

SOUNDING A CLEAR NOTE

GALATIANS 2:21 • TV135B

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By
HENRY T. MAHAN

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Zebulon Baptist Church
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Galatians 2:21

“I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.”

*“I do not frustrate (that word means confuse or complicate or distort) the grace of God;” this is Paul speaking in **Galatians chapter 2:21**: “I do not frustrate, (complicate) the grace of God. If righteousness comes by the law, Jesus Christ died in vain.”*

Now, I want to speak to you today from this verse of Scripture on this subject: **“SOUNDING A CLEAR NOTE.”**

My message may be somewhat offensive to some of you; I hope not. It may not please some, but others it will make your heart glad because you believe these things.

I want you to listen. Will you give me a hearing ear? Will you give me just a few moments of your time? I know a little bit about preaching. I’ve been preaching for a little while.

Now, there are many important and essential things in the preaching of the Gospel:

First of all: The Lord calls His preachers! *“There was a man sent from God whose name was John.”* The important thing there is not the man’s name but the fact that God sent him: *“there was a man sent from God.”*

It doesn’t matter what his name was. They asked him what his name was and he said, *“I’m just a voice.”* They said: *“Are you the Christ?”* He said: *“No, I’m not worthy to unlace his shoes. I just come to tell you about him. He must increase and I must decrease.”*

God not only calls His servants but He anoints them and empowers them. The Holy Spirit said to the early church: *“you separate unto me Paul and Barnabas for the work whereunto I have called them.”* The apostle Paul said: *“I thank God who put me into the ministry.”* God calls, anoints, and sends His servants.

Now, I know that there are a lot of preachers who have run in their own name and consequently they are delivering their own messages and many people hear them. Our Lord said: *“Let another come in his own name and him you will receive. I come in my Father’s name and you receive me not.”*

But, God does call and God does anoint and God does send and equip His messengers. There are three essentials to good preaching. I know good preaching when I hear it. I know good preaching when I do it.

There are three essentials to good preaching and they need to be emphasized, especially, in this day of poor preaching. We are not hearing much good preaching. We hear a lot of promoting and we see a lot of programing and a lot of proselytes and everything else but we don’t hear much real good preaching.

But, good preaching requires three things, three essentials that are other than being called of God, anointed of God, sent of God, and commissioned of God:

First: It requires knowledge! I’m not talking about knowledge in the sense of human wisdom. I am talking about knowledge of God, of Christ Jesus, and of His Word.

Over in **1 John chapter 1: 1-3**, the apostle John talks about the messaged he preached and he said: *“I declare unto you that which I have seen and heard.”* He says that three times, three times in those three verses.

“That which I have seen, that which I have heard, I preach unto you, I declare unto you that which I’ve seen.” A man can’t preach what he doesn’t know. A man cannot preach what he has never experienced.

The reason you don’t hear very many effective sermons on repentance is that most men have not repented. The reason you hear poor preaching on faith is that most men are not the subject of faith; they know nothing of faith. They have never experienced faith.

That's the reason we are doing so much promoting today and so little preaching. Most preachers have nothing to tell. They haven't been anywhere spiritually and they have nothing to tell.

They have to talk about their trip to the Holy Land but they have never been to Calvary. They have to talk about eschatology because they know so little about the first coming of Christ. They have to be bound up in church doctrine and in discipline and organization and all of these things because they know so little about a vital union with the Lord Jesus Christ.

You have to have knowledge before you can preach. You have to know Christ. If you know Him you can brag on Him. If you know Him you can talk about Him. If you know Him you can introduce Him to somebody else, but you've got to know Him.

Second: Then, the second word is sincerity! The apostle Paul said in **Romans 10**: *"Brethren; my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved. I bear them record; they have a zeal, (an enthusiasm for God) but it's not according to knowledge:*

"For they are going about to establish their own righteousness and have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of Christ: But, I have great heaviness, continual sorrow, for my brethren in the flesh: I could wish myself accursed from Christ, that they might be saved. "I want them to be saved so badly. I want them to know God so badly that I would almost go to hell for them." That is what Paul is saying.

