

Impact Of The Gospel

Acts 18:1-11, 1 Cor 2:1-5, 6:9-11

Sunday July 11th 2010 Morning Service

Rupert Bentley-Taylor

What's this baptismal service all this about? What we are celebrating this morning was celebrated almost 2000 years ago in the city of Corinth in Greece. All over the world many others also being baptised, like these three this morning.

1. Message

Begins with a message. Paul turns up in Corinth fired up with a message. Several different words are used: v4 he 'reasoned', tries to 'persuade', v5 speaks of 'preaching, testifying', v11 'taught'. It is same message that comes to us. It is a message about Jesus: see v5 that 'Jesus was the Christ'. Christianity is not message about us or about the church: it is about Jesus. A real person in history. About the fact that He is the 'Christ'. This was a loaded word: full of significance. Meant the person promised by God who would come as King, to bring God's saving purposes about & set up his eternal kingdom. Paul says he has come and he is Jesus. But there was something very particular that Jesus came to do: later Paul put it like this 1 Cor 1:1 'I resolved to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified'. A few verses earlier he said 'Jews demand miraculous signs' (something visibly impressive), '& Greeks demand wisdom' (something intellectually impressive) 'but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles but to those whom God has called, Christ the power of God & the wisdom of God'. Bible tells us that 'the wages of sin is death'. We die because something has gone wrong in all of us. That's what Jesus came to deal with. To do that he had to die in our place. He bore our guilt before a holy God so we be forgiven. He rose triumphant, he reigns forever, one day he will return to judge & bring in God's eternal kingdom. All a message about Jesus.

2. Response

2 sorts of response: always are.

1) Rejection: a common reaction: v6 Jews 'opposed Paul & became abusive'.. Always will be those who hear this message & reject it. Jesus himself when he was on earth was rejected. Plenty of people reject this message today. You may.

2) Believed: see v8. Some surprises here: Crispus was the synagogue ruler, might have been expected to take a lead against the message about Jesus. But Crispus listened & believed that Jesus was indeed the

promised Christ. Also 'his entire family believed in the Lord.' Crispus & his family were Jews. But the verse before 'Titius Justus' is a Gentile. That wasn't all: 'many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed'. They were people of all sorts. But they were united in this one thing: they came to believe in Jesus. It maybe that some of here have heard this message often but have never actually responded by believing. It is not too late to open personal communication with God & say to Jesus "I really believe you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who can save me from my sins and I want you to be my Lord". Have you rejected or believed? Paul said once 'Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved' 16:31.

3. Power

This message is the most powerful thing in the world. In 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 when Paul writes later to this same group of believers in Corinth. Whether they were respectable or not, Jews or non Jews, they all needed God's forgiveness. Paul's point is how wonderfully the message of Jesus had changed these people, even people who seemed very publicly set against what God wants. 'Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God'. Here is a power to change people. What had God done? 3 wonderful things. 'But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God'. Washed: refers to guilt & shame & dirt of mind & behaviour washed completely away. Sanctified: means made holy. Not just sin washed out: but cleanness, holiness given in Christ. A Christian is a person made holy in Christ & being changed by Christ. Justified: that is a judicial word. Means when God as your Judge declares you innocent: forgiven: just in his eyes. These 3 words sum up the power found in the name of Jesus Christ & it is worked by the power of the Spirit of God. This is what God Himself alone can do for you.

4. Proclamation to everyone

Acts 18:8 we read 'Many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptised'. Being baptised is what Jesus commanded should be the way that a Christian tells the world what God has done for them. Jesus said 'If anyone is ashamed of me & my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory'. Mk 8:38. He told his disciples 'Go & make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father & the Son & the Holy Spirit'. That's what these three are doing because Jesus commands it. Baptism is going public about what God has done for you: it is the outward sign of repentance of their sins & believing in Jesus as Christ and Lord. We are not ashamed of letting everyone know we belong to Jesus. This morning we rejoice in what God does in people's lives.

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