

It Pleased God

By Henry Mahan

Bible Text: Philippians 3:1-14

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Now we are turning back for our text this morning to Philippians three, verse 10. “That I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the communion or fellowship of his sufferings being made conformable unto his death.”

I don't think the apostle Paul feared any man. He said, “If I please men I am not the servant of Christ.”

I do not believe the apostle Paul feared death. He said, “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain. I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ which is far better.”

I don't think the apostle Paul feared persecution. He talked about being stoned and shipwrecked and scourged for Christ. And he said, “I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

I do think there are some things he did fear. I think there are some things that caused him great fear, some things he was afraid of. One of those things is, I believe Paul feared false converts. He continually exhorted people to examine themselves when he was talking about the Lord's Table in the book of 1 Corinthians and when he was inviting the people of God to come to the table of the Lord. He said, “But before you come, examine yourselves. Let every man examine himself and so let him eat. Don't eat the table of the Lord unworthily. Without faith it is impossible to please God. Without faith a man cannot come to God. Don't eat the table of the Lord unworthily. Don't drink and eat unto yourselves damnation. If you do not know Christ do not come to his table.”

And then he said, again, “Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith. Know ye not your own selves how that Christ dwelleth in you except you be reprobate?”

And then he said, “I thank God I baptized none of you, with the exception of Crispus and Gaius, lest any should say I baptized in my own name.”

Paul feared false converts. He was afraid that people would sit under his ministry and make a false profession, that they would claim to know Christ and not know him. He was constantly afraid of this.

And then, secondly, I think something else that Paul feared was false religion. He said in the book of Galatians, chapter one, if you want to look at that with me. In Galatians, the first chapter, he said, verse eight, “Thou we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached, let him be accursed.”

There is only one gospel. There is only one God. There is only one mediator between God and men. There is only one way of salvation. There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.

“So, as I said before, so say I now again,” verse nine, “If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that you have received, let him be accursed.”

In 2 Corinthians chapter 11, verse four, Paul said, “If he that cometh preacheth another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive another Spirit whom you have not received, or another gospel which you have not accepted, another Jesus, another Spirit, another gospel,” He feared these things. He feared people making false profession. He feared false converts.

Paul wouldn't have dared to enter into the type of aisle dragging and head counting that we have entered into in this day. He was too much afraid of false converts, of people making false professions. And then he was afraid of false religion, of false gospel. Oh, he said over there in 2 Corinthians, “If this person comes preaching another Jesus, another Spirit and another gospel, you might well bare with,” in italics is *him*, the word is “me. You might bear well with me.”

And then, quickly, the third thing of which Paul was afraid and which he feared. He feared false converts. “Examine yourselves.” He exhorted people to continually, to examine themselves. He feared a false gospel. He feared a false gospel. He said, “Now, if anybody comes preaching any other gospel or another Jesus or another Spirit, let him be accursed. I don't care,” he said, “If it is an angel from heaven. Let him be accursed. I fear false religion, false worship.”

Under God let the potsherds of the earth strive with the potsherds of the earth, but let no man contend with God. “It is a fearful thing,” he said in the book of Hebrews, “to fall into the hands of the living God.”

And then the third thing I think he feared above all things, he feared failure. He feared failure to know Christ.

That is the reason he said here in Philippians chapter three...he goes back and says in verse four, “Thou there are folks that think they have confidence in the flesh, I more. I was a Jew. I was circumcised the eighth day of the stock of Israel. I was of the tribe of not Reuben, but Benjamin, not Gad, but Benjamin, Benjamin, the beloved son. I was of the tribe of Benjamin. I was a Hebrew of Hebrews, concerning the law I was a Pharisee. Zeal? I persecuted Jesus Christ and his Church. Touching the righteousness which is in the outward law, the moral law, the ceremonial law, they couldn't lay anything to my

