

Articles and Sermons :: The Word of the Cross - Poul Madsen**The Word of the Cross - Poul Madsen - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2007/8/13 18:19**

A message given by Mr. Poul Madsen at the Aeschi Conference, Switzerland, in September, 1969

THE WORD OF THE CROSS

"For the word of the cross is to them that are perishing foolishness; but unto us which are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1:18).

"Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church; whereof I was made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which was given me to your-ward, to preach fully the word of God" (Colossians 1:24-25).

I CANNOT tell you how grateful I am to be among you, and to meet old friends whom I have not seen for twenty-one years. Some of us were together at Kilcreggan, Scotland, in 1948, and for me that was a time of very real importance. There the Lord gave me two things: a new Bible -- a new revelation; and new friends -- a new experience of fellowship in the Lord. And those two things have stood the test of time. It was not just a time of emotion, but some days when the Lord did a lasting work in us.

Some of us have been through many things during the last twenty-one years. We have had many joys, some trials, some sorrows, some difficulties, and quite a number of things which we would not have chosen ourselves; and through all these things we have proved and experienced that the preaching of the Cross is truly the power of God. The word of the Cross has brought us through. A sentimental word could not have done that. A superficial word would not have been able to carry us right through, but the word of the Cross has actually and truly brought us through many, many different things; and the word of the Cross is actually the Word of God, touching all aspects of life.

1. A WORD OUT OF DARKNESS

The word of the Cross is a word out of darkness and suffering: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" That was a word out of utter darkness, and you find it throughout the Bible. It was the word of David. Again and again he cried: "Why, my God? Why?" It was the word of the prophets, and it was the word of Job. It was a word of suffering, but not of despair, a word out of deep trial, but not of rebellion; and a word out of that experience has power -- and how that word has helped us!

2. A WORD OF THIRST AND LONGING

The word of the Cross is also a word of deep, deep thirst, a longing to see the Lord's plan of salvation fulfilled. How I long to see the full salvation of my God! That also is a word throughout the whole Bible. The Lord said: "I thirst", and David did the same; so did the prophets. No one in touch with reality and in touch with God can come through on his own. He has a thirst in him for the realization of the Divine plan of salvation. How often we have been in difficulties and in situations where this thirst was felt in our innermost being! And how the word of the Cross has been a power to bring us through when we felt our thirst!

3. A WORD OF TRIUMPH

The word of the Cross is also a word of true triumph, not a superficial, cheap victory, but true triumph: "It is finished!" We find throughout the Bible that in the hours of deepest suffering the Lord's saints have been enabled to triumph, and I repeat, not a cheap, superficial victory. It is not only an emotional thing, but true victory that can stand even in the sight of God. How the word of the Cross has helped us, even in hours of deep darkness, to triumph through Him!

4. A WORD OF DEEP REST

The word of the Cross is a word of deep, deep rest. The waves were high, the enemy was seemingly triumphant, the darkness was heavy, but, in spite of all that, the word of the Cross gave us the deepest rest in our Lord. "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Sacrificing everything, even Himself, He was in the deepest rest in the will of His Father. Losing everything, His rest of faith was triumphant; and you will find that everywhere throughout the Scriptures. It is the word of the Cross, the eternal Word of God. "Though the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour

r of the olive shall fail ... yet I will joy in the God of my salvation" (Habakkuk 3:17-18). How the word of the Cross has enabled us, through many trials, to be quiet in our Lord, the Lord of our salvation! The enemy has been very busy and our nerves were very weak, but the word of His power brought deep rest to our innermost being.

5. A WORD OF DIVINE LOVE

The word of the Cross is also a word of love -- not cheap love, but Divine love: "Father, forgive them." One of our leaders in Denmark, who is not a Christian, said publicly: 'I do not know the truth, but this is the biggest word ever spoken to mankind: "Father, forgive them."' And then he added: 'It might well be the truth!' And you find it throughout the whole Bible. David prayed for Saul, the prophets prayed for Jerusalem and for their enemies. Nothing can create this love in us except the word of His power the word of the Cross.

In the last twenty-one years we have been tempted quite often to bitterness, or to fight with carnal weapons. How wonderful it is when the word of His power creates in us who are being saved the love of God!

6. A WORD OF FELLOWSHIP

The word of the Cross is the word of fellowship: "Woman, behold thy son ... Son, behold thy mother." I have not seen my two brethren here during these twenty-one years, and yet I say: 'Behold, my brothers.' That is the power of the word of the Cross, making us a new family; not founded on an emotional basis, but in spirit and in truth.

So I can testify to the power of the preaching of the Cross. "Unto us which are being saved it is the power of God." And it has brought us through. Signs could not help us. Sensationalism had no power to help us. The wisdom of men could not bring us through, but this word has actually proved its power in bringing all of us through. And now my own great wish is to be enabled to preach that word of the Cross; it may be that the Lord has given us some time here in order to enable us to preach that word, but without some practical identification with those who spoke the word of the Cross fully, how could one expect to preach that message?

7. A WORD TO BE PREACHED

The word of the Cross requires the spirit of the Cross, and thus Paul says that he rejoices in his sufferings. It had something to do with his ministry, for through the many sufferings he was enabled to preach the word of the Cross fully. Preaching is not only saying correct things according to Scripture; it has to convey the Spirit, the life of Him who spoke the word from His Cross. So it is not possible to preach the word of power without one's self being identified with Him who spoke from His Cross. That might explain many things in the past twenty-one years.

We are living through very difficult days. In Denmark, at least, the darkness is very, very heavy, and we have experienced that nothing of a superficial, easy-going Christianity can really bring true help. We are not fighting against flesh and blood, but are involved in some measure in a cosmic warfare, and we do not want only to touch the brains of men. We want really to touch deep down in human lives. As we have ourselves experienced the power of that word, not given us with very great manifestations, but in truth and in the spirit, then we know out of our own experience what to do. We want to be identified with our crucified Lord and Saviour. We want -- I have to say this carefully, but I must say it -- the sufferings which come out of obedience. We want, in days such as these, fully and truly to avoid the popular and to accept the truth. Therefore, my dear friends, we are not looking for signs, nor do we want the wisdom of this age, but the power of the Cross is the thing that we are seeking.

I guess that we are gathered here together during these days for this very reason. I have been to many conferences during the past twenty-one years. I have sponsored many myself. I have forgotten most of what has been said in all these conferences. Very much of it was very wonderful, as far as the emotions were concerned, but what has been left with me, what has stood the test of time and trial, what has kept me in the true fellowship of the Lord's saints, was the preaching of the Cross.

And, as I started by saying, it has been wonderful to come back now and to look back over twenty-one years with some of you.

The word of the Cross that goes forth from the mouth of the Lord has never returned unto Him void, and so I suggest that we, during these few days, seek the Lord's face together, asking Him to renew all of us, especially those in the ministry of the Word, that we, in our generation, can bring the word of His power so that, if we meet again in twenty-one years, we shall see then that that word of the Cross was effective and powerful, that it gave us new revelation, a new sense of fellowship, and was so powerful that it brought us through the coming twenty-one years with all their trials and sufferings. It shall be done!