

What is the Gospel?

Doyle Davidson



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Doyle Davidson was born on a farm near Sarcoxie, Missouri in 1932. He served as a hospital corpsman in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War, spending 27 months in Yokosuka, Japan. After his return to the states he was admitted to the University of MO, School of Veterinary Medicine in 1958. Just prior to entering veterinary school, God visited him, and he heard, "I don't want you to be a veterinarian, I want you to be a minister of the gospel." He did not obey God that day and went on to receive a doctorate in veterinary medicine. He moved to north Texas and established a successful equine veterinary practice.

In 1968 God moved in Doyle's life and for two years, the presence of the Lord rode in his car asking him when he was going to preach the gospel. The Lord directed him in 1969 to sell his hospital and practice and obey him. January 2, 1970, the sale was finalized, and he drove away not knowing where he was going. Although born again as a small boy, Jesus became Lord of his life that day and he was subsequently baptized in the Holy Spirit and in water. God sent him to Israel in 1974, anointing him to preach the gospel at the Garden Tomb, June 16th, with Acts 1:8 burning in his heart. In 1980, God instructed Doyle to speak to the people of Plano, Texas. He established Water of Life Ministries, and in 1982, closed his veterinary practice.

Doyle is called as a servant and apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. In 2017 the Lord said to him, "I have chosen you, sent you, to the four corners of the earth to deliver my word without despair or fear."

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WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

by DOYLE DAVIDSON

Unless otherwise indicated, all scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

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PREFACE

The purpose of this book is to answer the question: What is the gospel? I rarely meet a person who knows the answer to this question; yet it is the most important question you can ever answer. A revelation of the gospel is essential to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. In John 15:8, Jesus states:

Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

We are disciples of Jesus when we bear fruit. In this book, I will show you that the gospel is what brings forth fruit in your life. The gospel bears fruit in your life, because it is the power of God. The Apostle Paul writes in Romans 1: 16:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. I will show you in this book that salvation does not end with receiving Christ. Salvation includes everything that you need. You must believe the gospel to experience a manifestation of God's promises in your life.

Once you have a revelation of the gospel, I want to encourage you to trust in, rely on, and adhere to it. I can warn you now, you are in for a fight. Your soul will want to do anything but hold fast to the gospel. God taught me how to overcome my soul. Here are some of the things that God taught me to do:

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Read the Word of God Aloud Daily

God taught me to read the Bible, specifically the Psalms and the New Testament, aloud. In Jeremiah 23:29, God said -His word is like a fire and like a hammer. You will find the gospel written throughout the Psalms and the New Testament. The gospel works like a fire and like a hammer to deal with our hearts.

Humble Your Soul with Fasting

You can find various fasts throughout the Bible. In Psalms 35: 13, David said that he humbled his soul with fasting. Isaiah 58:6-7 tell you the kind of fast that God honors. These verses state that we should fast to loose bands of wickedness, to undo heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke. Isaiah 58:8 gives us the results that we can expect from this kind of fast.

Seek to Be Led by the Spirit

Romans 8: 14 states that you must be led by the Spirit of God to be a son of God. In John 10:27, Jesus said that His sheep hear His voice. To hear the voice of God, you must believe that you can. You must believe that you are one of God's sheep. Hebrews 8: 11 states that all can know God from the least to the greatest. To be led by the Spirit, you must hear the voice of God and then obey Him.

Learn to Pray Without Ceasing

I Thessalonians 5: 17 states that we should pray without ceasing. In Matthew 26:41, Jesus told His disciples to watch and pray that they enter not into temptation.

Meditate on the Word of God the Gospel Daily

In Proverbs 4:20-22, the writer of Proverbs says that we should incline our ears to the words of God, that we should not let them depart from our eyes, and that we should keep them in the midst of our hearts. The result is life and health to our flesh.

In Philippians 4: 9, the Apostle Paul writes:

Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

I will show you in this book that the Apostle Paul determined to not know anything but the gospel. You and I should endeavor to do the same.

Doyle Davidson

CHAPTER 1

THE CALLING OF GOD

I would like to begin by sharing how God intervened in my life and called me to be a minister of the gospel. Just as God revealed the gospel to the Apostle Paul and sent him to preach to the world, God has revealed the gospel to me and sent me to preach to the world.

In August 1958, I was rotating the tires on my car. I had just been accepted into the School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Missouri after being discharged from the United States Navy. Suddenly, the presence of God was all around me. It was as though a cloud of clear gas surrounded me. God's words encompassed me as He said, "I do not want you to be a veterinarian. I want you to be a minister of the gospel." There was a great fear with the presence of God, and I found myself sitting there in the street praying aloud.

I could not believe that it was God, however, and I went ahead and entered the School of Veterinary Medicine in the fall. Several years later, God showed me that my unbelief was the reason I did not obey Him when He initially spoke to me that day in 1958.

