

HOW DOES ONE LEARN THE GOSPEL?

ROMANS 1:16 • TV164A

A television broadcast sermon delivered

MARCH 21ST, 1982

By

HENRY T. MAHAN

Transcribed, edited and published

SEPTEMBER 5TH, 2013

HENRY T. MAHAN TAPE LIBRARY

Zebulon Baptist Church

6088 Zebulon Highway

Pikeville, KY 41501

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 apostle Paul wrote in **Romans chapter 1:16**; *“I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”*

He said, *“I am not ashamed of the gospel; (I am a debtor both to the weak and to the strong, both to the Barbarian and to the free).”* “I am ready to preach this gospel to you that are in Rome also because I am not ashamed of it.”

My friend, I thank God that we have a Gospel to preach, don't you? Guilty sinners are not without hope. Guilty sinners are not without mercy. Guilty sinners are not without forgiveness. Guilty sinners are not without pardon because God hath determined to save; God has purposed to save sinners.

HOW DOES ONE LEARN THE GOSPEL?

ROMANS 1:16 • HENRY T. MAHAN

The Gospel is called "*The gospel of God.*" It's not man's Gospel, it is God's Gospel, it originated with God; He purposed it, He planned it.

"God delights to show mercy." God Almighty delights to show mercy. He delights to reach out to the guilty in love, mercy, and forgiveness.

Paul said, "*He was separated to the gospel of God,*" it is God's Gospel: Not only that; it is the Gospel of free grace; "*we are justified freely by his grace through the redeeming blood of Christ.*" So, it is a free Gospel. It's not only God's Gospel but it is a free Gospel.

Not only that, but there is but one Gospel. Paul wrote in **Galatians 1**; "*If an angel from heaven preach any other gospel than the gospel that we have preached, let him be accursed.*" There is but one Gospel, the Gospel of God, the Gospel of free grace, and this one Gospel is concerning His Son Jesus Christ.

John said, "*This is the record that God hath given, (freely given to us), eternal life and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son of God hath life and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*" So, I thank God that we have a Gospel.

What does the word Gospel mean? It means "glad tidings;" it means "good news." It means a proclamation not of a work to be done but a proclamation of a work that has already been done, a complete work, a sufficient work, an effectual work and a work that is finished. That's what our Lord said on the cross, "*It is finished.*"

But now, remember, this Gospel must be preached. Paul said, "*Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel. Necessity is laid upon me; I must preach the gospel. Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel.*"

When our Lord sent His disciples out into the world before He ascended back to the Father, these were His parting words; "*you go into all the world, (not just to your nation, not just to your people) but go into all the world and preach the gospel.*"

The Gospel of the remission of sin through His blood, the Gospel of repentance toward God in faith in Jesus Christ, the Gospel of mercy and grace, through the sacrifice of God's Son; "*you go into all this world and you preach the gospel to every creature.*"

"He that believeth and is baptized; (he that believeth what), he that believeth this Gospel and is baptized shall be saved. He that believeth not shall be damned."

Paul writing over in **Romans 10** said, "*Whosoever, (Jew or Gentile, male or female, old or young, bond or free, black or white, whoever); whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*"

HOW DOES ONE LEARN THE GOSPEL?

ROMANS 1:16 • HENRY T. MAHAN

“How 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, and how shall the preach except they be sent?”

So, we have a Gospel, but this Gospel must be preached. This Gospel must be heard; this Gospel must be believed; it must be heard and it must be believed. Listen to what Paul said in **1 Corinthians 15:1**, *“Brethren, I declare unto you the gospel.”* That’s what I have been talking about, “the Gospel of God, the Gospel (definite article); not a Gospel, the Gospel, the one Gospel. *“I declare unto you this one gospel, the gospel of God, (the gospel of His free grace, the gospel concerning His Son), which I preached unto you.”* Now listen to this, *“which also you received and wherein you stand and by which you are saved.”*

Now, the question comes: “Well preacher, how does one learn the Gospel? How can I learn the Gospel?”

Well, I will tell you this first and this must be stated; this is the foundation that has to be laid; the Gospel is called a *“mystery.”* The Gospel is said to be hid from ages and generations. The Gospel is said to be hid in the sense that men’s eyes have been blinded by Satan.

The Gospel has been hid in types, in shadows, pictures, and ceremonies, and in Christ. Christ is the Gospel. So, it must be revealed. *“Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered the heart of man the things God has prepared,”* in the Gospel.

