

Ad-20090101 [29]: Preach Jesus

Acts 8:35
(Jn. 10:1-11)
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Acts 8:35

John 8:1-11

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Tape #201

Text: Acts 8:35

Perhaps I should bring you greetings also from my own diocese. Because last Sunday was a great Sunday. I was leading my diocese last Sunday but it was a youth weekend. And we had on that Sunday at All Saints Church in the town outside, not inside the church because the church can only sit a three hundred and we had five thousand people there. So you see the big difference, there was. I tell you, I'll surprise you by telling you we had this great gathering of young people who had come from different churches, our churches in the diocese, singing and witnessing on this particular Sunday. The service lasted for three hours. And we had, a I don't know whether you in America have this. And we had in Africa we still have this extraordinary meeting when people refuse to go home because they want to hear what God has to say from the pulpit. We had three preachers on Sunday and two young people giving their testimony. And I was among the preachers. Bishop as I am the two first preachers were laymen. One is a lawyer, a graduate from McKinley University, or Law graduate, wonderful man whom God is using and he's completely yielded. Degree in Law and he working on the second and he has now decided instead of pursuing his law degree to go and be at Theology at D_____ University in England. For full ministry. Another man is an economist, working on his second degree in economics. These two young men a greater in preaching and I only joined them to conclude a remarkable time. While these young people, thousands of them sat spellbound for two solid hours of real biblical preaching _____ in Africa. And if you finished they sometimes say, Haven't

YOUTH MTG
FK diocese

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you got anything more to say, in other words we came here to listen to the word of God and we should see how the word of God to give to us. We will hear all of it. It's a wonderful thing to speak such a subject. So they sent their love and greetings and that Sunday we concluded, a..m we said, I said, in concluding, any among the young people and old people who want to come and make a commitment to Jesus Christ. Because we simply don't preach for the sake of hearing. We give the message, and if you really caught the message then you ought to do something about it. It was wonderful because we said those who are really meant business, those in whose heart the Spirit of God has said a living word. You come to the church for commitment when the crowd has to stand and the church was packed. Some were in tears, some were rejoicing. A number of pastors were there, singing and rejoicing and encouraging and praying for them. It was a remarkable time and I shall never forget the feeling because I was saying goodbye, you see, beautiful when we say goodbye to your diocese. When we leave they're all getting busier and then you go across the Atlantic to share with the other brethren across the seas. These sent their love and greetings. Just a word to encourage you in this tremendous preparation. I believe that you and I are caught up in this tremendous time of movement. I don't mean we're caught up in a very lovely world. The kind of utopian world most people look forward to, but about which the New Testament knows nothing. I'm sure as men experiencing your ministry, as you get deeper and deeper into the word, you will discover again and again, the kind of word, God loved, God loved. It is not a lovely world, a utopic kind of world, it is

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not an ideal world, God had nothing to do with an ideal world. God loved a real world, the realistic world. Now what is a realistic world like, or what was it like or what is it like? in 1973. Speak about my country of Uganda. What is the world of Uganda in which we are preaching the Gospel. What is it like? Is it a sort of lovely world where men listen to the Gospel and where moral standards are interrupted? And where the political feelings are nice and understanding? What is it like? This is not the real world of Uganda. The kind of world you and I are called to speak to preach, to minister, because preaching to me is not just throwing verses at people. That's what I call, for lack of words or expression, a cheap Gospel and there has never been a cheap Gospel anywhere in the new Testament. _____ In other words, we are not invited to come and give people lovely phrases, beautiful cliches of our evangelical heritage. If you do that, you could be further away from the real Gospel. See, the Gospel is Jesus Christ, have you ever thought about that, again and again in your ministry. The Gospel is Jesus Christ. He is the Gospel. You look at him and you see him declared in the Gospel. You look at his attitude towards men and women of his time, towards politicians towards the Romans, towards the outcasts of his time, and there was, there was plenty of them. His world was no better world than the kind of world you're caught in in America. Better so with _____. His world was no better world than the kind of world I am caught up with in Uganda. The same world. And what was his attitude? What was his disposition in that world. It is put beautifully in the word, in the words of the Gospel later, as he had already gone up, back to where he came from, another man