Over the next ten years, I graduated from the University and conducted a very successful equine practice in North Texas. Yet, during those years, the Spirit of the Lord spoke to me on numerous occasions, saying, "When are you going to preach the gospel?"

In 1968, I began earnestly reading the Bible. Between 1968 and 1970, I read the Bible through twice from Genesis to Revelation. For the first time in my life, the scriptures would leap off the pages at me as I was reading. God was revealing the Word to me.

2 What is the Gospel?

While practicing veterinary medicine, I invested in a number of businesses. One of those businesses was a corporation in which I held a twenty-five percent interest. In June 1969, I told God, “If this is You who has been bugging me all these years to preach the gospel, sell my interest in this corporation, and I will do anything You ask.” The next day, quite to my surprise, two of the other stockholders came to me and offered to buy my interest in the corporation. We completed the transaction within two hours.

Two weeks later, God told me to sell the veterinary hospital that I had built in McKinney, Texas. I told God, “I did not say that I would sell my veterinary hospital.” He replied, “You said that you would do anything that I asked.” I then said, “Well, I did not mean that I would sell my hospital.” However, I knew that God was speaking to me, and I knew that “anything” meant just that—anything, so this time I obeyed. Over the next several months, I sold my hospital and began divesting myself of many of my business investments and holdings. In May 1970, I said to the Lord, “Forgive my sins and be Lord of my life.”

The Gospel of Your Salvation

One of the first passages of scripture that God began revealing to me was Ephesians 1:13-14. These verses state:

In whom [God] ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise (v. 13),

Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory (v. 14).

I saw in verse 13 that the “*gospel of your salvation*” is called the word of truth. The word “gospel” and the word “salvation”

were two words that I had heard all of my life in church, but I did not know what either word really meant.

Also, I found two separate experiences in verse 13—salvation through the gospel and a subsequent baptism in the Holy Spirit. I really knew nothing about either one, but over the next three or four years, God revealed them to me as I began an intense study of the Bible.

CHAPTER 2

THE GOSPEL DEFINED

In my studies, I was astonished one day when I saw that the gospel is defined in I Corinthians 15:1-4, just as faith is defined in Hebrews 11:1. People frequently refer to Hebrews 11:1 as the definition of faith. Yet, seldom do you hear anyone refer to I Corinthians 15:1-4 as the definition of the gospel.

Read I Corinthians 15:1-4, and then we will look at each verse in more detail.

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand (v. 1);

By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain (v. 2).

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures (v. 3);

And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures (v. 4):

Paul Preached the Gospel

Look at verse 1:

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

Paul said he preached the gospel to the Corinthians and they received it. You have to receive the gospel. Where do you receive the gospel? You receive the gospel in your heart—not your intellect.

Verse 1 then states that once you have received the gospel, you must stand in it. You cannot simply stand on any word of God. In Romans 1:9, Paul states this:

For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;

Paul said that he served God with his spirit in the gospel. That is what you and I should do. We must stand in the gospel, because the gospel is the power of God for our salvation.

The Power of God

How do we know that the gospel is the power of God for our salvation? Well, in Romans 1:16, Paul states:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

The word “power” in this verse is the Greek word, *dunamis*. It means ability. The gospel is the ability of God unto salvation to every one who will believe.

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Salvation

The word “salvation” in Romans 1:16 means soundness or to be set at safety. It includes the born-again experience, but it does not end there.

God made it very simple for people to be born again. All you have to do is call upon the name of Jesus and believe that He was raised from the dead, and your spirit will be saved. Romans 10:13 says that whosoever will call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

However, salvation includes much more than simply being born again. Salvation includes everything that you need. III John 2 states:

Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

Prosperity and health will come to you as your soul prospers.

How does your soul prosper? I Peter 1:22 states:

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

You must obey the truth to purify your soul. The word “obey” in this verse means to hearken submissively. The truth under the New Covenant includes the words of the Lord Jesus and any other thing that God has commanded you to do by His Spirit. The way to purify your soul, then, is to hearken submissively and do what God has commanded you to do.

Keep the Gospel in Memory

Look back at I Corinthians 15:2:

By which [the gospel] also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

Verse 2 states that you must keep in memory, or hold fast to, the gospel to be saved—be made sound—spirit, body, and soul. If you hold fast to the gospel for one hour and believe something else the rest of the day, the gospel will not save you.

It is God's desire to make you sound spirit, body, and soul. Look at Ephesians 3:16. This is a prayer that Paul prayed for the church at Ephesus:

That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

God wants you to be strengthened in your inner man which includes your will and your emotions.

How does God strengthen your inner man? One way is to pray in other tongues. Jude 20 states:

But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,

Believe the gospel and mix faith with it while you are praying in tongues, and you will build yourself up. You can also read the Psalms or the New Testament aloud the same way and build yourself up.