charge. But I count all of these things loss for the knowledge of Christ. My circumcision, my ceremonialism, my legalism, my success, my attainments, my background. I count all these things but loss. Yea, I count them but dung, less than nothing, that I may know Christ, that I may be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, that I may know him, that I may know him, the power of his resurrection. God raised him from the dead as a triumphant substitute. The power of his resurrection: God raised him from the dead. Our sins paid in full. The power of his resurrection: God raised him as he shall raise us. The power of his resurrection: God raised him that we might sit with him in the heavenlies. I want to know him and the power of his resurrection, the resurrected life, the Christ life. I want to know him and the fellowship, the communion of his sufferings, how he suffered as a man, tempted in all points as we are tempted, yet without sin, in soul, in body. He made his soul an offering for sin, why he suffered, that my trials and my tests might make me more like him. I want to enter into the fellowship, the communion of the sufferings of Christ, how he suffered, why he suffered and that my sufferings might more conform me to his image. Oh, that God would reveal himself to me,” Paul said, “That I may know him.”

It is not enough to know doctrine. One of the saddest things I know in this world, one of the saddest things and I fear that I have contributed to it. One of the saddest things I know is that people have come to positions on doctrine, they doctrinal, they are orthodox, they are theologians, but they don't have the spirit and the compassion and the knowledge of the Son of God. And Barnard said one time years ago and I understand now what he meant. You cannot build a work for the glory of God on theologians because they are stopped short of Christ and they are more interested in their doctrines than they are in God. And they are more interested in their doctrines than they are in Christ. And they are more interested in proving their doctrines than they are in demonstrating the Spirit of the Son of God. And you cross their doctrines on Calvinism or ecclesiology or prophecy, if you cross their doctrines it is more important to them to defend their doctrines than to demonstrate the spirit of the Son of God.

Oh that I may know him, that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, that I may know him and the communion of his sufferings, that I may know him and be conformable, be made conformable, be made like the Lord Jesus Christ in his death and in his resurrection and in his spirit and in his grace and in his love and in his mercy. Not that I may know doctrine, but that I may know Christ.

You say, “Preacher, you can't know Christ without knowing doctrine.”

You are right. But you don't arrive at Christ through doctrine. You arrive at doctrine through Christ. You come to know him and he reveals his teachings and his doctrines in himself.

That I may know him.

I want you to turn to Psalms 115, Psalms 115. Let's look at this just a moment, Psalms 115. There are those who stop with doctrine. There are those who stop with a devotion to

an organization. I want us to have here in this place, I want us to have a church that has sweet fellowship and I want us to have a church that is friendly and I want us to have a church in which people will feel welcome. But I do not want people to come to this place in order to meet with friends. I want them to come and meet God. There is a difference. I don't want people to feel attracted to this place because they come to this place and they find what we call a kindred spirit. I want them to come here to meet God to worship God to hear the gospel of God. And if all these other things can be had and be shared as we meet God and as we worship God, that's wonderful. But let's not have them without God.

Who is he? What has he done? What is he doing? Who is God? That I may know him. That I may know the living God.

Christ said, "This is eternal life, not that you might have a God and go through a form of worship, but that you might know the living God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, that the living God, that the personal God might be known by you."

Do you know God? You know brother Mahan. Do you know God? You know the five points of Calvinism. Do you know God? You know brother Pfitzer and brother Louis and brother Yeager. Do you know God? Do you know God? You know the moral law. You know what is right.

"I know what is right and what is wrong."

But, yeah, I know you do. But do you know God? The heathen knows what is right and wrong. God has put in the heart of every man the light of conscience and everybody knows what is right and what is wrong, but do you know God?

That is what Paul is talking about here. I want to know God. I want to know God.

Well, the heathen said in Psalms 115, in verse one, "Not unto us, oh Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory."

That is fine church out there on 13th street. They are generous people. They sing well. They are friendly people. Their preacher can preach. They have got a good mission program. That is all fine. But do they know God? Do they know God? Those people know God out there. I went in their congregation, in their service and I could feel the presence of God. I could feel the presence of God. And one reason I could feel the presence of God is because I took God with me. I took God with me. And I went there looking for God and sure enough he was there.

We can't point our finger at anybody. Somebody said, "Church doesn't worship like it used to." Do you? Because you will find just exactly what you are looking for and you will find what you bring. You can't expect God to dwell in walls of stone. God doesn't dwell in walls or between walls of stone. God dwells in pulsating, personal, loving, intimate, believing hearts. That's where God dwells.