The Gospel

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who had actually caught up of what the Gospel was about. Write those wonderful word, we learnt by heart. So God loved the world. The words we are so used to but which many times we have failed to shuck us to reality. So God loved this kind of world, what? The world of Zacheuses, you know that man out of Jericho, deeply _____, alone and lonely an out-cast in Israel, a man who have become a slave of money and possessions, a man, a victim of materialism. ~~For~~ that's what Zacheus was. A man who had completely lost his personality and no one could restore it for him, except the one who walked quietly through Jericho. To where ~~Zacheus~~ was. You see, you can see the Gospel walking. You see, Good News walking to Jericho, and stopping where Good News should stop. You see, Good News did not stop short of Zacheus, it actually reached Zacheus. In his rugs and _____, in his utter loneliness, in his despising himself, psychologically all over the place, utterly lonely, and he's very rich, just many, he, he sounds like an American. doesn't he. Very rich, and he's very lonely. Very rich and he's very empty. ~~Very~~ rich and he's completely broken up. Did he know who he was? Not a bit. His own world had given him a title, a sinner. Not a person, a sinner. He was a case among many cases. He was not a _____ person. ^{you know} And/when people treat people like that, you treat yourself like that, like that. Everywhere in the world there are communities which has ceased knowing who they are. Because of the labels which they have carried ~~though~~ the centuries. I know there are black cases, black cases. No longer human beings, just black cases. In other words, they are not human beings, they are simply colors. Like me. For there are white cases, or there are imperialist

Zacheus

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cases, or there are segregationist cases. There are communities everywhere which no longer know who they are. Like Zaccheus. And you know you and I are called into a tremendous ministry, yours and mine is the only ministry which can restore men to their proper personality. No other religion has got that. No other. Only the religion of Jesus Christ, the Good News of a Person who when he comes, Zaccheus discover exactly who he is. Isn't that a tremendous thing. But no minister can ever minister until he continually discovers who he is. This is not something that you simply know theologically. Not a bit. This is not something you learn in a theological room. The theological lecture may help you to put your thoughts together but it won't help you to put men together. Remember that, it may help you how to think. Or how to expound the word. Of the Bible. But when it comes to putting men together, then you you are going to be there, that lovely English word, there, where, where I am says the Master, there shall my disciple be. John chapter 12, verse 25 onward. You know as he had spoken about the wheat, that falls into the ground, there, that is where men are put together. So, we read the a portion in the Bible, just a passage, to orientate your thoughts in this tremendous ministry, in this preparation you are making right here. In the ministry which can make Zaccheus alive again. The Gospel walking to Jericho, or in the words of Luke, the physician who must must have known a little bit of psychiatry. He tells story after story in his gospel. Of men who were broken, being being mended or being remade, better, being remade, speaks about the woman who was a sinner, again. The pharisees in the Gospel of Luke 7, the woman comes alone and invited into a

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room full of guests. To the embarrassment of the host. Weeping, doing all sorts of things upon the Good News, Jesus Christ. Her attention attracted by Him, made her feel she was a person again. That's our Gospel. Do people make people feel like that. Does your preaching man, make your congregation men in the congregation feel back to himself. Do they discover it is based on what you preach or rather on whom you preach? Because we don't preach a message, we preach a person. In the language of the Acts of the Apostles, this is what we read, And, the evangelist felt going by the way of the desert, who when an angel of the Lord said to Philip, rise and go toward the south, to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza. Very strange way of putting things in it, and very active busy evangelist is told the place of business and he is redirected to go to the ways of the desert, the dry place. A very strange, why Gaza? Why the desert? Why leave this place of Samaria where revival has been going on, and take a rather meaningless sort of journey to the desert. There is a purpose in it. God never wastes of time. God is not a master of time. He has a purpose in it. And this is the desert, it says, and the road, and he rose and went, bless him. I hope we do that. And behold an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a minister in the government of that particular time. In charge of all her treasures, sort of minister of finance, if you like, had come to Jerusalem to worship. Very religious person. He was returning home to Ethiopia. Seated in his chariot, well-to do, high in position, was reading the prophet Isaiah. And the Spirit said to Philip, Go up and join this chariot. So Philip ran to him. He heard him reading Isaiah,

Philip &
Ethiopian
eunuch

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the prophet, and asked, Do you understand what you are reading?
And he said, how can I unless someone guides me and he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. And the passage he read is this one, As a sheep led to the slaughter, or a lamb a foal, its share is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth, And his humiliation, justice was denied him, who can describe his generation, for his life is taken up from there. And the eunuch said to Philip, Apart from prayer does the prophet say this about himself, or about someone else. Then Philip opened his mouth. The beginning with this very Scripture, he told him the Good-News of Jesus. Or he preached him. This, what a wonderful opportunity. And what a wonderful passage. And what a wonderful humanity. You see, the relevance of the message here, the reason why this message makes sense, is because it speaks about the suffering servant of the Lord, in whom suffering humanity is taken up as it is. And in that very one who suffer, who bear, who lifts, who heals, who identifies, who sympathizes, humanity is well restored. This is ^{the} reason why the Gospel is always relevant. You know I'm using this beautiful modern word, relevant, relevant. The Gospel is not only relevant. The Gospel simply picks up humanity in the person of Jesus Christ, and that's why this eunuch listens absolutely almost breathless. The wounds, speak of his wounds. The burdens speak of his burdens. The suffering brings out all the sufferings he knew. Whether it is guilt, whether it is just ordinary suffering that humanity is going through. Here you have got a message completely puts its hand in the message of humanity. Here is someone who is not scared of getting right in. Getting right in, that's why I said, it's beautiful.