Ministry of the Spirit is another way that you can be strengthened in your inner man. In Romans 1:11, Paul states:

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For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;

A person ministering the Spirit will impart spiritual gifts to you and establish you.

The Definition of the Gospel

I Corinthians 15:1-2 tell us that when we receive the gospel and stand in the gospel, we are saved by the gospel. I Corinthians 15:3-4 tell us what the gospel is:

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures (v. 3);

And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures (v. 4):

There it is; the answer to the question, “What is the gospel?” The gospel is that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures. But what are the scriptures that the Apostle Paul is referring to here? Jesus spoke of the many references to himself and the gospel found in the Old Testament in Luke 24:44:

And he [Jesus] said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

We would not have enough time to go to all of those things written, but let us look closely at one. The prophet Isaiah wrote of

the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus 700 years before Jesus came to earth as a man.

Look at Isaiah 52:13-15 and Isaiah 53:1-12:

Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high (v. 13).

As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men (v. 14):

So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider (v. 15).

[53] Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed (v. 1)?

For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him (v.2).

He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not (v. 3)

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted (v. 4).

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed (v. 5).

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All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all (v. 6).

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth (v. 7).

He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken (v. 8).

And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth (v. 9).

Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand (v. 10).

He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities (v. 11).

Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors (v. 12).

How do we know that these scriptures are speaking of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus? The answer is found in the New Testament, in not just one, but two places.

Matthew refers to this passage of Isaiah's when describing the work Jesus was doing among them. Look at Matthew 8:16, 17:

When the even was come, they brought unto him [Jesus] many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick (v. 16):

That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses (v 17).

Acts 8:26-35 contains yet another account referring to this same passage from the book of Isaiah, Philip preaching Jesus from it.

And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert (v. 26).

And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship (v. 27),

Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet (v. 28).

Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot (v. 29).

And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest (v. 30)?

And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him (v. 31).

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The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth (v. 32):

In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth (v. 33).

And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man (v. 34)?

Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus (v. 35).

The death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, the gospel, is not just a New Testament doctrine. As Paul states, the gospel is according to what was written in the Old Testament scriptures.

Struggling with the Flesh

When God first started showing me these verses of scripture—that Jesus died, was buried, and rose again the third day, I struggled greatly between my intellect and my spirit. My intellect wanted to say that the gospel included all of the specific events that took place from the time that Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss until Jesus ascended into Heaven with His blood after the resurrection. For example, I thought that the crown of thorns placed on Jesus' head was part of the gospel. At the same time, my spirit knew the truth—that the gospel was simply that Jesus died, was buried, and rose again on the third day.

I will show you that the Apostle Paul also experienced and wrote about the struggle between the intellect (flesh) and the spirit.

Paul tells us in Galatians 5:17:

For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

In I Corinthians 2:11, he states:

For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

Then, in I Corinthians 2:14:

But the natural man [flesh or intellect] receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

The flesh lusts against the Spirit. No man can know the things of God except by the Spirit of God. The things of the Spirit are foolishness to the natural man. This is the struggle that every one who walks in the Spirit will experience.

Overcoming Your Flesh

I knew John 16:13 stated that the Holy Spirit has to “*guide you into all truth.*” I simply had to humble myself and say to the Lord, “I cannot understand this on my own. You will have to teach me.”

I began to practice II Timothy 2:7:

Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.

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The writer of Proverbs makes a similar statement in Proverbs 4:20-22:

My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings (v. 20).

Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart (v. 21).

For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh (v. 22).

Paul told Timothy to consider what was being spoken. The writer of Proverbs goes a step farther saying “*incline your ear*” or, put another way, bow down your ear or pay close attention to what is being spoken.

God is the only One who knows the struggle that I had to overcome my flesh. I will give you two passages of scripture that God used to encourage me during this time. Look at Philippians 1:6:

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform [complete] it until the day of Jesus Christ:

Then, in Philippians 2:13:

For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

The Lord, ministering these two verses of scripture to me by His Spirit, gave me the encouragement that I needed to continue to apply Proverbs 4:20-22 in my life.

Over a period of several months, the Lord convinced me by the Holy Spirit that the gospel was simply—“Jesus died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that

he rose again the third day according to the scriptures (I Corinthians 15:3-4).” I will show you later that this is what Jesus preached, this is what the apostles preached, and this is what you and I are to preach.

“Jesus Died for Your Sins” Is Not Enough

Before we continue, I want to emphasize once again that the gospel is that Jesus died, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day. Preaching “Jesus died for your sins” is not enough.

Look at I Corinthians 15:13-17:

But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen (v. 13):

And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain (v. 14).

Verse 14 plainly states that if there is no resurrection, our preaching is vain. Not only is our preaching vain, but our faith is also vain.

Read verses 15-17:

Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not (v. 15).

For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised (v. 16):

And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins (v. 17).