Everything that God has prepared for the sinner is in Christ. Everything that God gives to us is in Christ. So; *“It has not entered the heart (or the understanding of man) the things that God has prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.”*

“What man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man that is in him? Even so, the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God and he to whom the spirit of God will reveal him.”

You see; *“The natural man receiveth not the things of God, they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them, they are spiritually understood”* and God hath revealed them. So, this Gospel must be revealed.

Our Lord asked the disciples one day; *“who do men (that are natural men, the people of the world); say that I the Son of man am?”* The apostle Peter spoke up and said; *“Well, some of them say that you are John the Baptist, some say that you are Elijah, some say that you are one of prophets.”*

But, the Lord said; *“Who do you say that I the Son of man am?”* Peter again spoke up and said, *“Thou art the Christ, (the Messiah); thou art the Son of the living God.”*

HOW DOES ONE LEARN THE GOSPEL?

ROMANS 1:16 • HENRY T. MAHAN

“Thou art that Prophet. Thou art the one for whom we look. Thou art the Consolation of Israel. Thou art the Redeemer of which Job spoke, the Shepherd of which David spoke, the substitute of which Isaiah wrote; thou art that Passover Lamb. Our Lord said, *“Blessed are you Simon; (you are blessed of God); flesh and blood didn’t reveal that to you but my Father which is in heaven.”*

Now this is so; if my voice is the only voice you hear, we will just have us a little logic and a little natural wisdom, a little human understanding, and we could build us another religious denomination. But you must hear Him speak who speaks from heaven, who speaks through His Word, who speaks with convincing, convicting and converting power. You have to hear from God the Holy Spirit.

You see, the new birth, regeneration, the awakening, the quickening, is of the Spirit of God. So, it comes by revelation.

But now, you watch this! How does one learn the Gospel? That is what we are talking about; well, he learns it at the feet of Christ. He learns it from the Word of God. He learns it from the Holy Spirit.

But, God doesn’t work apart from the understanding. I know that salvation is a heart work. Man must repent with the heart and must man believe with the heart. Man receives Christ with the heart; salvation is a heart work. *“Keep thy heart; out of it are the issues of life.”* This is so but God doesn’t work apart from the understanding.

A man can’t believe in his heart what he doesn’t know in his head; now that is so! Listen to this Scripture in **1 John 5:20**: *“We know that the Son of God hath come; (we know that he hath come; Christ has come into this world) and hath given us an understanding;”* now, underscore that word, *“understanding.”*

I know that a lot of religion is emotional. I know that a lot of religion is left up to feeling and excitement and emotion and all of these things. People call it, “believe, believe, and believe.” I want to say, “Believe what?”

Give me something to believe. They say, “Yes, just trust the Lord.” Yes, but which Lord or which Jesus, which God, which Spirit and which message? Give me something to lay hold on. Give me something to understand. Give me something to comprehend.

Faith has to have an object; it just can’t breathe out yonder in space. So, *“The Son of God has come (called us) and given us an understanding, (an understanding; listen to the rest of the verse), that we may know him that is true, that we are in him, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God; this is eternal life.”*

Do you see what I am saying? There is a Gospel, a saving Gospel that is the power of God unto salvation. It must be preached!

HOW DOES ONE LEARN THE GOSPEL?

ROMANS 1:16 • HENRY T. MAHAN

My friend, let me tell you something; it must be heard and understood and believed. *“The Son of God hath come and given us an understanding that we may know him that is true, (not just a name, not just a mythical character, not just a historical character, but Him that is true), and that we are in him that is true.”* Now, this is eternal life and this is the true God.

So, we know this; the Gospel has to be revealed. The Gospel has to be preached from the Word but the Gospel must be preached with sincerity, simplicity, clarity and understanding. A man cannot believe what he does not understand. You can't receive an unrevealed Christ.

So, I am going to take five words in this message and try to teach the Gospel. I want you to listen to these five words; I believe that they will give you some understanding.

First of all: Where we begin is in this place here. We begin where the Bible begins; we begin with God. God is sovereign! Let's look at the word “sovereignty”.

Don't be afraid of that word, sovereignty. The meaning is right here in the word, s-o-v-e-r-i-g-n, God reigns.

That is what Nebuchadnezzar said when he came to himself. You remember what happened to him, he boasted about building the great city of Babylon; he bragged about his accomplishments. The Lord God said, *“I'll send you out in the field and your hair will grow like feathers and your fingernails and toenails like bird claws. You will eat grass like oxen. You will stay that way until you realize that I am the Lord.”*

Nebuchadnezzar in **Daniel chapter 4:34 and 35** said; *“When my understanding returned to me, I praised the most high God who ruleth, who reigneth, in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of this earth and giveth it to whom he will.”*

God reigns; that is what the word sovereign means, He reigns supreme, He is God, He rules. God reigns in creation; He created all things as it pleased Him.