I want to know God. I want to stand up here and preach God. I want people to feel the presence and hear the voice of God. I want us to walk out of this building say, "I was glad when the said let us go to the house of God. Didn't our hearts burn within us as he walked with us and as he talked with us? God was there."

"How many did you all have in Sunday school this morning?"

What difference does it make if God wasn't there?

"How many baptisms did you have last year?"

What difference does it make if God wasn't there?

"Not unto us, but unto thy name give glory. Wherefore should the heathen say, 'Where is your God? Where is your God?'"

I know where Buddha is. He is sitting over there with his...with that big silly grin on his face and [?] Japan. I know where he is. And I know where Confucius is and all his wisdom in the pages of his book. And I know where Mohammed is and all these other gods. I know where they are. Mohammed is in his grave. His bones have gone back to the dust and he has left a few memories. But where is God? Where is your God?

Verse three. "Our God, oh our God is in the heavens. He fills the heavens. The earth is his footstool. The heavens cannot contain him."

Where is your God? "Our God is in the heavens. Our God is in the things that hath made. Our God rules and reigns and controls and is sovereign. And watch it. "And he does what soever he pleases." That's our God. He does what he pleases when he pleases with whom he pleases and the way he pleases. That's our God.

"That's not my God, preacher."

Then I have nothing for you. You are in the wrong place. You are in the wrong place. I am here to preach as Paul said to Timothy, "The word of God." I am here for God to speak concerning himself, not what grandma thinks about God or grandpa or the old preacher under whom we were raised. I want God to speak.

Where is God? He is in the heavens. And his character is and his attributes are, he has done what he pleased. That is what he has done.

And the first thing I find it pleased God to do and I am sure happy about it, over in 1 Samuel chapter 12. It tells me what he pleased to do. This one thing I know. Our God, the God of the Bible is in the heavens. And he does what he pleases when he pleases the way he pleases with whom he pleases and none can stay his hand or say unto him, "What doest thou?"

He said, "I am the Lord. I create light. I create darkness. I have the keys of hell and death. I am the Lord."

Now read 1 Samuel 12:22. Watch it here now. "For the Lord will not forsake his people for his great namesake because it hath pleased the Lord. It hath pleased the Lord to make you his people."

You are a child of God because it pleased God to make you his child. You are saved this morning, if you are, because it pleased God to save you. Is your testimony what you have done for God? Or is your testimony what God has done for you?

Let me ask you a question. I want you to turn with me to Ephesians chapter one, Ephesians the first chapter. And let me ask you three questions. Ephesians, the first chapter and I want you to look carefully at verses three through five and I want you to answer these three questions from these three verses.

The first question is this. Did you choose God or did God choose you? Now read Ephesians 1:3. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ according as he hath chosen us." It pleased God to choose you. It pleased God to choose you to set his affections upon you.

How many people does God have? The Scripture says, "A multitude which no man can number out of every tribe, kindred, nation and tongue under heaven, black people, white people, yellow people, red people." God has got a people out of every tribe, kindred, nation, tongue under heaven. He said in Revelation, "Lo a multitude which no man can number. And he took Abraham out one day and said, "Look at the stars." And they tell us they are multiplied billions of them out there. And he said, "So shalt thy seed be."

"Look at the sands of the seashore. How many are there? So shalt thy seed be."

All right. Let me ask you the second question. When did God choose you? "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He hath chosen us in Christ." When? "Before the foundation of this world."

If you are going to meet with the God of the Bible you are going to have to meet with the God of election. You may not like it. You may grind your teeth. You may clench your fist till the nails pierce your palms and you may call the God of election the monster. You may say that the God of election is a devil. You say what you want to. But if you are going to meet with the God of the Bible you are going to have to meet with the God of election, the God of covenant, the God of purpose, the God with whom there are no accidents, the God who is in the heavens who does what he pleases. That is so. Ain't now way around it, no way around it.

When did God choose you? Before you were born. Further back than that. Before Christ died on the cross. Further back than that. Before Adam fell. Further back than that. Before Adam was created. Further back than that. Before the foundations of the earth were laid God chose you in Christ. That's right.