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Notice in verse 17, if Jesus was not raised from the dead, we are still in our sins. You cannot just believe a part of the gospel and be saved. More specifically, you cannot believe “Jesus died for your sins” and be saved; if you do not believe that Jesus was raised from the dead, you are still in your sins.

This explains why the Church today has so many problems with sin. They do not believe in the resurrection. In Matthew chapter 9, the scribes were upset with Jesus, because He told a man sick with palsy that his sins were forgiven. In verses 5-6, Jesus says:

For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk (v. 5)?

But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house (v. 6).

Jesus made no distinction between forgiveness of sins and healing the sick. Why? Because He trusted in the power of the resurrection. He knew that when that power touched a person, sin would leave, just as sickness had to leave.

The Resurrection Power

Everything that Jesus did for us became ours when Jesus was raised from the dead. Jesus took our sins on the cross, but they were not forgiven until Jesus was raised from the dead. Jesus took all of our sickness on the cross, but we were not healed until He was raised from the dead. Jesus took our poverty on the cross, but we were not made rich until Jesus was raised from the dead.

Look at II Corinthians 1:20:

For all the promises of God in him [Jesus] are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

All the promises of God are yes and Amen through Jesus, but you do not experience the manifestations of the promises (i.e., forgiveness of sins, divine health, prosperity, etc.) by standing on the promises or by standing on the Word. You experience the manifestations of the promises by believing the gospel, or, put another way, you experience the manifestations of the promises by relying on the gospel to perform them.

Ephesians 1:17-23 is a prayer that Paul prayed for the church of Ephesus. It is a prayer that I frequently pray for the world. Look at verses 17-20:

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him (v. 17):

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints (v. 18),

And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power (v. 19),

Which he wrought [worked] in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places (v. 20),

Before you can know the same power that raised Jesus from the dead, you must receive a spirit of wisdom and a revelation of the knowledge of Jesus, and the eyes of your understanding must be enlightened. The power that will bring to pass all of the promises of God in your life is the same power that God worked

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in Jesus when He raised Him from the dead. That is why a revelation of the gospel is essential.

CHAPTER 3

WHY THE GOSPEL IS HID

During my years of ministry, I have frequently had people come up to me and say, “I did not know what the gospel was until I met you.” Others have come up and said, “I went and asked my friends what the gospel was, and not one could give me an answer.” The reason for this can be found in II Corinthians chapter 4.

Look at II Corinthians 4:1-2:

Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not (v. 1);

But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God (v. 2).

Notice in verse 2 that the gospel deals with the conscience of a man.

Continue reading verses 3-4:

But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost (v. 3):

In whom the god of this world [Satan] hath blinded the minds [thoughts of the heart] of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious

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gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them (v. 4).

Do you see why the Devil is able to blind the thoughts of the lost? It is because they do not believe the gospel.

Read verses 5-7:

For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake (v. 5).

For God, who commanded the light

The light, as you saw in verse 4, is the glorious gospel of Christ.

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (v. 6).

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us (v. 7).

All that is required for the light to shine in your heart is that you believe the gospel.

Why Men Will Not Believe the Gospel

John 3:19-20 explain why men will not believe the gospel.

And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil (v. 19).

*For every one that doeth evil hateth the light,
neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should
be reprov'd (v. 20).*

It plainly states in these verses that men love darkness more than the gospel, because their deeds are evil. Verse 20 even states that they hate the gospel, because they do not want their deeds reprov'd. That word "reprov'd" means "to convict."

Then, verse 21 states:

*But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that
his deeds may be made manifest, that they are
wrought in God.*

The deeds of a person who walks in the truth will be manifest that they are wrought in God.

CHAPTER 4

JESUS PREACHED THE GOSPEL

I John 2:6 states that a person who says that he abides in Jesus ought to walk as Jesus walked. If we are to walk as Jesus walked, then we should examine His preaching.

Look at Mark 1:14:

Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,

What did Jesus come into Galilee preaching? He came preaching the gospel of the kingdom.

Preaching

The word “preaching” in Mark 1:14 means to publish or proclaim. Jesus came publishing or proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom of God.

Jesus did not simply preach words; He demonstrated power with His preaching. Luke 8:1 states about Jesus:

And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing [exhibiting] the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him,

Jesus was not only preaching, He was also exhibiting the glad tidings—the gospel—of the kingdom of God.

Look at Acts 8:5-7:

Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them (v. 5).

And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did (v. 6).

In verse 6, the people heard and saw the miracles that Philip did. What did they hear and see? Read verse 7:

For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.

This is what happens with the preaching of the gospel. The people heard the unclean spirits cry out, and they saw the lame walk.

Jesus also preached with authority. Mark 1:22 states:

And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.

The word “authority” in this verse is the Greek word, *exousia*. It means privilege. Over what did Jesus have authority or privilege?

