

## A Prophetic People with a Prophetic Message

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### 1. A prophetic people have a prophetic message to proclaim

- Have already spoken on what it means for the church to be a prophetic people.
- The key thing about prophets is that they have been given a message from God to proclaim - they have a message and a voice (“A voice of one calling in the desert...”).
- Likewise, the church, in its prophetic ministry has been given a message to proclaim

### 2. Our message is offensive and “foolish”

- **1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5**

<sup>18</sup>For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. <sup>19</sup>For it is written:  
 “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise;  
 the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.”<sup>[a]</sup>  
<sup>20</sup>Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? <sup>21</sup>For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup>Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, <sup>23</sup>but **we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block [scandal/offence] to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,** <sup>24</sup>but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. <sup>25</sup>For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.  
<sup>26</sup>Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. <sup>27</sup>But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. <sup>28</sup>He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, <sup>29</sup>so that no one may boast before him. <sup>30</sup>It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.  
<sup>31</sup>Therefore, as it is written: “Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.”<sup>[b]</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. <sup>[c]</sup> **For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.** <sup>3</sup>I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. <sup>4</sup>My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, <sup>5</sup>so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.

- Offensive to the religious mind?
  1. Cross is un-spectacular - it is apparently sign-less and powerless
    - Jews believed the Messiah would come in strength and majesty to set everything right
    - Cross is bereft of signs and power to the religious mind - Jesus did many signs, but religious mind demands signs out of scepticism



“Demanding signs from God means demanding that God act on my terms; demanding that God be God according to my categories and presuppositions” (Darrell Johnson. *It Is Finished*, 88).

## 2. A cursed man couldn't be the Messiah

- Deuteronomy 21:23  
“...because anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse.”
- The fact that Jesus was hung on a tree disqualified him from messiahship - Jews could not conceive of the Messiah being cursed by God. A cursed man couldn't be God's Anointed.
- Religious mind missed the full picture: the curse Jesus bore was not his, but ours

<sup>10</sup>All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.”<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>11</sup>Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, “The righteous will live by faith.”<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>12</sup>The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, “The man who does these things will live by them.”<sup>[c]</sup> <sup>13</sup>Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.”

- Foolishness to the philosophical mind?
  1. Jesus and the cross are too particular
    - Plato: truth and wisdom reside in universals, not in particulars
    - A particular (tree, dog, man) only has meaning as it reflects the universal (tree-ness, dog-ness, man-ness)
    - Jesus and cross are all about particulars: God acted on behalf of humanity and the whole universe in one particular place, at one particular time, in one particular Jewish man - through his particular birth, his particular life, his particular death
    - Particular event of the crucifixion (execution as a common criminal) lacked intellectual credibility for the philosophical mind.
    - Jesus' death on the cross turned everything upside down. Before, according to Greek philosophy, particulars were to be understood in relation to universals, now universals were to be understood in relation to this particular man and this particular event
    - “Now the universals only have meaning as they relate to this one particular. “Love” now has meaning only as it relates to the love of the cross. “Justice” now has meaning only as it relates to the justice of the cross. “Holiness” now has meaning only as it relates to the holiness of the cross. “Human-ness” now has meaning only as it relates to the Human on the cross. And (!) “God-ness” now has meaning only as it relates to the God on the cross” (Johnson. *It Is Finished*, 91).
    - Everything has now to be understood in relation to the cross.



2. The gods do not suffer, nor do they feel
  - Foremost attribute of Greek and Roman gods: *apatheia* - they could not feel; they were unaffected by human sin and misery
  - The idea that God suffered in Christ was, therefore, utter foolishness
  - But God chose to open himself up to the pain of the world; he chose to open himself up to suffering. God chooses to suffer.
- Implications for us?
  1. Our proclamation of the gospel does not shrink away from causing offence or risking ridicule - offence and ridicule are normal reactions to the message of the cross. "The Gospel steps on the toes all of who think they are wise and strong." No one can boast under the cross - our wisdom cannot save us, nor can our strength; only the finished work of Christ can save us.
  2. We are called to live a cruciform lives; lives that mirror the cross (weakness and foolishness) - give our lives away that we might gain them; love our enemies; turn the other cheek
3. The victory is in the cross
  - The crucifixion is the victory; the resurrection is the confirmation and celebration of that victory

- **Hebrews 2:14-15**

<sup>14</sup>Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that **by his death** he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—<sup>15</sup>and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

- **Colossians 2:15**

<sup>15</sup>And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, **triumphing over them by the cross.**

- **Revelation 5:9**

<sup>9</sup>And they sang a new song:  
 "You are worthy to take the scroll  
 and to open its seals,  
**because you were slain,**  
 and with your blood you purchased men for God  
 from every tribe and language and people and nation.

- Matthew 27:50-52

<sup>50</sup>And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

<sup>51</sup>At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. <sup>52</sup>The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life.

- The dead are raised to life at the moment of Jesus' death - at the death of Jesus Death loses its power

- 1 Corinthians 2:8

<sup>1</sup>When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God.[a] <sup>2</sup>For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. <sup>3</sup>I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. <sup>4</sup>My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, <sup>5</sup>so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.

**Wisdom From the Spirit**

<sup>6</sup>We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. <sup>7</sup>No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.

<sup>8</sup>None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

- If they had known that by his death Jesus would defeat them, the rulers of this age would have never crucified Him.

We live from victory, not towards victory

- Sin and fear have been conquered once and for all at the cross. They have no power over us.

