

The Gospel That Saves

Sunday, October 2nd, 1988

1 Corinthians 9:16

“For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!”

Read with me what Paul, wrote *“For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of, for necessity is laid upon me; woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel.”*

I just wish that you would pull your chair up for a little while. I am going to speak to you only about 26 or 27 minutes. I’m going to speak to you from what I believe is the most important subject that I can deal with or you can hear. This is my subject: What is the Gospel? The title of this message is “THE GOSPEL THAT SAVES.”

I’m not going to talk about the Gospel this morning; I am going to preach the Gospel. I am going to define it; I am going to set it forth in clear, unmistakable terms. I believe like the apostle Paul, *“Necessity is laid upon me; I must preach the gospel.”*

I have nothing to glory of. *“Woe is unto me if I don’t preach the gospel.”* Personally, let me confess something unto you, I am vitally interested in three things. Paul said, *“God is my witness.”* These three things genuinely occupy my attention and thoughts more than any other.

First of all, I want to know the Gospel, not a gospel, not some gospel, not any gospel, but the Gospel. There is only one Gospel. Paul said, *“If any man preach any other gospel let him be accursed.”* He said, *“I don’t care if it is an angel from heaven.”* There is just one Gospel.

That Gospel of God, that Gospel of His glory, that Gospel of His grace, that gospel concerning His Son is the Gospel that I want to know. I’m not taking for granted that I know it, and I’m not taking for granted any of you know it.

A man can miss the Gospel; he can be deceived. If he is deceived, he doesn’t know that he is deceived, or if he is not deceived. You may say, “Well, I know that I’m not deceived.” How do you know you are not deceived? If a man is deceived, he certainly doesn’t know it. Paul said, *“I’m not ashamed of the gospel, it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth.”* So, I must know the Gospel, for that Gospel is the power of God unto salvation.

Second: I don't only want to know the Gospel in my head, I want to believe it and lay hold of it in my heart. Do you? I want to believe that Gospel. What a fearful thought, what a horrible thought to preach to others and I, myself, become a castaway.

This was Paul's prayer for himself; he said, "*O that I may win Christ.*" I want to know Christ but I want you to know Him too. "*O that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection.*" I want to believe the Gospel, to be obsessed with the Gospel, embrace the Gospel, and lay hold on this Gospel that God says is the power of God unto salvation.

Third: I want to preach the gospel. I mean preach it! I don't want to just preach about it. There are a lot of people who are preaching about the Gospel who really never preach the Gospel. Now, you listen to me. I hear people talking about the gospel all the time. I listen to them and they never define it and they never preach it; they just preach about it.

They will use the words, cross, blood, Bible, heaven, hell, repentance and faith. They really never get around to preaching the gospel, defining the gospel. Paul said, "*I preach the gospel.*" I preach the Gospel, not with wisdom of words, not with intellectual comments, praises and so forth.

I don't do it to please men, but I preach the naked Gospel, as it is to men as they are. "*I preach the gospel.*" That is what I want to do; I want to preach the Gospel. I want to be able to say with that great apostle, "I do not frustrate; I do not distort and I do not confuse the Gospel. I sound a clear note, a clear trumpet on the Gospel."

Let me tell you something, there are several things that are critical, absolutely critical to understanding the Gospel, things that I must give you in introducing this message. First of all, this Gospel that saves, is the Gospel of God; it originated with God. This Gospel did not originate in some church council; it did not originate in some denominational headquarters; it originated with God Almighty.

Paul said, "*I am an apostle separated unto the gospel of God,*" God's Gospel. God planned it; He purposed it and He executed it. "*It pleased the Lord to bruise Him.*" He applied it. "*It pleased God to reveal His Son to me.*" He sustains it and He will perfect it. It is God's Gospel from Alpha to Omega. Almighty God originated the Gospel and it came from Him to men. It did not originate down here; it came from God. This is very important.

Second: This Gospel that saves which is the only one is the Gospel of God's free grace. I know that the word grace is used all the time. My friends; free grace is totally and completely the unmerited favor, *"For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast."* This salvation is the free gift of God.

"The wages of sin is death." We've earned that; we merit the wages of sin. The gift of God, the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord, *"Being justified freely by His grace."* So, the Gospel that saves is of God's free grace. We don't merit grace, earn grace, or buy it; it is given by God. It is bestowed by God's free grace.

Third: the Gospel that saves is the gospel of God's glory. He is going to get all the credit. That's the word, credit. He's going to get all the praise and all the glory. He will not share His glory. *"As it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."*

God will be glorified from eternity to eternity for all that He does. God will be glorified for all that we are, for all that we know, and for all that we will ever be. Any preaching that does not ascribe all the glory to God, is not of God. I mean not one jot; one atom or one tittle of the glory shall be given to men.

I am talking about all of your reward systems, your crowns that He is suppose to give out in glory and for all the work that you have done. This is an abomination to God Almighty. He is not going to share His glory with an apostle, with a priest, prophet or a king.