Moses said something very similar to that; he said; he stood between God and Israel one day and he said: *"Lord; if you destroy these people, then you blot me out of the book you have written."* That's strong language but that's strong feelings and that's strong sympathy. That's a heavy burden.

If you can't preach from a sincere heart, get out of the pulpit. If your heart's not broken for your congregation, if you don't love the people to whom you preach, you can't preach, you can't talk to men for God unless you can talk to God for men.

There's just no way. There's got to be sincerity, a deep sincerity, whether you teach or preach or witness or whatever, unless you can do it out of a genuine heart-love then leave it alone. Leave it to somebody who can.

There's a two-fold motive that constrains every true minister of God and it's not praise or popularity or possessions, it's the glory of God and the eternal good of his hearer. That's what constrains him; it's the glory of God.

He wants God to be glorified in all things, in all things he wants God to be glorified. Whatever the cost, he wants God to be glorified. And he wants his hearer to genuinely be saved, not just become a name on a roll or a number in a Sunday school class or somebody to brag about that, "you have won them to Jesus;" he wants them to come to know the Son of God.

Third: This is really what I am getting to in this message, sounding a clear note; the third word is simplicity! There are three essentials to Gospel preaching, knowledge, sincerity, and simplicity!

There's no substitute for simplicity in preaching the Gospel. The apostle Paul was a brilliant man. The apostle Paul was one of the most highly educated men of his day.

In fact, one great ruler said to him: "you've studied so much you have lost your mind." Now, that's the conclusion to which he came in reference to the apostle Paul: "you've just been studying so much, much learning hath driven you crazy."

The apostle Paul was a studious, educated, learned man. He graduated from the best university of his day. He was a man schooled in the Scriptures, in the traditions, in the ceremonies, and in all the types yet, he didn't know Christ.

But, when he came to know Christ, he set all of this aside. He said: *"I count all of this but dung that I may win Christ and be found in him, that I may know him and the power of his resurrection."*

And he said to that great city of Corinth: *"I'm determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified."* In the 2nd epistle to the church at Corinth in Chapter 11 he said: *"I fear."* Paul didn't fear many things; he feared God. He feared false converts. He feared *"lest he become castaway"* after preaching to others. He feared; *"lest Satan should corrupt their minds and turn them away from the simplicity of Christ."*

Is that not done in our day? Have not men been turned away from the simplicity of Christ? Have we educated ourselves out of the ministry? Have some men totally and literally educated themselves out of the ministry?

They are talking in a language that men don't understand. They are preaching on subjects that folks know nothing about. They are answering questions that nobody is asking.

Folks go to church and sit and listen to these fellows and come away with pretty music, a beautiful building, and a fine choir, etc. but no message. I don't understand a thing the man says.

Our Lord preached to people in language they understood. They may not have believed what He said but they understood it. They may not have bowed to what He required but they understood it. They did not agree with what He said but they understood what He said; they understood it.

I can go all the way through His teachings and I could say to you: "you understand what He is saying." You may not believe it, you may not be willing to bow to it, and you may not agree with it, but He spoke in language that men could understand.

Now, what is preaching? Just exactly, what is preaching? Well, I will give you what I believe preaching to be:

First of all: It's proclaiming the Gospel!

John said: *“That which we have seen and heard declare we,”* it’s a declaration, and it’s a proclamation. Preaching is not explaining the Gospel, it is proclaiming the Gospel.

There is no way that I can explain the Gospel; the Gospel has to be revealed. I can proclaim it; I can proclaim it. I can preach it and I can declare it but it’s not explaining it.

“Natural men do not receive the things of God; they are foolishness to them. The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness,” but that doesn’t mean that I quit preaching it. I preach the cross and depend on the Holy Spirit to reveal it, to reveal a man’s need, to reveal a man’s sins, to reveal Christ to his heart, to reveal the mystery of the Gospel.

