence. To the doctrine. That whenever Christ.

[20:34] Gospel is preached faithfully. He comes. And he himself. Speaks. And preaches. Peace. You know. When Jesus. Anointed the 72.

And sent them out. To preach the gospel. Ahead of him. To every town and place. Where he was about to go. He gave instructions. About what they were to do. And say. And then he said. He who listens to you.

Listens to me. And he who rejects you. Rejects me. But he who rejects me. Rejects him who sent me. There it is again. He that hears you.

Is hearing me. He comes. And speaks through. His messengers. So we've seen. First. The doctrine stated.

The voice of the living Christ. Is heard in all faithful preaching. Of the word. The doctrine supported. From other passages. That Christ's own voice. Is heard in the preaching. Of the gospel.

[21:31] And now the doctrine applied. First of all. For how we hear. The preaching. Of God's word. So our singing is over.

And the one leading the worship. Sits down. But instead of me. Standing up to preach. The risen glorified Lord Jesus. Comes up here. In his glorified body.

And begins to preach. Does that make any difference. In the way that you hear the preaching. Oh my. It will be made known.

One day. That in fact. Christ did come here. Today. By his spirit. And did preach. To you. Peace. And it's my prayer.

That each time I preach. You will be listening. For the voice. Of the son of God. Himself. As he comes. And preaches. Peace to you. So that you'll have. Personal dealings.

[22 : 32] With the living. Risen. Christ. He's here. He's preaching. Even through this poor preacher's words. With all my faults.

As long as I'm faithfully preaching. His word. Hear his voice then. With all his authority. With all of his seriousness.

With all of his love. With all of his concern for you. And so make a fitting response. To him. Who comes. Preaching peace to you.

Do you hear him preaching. As from the great prophet. Of his church. Why do we need a prophet? He comes to teach us. The will of God.

He. He is that great prophet. That had been promised. And he comes and preaches. The will of God to us. Can you say as you come. Blessed Jesus. At thy word.

[23 : 28] We are gathered all. To hear thee. Not just to hear about thee. But to hear thee. You yourself. As you speak. Does your heart cry out to him.

As you're about to hear the preaching. Speak oh Lord. As we come to you. To receive the food of your. Holy word. Take your truth.

You take it. And plant it. And plant it. Deep in us. Shape and fashion us. In your likeness. Teach us Lord. Full obedience. Holy reverence. True humility.

Speak oh Lord. Renew our minds. Help us grasp. The heights. Of your plans. For us. That's a song sung. By one who believes. The doctrine of my text.

This evening. In Ephesians 2. 17. That in the faithful. Preaching of the word. Christ comes and. Preaches peace to us. Oh that. I.

[24 : 22] Oh that you would be more aware. Of his presence. As he. Preaches. To us. Preaching is so much better. When you hear him preaching. Than just me.

And then I pray that after hearing the preaching. You'll be able to say with the song. I heard the voice of Jesus say. Come unto me and rest. Lay down thou weary one.

Lay down thy head upon my breast. I came to Jesus. As I was weary. And worn. And sad. I found in him a resting place.

And he. Has made me glad. Did you hear the voice of Jesus? Did you. Were you conscious that he was speaking? Drawing near.

Not in a whispered voice within. We're not listening for some. Mystical voice. A mystical voice. But just the awareness by faith. That as the word is preached.

[25 : 23] Christ is here. And preaching. So let's remind each other to listen to him. As we hear his word preached. It should drastically change the way. That we.

Listen to preaching. But there's application here too for preachers. Both for their encouragement and for their watch care. I find encouragement galore to know that Christ comes and speaks peace. Himself to you. As I am preaching. There are a people who hear his voice as. That word is being preached.

That the word of God comes in more than my power. More than any power that I can muster up. But it actually comes from him who has all authority in heaven and on earth.

The omnipotence of his voice that's able to wake the dead. To revive the sleepy. To recover the strain. To give light to the eyes.

[26 : 20] Joy to the heart. With far more effects than my words can affect. But in power. In the Holy Spirit. And with great assurance. And there are people who receive preaching of scripture.

Not as the word of men. But as it is in truth. The word of God. That was something that encouraged Paul the preacher. And sent him running with thanksgiving to God. In 1 Thessalonians 2.13.

We also thank God continually. He says. Because when you receive the word of God. Which you heard from us. You received it not as the word of men.

But as it actually is. The word of God. Which is at work in you who believe. There is something here of the romance of preaching. To know that Christ is secretly.

Inwardly. Working in the hearts of his people. Applying his own word. In a hundred different ways. That I can't possibly know that you need it. But he knows.

[27 : 20] And he comes. And he preaches peace. To you. What will Christ do. With his word today?

How will he work in you today? There's tremendous encouragement. But there's also care. For pastors. To be sure. To be sure. That what we are teaching. Is the pure. Unadulterated. Word. Of Christ. It's not all preaching. In which Christ comes. And preaches. But only that which is faithful. To his word. So I must study hard.

That I might be approved unto God. Rightly dividing. The word of truth. I must be careful. To preach the word. Drawing out of it. What God has put in it. And not drawing out something.

That I have read into it. And I wanted to say. It's not mine to edit. It's not mine to adjust it. But just. To simply preach it.

[28 : 15] To explain it. To apply it. And I pray for the. I must pray for the shepherd's voice. To be heard. And be careful not to get in the way.