Read Luke 4:32-36. This is the same account as Mark 1:22. Begin with verse 32:

And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power [authority or privilege] (v. 32).

24 What is the Gospel?

Continue with verses 33-35:

And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice (v. 33),

Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God (v. 34).

And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not (v. 35).

In verse 35, Jesus commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man, and the spirit came out.

Now, look at verse 36:

And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority [privilege] and power [ability] he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.

Jesus preached with authority and power. He had authority over evil spirits, and the evil spirits had to come out when He spoke.

The Kingdom of God Is in Power

Do not be deceived. If you are preaching the word only and not demonstrating the power, you are not preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God.

Paul writes in I Corinthians 4:18-20:

Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you (v. 18).

But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power (v. 19).

For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power (v. 20).

In I Thessalonians 1:5, Paul writes:

For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

When Paul states that the gospel came not in word only, the “word” to which he is referring is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. It is not any word of God. It is the gospel—that Jesus died, was buried, and rose again the third day. The gospel is the power of God.

Not with Enticing Words

If you are preaching the way Jesus preached, you will not preach the word only, and you will not preach with enticing

words. Look at I Corinthians 2:1-5. In these verses, Paul makes this statement:

And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God (v. 1).

26 What is the Gospel?

For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified (v. 2).

Paul did not come to the Corinthians to impress them with his excellent speech and his great wisdom. Paul said he determined not to know anything but the gospel. Why?

Continue reading verses 3-4:

And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling (v. 3).

And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power (v. 4):

Paul says that he did not preach with enticing words. He did not preach from his intellect. Paul was interested in only one thing—demonstrating the Spirit and power.

Read verse 5:

That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

Now you can see why Paul determined to not know anything but the gospel—the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. The gospel is the power of God, and it is the only thing that can change the hearts of men.

The Cross and the Gospel Are the Same

In church, you frequently hear preachers refer to the cross or the preaching of the cross. I would like to show you that the cross is not the two wooden beams on which Jesus hung, but that the cross and the gospel are the same.

Paul, writing in I Corinthians 1:17-18, makes this statement:

For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect (v. 17).

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God (v. 18).

Verse 18 is very important. I would like to examine this verse again using two other translations. The New International Version (NIV) states this:

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

The Interlinear Bible's translation is very similar to the NIV translation. It states:

For the word of the cross is truly foolishness to those being lost; but to us being saved, it is the power of God.

Notice the preaching of the cross is foolishness to those who are “*perishing*” or “*being lost*,” but to us who are “*being saved*,” it is the power of God.

Romans 1:16 states that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. In I Corinthians 1:18, the preaching of the cross is the power of God. This is what convinced me that the cross is not just the two wooden beams. Neither is the cross the events of the cross (i.e., the soldiers casting lots for Jesus' coat). The cross and the gospel are the same—that Jesus died, was buried, and rose again the third day.

28 What is the Gospel?

God Approved of Jesus

Jesus preached the gospel of the kingdom of God in power, and He was approved by God. Look at what Peter says in Acts 2:22:

Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

If God approves of your preaching, miracles and wonders and signs will follow your preaching, just as they followed Jesus' preaching.

CHAPTER 5

REPENT AND BELIEVE THE GOSPEL

I would like to go back now and examine Mark 1:14 in conjunction with verse 15:

Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God (v. 14),

And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel (v. 15).

Jesus came saying, “Repent and believe the gospel.” I would like for you to examine the word “repent” and the word “believe” in greater detail.

Repent

If you grew up in church, you have probably heard the word “repent” many times. What does it mean? The word “repent” means to change your mind or to have another mind. When you repent, you change your mind to agree with God. You give up your will for the will of God.

God has to lead you to repentance. Look at Romans 2:4:

Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

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30 What is the Gospel?

It is the goodness of God that He leads each one of us to repentance.

Consider II Corinthians 7:8-10:

For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season (v. 8).

Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing (v. 9).

For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death (v. 10).

Notice that “sorrow” and “repentance” are not the same thing—that simply saying you are sorry is not the same as repentance or changing your mind to agree with God. Verse 10 states that Godly sorrow brings repentance unto salvation, but worldly sorrow produces death.

I had lunch with a well-known preacher several years ago. Over lunch, he related to me that he had spent the previous day with a local television preacher. He stated that they had spent the entire day repenting. God had me tell this man that he was involved in worldly sorrow—not Godly sorrow, and that worldly sorrow produces death. His response was: “Well, brother, don’t you believe in repentance?” I said, “Sure—if it is Godly repentance.” This man could not hear what God was saying through me that day. Three months later, he died.

Repent then Believe

Once you have repented, you have to do something. You have to change your mind to something else. Jesus said, “*Repent ye, and believe the gospel.*”

The word “believe” means to rely on, to adhere to, to trust in. In other words, you have to trust in, rely on, and adhere to the gospel—that Jesus died, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day.

