

Trinity Against the Anti-Gospels – 1 Cor 2:1-5, 15:12-19

- *Life in the Trinity #5*

Introduction – Our studies on the Trinity have led us to consider the nature of relationships and covenant, what it means to be close and in union with God, and how we are able to rest and walk in the assurance offered to us by all three Persons of the Trinity. Trinitarian faith is also a dangerous weapon to be wielded by the church against the false and seductive anti-gospels present and growing within our culture. We will consider two in this message.

The Centrality of Christ Crucified (1 Cor 2:1-5) – As Paul reflected on his ministry of preaching to a culture racked with idols, hedonism, and selfishness, he notes that he refused to scratch where the culture itched, but rather preached the centrality of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. In doing so, he refused to rely upon his rhetoric (v1) or in his own strength (v3). He refused to rely on fancy argumentation, especially that expected by his audience (v4 – also 1:22-23). He relied on the work of the Spirit in his preaching and in the power of God, so that the faith of Corinth rested on Christ and not on Paul. When people turn to Christ, it looks crazy to the unbelieving world around them.

The Trinity in Christ-Crucified-Predaching – In this passage the Trinity is present and for our purposes should be noted. This kind of testimony is “of God” (v1). It centers on His Son and His work on the cross (v2). It is a message which is only received by the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit (v4). To speak of the cross requires the theology of the Triune God.

Understanding “Jesus Christ and Him crucified” – Paul does not mean that the only thing He preached was Christ and His crucifixion. For instance in 1 Cor 15:12-19 Paul preaches on the historic necessity of the resurrection – something which must be preached, heard, and believed, or Christians, of all people, are the most to be pitied.

The Crux of the Matter – Crux is Latin for the cross and the crux of the matter for Christians is the cross of Jesus Christ and all that this points to – which is to everything. Christ’s death is our new covenant Head leading the way by dying for His people. It is only in our union (mutual indwelling) with Christ in His death that we join with Him in His resurrection and new life (Gal 2:20). It is only through Christ in the power of the Spirit that we are able to approach God as our heavenly Father.

Our Current Culture: Secularism, Agnosticism, Growing Atheism and Materialistic Humanism – Statistics show a rising number of Americans who name no organized religion as their own. This is the fruit of instructing our children for generations that, if there is a god, he certainly is unnecessary in just about any area of study, work, or society (which is the basis of government schools and is approved by most professing Christians today). But all cultures have a god and in order to find him or her all you have to do is watch where the society looks for salvation, for preservation, for significance and meaning in life.

In “God” We Trust – Who is that god on our coins and in our pledge of allegiance? It certainly cannot be the Triune God of scripture; not as far as the general public is concerned. This god doesn’t protect the life of the unborn and this god does not uphold the trinitarian picture of marriage, for just a couple of contemporary examples. It claims all kinds of tolerance for other religions as long as they stay in your head or deep in your hearts and as long as they are not allowed to shape public policy.

The Approaching Culture-War: Islam – One of the things that secularism builds itself upon is a denial of the antithesis, a blurring of truth and error, of origin and destination, and instead upholds a doctrine of pragmatism; if it works (or feels good, or is accepted by the majority), it’s ok. In the end, this is the perfect setup for a takeover by another belief system, especially one which has a militant mindset. Enter Islam. There is good reason to believe that the conflict between the Western world and Islam will be the central conflict in our children’s/grandchildren’s years in a way similar to the conflict with communism in previous generations.

Islam = Christianity? – There is a huge effort underway to try and make Allah and Yahweh equals, even the same being, in the minds of American secularists and Christians. Religious experts are fond to point out that Muslims, like Christians, worship one God only, respect Jesus and Mary, and base their faith on a book considered to be the revealed Word of God, both containing stories of Adam, Abraham, Moses, and David. When the recent terrorist attacks by Muslims are pointed out, the experts are quick to remind us that Christianity has a history of violence.

Allah and His Prophet – Allah is the only God in the teachings of Islam, and Mohammed did not live a life at all like Jesus Christ. Islam means “submission” and yet there is no indwelling of Allah in his people, especially when they are bowing to one who is nothing but raw power and force. This means that the five pillars of Islam (confession, prayer, alms-giving, fasting, pilgrimage) must be superseded in the end with jihad – holy war – or conversion by the sword and a violent overthrow of the infidel.

The Foolishness of the Gospel – Like our modern secularists, the Muslims affirm many things about Jesus that are true. They affirm, for example, His virgin birth, that He was a profound teacher, and they even speak of Him coming to bring forth the final resurrection. But they deny His Deity and His death and resurrection (Koran 4:156-157). In their mind, how could Jesus be Allah? How could raw power lose and die? It makes no sense at all to the fleshly mind.

Death and Resurrection – This is the heart of the gospel and of understanding everything else. Christians, like Muslims, both speak of conquering the world. The Muslim anti-gospel preaches that there will be life by killing; the Christian gospel preaches that there will be life by dying. Killing and subduing through power –vs- Dying and subduing through service. That’s the difference.

Our Response –

Trinitarian Worship – In our worship service we approach the Father in the name of the Son and in the power of the Holy Spirit. We are renewed in our mutual indwelling with the Trinity and empowered to be the body of Christ to the world.

Trinitarian Family Life – Husband and Wife, Christ and His Bride, bequeathing and receiving glory, biblical headship and biblical submission – and fruit from our union – these are critical to the fight against unbelief, false belief. Our homes, resurrected by the power of God’s Spirit in our midst, preach the gospel.

Trinitarian Evangelism – We preach Christ because “*God so loved the world,*” because “*while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us,*” and because “*Christ died for our sins.*” We follow Christ in the discipling of nations through giving ourselves in Jesus’ name.

Dave Hatcher – December 9, 2007