*Message
makes sense*

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It was born outside the city where the paths of life passed or crossed. Christ is the cross. And in violence and in blood, and in justice, and loneliness, and hatred, anything you can think of was completely demonstrated on him outside of the city. And there the Good News was born. That's why when we preach it in Africa, you see people weeping. Because that message takes a man where he is. In his blood and sweat. You can preach it in South Africa where _____ are coming from, it makes sense. Even where men are being shot by the police, you can stand there and say, look here, so he loved you, and he died for you and it makes sense. No other message can. And my dear brethren, this is what you are preparing for. This is the message that America is desperately in need of. And yet people are ready to listen.

The other day, I was I was taken back in the month of July in one of my parishes. I have a number of preachers and we have great crowd of people. I went, you know we Anglicans or Episcopalians have a tradition of confirmations. I go round confirming people in my diocese, I haven't been a bishop long in my diocese. I have only been eight months of nine months. And I've already confirmed in my ^{small} diocese of two hundred and twenty thousand people. More than ten thousand people in those few months. And I have been not there all the time. But in this particular occasion I'm not talking about the sermon of confirmation. That is only a material exception when it has the center. The center is Jesus Christ.

I have my, I want to share with you, this just how God can encourage you when you are feeling depressed, would your feeling cease and not moving, when you sense that there is dryness in the congregation and dryness in

The center is Jesus

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your heart, please don't get away from it. When a minister bhys away from cencerting his own dryness dryness remains in his congregation. We have to face it, we are human beings, my brethren, as I stood there as bishop, beautiful morning, brillianttropical sunshine. Sunday morning. And you saw, I saw this people walking up. Well, they don't drive up. They walk up. Most of them, at least, a few cars, few bicycles and most of these, the greater part, pedestrians who walk six miles to come to the meeting. Some of them carrying their own babies. And by the time, you gather, you start preaching, you've got a sea of faces outside. The reason outside, is because our churches are not never big enough. They are too small. Epaise God for that too. We don't have to depend on a church. Christianity was not born in a church. It was born outside the city. So, we started preaching, but particularly, it was beautiful. Eight thousand people. Catholics, anyone who care to come, they gave. And we had four preachers on that day. And it was a beautiful time. I shall never forget it. So many people came to the Lord that day, that for a number of months I hadn't seen it that way. Young people, old people, little children, many of them cried, some of them shouted. We simply didn't know to counsel it. We had not prepared to counsel. This ~~was~~ an ordinary Sunday morning service, you know, for which you didn't/^{prepare}your counseling classes or anything of this sort. And so, they had to go into this church. And you saw these people rejoicing, and Christians throwing themsleves among them. Shouts of hallelujah in an Episcopalian is partially quite a fact (laghter) beautiful. Beautiful. We like it. And it was a joy. To rejoice very well seeing more than four hundred people on that day, accepted the Lord, and they went back

Swiss in Uganda

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quietly to their respective villages and communities to tell the story. Not to keep quiet about it, to tell the story. This is a part in my church, when people are blessed at a meeting they go back to tell the story. Actually, if you don't mind, do you know the fact how I came into the blessings. The man the Lord used to help me out of my utterweldedness at the age of nineteen, had only been a Christian, three hours before he met me. It's on a Sunday morning in an Anglican Church, this young man a teacher, and I was a young teacher too, somehow was brought into the liberating presence of Jesus Christ. A Few hours later, he met his friend on the road. And without waiting he just shared, like a human being, with another friend what had actually happened and it caught fire. In my heart, but sent me to the Lord Jesus Christ. So they they desperse inorder to share. In other words, whenever there is a blessing in the church, it is not the end, it is only the beginning. Usually most of our evangelistic meetings begin when they end, they end inorder to begin. And then you listen to stories coming back, after a month or three, and you see a people who have been blessed through those who were blessed at the gathering. So that this is a tremendous experience. Let us pray my dear brethren, that as the Gospel, I mean Jesus Christ, and Philip preached to him Jesus Christ, as the relevant, no, as the living Saviour whom this poor eunuch needed desperately. And when the eunuch went back to Ethippia, what's story could he tell. A person had become alive, Isaiah which looked forward to something had now become completely alive in the New Testament words, it had flesh and bones, in the person of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. who breathed new life upon the words of the truth. So my dear friends,