Now, the third question. Why did he choose you? There are a lot of folks he didn't choose. Why did he choose you? There is nothing in you to merit his choice? Why did he choose you? Nothing in you to merit his love. Why did he pick on you? Why didn't he pass you by? He passed by a lot of other folks. Why didn't he pass you by? He should have. If he had he would have been just. If he had, you deserved it. Why did he choose you?

Read on. "Having predestinated us," verse five, "unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his own will." He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

Look at verse 11. "In whom we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." I want to know God. I want to know God. Now I am not going to bring a prescription and say, "Fill that...preacher, fill this prescription. This is the kind of God I want. Here is my prescription. I want to hire you to preach for us this Sunday at 13th Street Baptist and here is the prescription of God we want you to fill."

I am not going to bring any dimensions and say you build me a God and make it according to these dimensions. I'm not going to bring you a blue print and say, "Here, build me a God." I am not going to bring you an underlined Bible with nothing but the free will passages underlined and say, "Here, preach this God to me" or bring you a hyper Calvinist Bible with only those passages underlined and say, "Here, preach this God to me."

Brethren, I want to know the God of the Bible, the God of the Bible, the God who in compassion and love said, "Come to me if you are laboring and heavy laden and I will give you rest." And the God who turned around and said, "No man can come to me except my Father which sent me draw him." God chose me. And God chose me before the world began. And God chose me according to the good pleasure of his own will.

Where is your God? Where is your God? I know where the hyper Calvinist God is. He is in their systematic theology books. There is where he is and he doesn't dare get out of there. Where is the free will God? I know where he is. I know where he is. He is chained. He is in prison. He can't do anything but what they let him do.

Where is the God of the Bible? He is in the heavens. He is in the heavens. And he does what he pleases. And if he pleases to destroy a world and save a man named Noah, he will do it. If he is pleased to wipe out a whole race and save a Gentile by the name of Naaman he will do it. He will do it. He is in the heavens. He does what he pleases.

All right, now the second thing. Turn to the book of Colossians chapter one. I want to know God, not just any God, the God of the Bible. I want to meet with God not just any God, the God who is in the heavens.

What did it please him to do? It pleased him to make you his people, not to leave you in your guilt, not to leave you wallowing in your sins, not to leave you in your rebellion, but to set his love on you in Christ, to love you with an everlasting love. It pleased him to do that. Aren't you glad? He is the friend of sinners.

But then in Colossians 1:19 it says, "It pleased the Father that in Christ should all fulness dwell." Now these people God chose, he chose them to make them holy but they aren't holy now. He chose them to make them righteous, but they have no righteousness of their own. They are enemies.

Look at Romans chapter five, what it says about us. It says here in Romans chapter five, beginning with verse six. "When we were without strength in due time Christ died for the ungodly." Verse eight. "God commanded his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Verse 10. "If when we were enemies we were reconciled..."

So these people had no righteousness. God chose them. Back in the counsel halls of eternity, chose them in Christ, set his affections upon them in Christ, but they were ungodly, enemies without strength, without hope. So what did he do? The book of Galatians tells us awful well, Galatians chapter three. It says here in verse 10, "As many as were of the works of the law under the curse of the law. For it is written, 'Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.'"

And Galatians four, verse four, Galatians 4:4, "When the fullness of time was come God sent his Son made of a woman, made under the law to redeem them that were under the law." It pleased God to designate his Son. It pleased God to anoint his Son. It pleased God to send his Son into this world in the likeness of human flesh to obey for us his righteous, holy law. It pleased God to make God our representative. It pleased God to make Christ our surety. It pleased God that in Christ should all fulness dwell, all salvation, all wisdom, all righteousness, all redemption. It pleased the Father to do that.

Where is your God? He is in the heavens. Now, it pleased him to look down through the ages of time and pick out a people. And then it pleased him in the fulness of time to send his Son through the virgin's womb into this world in human flesh as the second Adam, as the Lord from heaven, as the man from glory, as the God man to stand here on this earth and represent those people whom he chose, who had no righteousness or godliness or strength or beauty to stand for them. If a man sin against a man the judge shall stand for him. If a man sin against God who shall stand for him?

It pleased God to make Christ that man's surety.