The preaching of the Gospel is proclaiming it, it’s not putting it in a systematic order so men with their natural minds can understand it, it’s just preaching it; *“preach the Gospel.”* Paul said to Timothy: *“preach the gospel.”*

Our Lord said to his disciples: *“Go into all the world and preach the gospel;”* declare who Christ is and what He did and why He did it and where He is now: tell them about the cross. They may despise it, hate it, reject it, and turn from it. They did in His day but He went right on preaching it.

So, preaching, first of all, is proclaiming the Gospel!

Secondly: it’s holding forth the Word of God. Paul said: *“Timothy; preach the word.”* That’s what we are to preach, the Word of God.

Open your Bibles and preach from what the Word says. Today, men are preaching their ideas. They are preaching on “current topics” they say. They are giving book reviews and they are giving nice little stories and poems and trying to get folks to feel good.

We are to preach the Word: *“That which we have seen and heard, that we declare unto you: this is the message we’ve heard of him and declare unto you.”* We are not seeking to be consistent with ourselves; that would be to be consistent with a fool. We are seeking to be consistent with the Word of God.

This is good preaching when you preach the Word: *“thus saith the Lord!”* The Old Testament prophets were sent by God to declare what, their ideas, their thoughts, and their philosophy?

On no! Go tell them: *“thus saith the Lord, thus saith the Lord.”* That is what they preached and God promises *“that his word will not return unto him void; it shall accomplish that whereunto he has sent it.”*

Thirdly: Good preaching is proclaiming the Gospel. It is preaching the Word of God and it is thirdly, communicating with our hearers! Preaching is taking God’s message to men in words and language that they understand. Paul said: *“Not with wisdom of words lest the cross of Christ be made of non-effect, not with enticing words of man’s wisdom.”* Preaching the Gospel is communicating with people, saying in the language that men understand what God sent you to say.

That's what Paul is saying in our text in **Galatians 2:21**, he says: *"I do not frustrate (distort, confuse, complicate) the grace of God."* Paul sounded a clear note.

I can't force men to turn from their idols but I can identify their idols. That's right, I can identify them. I cannot force men to believe the Gospel but I can preach the Gospel because they are not going to believe it if they don't hear it.

"How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed and how should they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" They have got to hear the Gospel.

Then, I cannot force men to bow to Christ but I can tell them that God commands it and that one day all men will bow to Christ. The question is not: is Christ your Lord? He is your Lord; He is every man's Lord. The question is: will you submit to His Lordship now or at the judgment?

I cannot force men to face the issues but I can let them know what the issues are. That's plain preaching. I can tell you what the issues are. That's what I plan to do in the next few moments. I am going to declare unto you what the issues are in language that you can understand.

It doesn't matter whether you are a college professor, or whether you are a man who didn't go past the second or third grade. You are going to understand what I am saying today because I am going to talk to you in your language delivering God's message.

Now, here's the first point that I want you to listen to:

First of all: I don't know if you will ever repent! But I know this, the Scripture says: *"except you repent you will perish."* That's pretty plain isn't it? That's sounding a clear note. We don't need to hedge about it, we don't need to argue about it, and we don't need to fall out over it.

Almighty God said, through the mouth of the Saviour Himself: *"except ye repent; you shall all likewise perish."* Now, I don't know how to define repentance. Somebody said, "Repentance is a turning," yes, but oh what a turning. Somebody else said, "Repentance is a change," but oh my soul, what a change. It's a change of mind about some things.

In **Isaiah 55**, it says: *"Let the wicked forsake his thoughts."* It's a change of mind about you and about God and about his Word and about His Son and about justice and righteousness. It's a change of mind.

Repentance is a change of manners. He says on further *"let him forsake his way."* We have to give up our way and go God's way, give up our will, and do God's will.