He is going to get all the glory, every bit of the glory. The crowns are going to be on His head. I am telling you the truth, *"He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."* That is written in the Word and God will not share His glory.

I am telling you this, there is too much preaching today that dignifies the flesh, praises the flesh, honors the flesh, and does not glorify God. My friends; in these last days; someone has got to lift a voice and tell this generation the truth that, God Almighty is going to get all the glory.

"Every knee is going to bow." That is your knee, my knees and everybody else's. *"Every tongue is going to confess in heaven, earth, and hell that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."* He is going to have the preeminence. If He does not have it, you will not have any part in His Kingdom.

If we don't learn to glorify Him here, how are we going to glorify Him there? It is going to have to start right here. The attitude and the spirit are planted in the heart right now that blossoms in glory, the seeds are planted here.

Fourth: This Gospel that saves is the ancient, eternal Gospel; it is *"The gospel which He promised before by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures."* This is the same Gospel that He preached in the Garden of Eden, when He was talking about the Seed of Woman, Christ Jesus.

It is the same Gospel that He preached in the Garden of Eden when He slew the lamb and clothed our mother and father. It is the same Gospel Abel preached when he brought the lamb and its blood to the altar. It is the same Gospel that Moses wrote about in Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. It is the same Gospel that Isaiah preached. It is the same Gospel that Abraham preached. It is the same Gospel that Peter, Paul, James, and John, the reformers, preached.

It is the one Gospel, there is not but one. God has never saved a man prior to this day or after this day, but by one way, and that is by looking to Christ. There is not going to be another gospel for the millennium and another gospel for the Jew or another gospel for the Gentiles. There is only one Gospel and that is the Gospel of God, the ancient, eternal Gospel. It is His Gospel.

Fifth: Listen to me, I am sounding a note and blasting a trumpet and declaring a truth that needs to be sounded to all men. This is what I am telling you. You might say that those are strange things. Why haven't we heard them; are they Scriptural? Everyone says that they are preaching the gospel. No, they are preaching about the Gospel.

They are talking about it, but nobody is defining it. This Gospel is the gospel of a Person. It is the Gospel concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. He was made of the seed of David and was a human being, a man. *"He was declared to be the Son of God, with power from the resurrection from the dead."* This Gospel is a proclamation of a Person and the work of that Person Jesus Christ.

Who is He? Do you know who He is? Who is Jesus Christ? He is the God-Man, very God of very God and yet the Son of Man. There are two natures in one person. God Almighty is man. He is God to satisfy and man to suffer. He is God in human flesh. *"The Lord Himself shall give you a sign; a virgin shall be with child and you will call His name Immanuel which is being interpreted, God with us."*

“The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,” (the express image, the exact image of God). Thomas fell at His feet and said, *“My Lord and my God.”* I’m not talking about “Jesus Christ super-star” or the “sweet little Jesus boy.” I’m not talking about the “good man upstairs.” *“He is God in human flesh.”*

What did He do? He came to this earth. He robed Himself in human flesh, died on a cross, was buried and rose again and ascended to the right hand of God. Why did He do it? He did it so that *“God can be Just, and justify the ungodly.”*

Where is He now? He is seated at the right-hand of God triumphantly. He is the Conqueror, the Redeemer, and our Victorious Saviour. He is satisfied with what He did. He is satisfied with what He accomplished. He is not ringing His hands out, leaning over the banisters of heaven and hoping that someone will let Him have His way. *“He sat down expecting until His enemies be made His footstool.”*

Those things are true; they are according to this Book. This is the truth; this is the Word of God. This Book cannot be set aside; it has to be faced. If you meet the truth in the middle of the road, you will have to either run from it, or bow to it. What we think or what we believe about the Gospel makes no difference whatsoever, the Gospel of God will never change. There is one Gospel and I know it is so. That is the Gospel of God and I know it is so!

God is the One who has been offended. God’s law is the law we have broken. God is the only One who can forgive. God is the only One who can justify. God is the only One who can speak peace. God is the only One who can forgive. This is God’s Gospel!

I will tell you this, we have nothing to pay; it has to be by grace. We are bankrupt, we are broke, and we are dirty beggars. We are diseased, ragged, dead sinners. If anything is done, God will have to do it. We can’t lift a finger or wiggle a toe. It is the Gospel of God’s free grace.

I will tell you this; it is the same Gospel that He has always declared. God has never saved men, but by one way. *“Every tongue in heaven is going to declare that Jesus Christ is Lord. Every knee is going to bow at the throne of Jesus Christ.”*

No one is going to bow at the throne of the law, or the throne of works, or the throne of some denomination. Nor are they going to bow at the throne of some evangelist who won them to the Lord. They are going to bow the knee before Christ, and they will confess

that He is Lord. Every tongue will declare in heaven unto Him Who is worthy, unto Him Who loved us, and washed us from our sin in His own precious blood.