Now look at Isaiah 53, verse 10, Isaiah 53:10. Now listen to this. "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him. It pleased the Lord to bruise him."

Where is your God? Huh? Where is your God? Well, we got our God in jail and he wants to enter every body's heart, but they won't let him. We got our God up there peeping through the banisters of heaven crying his eyes out. He is like a poor little boy. Somebody stole his ball and he is sitting down there looking through the bars and he is crying.

Where is your God? Our God is in the heavens. And he has done what he pleased. Our God is not in jail. He is on a throne. Our God is not defeated. He is victorious. Our God is not frustrated. He is almighty. And it pleased him to look down upon the ruin and degradation and depravity and cess pool of sin and pick out some sons of Adam to make them trophies of his grace. It pleased him to do that. But he saw his law had to be honored and he saw his justice had to be satisfied and he saw that in order to be just and justifier of the ungodly that man was going to have to have a surety. Man was going to have to have a representative. So it pleased him to send Christ down here in this world as a man. And Christ walked this earth in the flesh and thorns pierced his feet and the sun burned his brow and the dust collected on his body and the whip descended on his back and the nails pierced his hand and unjust witnesses falsely accused him and the religious multitude nailed him to a cross. Yet it pleased God to bruise him. It pleased God.

Turn to the book of Acts, the book of Acts.

You say, "Those mean old folks crucified our Lord."

They sure did. They are going to hell for it, too. But in crucifying our Lord they did what our Lord decreed to be done. They did what our Lord pleased for them to do. Brethren, I will tell you. You may gnash your teeth and shake your fist at the God of the Bible, but every breath you draw is drawn by his good pleasure. And you may take a hammer and nail and drive it into the hands of his beloved Son, but you couldn't do it if it didn't please him to let you do it. That's so. That's so.

It says in Acts chapter four, listen to it. Acts chapter four. And beginning here with verse 27. "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus whom thou hast anointed both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. They did what they wanted to do. But they did what God determined for them to do."

One of those soldiers standing under the cross, he hadn't read the Bible. He didn't know the prophets. He turned to another and said, "That fellow we crucified, Jesus of Nazareth, has a pretty robe there woven throughout without a seam. Let's don't tear that apart and share it among us. Let's cast dice to see who can get it."

And he said, "That's a pretty good idea. Where did you com up with that?"

If he had read the book of Psalms he would have come up with it right there in the book of Psalms. God prophesied hundreds of years before that fellow ever said that that he would say that. "And they cast lots for my raiment. And they cast lots for my raiment."

"I'll tell you what let's do. Let's don't tie him to the cross. Let's nail him to the cross."

"Where'd you come up with that? That's a pretty good idea."

"We see more blood that way."

He didn't come up with it. God said hundreds of years before, "They pierced my hands and my feet."

Every curse word they said, every cruel thing they did, every drop of spittle they spat in his face, God determined for them to do it.

But you can have your little five and ten cent store God. I want to know the God of the Bible. I want to know the God who is in heaven, who does as he pleases. I wouldn't waste five minutes worshipping your God because he can't do anything anyhow. He is frustrated and disappointed and defeated. But the God of the Bible does what he pleases. And it pleased him to bruise his Son.

Now turn to Galatians one. What else did it please him to do in Galatians chapter one? I want you to listen to this now. It pleased God to have a people. How many? The stars of the sky, as the sands of the seashore. Where did he get them? Out of every tribe, kindred, nation under heaven. What are they going to be like? They are going to be like Christ. How did he get them? He chose them. They didn't chose him. They wouldn't have chosen him.

If you think you would have chosen God apart from his divine grace, you don't know yourself. Somebody said, "Would you like to live back during the days of Christ and the apostles?"

No. I might have been one of those out there who crucified him. I want to live in the light of revelation. I want to live in the day when there is a most revealed about Christ. It pleased God to pick out a people and it pleased God to make God their surety and send him down here to this earth to face the law in their place and to go to the cross. It pleased him to bruise Christ for our sin, our sins were laid on him.