It's not only a change of mind and a change of manners but it is a change of masters. *"Let him return unto the Lord."* I think that's a good definition of repentance. It's getting your mind straightened out about God and about sin and about righteousness and Christ.

It's changing your manners, your behavior and conduct on the basis of God's Word. It's a change in masters. *"No man can have two masters."* That's repentance.

I don't know whether you have repented or ever will repent. You may be a Sunday school teacher and never repented. You may be a preacher and never repented. *"But, except you repent you will perish."* That's what God's Word says. Do with it what you will but that sounds a clear note.

I don't know if you will ever experience a new birth. I know that a new birth is not walking down a church aisle; it's not shaking the preacher's hand, and it's not deciding that you would rather go to heaven than to go to hell.

The new birth is of God; it's of God. *"We are born of God;"* that is what the Scripture says. *"It's not of the will of the flesh, not of the will of man; we are born of God."* It's a supernatural birth. It's a spiritual birth. It's from above. *"We are born of God."*

We are born of the Spirit: *"that which is born of the flesh is flesh. That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit."*

We are born of the Word of God. *"He hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever: Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth."*

It's to a new life. We are born of the Spirit of God to live a spiritual life. I don't know whether you have ever been born again or ever will be born again, but I know this and this is sounding a clear note: *"Except a man be born again he will never see the kingdom of God."*

Now, you can do what you want to with that but that is sounding a clear note; that's preaching. I know that a lot of preachers him-and-haw and apologize and beat around the bush and do whatever they do to stay on the good side of whoever they are trying to stay on the good side of, but that's where it is.

That's what the Book says: *"except a man be born again he will never see the kingdom of God,"* whoever that man is. You can laugh at it, ridicule it, make fun of it, and talk about born-again-Christians and some of them ought to be made fun of.

Nevertheless, you can't do anything about that one charge; *"except a man be born again, he will never see the kingdom of God."*

I don't know if you will ever receive Christ as your Lord and Saviour, you may never have, you may and you may not, I don't know. But, the Scriptures make it clear: *"he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life. He that believeth not the Son shall never see life but the wrath of God abideth on him."* That's plain and simple and that's the kind of preaching we need to hear.

"This is the record, God hath given us eternal life and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son of God, hath life, (not he that has a good reputation, he that hath a moral code, he that hath a good

standard, he that goeth to church on Sunday and teacheth a Sunday school class and sings in the choir) *he that hath the Son of God hath life and he that hath not the Son of God shall never see life.*"

"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God that you may have eternal life." Life is in Christ. "He's our righteousness, our wisdom, our sanctification, (our holiness), and our redemption."

It's all in Him. *"In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily and you are complete in him."* I don't lack anything if I am in Christ. If I'm not in Christ, whatever I have, will do me no good.

I don't know if you will go on trusting your own righteousness and holiness and bragging about how holy you are and good you are and how spiritual you are and religious you are, I don't know. You may go right on down that path of self-righteousness and perish.

But, I will tell you this; the Lord picked out the most righteous men of His day, the Pharisees. He said to His disciples: *"if your righteousness does not exceed theirs, (go beyond theirs, and better than theirs), you will never see the kingdom of God."*

You say: "Where am I going to get that kind of righteousness, that kind of holiness?" It's in Christ. Christ is God's righteousness. He imputes it unto us. *"He was made sin who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."*

"He was born under the law, made of a woman, made under the law to redeem them that were born under the law that we might be righteous in him." Christ is our righteousness!

God can't look upon anything you are, say, or do, and accept it because it is imperfect. God can only accept perfection. But, He loves us in Christ. He accepts us in Christ. He sees us as righteous in Christ. He forgives us in Christ.

It's all in the Saviour, in Christ, like in Noah's Ark. Noah was in that ark. He wasn't out there swimming along with his own strength and power and floating on water-wings and lying on a life-buoy; he was in the ark and the ark was his security and safety. The ark was his refuge. Christ is our refuge.