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Philip preached Jesus to the eunuch, and I believe that as we come here humbly to those of us whom you have invited from Africa and other places. A long, long way to go. And I must confess everytime I'm invited, I feel inadequate. Why should this fellow be invited all the way from Africa to come to your beautiful country, a country with such a long history, ^{of} Christianity. Is this a way it should be? I believe it is. Not Because the one whom you invited has a strange message to give. If there is anything that excites me, is to preach Jesus to the Americans. Just how they preach him to the Africans. And just how they would like to preach him where things are sick, where injustices are rampant. Where segregation is the experience where men's heart are being broken to pieces, where lives are disintegrating. That's where the Gospel becomes very Good News. For very bad people. And pray that words may not becloud him. It's very easy. Very easy. Words, expressions, particularly strange ones, such as I'm going to use, a mixture of English and African language. And the Americans don't find it easy to hear this kind of language. Just how the Africans don't find it easy either. But may God the Holy Spirit take simple words and apply them so that they may clarify the smog of sin and despair from the hearts of people so that they may see the face of the glory of God in the faith of Jesus Christ. It's exciting. I could tell you story after story. I was telling a story when I stood in a stadium, broken-hearted, shattered, recently in my country, this year. Three members of my church were going to be executed publicly in the stadium by the firing squad, and as a bishop, I had the duty of coming to speak to these three men. They belong to my church but I was never sure they knew Jesus Christ personally. I knew they hadn't the living contact

3 men
knew
Jesus
Christ
personally

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with him. My heart was bleeding, I wish they have found him. There was no time. You know do you realize that time is against us. There's no time and the only time I had was a few minutes to stand before them and I did not know what to do, ~~what~~ do you preach to such a man when they are about to die? Tell them about God's love? Perhaps they have been arrested unjustly. They have not been tried either. Does it make sense to tell them about the God of justice and love. You know I was at _____. Three thousand standing quietly in a stadium, three men in a clock, an army jeep, utterly lonely. ~~Therme~~ families bleeding, breaking, and here comes an Anglican bishop to come in robes to stand before them and say meaningless words. What do you say. And I came absolutely shaken, shattered. And May I confess I was lost. There's only one saving ray of light, and that is why you are here. Only one saving ray of light in my confusion. As I walked towards the three men he reminded me, he said, your words don't make sense, your prayers are meaningless, I am meaningful to them, you go and whisper to them, in the last behold the lamb of God, who alone can take away your sins. Somehow I didn't even believe that it could make sense. This can be just words, set of words. But as I came near, you know, gentlemen I don't have to preach. Because I came with ~~my~~ two men two other ministers and we stood in front of the men. The men were absolutely angelic. The Lord had used in their _____. They had been converted without a minister or with ~~the~~ minister, ~~thegreater~~ ministry. So as soon as I stood there one of them started giving his testimony and the soldiers, guns starting his body, he was so excited and he said, go and tell my family, my wife and children

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I found the Lord Jesus the day I was arrested. Heaven is opened My sins are forgiven I know I'm going to the Lord. There is no problem. Exciting. Hands were tied. He couldn't wave them but he waved the both hands. As soon he finished, the second man started and soon as the second man finished, the third man started a young student of twenty. And we stood and soldiers stood and I and my fellowministers stood there spell-bound, completely. Good News. Good news absolutely. Men are shining. They are excited and soldiers absolutely. Their hands were frozen on their guns and when the men finished, I didn't have anything to say to the men I feel personally to speak to the soldiers who were there. They needed it. These other men don't need anything more. So I started telling the story in the language they understood what the men are saying and what they are excited about. For the next five minutes I was preaching to soldiers before they carried on their duty. It made sense. And faces of these men and the excitement and liberty made the gospel meaningful to the soldiers. They could see it. They died rejoicing and waving in front of, in fact the experience was so shattering that the soldiers forgot their duty of blindfolding the men. Which they should have done. They forgot it. Unintentionally. I think God made it that they may look at their faces shining before they shot them. And recently I've heard a news from a soldier who told me, he told one of my ministers, and he said, you know the soldiers who carried all the execution can never forget the faces of those men. They are still asking, what happened? Good News. For bad people. The Good News of our Lord/preached him...Jesus. I hope that's what you preach. And you pray that you not preach. I'm sharing

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and opening the word. We will preach nothing but Jesus. Let us pray.

Praying
Our heavenly Father, we are unworthy servants, but we praise your name for the glorious privilege that you have called upon us to team up with you in the ministry. Which make men and women live again. Oh thank you Lord Jesus. Sinful as we are, unreliable as we are fumbling as we are, messing up a lot of things but yet Lord, you took it upon yourself to team up with the kind of people we are and to give us the privilege of lifting you high before our people. Bless these few days we're here. Bless these men, Lord, in their congregations. In their homes, in their relationships that nothing will hinder the flow of the mighty blessings. We pray that those who come to the meetings will discover who they are in the light of who Jesus is and this we pray in His precious name, Amen.