Now, wait a minute. Now wait a minute. These people whom God chose, for whom Christ was the surety, for whom Christ died are still enemies. They still hate God. That's right. They still hate God because the Scripture says, "The natural mind is enmity against God. It is not subject to the law of God, neither, indeed, can be, neither, indeed, can be."

Now, let me tell you something. Every person born into this world, every person born into this world is born with an evil fleshly nature that loves darkness and hates light, that loves evil and hates beauty and holiness and that loves sin and hates God. Everybody.

And that nature is flesh and it is going to stay flesh. And it is not going to walk in the light of holiness. It is not going to walk in the light of truth. It is not going to walk in the light of God. And it is going to hate God. It is blind. It cannot see the mysteries of the gospel. And so...and that is the way Saul of Tarsus was. He hated Christ and he hated the gospel and he hated this message of substitution and he did everything he could against it. But one day on the Damascus road God said, "That boy belongs to me and I chose him from eternity and my Son died for him and my Son was surety for him and that blind rebel, that deaf rebel, he has gone far enough. Whoa."

And he stopped him right there and unhorsed him. And Saul bit the dust. And God blinded him and he looked up and he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And the Lord Jesus revealed himself to him. He said, "I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you persecuteth."

"Lord, what would you have me do?"

And after that he was a different man. And he tells about it here in Galatians 1:15. Listen to it. "But when it pleased God, when it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb and called me by his grace..." It doesn't say anything about deciding for Jesus. It doesn't say anything there about one day I was on my road to Damascus and I was thinking about this thing and I remembered Stephen died and I got to thinking about, well, you know, I ought to straighten up and do right and I ought not to persecute Jesus Christ and I ought not...

He doesn't say that. He says, "When it pleased God who had separated me from my mother's womb and made me his child from all eternity. When it pleased him he called me by his grace and revealed his Son to me. He revealed his Son."

Saul didn't make a decision for Christ. God revealed Christ to his heart. There is a lot of difference. Saul didn't decide to quit some sins and join the church. Christ was revealed to him. Saul didn't decide to join the Baptists because he got tired of the Methodists and they were modernistic and they contributed to the National Council of Churches. So he was going to get out of that liberal outfit and join these conservatives. Phooey on that. He came to know Christ. God revealed his Son to me. That is why I am here, because God revealed his Son in me, not just to me, but in me. Christ liveth in me. Christ liveth in me. It pleased God to reveal him. It pleased God.

Now, what's the last thing? In 1 Corinthians one, now listen to this. Back yonder and before all eternity the sovereign God who reins upon his throne of judgment and his throne of grace looked down through the ages and saw all the sons of Adam and for reasons known only to himself because it seemed good in his sight, he chose in Christ a people to be trophies of his grace, to declare the riches of his grace in Christ Jesus throughout all the endless ages. And he chose them from their mother's womb. He chose

them. He set his affections upon them. And it pleased him to designate and anoint his Son as their representative, as their surety. And he came down into this world and it pleased God to nail him to a cross by the hands of cruel men and wicked men, fulfilling the design and purpose of God the Father whom it pleased to bruise him. And down there on their Damascus road to hell, kicking against the pricks and going down the way they want to go, turning to their own way. God reached down and turned them by the power of his Holy Spirit he turned them, by the power of his Holy Spirit he revealed Christ to them. But he did it through the preaching of the Word.

Now, you look at it in 1 Corinthians one, verse 21. "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God." This world doesn't know God. There is no fear of God before...this world has a god, but they don't know the God. They have got their prescriptions filled and they are getting them filled every Sunday morning. They have hired them preachers that preach what they want to hear. And if their preacher crosses them, they will fire him. They need to get them some prophets. If they cross him he will fire them. That's right. They need to get some prophets. They need to get some men who fear only false converts and false religion and his own failure to know God. They need some prophets who have seen God in his holiness, themselves in their sinfulness and the land in its uncleanness who dare to preach God and call on them to bow down and worship or be sent to hell.

It says here it pleased God. The world by wisdom didn't know God. But it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. That's right. That's right. By preaching men are convinced of sin. We are begotten in the gospel. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. I wouldn't give you two cents for any kind of doctrine that talks about a man being a child of God who has never believed and heard and received the gospel. It is not so. By preaching hearts are broken. By preaching Christ is revealed. By preaching lives are changed. By preaching God is glorified. By preaching repentance and faith are given. By preaching the dead are quickened.