I don't know when you will die, I don't know. I don't know when you will meet God in the judgment but brother I know this, you are going to die and you are going to meet God at the judgment.

The Scripture says: *"it is appointed; (it's an appointment you are going to keep) unto men once to die and after this judgment;"* my friend; that's straight; that's sounding a clear note. That's where it is!

You may be hearing the last preaching you will ever hear. You may be laughing at the last preacher you will ever laugh at. You may be ridiculing the last Gospel message you'll ever ridicule and you may be rejected the last word of truth you will ever reject.

I'm telling you this: you are going to die and you are going to meet a holy God in judgment. And He says: *"every secret thing shall be brought into the open and everything whispered in closets shall be shouted from the housetop."* God is going to judge every man according to the things written in the Book. I don't know what's on your books but I have a good idea. I don't know what's on your record but I've got a good idea.

The Word of God says: *"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. From the soul of our feet to the top of our heads; there's no righteousness or soundness in us."*

Let me give you four words to think about. You've got a life to live, you've got a death to die, you've got a judgment to face and you've got an eternity to spend. That's the four most important words you can think about.

It's not how much money you make or how many friends you've got or how big a house you live in; you've got a life to live. The only life that is worth living is that life which is lived in Christ and you've got a death to die.

You will die in your sins or you will die in faith, one of the two. You've got a judgment to face and you will face it in Christ His substitute or you will face it alone, alone. If you face it alone you will spend eternity alone. You will be cast out of the presence of God. *"But, there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ;"* there is no judgment.

I don't know if your name is in the Book of Life; I've never seen it. I don't know whose name is in the Book of Life. I do know this; the Scripture says: *"whosoever is not written in the book of life shall be cast into hell."* That's what it says!

Our Lord Jesus Christ and His disciples came running to him one day. They were real excited. They had been out there preaching a little bit and they came back real excited and they said: *"Lord, even the demons are subject to us."*

That sounds like some of the present day hucksters on television doesn't it, "merchandisers of the Gospel?" They came running in and said: *"even the demons are subject to us."* Our Lord said: *"Don't rejoice that the demons are subject to you but rather rejoice that your names are written in the Lamb's book of life."*

Demons can be subject to demons. The demons can be subject to Satan's ministers. The demons can be subject to Satan's ministers of righteousness who deceive the people and creep in unaware. But, the demons names are not written in the Book of Life.

The sheep of Christ, the children of God, the beloved; their names are written in the Book of Life. This is what you better rejoice in. This is what you better seek, to have your name written in the Book of Life by the hand of the Saviour, *"who loved us and gave himself for us."*

SOUNDING A CLEAR NOTE

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I don't know when Christ is coming back to the earth but I know that He is coming, I know He's coming. I know that a lot of people are getting excited right now but they have gotten excited before.

I'm telling you this; our Lord said: *"I go to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto myself."* That's the main thing, that's the main thing. *"Christ Jesus shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation."*

The main thing is, has He appeared the first time on your behalf to put away your sin by the sacrifice of Himself? If Christ is your Redeemer it doesn't matter whether you go through the tribulation or don't.

If Christ is your Redeemer it doesn't matter whether the millennium is on this earth or not. If Christ is your Redeemer it doesn't matter whether there are 7 judgments, five judgments, or one judgment; who cares?

There's no judgment in Christ; they are redeemed in Him. Everything is all right in my Father's house, everything's all right. Let's don't get taken up with these things and get sidetracked. What you better do is *"make your calling and election sure. If you do these things you will never fail."*

I know that He is coming back. The angel said, *"This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as you have seen him go."*

Now, men may claim that it's difficult to find mercy but I will tell you this, my friend: it's no secret where mercy is found; it's in Christ; that's where it is; God said that: it's in Christ.

Men may not understand why God saves whom He saves but its no secret how He saves them. He saves them by the sacrifice of His Son. If Gospel issues are laid down, lines will be drawn, and folks will choose up and take sides and God will be glorified!