And to distract you. From having dealings with him. He comes. And preaches peace. To your soul. But then there is here.

A revelation of Jesus Christ. And of his heart. I don't want you to miss. Look at Acts chapter 1. Acts 1.

And. It's in this introduction. To this book. As he's writing to Theophilus. You know Luke wrote the book of Acts. And he wrote the first. Book that he wrote.

The gospel of Luke. To this same fellow. Theophilus. And here in Acts 1. Verses 1 and 2. He says in my former book. Theophilus.

[29 : 13] I wrote about all that Jesus. Began to do. And to teach. Until the day he was taken up to heaven. Now that's where. The gospel of Luke ended.

With the ascension. Of Jesus into heaven. That was all about what Jesus. Began to do. And began to teach. As if to say. Now this book that I'm writing to you.

This book of Acts. Is all about. What Jesus. Continues to do. And continues to teach. After.

Having ascended to heaven. But now doing so. By his spirit. Through the apostles. And through the church. So yes.

Jesus continues. To do. And to teach. But now. Not physically present. As he had before. But spiritually present. In his.

[30 : 09] Apostles. And then after them. Through his church. To the end of the age. Look at the last two verses. Of Mark's gospel. The last two verses.

Of Mark's gospel. Make the same point. It's 16. 19. And 20. And this takes us again.

To the ascension. And after the Lord Jesus. Had spoken to them. That's his apostles. He was taken up into heaven. And he sat at the right hand of God. Then. The disciples.

Went out. And preached. Everywhere. And the Lord. Worked. With them. And confirmed his word. By the signs. That accompanied it.

The Lord. Worked. With. Them. He's not only. With us. But he's working. With us.

[31 : 04] To the ends of the age. To the end of the age. And so. The way I see the heart of Christ. In this. Is to ask. What is the heart.

Of Christ in heaven. Toward his church. Here on earth. Is he so wrapped up. In the glories of heaven. That he's just kind of. Dished off.

The mission here on earth. To us. Well I. I taught you how to do it boys. Now you go do it. I'm going to heaven. And I'll send you the Holy Spirit. But. You guys are.

It's all on you now. I'm going to heaven. No. He. He promised to be present. With them. And to. Preach through them. To work with them.

And. What a. What a precious thing. To know that his heart. Is with us here. In the assignment. That he's given us. He's. He's going to help us. All the way. That's why he says.

[31 : 58] I will build my church. I'm not just going to watch. You guys build it. I'll be there. With you. Working with you. Preaching through you. Witnessing through you.

And it shows. His heart. Is with us here. In this work. The gospel of peace. The gospel of peace. Is so much on his heart. That he continues.

This great work. Calling sinners. Calling sinners. To himself. Calling them. To peace with God. Through faith. In himself. So.

Isn't the Christian life. An exciting thing. Doesn't this make. The Christian life. Filled with glorious. The supernatural. If only we will have.

Faith. To believe the unseen. That Christ comes. And preaches. To us. And then there's an application. For the lost.

[32 : 53] It's no small thing. To hear the preaching. Of God's holy word. It's no small thing. To have Christ come. By his spirit. And to preach it. To us. He says in John 12.

As for the person. Who hears my word. But does not keep it. I don't judge him. For I didn't come. To judge the world. But to save it. There is a judge. For the one. Who rejects me. And does not accept. My words. The very word. I spoke. Will condemn him. At the last day. Isn't that interesting?

The very word. I spoke. Will condemn him. At the last day. So. Matthew 25. Takes us to that.

Last day. And. And Jesus. Speaks. To those on his left. And says. Well when I was hungry. You didn't feed me. And when I was thirsty. You didn't. Give me to drink.

[33 : 48] And all the rest. And. They say. When did we ever see you hungry. And so on. And he says. Well in as much as you didn't do it. To the least of these brothers of mine.

You didn't do it to me. And I just wonder. If. If. If. If. If. If. If. If. People in that day. Will be charged. And said. Well. You rejected. My word. I came and preach peace to you.

I offered peace from heaven. But the very word which I spoke. Will condemn you. At the last day. And what would they say. Well when did you.

Ever. Come and. Preach. Peace to me. Well I came. Each week. As that. Old preacher got up. And just. Tried to.

Read. And explain the bible to you. I was there. And I was speaking peace. To you. And you wanted nothing. Of it. That day is coming.

[34 : 46] And the bible says. It will be far better. For Sodom and Gomorrah. Than those who heard. His voice. And rejected it. So it really. Raises the. Responsibility.

Of what are we doing. With the word of God. That we've heard. Because Jesus has come. And spoken it to us. Oh he's here. And he's willing.

And able. To receive. And to save. All that come unto God. Through him. He loves to make peace. Through his blood. We're going to sing. That song. Speak oh Lord. I think it's a. It's number four. In your grace hymns. And it should just.

Remind us again. That as we. Come to hear the word of God. We're. We're listening to Christ. Himself preaching. Let's stand as we sing.

[35 : 41] Number four. Loana Hay activity. We're. For. It's not. We're.

It's not. It's not. It's not. It's not. It's not. It's not. It's not. It's not. It's not. It's not. It's not. It's not. It's not. It's not. It's not. Yeah. It's not. It's not. It's not. It's not. It's not. It's not. It's not.