If you are believing the gospel, you will not depart from it. If you are believing the gospel, you will not look at your predicament or your grim circumstances. You will hold fast to and rely on that Jesus died, was buried, and the third day God raised Him up by the power of God. You will hold fast to that power until God manifests Himself on your behalf.

Mix Faith with the Gospel

As you are believing the gospel, you must mix faith with that gospel. Consider Hebrews 4:2:

For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

The “*word preached*” in verse 2 refers to the gospel—the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. According to Hebrews chapter 3, the word “them” in Hebrews 4:2 is referring to the Jews in the wilderness. The gospel was preached to the Jews in the wilderness, but it did not profit them. Why? Because they did not mix faith with the gospel.

32 What is the Gospel?

So, let God lead you to repentance. Trust in, rely on, and adhere to the gospel—that Jesus died, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day. Mix faith with that gospel, and it will profit you.

CHAPTER 6

THE APOSTLES PREACHED THE GOSPEL

After Jesus was raised from the dead, He appeared unto His disciples. Look at Luke 24:44-48:

And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me (v. 44).

Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures (v. 45),

And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day (v. 46):

What were the “words” that Jesus spoke to his disciples while He was with them? Verse 46 answers this question—“*it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day.*” Jesus spoke the gospel to them.

Continue with verses 47-48:

And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem (v. 47).

And ye are witnesses of these things (v. 48).

34 What is the Gospel?

Signs Follow the Preaching of the Gospel

Mark 16:15-18 give an account of what Jesus commanded the apostles before He ascended up into Heaven:

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature (v. 15).

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned (v.16).

Jesus told them, “*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.*” What do you have to believe to be saved? In verse 15, Jesus commanded the eleven to go preach the gospel. You must conclude, then, that if you believe the gospel—the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, you shall be saved.

Read verses 17-18:

And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues (v. 17);

They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover (v. 18).

These verses tell us that signs follow the preaching of the gospel.

During the time that God was revealing the gospel to me, I was attending different Charismatic meetings. In these meetings, I heard preachers read these verses in Mark chapter 16 and then say, “If you want healing, preach on healing. If you want tongues, preach on tongues. If you want prosperity, preach on prosperity.” Yet, these verses are very clear and simple—signs follow the preaching of the gospel—the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

Proof of the Gospel

Once I saw the gospel defined in I Corinthians chapter 15, the Holy Spirit proved to me that the death, burial, and resurrection was indeed the gospel by showing me what the apostles preached in the book of Acts. We looked at Mark chapter 16 and saw that Jesus commanded the eleven to go and preach the gospel.

In Acts chapter 2, Peter was preaching before the crowd that gathered on the day of Pentecost after the disciples had been filled with the Holy Ghost. In verses 23-24, Peter, speaking about Jesus, states:

Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain (v. 23):

Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it (v. 24).

Peter preached that Jesus was crucified and that God raised Jesus up again—in other words, Peter preached the gospel.

I would like for you to give particular attention to verse 37:

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

This is what happens when you preach the gospel—the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. The people’s hearts were “pricked.” That word “pricked” means to stab or pierce thoroughly.

36 What is the Gospel?

When I first started attending Charismatic meetings, I heard various ways to minister to a Jew. One day the Lord asked me, “Would you like to know how to witness to a Jew?” My reply was, “Sure.” He said, “Read Acts chapter 2.” I saw in Acts chapter 2 that Peter preached the gospel to the Jews and it pricked their hearts.

If you continue reading in Acts chapter 2, you will find that three thousand souls were saved that day. That is what the preaching of the gospel will do.

The Lame Man Was Healed

In Acts chapter 3, Peter and John were going to the temple to pray. On their way, they found a man lame from his mother’s womb. Peter and John prayed, and the man was healed completely.

Read Acts 3:11-12 with me:

And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon’s, greatly wondering (v. 11).

And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk (v. 12)?

Look at the next several verses and see what Peter preached:

The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in

the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go (v. 13).

But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you (v. 14);

And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses (v. 15).

It was the gospel that made the lame man whole. Keep in mind as we look at each of these scriptures that Mark 16:17 tells us that signs follow people who believe, or hold fast to, the gospel. Healing the sick is one of the signs that follows people who believe.

The Apostles Preached the Resurrection

Next, look at Acts 4:33:

And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

In Acts 17:18, Paul also preached the resurrection.

Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He

seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.

38 What is the Gospel?

We have already discussed the power of the resurrection, but I wanted you to see that the apostles gave witness to the resurrection. They did not preach “Jesus died for your sins” only.

They Spoke with Tongues

In Acts chapter 10, there was a centurion named Cornelius. Cornelius was a devout man and a man that feared God. God instructed Peter to go and speak in Cornelius’ house. Read verses 34-35:

Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons (v. 34):

But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him (v. 35).