God Almighty rules in providence; He said, *“I create light, darkness. I create good, evil; I the Lord do all these things. None can stay my hand; none can say unto men, what doest thou? Our God doeth according to his will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of this earth. None can stay his hand.”* He cannot fail. He is omnipotent, He is sovereign, and He is almighty in all things.

My friend, I will tell you this; there is just one place a man will really worship and that is at a sovereign throne, a God who reigns and rules, a God who cannot be frustrated, who cannot be defeated, who cannot be disappointed, *“who doeth as he pleases.”* That is the only place you will worship.

HOW DOES ONE LEARN THE GOSPEL?

ROMANS 1:16 • HENRY T. MAHAN

Men will bargain with an equal, they will argue with an equal and they will quarrel with an equal, but they only worship God who is God. They will only fall down and worship, bow down at the throne of a God, who does what He will, when He will, and with whom He will, for His glory and for their good.

I will tell you the only place that a man will find any comfort in the midst of trials, struggles, and tribulation, heartaches, sickness, death, or whatever; there is just one place that you will find any comfort and that is at the throne of a sovereign God.

You can say that *“we know that all things work together for good, to them who love God, to them are the called according to his purpose.”* Only a sovereign God can work all things together for good; only God can do that.

There’s just one place where a man will find a true salvation and that is at a throne of a sovereign God *“who is able to save to the uttermost, who is able to keep that which we have committed to him, who is able to present us faultless before his throne, who is able to raise our vile bodies and make them like his own.”*

They asked David, *“Where is your God?”*

Psalm 115: 2 and 3 says, *“The heathen said, where is your God?”* They knew where their gods were; their gods were down at the temple, down at the shrines, down at the altar, down where they left them.

Most people today know where their gods are; they are down at the building where they worship. They leave their god in their holy places. They said, *“David, where is your God?”* He said, *“Our God is in the heavens. The heaven of heavens won’t contain him. The earth is his footstool. Our God is in the heavens.”*

Well, what is He like? Read **Psalm 115: 2 and 3**: David said this is what he is like; *“But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he pleases.”* He repeated it in **Psalm 135: 6**, he said; *“Our God is in the heavens; he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased in heaven, earth, and under the earth.”*

So, that is where you start. The Bible starts there; *“In the beginning God.”* That’s all it says, it doesn’t prove His existence, it doesn’t argue about His existence, it doesn’t give any thought of His existence not being true, it says; *“In the beginning God.”*

“He does what he pleases.” What does God do? Well, if you will get a concordance and look up that word pleased, *“it pleased the Lord,”* you will find in **1 Samuel 12:22**, *“it pleased God to make you his people.”* It was no accident, you didn’t choose God; he chose you.

Then, in **Colossians 1:19** it says, *“It pleased God that in Christ should all fullness dwell.”* He vested everything in Christ; He put everything in Christ.

HOW DOES ONE LEARN THE GOSPEL?

ROMANS 1:16 • HENRY T. MAHAN

If you refuse Christ then you can't know God. Turn from Christ and you can't know God. The Son said this; "*No man knoweth the Father save the Son and he to whom the Son will reveal him.*" You can't know God; you can't be blessed of God; apart from Christ, everything is in Christ.

Colossians 1:19 says, "*It pleased God. Our God is in the heavens. He hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.*" It's not a question do you have a god but do you know the living God? Eternal life is to know the living God, not a god, the living God.

David said, "*My soul panteth for thee, the living God.*" In **Isaiah 53:10** it says, "*It pleased God to bruise him,*" that is, Christ's death was no accident. Men didn't kill the Lord of glory; they did what their wicked hearts determined to do and their wicked hands wanted to do, but they did "*what God determined before to be done.*"

Read through the Old Testament and you will find the place written of His birth, you will find the tribe He came from, you will find His family line, and you will find the nation from which the Lord Jesus was born. You will find it written how they plucked out His beard, spat in His face, and how they drove nails in His hands.

You will find in the scripture how Judas sold him for 30 pieces of silver. How he came back and cast the money on the floor in the temple, and went out and hanged himself. And how they used the money to buy the potter's field. You will find how his disciples betrayed him; you will find all that written in the word of God.