Why? It pleased God to do it that way. If you don't like it that way you will have to get you another God because that is what it pleased God to do. Now, if you are satisfied with God's pleasure in choosing men and you are satisfied with God's pleasure in sending Christ to the cross to die for sinners, if you are satisfied with God's pleasure in sending the Holy Spirit to quicken them, you had better bow to God's pleasure when he said it pleased him by the foolishness of preaching to save everybody that will believe what that preacher says. That's right.

You turn to the book of Acts. I know I'm keeping you long, but I want to show you something here. The book of Acts. Now, you know the Scripture over there in Romans. Would you turn to Acts chapter eight? You know that Scripture over in Romans where it says, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." That is so. You call on the name of the Lord, not just any Lord, the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But how are they going to call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they going to believe on him of whom they have not heard? And how are they going to

hear without a preacher? But I want you to look at the book of Acts and here in Acts chapter eight, verse 28, there was a fellow returning, sitting in his chariot. This was a...go back to verse 27. This man of Ethiopia, he was a eunuch of great a authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians and he had charge of all the treasure of Ethiopia. He went to Jerusalem to worship. He walked in what light he had. He didn't know Christ. He didn't know substitution. He was going through all that Jewish ceremonialism. But he was returning to Ethiopia and sitting in his chariot reading Isaiah the prophet. And where he was reading was Isaiah 53 which I read to you a little while ago.

And then the Spirit of the Lord said, "Philip, go over there and join yourself to that chariot." Now watch it. If he is one of the elect he doesn't need to hear the gospel. That's what people tell me. If he was chosen by God, God has quickened him by the Holy Spirit and he has already got life and he has already saved. He is already going to heaven. What does he need to hear the gospel for?

He needs to hear it to be saved. Election is not salvation. It is unto salvation. Christ is salvation. And if you don't have Christ you don't have salvation even though you claim election. Not so.

And the Spirit said, "Philip, go join yourself to that chariot. And Philip ran and heard him read the prophet Isaiah." And he said, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

He said, "How can I? How can I except some man should guide me?" And he said, "Philip, come up here and sit with me." And the place where he read was, "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter. He was wounded for our transgression." You know the Scripture. "Bruised for our iniquities."

Verse 34. And the eunuch answered and said, "Philip, of whom is he speaking?"

How can this man be saved? He doesn't even know Christ? He doesn't even know who Christ is? He doesn't know why Christ died? He doesn't even know that Christ died.

He did not say...he said, "Who in the world is he talking about?" How in the world is this man going to praise Christ for dying for his sins? He doesn't even know who Christ is? Who is he talking about? Is he talking about himself? Why this fellow, if God took him to him he might run up and shake Isaiah's hand and say, "Thank you for dying for me."

"Who is he talking about, himself or some other man?"

Philip opened his mouth and began at the same Scripture and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went their way they came to a certain water and the eunuch said, "Here is water. What doth hinder me from being baptized?"

And Philip said, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." And he answered and he said...Watch it now. Something has happened to this old boy and it happened under the preaching of the gospel. It pleased God to choose him. It pleased God to

predestinate all the means to send him to Jerusalem, to give him a Bible to read, to send Philip to walk along the chariot, to give him the will and the grace to invite Philip to sit and talk to him. God predestinated the means and God predestinated the means of preaching the gospel to and Philip preached Christ to him and this old boy who awhile ago didn't even know who Christ was said, "I believe that Jesus Christ who died on the cross, who was buried and rose again, who is at the right hand of God, is the Son of God. That is what I believe."

Praise God.

Preaching. Preaching.

And Philip said, "Stop this chariot." And they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch and he baptized him. And when he came back up out of the water Philip left him.

Oh that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the communion of his sufferings and be conformed to his death.

I want us to turn to number 37 and I want us to sing as our closing hymn, "Oh, Lord my God when I in awesome wonder consider all the worlds thy hands have made. I see the stars and I hear the rolling thunder, thy power throughout the universe displayed. Then sings my soul, my savior God to thee, 'How great thou art.'"