God is not a respecter of persons. The apostles had been preaching to the Jews only until this point. Cornelius was a Gentile. Jesus died, was buried, and rose again for Jews and Gentiles alike.

Continue reading verses 39-40, because I want to show you what Peter preached.

And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree (v. 39):

Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly (v. 40);

Do you see the gospel in these verses? Peter was preaching the gospel to the Gentiles in Cornelius’ house.

Look what happened in verses 44-46:

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word (v. 44).

And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost (v. 45).

For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God (v. 46).

The Holy Ghost fell on the Gentiles as Peter was preaching the gospel, and they spoke in other tongues. Mark chapter 16 states that one of the signs that follows a person who believes the gospel is speaking in new tongues.

CHAPTER 7

THE WORD OF FAITH

There are a lot of preachers today who teach that you must stand on the written Word or, put another way, that you must find your promise in the Bible and stand on it. As God taught me in II Timothy 2:7, I would like for you to consider the passages of scripture in this chapter and let God give you understanding.

I would like to begin by looking at Romans 10:8-9:

But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach (v. 8);

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved (v. 9).

Verse 8 states that the “word of faith” is nigh thee. What is the “word of faith”? Is it any word of God as many preachers teach?

I want you to look closely at the punctuation in verse 8. You will find that verse 8 ends with a semicolon. This should tell you that verse 9 is closely related to verse 8. So, what is the “*word of faith, which we preach*”? The word of faith is the gospel—that Jesus died, was buried, and rose again the third day. That is what verse 9 states.

Faith Comes by Hearing

Another teaching that you hear is that faith comes by hearing any word of God in the Bible. Look at Romans 10:13-15:

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved (v. 13).

How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher (v. 14)?

And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things (v. 15)!

Verse 15 tells us what preachers should be preaching. They should be preaching the gospel of peace.

Continue reading verse 16:

But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?

They have not obeyed the gospel—the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. In verse 16, Paul equates obedience and believing. If you obey the gospel, you will believe, or rely on, the gospel.

Now, look at Romans 10:17:

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

42 What is the Gospel?

This is very important. “*So then faith....*” You must read Romans 10:17 in conjunction with the previous verses. You cannot pull this verse out of context and say that faith comes by hearing any word of God. The previous verses clearly refer to the gospel, and the gospel is the word of God by which faith comes.

The Holy Spirit Bears Witness to the Gospel

I would like to go back to Acts chapter 10 and look at some other verses of scripture. Acts 10:36-38 states:

The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) (v. 36)

That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judæa, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached (v. 37);

How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power [ability]: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him (v. 38).

I heard a well-known television preacher in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex say that verse 38 is the gospel. Many of you may have heard this as well. What this preacher was saying is that the gospel is—“God anointed Jesus with the Holy Ghost and power, and He went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil.”

Well, Jesus operated in the power of the gospel, and healing is one of the signs that follows those who believe the gospel. However, Acts 10:38 is not the gospel. I want to make sure that you understand this, because if you and I are supposed to hold fast to the gospel—if you and I are to go into all the world and preach

the gospel, then we need to have a clear understanding of what the gospel is.

Look at Acts 5:29-32. Peter and the other apostles were before the council:

Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men (v. 29).

The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree (v. 30).

Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins (v. 31).

And we are witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him (v. 32).

To what does the Holy Spirit bear witness? Look at verse 30 and 31 again. The Holy Spirit bears witness to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

If all you preach is that Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit and power or that Jesus healed the sick, your preaching is empty, and you are not preaching the gospel. You are preaching the letter. Consider II Corinthians 3:6:

Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

The Holy Spirit bears witness to the truth. The Holy Spirit bears witness to Jesus died, was buried, and rose again the third day.

44 What is the Gospel?

When the Holy Spirit bears witness to your preaching, it will produce life in the people who hear.

CHAPTER 8

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

Having established that the gospel is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, I would like to take a look now at the parable of the sower. You can find an account of this parable in Matthew chapter 13, Mark chapter 4, and Luke chapter 8. In Mark 4:13, Jesus said that if you cannot understand this parable how can you know all parables. I want to start with Mark's account of the parable of the sower.

Look at Mark 4:14 with me:

The sower soweth the word.

By now, you probably know what I am going to say, but please humor me. The “word” that Jesus is talking about here has got to be the gospel—the death, burial, and resurrection. In Matthew 13:19, Matthew calls it the “word of the kingdom.” We saw in Mark 1:14 that Jesus came preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God. As we continue on with this parable, I believe it will become even clearer that the “word” sown is the gospel.

The Way-Side Heart

Read verse 15:

And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.

46 What is the Gospel?

In Luke 8:12, Luke says:

Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

Notice two things. First, the word is sown in the heart—not the mind or intellect. Second, Luke says that Satan comes to take the word out of a way-side heart “lest they should believe and be saved.” This is what convinced me that the “word” sown is the gospel. I have shown you throughout this book that the gospel is what saves you.

