

SERMON FOR FEBRUARY 5, 2023

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 2: 2

THEME: IT'S JUST THAT SIMPLE

2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

In the name of Jesus:

Last month many of us received in the mail all sorts of financial statements. We got W-2s, 1099s—or 1099-INTs or 1099-DIVs or 1099-DIV SUBSTITUTES—1098s, you name 'em, in the mail. Which means we'll soon start assembling deductions, exclusions, exemptions, seeing if we qualify for any credits. It's complicated!

So many people today just don't understand the message of the Scriptures. They look at the Scriptures as a massive book filled with contradictions and confusing statements. They think that the Bible is a complicated book. One look at both the Epistle and Gospel lesson for today, one might, on the surface, think that the message is complicated and confusing.

First you have Jesus speaking in the Sermon on the Mount saying this: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven

and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot [the King James says not one “jot” or “tittle”], will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. (vv 17–19a).”

So yes, we believe in the Bible as the Word of God and that it is inspired and without error. But now listen to our text for today, where Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 2: 2: “I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” Nothing but Jesus and His cross, nothing except Jesus, only Jesus. But Jesus says you have to keep the Law. It seems like there is a big contradiction, and that Jesus and the apostle Paul aren’t on the same page. Are you saved by keeping the Law, or is it as Paul says, only about believing in Jesus?

What Jesus says is absolutely true. Jesus didn’t come to abolish the law, He came to keep the Law and fulfill it, every word, every aspect, every letter and punctuation of the Law. He did it so that we could not be confused about it.

A few years ago, you may recall, a billionaire businessman by the name of Steve Forbes was running for president, and he proposed a flat tax to replace the whole federal income tax structure: Here’s how much you made;

now pay 17 percent. Simple. The problem, critics say, is that it's not that simple. It won't work. At least not at a rate that low.

Some people attempt to simplify what God has to say in the Bible. Some simplify the message by denying the truths of what God has to say, whether it be the truth that creation was created in six days, or by ignoring passages of the Bible that they don't agree with and that don't fit their lifestyle. Some will say that the message and truths of the Bible are outdated or that what the Bible says doesn't apply to them. So this gives them the so-called freedom to believe what they want and to do what they want. So they reduce the truths to the Bible into something that they think is manageable for them. It all becomes very simple, like a low flat tax rate.

But note what Jesus says, that this reduction of the Law of God into something that is very simplistic is not going to work, because Jesus says: "Truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not [one jot or tittle] will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. (vv 18–19a). God doesn't simplify His standards. He says that you must keep the Law in its entirety, a 17% rate or a 99% rate of perfection doesn't cut it. You must be perfect in every aspect of life 100% of the time, in thought, word and deed. You need to keep the Law

and pay attention to keeping it, to every word, every letter, every tiny detail of the Law.

Well who can do that? No one can, all of us are in the same boat, we are afflicted with the same sin sick condition. And that is why the Apostle Paul says that he is determined to know nothing else than Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

For to know Jesus is to know that Jesus kept the Law for sinners, and He kept the Law for you. His will was to know and do the will of His Heavenly Father, so Jesus kept the Law perfectly for you, He lived and breathed the Ten Commandments, always paying attention to them, always keeping them, every word, every letter, even to the smallest and tiniest detail of the Commandments. And most importantly, Jesus did this for you.

Whatsmore, Jesus went to the cross to die for your sins, each and everyone of them. That is the simple truth, that Christ came and died on the cross to save sinners. Nothing complicated or confusing about it, Jesus died on the cross for you! And when He died on the cross, Jesus cried out: "It is finished!" Nothing else can or could be done to save you. Christ died for you His perfect death all so that you would be forgiven of all of your sins.

Christ came to save sinners! Christ died and rose for your sins! It is the Good and glorious news of the cross, that Jesus died on the cross for you.

Jesus' death saves you. It is the message that sinners for centuries have longed to hear. It is a message that you and I are privileged to hear each and every Sunday and it is a message that we are to proclaim with our lips and our lives.

So let your light shine, the light of Jesus. He is the Light of the World. He is the One who shows sinners the love of God, in that while we were yet sinners, Jesus came to be crucified for sinners. For you, for me, for all. IT'S REALLY JUST THAT SIMPLE. Our lives are all about Jesus, His life, His death, and His resurrection, His love radiating and shining in our lives so that others can see and believe in Jesus.

To the glory of God and in Jesus' name

Amen