You will find in the Scripture what the Lord said from the cross and how the soldiers "*cast lots for his garments at the foot of the cross;*" that is all in the Scriptures. Men did it willingly; they did it because they wanted to do it.

They didn't read the Scriptures and say, "Now, this is what we are supposed to do here, let's see if we are supposed to cast lots for his garment or tear it apart and separate it?" They didn't know anything about the Scriptures or how they would fulfill them but they did.

God prophesied what they would do. God knows all men, He knows their hearts. In **Galatians 1:15** it says, "*It pleased God to reveal him.*" In **1 Corinthians 1:21** it reads, "*God, with the foolishness of preaching, saves them that believe.*"

So, what I am saying is, if you want to learn the Gospel you start with the fountain, the source of the Gospel. You start with Him who purposed and designed the Gospel, planned the Gospel, gave the Gospel. It is His Gospel and you start with God's sovereignty.

Secondly: Let's look at the word sin!

HOW DOES ONE LEARN THE GOSPEL?

ROMANS 1:16 • HENRY T. MAHAN

There is only one place to learn the reality and the depth and nature of sin and that is to go back to where it started. Where did sin start? It started in the Garden.

The Scripture says, “*God created one man Adam*” and all of the men came from him, all of the men and women came from Adam. He created that first Adam without sin, holy and upright, the Scripture says, “*but he sought out many inventions.*”

His will turned against God and he sinned. I can’t explain that sin; I don’t know what happened. I know that Satan tempted Adam and Satan said, “*You will be like God*” and Adam took the forbidden fruit and God said in his Word, “*in the day you eat, you shall die*” and Adam died.

He didn’t die physically; he lived 800 years or something like that. He died spiritually. He became a man of shame and a man of fear and a man of guilt and a man of hate. He didn’t know these things before.

In other words, the Bible teaches original sin; that is where it began. Listen to **Romans 5:12**; “*By one man sin entered the world and death by sin, so death, (spiritual death, and disease and physical death and all that is associated with sin), so death passed upon all men for all sinned.*”

We sinned in Adam. That is original sin; that is where it started. The Bible teaches inherent sin, that is, we not only had imputed guilt but we also had imparted guilt. “*I was shapen in iniquity. I was conceived in sin. I was brought forth from the womb speaking lies*” because I came from a sinful father.

You can’t reject this unless you reject the Word of God because this is what the Scripture teaches, “*in Adam all die.*” That is what it says, “*By one man sin entered the world and death by sin so death passed upon all men. By one man’s disobedience many were made sinners.*”

That is what the Scripture teaches. You can fight it, you can argue it, you can do what you want to, but the Bible teaches original sin which started with Adam, and it teaches inherit sin; it is passed to every son from his father. We are the seed of our father and it is a fallen and sinful seed. You can’t get clear water out of a corrupt fountain.

Then the Scripture also teaches indwelling sin, in that sin dwells in all people!

There is nobody out there listening to me without sin. You can pop off all you want to about being perfect and having the sinful nature eradicated and getting the Holy Ghost and never sinning and “*you are a liar;*” that is what the Scripture says.

“*If any man say that he hath not sinned he is a liar and the truth is not in him, he deceives himself.*” Not only is he a liar but he is making God a liar because God says, “*there is none that doeth good, no not one.*”

HOW DOES ONE LEARN THE GOSPEL?

ROMANS 1:16 • HENRY T. MAHAN

God said, *“All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”* Now, that is Scripture; you can fight it all you want to but that is the Word of God. I call this to your attention; if you are going to buck the truth you are bucking God and his Word.

So, why don't you just receive the truth? You know it in your heart. You know what you are in your heart. You live with yourself. You know that sin is a nature.

A lot of people don't understand what sin is. They think that what they do outwardly, an act, is sin. Well, it is sin in a sense, but it is the product of sin; sin starts in the heart. The sin is in the thought. When the thought is conceived, when the thought is planned, that is when the action takes place but the sin has already started.

That is what our Lord was saying, *“to hate a person in your heart is to be guilty already of murder.”* You may never pull the trigger. You may never use the sword. You may never take his life but you wanted to.

God sees the heart, not just the outward countenance, but the heart. Sin is a principle, it is a nature, it is in the imagination, and it is in the motive, it is in the thought; that is where sin is.

That's where God looks and that is where God judges a man. That is where we have to do business with God. These outward acts are but the product and results of the inward fault. *“Our sins have separated us from God; they have come between you and your God.”*

That's what renders us helpless and hopeless and unable to fulfill God's law and that is our nature. It is inherit sin, indwelling sin; now that's a problem.

