

# EVANGELISM AND THE FIRST EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS

## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE EPISTLES TO THE CORINTHIANS

The two epistles to the Corinthians are very important for the contemporary preacher.

1. These epistles discover St. Paul's view of preaching and evangelism, for he spent the longest time in this city after Ephesus. He visited it at least 3 times and his ministry was very successful.
2. I think he was opposed from the Corinthians more than any other people. Some denied his apostleship, and he was obliged to defend it. Thus, it was a good chance to speak about apostleship, his fatherhood and Christian preaching and evangelism.
3. Corinth was the largest city in Greece and a very important commercial city, received peoples from many countries. They were very busy in their business, and were proud of their famous half-yearly games in Isthmes. About 1000 priestesses of the temple of Venus devoted themselves for adultery on behalf of the temple. Beside all these hard circumstances the Church of Corinth was suffering of many problems such as: Church division and schism, immorality, corruption of dogmas and doctrines.
4. Through these letters we can notice how St. Paul's heart was flamed by divine love, and nothing could prevent him from preaching. We can see how he could change the negatives to positive and active work of preaching and evangelism.

## PRINCIPLES OF PREACHING

**1. Enriched and united in Christ (1:1-11).** St. Paul was previously proud of his personality, his education, his righteousness, and his zeal for the traditions of the Jewish traditions. He discovered that he had to consider all these things as nothing to gain Jesus Christ Himself. Christ satisfied all his needs; therefore he hoped that every man might be hidden in Jesus Christ as his own Treasure. He does not witness to his own self but to the Savior of all mankind, so that all men may be united in Him.

**2. The Cross:** The Lord is our Treasure; how can we attain Him? Through the Cross. The Cross is the source of our strength, honor, wisdom, righteousness, sanctity and redemption. The Cross, in St. Paul's mind is not a theoretical belief, but it is a daily experience, a sharing in Christ's crucifixion (1:12-31).

**3. St. Paul's theme** in preaching is **not human wisdom**, but the Lord's crucifixion (2:1-5).

4. The Cross is the way that leads us to enjoy **the heavenly glory** (2:6-16). Is it possible? For the natural and carnal men, it is impossible but man it is at hand of the spiritual men.

5. Through the Cross we discover our own selves; who are we? (3:1-22).

- ❖ God's fellow-workers.

- ❖ God's husbandry or field.
- ❖ God's building, built on the Foundation.
- ❖ God's temple.
- ❖ Owner of everything.

6. The preachers are **stewards** who responsible to their Lord, and **fathers** whose pleasure is to be sacrificed on behalf of their spiritual children.

7. **The language of preaching is the heavenly joy.** They witness to the heavenly Savior who came to change our life into continuous feast. **Removing the germs of evil** is necessary to celebrate this feast (5:1-13).

8. The preacher reveals **the superiority of the believers.** They become **judges of angels.** They have not to belittle themselves, or to be involved in trifles by going to law before heathen tribunals.

9. The preacher has to study the philosophy and culture of those whom he preach. He direct them to the right path without ignoring their culture or attaching their philosophy. St. Paul dealt here with some heathen thoughts which the Corinthians believed in:

- ❖ **Every thing is lawful to me.** But not everything is expedient to me.  
But nothing has dominion upon me.  
But not every thing builds in.
- ❖ **The Food is for the belly and the belly for the food** (carnal desires) – But God will destroy this and that.
- ❖ **The body is an element of darkness; it is for fornication** – The Body is for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body.  
The body is a member of the Lord's member.  
The body together with the spirit glorify God.
- ❖ **Man is a weak creature** - who cleaves with the Lord becomes one spirit with Him.

We are bough by the precious blood.

#### **10. How does the preacher deal with the family problems?**

Instead of involving in the details of the problems, he has to direct them to the devotional life and serving God.

He has to assure to them that Christian life is a **divine call**, to be in Christ, with Christ and for Christ (7:1-40).

11. The preacher guides the believers not to waste their times in theoretical arguments and defending their own views, but to **consider the weakness of their brethren.**

12. The preacher is a soldier, vine keeper and shepherd. He has the right to be maintained. But through his fiery heart he **voluntarily declines his rights** to win many to our Savior.

13. As man discovers our richness in Christ and his new position in Christ he has to choose the fellowship with Christ or with evil. There is no third choice (10:1-33).

14. When the Orthodox preacher deals with Church tradition and order, he has to assure that we have to focus upon **Christ as the Head** (11).

15. The preacher encourages believers to use their spiritual gifts and talents for the edification of the kingdom of God on earth – Above all is love, which last with us eternally (12-14).

16. It is the message of the preacher to emphasize **victory over sin and death** (15).

17. At last, the preacher encourages the lovely relations among the local churches, and among persons as well.