The Stony Heart

Continue reading Mark 4:16-17:

And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately received it with gladness (v. 16);

And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended (v. 17).

People with stony hearts immediately receive the word with gladness (“Oh, that is great preaching, brother!”), but they have no root, and when affliction and persecution come, they are offended.

Verse 17 states that affliction and persecution come for the word’s sake. Look at Acts 14:22:

Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

The apostles were exhorting the disciples to “continue in the faith” and “through much tribulation” enter into the kingdom.

Be assured that once God starts revealing the gospel to your heart, Satan will immediately come with tribulation and affliction to make you stumble. Consider Luke 16:16:

The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

That word “press” means to force. You must forcefully enter the kingdom of God. How? Romans 1:16 states that the gospel is the power or the ability of God unto salvation to every one who believes. You must trust in, rely on, and adhere to the gospel—that Jesus died, was buried, and rose again the third day—to overcome the affliction and tribulation that Satan brings against you.

Be of good cheer. Jesus is our example. Jesus suffered more than we will ever have to suffer, and Jesus overcame the same way you and I will overcome—by believing the power of the gospel. Look at what Jesus said in John 16:33:

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

48 What is the Gospel?

Jesus overcame the world by trusting in, relying on, and adhering to the promise that God would raise Him up the third day. That is the same gospel that you and I are to believe.

The Thorny Heart

The third kind of heart in the parable of the sower is a thorny heart. Read Mark 4:18-19:

And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word (v. 18),

And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful (v. 19).

Look at Colossians 1:5-6:

For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel (v. 5);

Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth (v. 6):

Verse 6 states that the gospel is what brings forth fruit in your life. If you have cares of the world, deceitfulness of riches, and lusts of other things in your heart, they will choke the gospel that was sown in your heart, and Luke 8:14 says that you will bring no fruit to perfection.

The Good Heart

The fourth heart in the parable of the sower is the good and honest heart. Look at Mark 4:20:

And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

A good heart hears the word and receives it. Matthew 13:23 states that a good heart hears the word and understands it. Luke 8:15 states that a good and honest heart hears the word and keeps it and brings forth fruit with patience.

If we receive and hold fast to the gospel—that Jesus died for our sins, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, it will bring forth fruit in our life.

CHAPTER 9

THE GIFT OF CHRIST

Once you have received a revelation of the gospel, you must abide in Jesus to bear fruit in the kingdom of God. In John 15:4-5, Jesus states:

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me (v. 4).

I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing (v. 5).

So many people in the Church today think that once they receive a little knowledge of the Word, they have the right to go anywhere and preach. Yet, in verse 4, Jesus states that we cannot bear fruit of ourselves. Verse 5 states that without Jesus, we can do nothing. It is Jesus, abiding in us, who bears the fruit.

Look at Galatians 2:20:

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Dead people cannot bear fruit. If you are crucified with Christ, you are no longer alive, and you cannot bear fruit.

In the mid-1970s, Jesus spoke John 15:16 to me:

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring

forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

It is Jesus who chooses us and ordains us for the work of the ministry.

Now, look at Ephesians 4:7:

But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

You cannot study your way to God. You cannot confess your way to God. God's calling on our lives is a gift, and it comes by grace. How do we access that grace?

Read Romans 5:1-2:

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (v. 1):

By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God (v. 2).

Verse 2 states that we access the grace of God by faith. Romans 10:17 says that faith comes by hearing the word of God. I showed you earlier in this book that the gospel—that Jesus died, was buried, and rose again the third day—is the word of God you need to hear for faith to come.

The work that God has for each one of us, then, comes when we believe the gospel. Continue reading Ephesians 4:8-10:

Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men (v. 8).

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(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth (v. 9)?

He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) (v. 10)

Do you see the gospel in these verses? When Jesus was raised from the dead, He gave gifts to men. What are the gifts that He gave us?

Look at Ephesians 4:11:

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

It is the measure of the gift of Christ the apostle that is the gift to the Church. It is the measure of the gift of Christ the prophet that is the gift to the Church. Accordingly, it is the measure of the gift of Christ the evangelist, pastor, and teacher that is the gift to the Church.

What are the purposes of these five ministries—the apostle, prophet, pastor, teacher, and evangelist—in the Church? Read Ephesians 4:12-13:

For the perfecting [completion] of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ (v. 12):

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ (v. 13):

Apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, and evangelists, ministering the gospel by the Spirit, perfect or complete the saints.

The Apostle Paul was a minister of the gospel. In Romans 15:15-19 he states:

Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God (v. 15),

That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost (v. 16).

I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God (v. 17).

For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed (v. 18),

Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ (v. 19).

In Romans 15:29, Paul states:

And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

The fullness of the blessing of the gospel brings forth fruit to perfection.

54 What is the Gospel?

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