You have God, holy and upright; he won't change. You have man who is sinful, depraved and fallen; he can't change. What are we going to do? The law has to be satisfied! God Almighty has given his law and it has to be kept, it has to be obeyed and the justice of God has to be honored.

God can't clear the guilty. *“He will be no means clear the guilty.”* God can't just put his tongue in his cheek and say, “I'll overlook it this time.” He needs to be just and holy and he has to punish sin. He says, *“The soul that sinneth it shall surely die.”*

Thirdly: We have to have a substitute!

First of all: We have to have a substitute that is acceptable with the Father and a substitute that is the friend of man, we must have a near kinsman to redeem us.

HOW DOES ONE LEARN THE GOSPEL?

ROMANS 1:16 • HENRY T. MAHAN

We have to have a substitute that the Father will accept. We have to have a perfect substitute. We have to have a holy substitute. You see, God cannot change. His holy law must be honored and His justice must be satisfied.

So, if we are going to have a right standing before the law, the Scripture says; *“If a man sinneth against God who will stand for him?”* There is only one who can. An angel can't and a man can't but Christ can. Mary can't, the priest can't and the preacher can't but Christ can because He is the God-man.

Not only must we have a right standing before the law but justice has to be satisfied; *“the soul that sinneth shall die.”* Somebody has to die for our sins; they must be paid for.

The gates cannot swing open and the captive be set free until the law and justice has said, *“I am through with him. My needs and my demands are exhausted; the debt is satisfied. The ransom is paid; he is free to go.”*

The holy law of God and the holy justice of God are not going to open the gates and set these captives free, captives of sin, captives of the law, it says, *“guilty before God, let every mouth may be stopped.”*

He's not going to set us free until the law of God has been honored in every jot and tittle by our substitute Jesus Christ. He's not going to set us free until the last bitter dregs in the bottom of the cup of God's almighty's wrath is drunk. The justice of God is going to be satisfied before that gate swings open.

Thank God Christ did it all! He paid it all, all the debt I owe: *“In the fullness of the time God sent his Son into the world, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them under the law. He was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. He was wounded for our transgressions and by his stripes we are healed.”*

We see that; the word substitute is not in the Bible but it is the theme of the Bible; it is the very theme of the Bible, Christ bearing our sins in his body on the tree.

First of all: God is sovereign, no question about it, unchangeable, holy, immutably holy, infinitely holy.

Secondly: Man is a sinner, unchangeably evil.

Thirdly: Christ is the only substitute; *“I am the way, the truth, and the life and no man cometh to the father but by me”*

Fourthly: Satisfaction!

HOW DOES ONE LEARN THE GOSPEL?

ROMANS 1:16 • HENRY T. MAHAN

Is God satisfied? We have a song: “I am Satisfied with Jesus.” Have you ever heard that song? Well, I am but that’s not the question. At the end of that song it says that the question comes to me, “is Christ satisfied with me?”

That’s not the question either. The question is; is God satisfied with our Substitute? Now, that’s the question because we rest in him. We live in Him; our hope is in Him and our salvation is in Him. He is the city of refuge.

When God accepts Christ He accepts you and me. When God receives Him the Father receives us. When God sits Christ down on His right hand as His accepted Son, then He sets us down on His right hand. We are only accepted in the Beloved!

Is God satisfied? Well, has the law been sufficiently honored? Has justice been sufficiently satisfied? Is God reconciled? Has peace been made? Has pardon been secured?

What proof do we have? What proof do you have that God is satisfied with Christ? He raised Him from the dead!

Our Substitute lived on this earth and obeyed God’s law. He died on that cross under God’s wrath and He was buried.

Now, the question: if God is satisfied, if the law is honored, if justice is satisfied, if the debts have been paid, if everything is secure, God will raise Him from the tomb and God did.

Christ ascended to the right hand of God. The Scripture says; listen to this: *“This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sin forever, sat down on the right hand of God. By one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. We are seated with Christ in the heavenlies.”*

Here is the last word: Submission!

I turn to you and I say this; I preach a full and free Gospel of reconciliation. I say that God in Christ is reconciled.

Paul said, *“Be ye reconciled to God;”* believe on Christ; bow to Christ; receive Christ, and bow to the Lordship of Christ. Lay down your arms of rebellion and submit to the only Substitute and Saviour and that is Jesus Christ the Lord!

How does one learn the Gospel?