He said, *“Moses wrote of Me,”* and the people replied, *“We’ve got Abraham.”* He said, *“You don’t know Abraham; you are not Abraham’s children. If you were Abraham’s children, you would do the works of Abraham. Abraham saw My day; he rejoiced to see it and he was glad.”*

Jesus Christ is the Gospel from Alpha to Omega. If you miss Christ, you miss the Gospel. If you leave Christ, you leave the Gospel. That is what many have done. In Luke 24:27 the Scripture says, *“Beginning at Moses, (beginning at Genesis 1:1), and all the prophets (through Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel and through every one of the major and minor prophets), He expounded unto them all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”*

What is the Book all about? The Old Testament says, “Someone is coming.” The four Gospels say, “Someone has come.” The epistles say, “He is coming back.” That person is the Lord Jesus Christ. In Acts 10:43, it says; *“To Him give all the prophets witness that through His name, whosoever believeth in Him should receive remission, forgiveness of sin.”* It is all in Christ.

God put all of His eggs in one basket. God has put all of His promises and purposes in one basket. He has put them all in One Person. *“In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.”* God has committed everything to the Son. He has put everything in His hands! That is the way that you will come to God and it is through Christ.

That way, you will know God, love God, and worship God. That is the way that you will be forgiven by God. You will embrace and lay hold upon Him by faith, in His dear Son who said, *“I am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh to the Father, but by Me.”*

Listen carefully, as far as eternity is concerned. I had an old preacher friend one time that use to say, “If you are not in too big a hurry to meet God in the Judgment, if you are not in too big of a hurry to perish in eternal damnation.” If you have just a minute, will you carefully read with me?

This Gospel of Christ, this one Gospel is the only suitable sufficient Gospel for it both meets your need and God’s need.

God's need, what need? I know I have a need; what need does God have? Will you listen? It is time that we started thinking. Our Lord said, "*Come; let us reason together.*" We have to do some thinking. You can't get this generation to think. You can't get them to study. Listen to me now, God was under no obligation to save anyone; God owes us nothing.

God was under no necessity whatsoever to redeem any of Adam's race. You know that and I do too. God being God is independent and sufficient in Himself. He is under no obligation and no necessity to redeem anyone.

He passed the angels by, and He could have passed us by. But, having purposed to save sinners, having purposed in His eternal council to have a people to restore some of the Sons of Adam back to His favor (His elect), the Lord God placed Himself under certain Divine requirements in being God.

Let me go over that again: God had no obligation to us. He has no necessity to redeem any of us. Once Almighty God purposed to save a people, once Almighty God in His eternal council said, "I'll have a people out of Adam's race and will give unto My Son," He placed Himself under certain Divine requirements, meaning, if God is going to justify sinners, He has to do it in keeping with His character. He has to be Just and Justifier.

If God Almighty is going to show mercy to sinners, He has to do it in keeping with His character. He has to do it as God. He must be Righteous and Merciful. If God Almighty is going to be gracious to sinners, He has to do it in keeping with His character. He has to be Holy. Do you understand what I am saying? God, being God, cannot do anything that is not according to His Holy, Perfect, Righteous character.

Here are four things that I am going to give you in about ten minutes:

First of all, God's law must be honored. If He is going to justify sinners and save sinners, He can't do it at the expense of His Law. He can't erase His Law. He can't repeal His law. His Law has always stood and always will. God's Law is a revelation of God's character.

His Law has stood, it does stand, and it shall stand forever as the Laws of His Kingdom. God is a thrice Holy God. He can't change. There is no way that God can save, accept, or have dealings with men at the expense of that Law. He cannot cancel the Law for your benefit.

The Law must be obeyed by all who would come to Him. Any man who comes to God must come to God as a perfect person, or He cannot be received. There is not one jot or one tittle that shall pass from that Law until it is every bit fulfilled. Christ said, *“I didn’t come to destroy the Law; I came to fulfill it.”* It is going to be fulfilled. That is why Christ was born of woman. That is why *“Jesus Christ was made under the Law.”*

That is why Jesus Christ took our flesh and our bones, that He might fully obey God’s Law on behalf of those who were given to Him, and on behalf of those who would believe on Him. Romans 5:19 says, *“By the disobedience of one, many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous.”*

God obeyed the Law as your Head, as your Representative, as your Substitute, if you are in Him. He fulfilled it for you. Before the Law, every believer has a perfect righteousness. Every believer himself has met God’s Law head on, and fulfilled it in Christ.

Now, God can justify us, save us and receive us because we are in Christ perfectly and His Law is not violated. His Law is not violated. God can’t violate His Law. He can’t stick His tongue in His cheek and say, “Well; you know, I just overlooked that little infraction there.” There is not *“One jot or tittle.”* That is a pretty small amount, a jot and a tittle.

Second: God’s Law must be honored. God can’t do anything except in keeping with His character. God’s Justice has to be satisfied. *“God is Just.”* He is absolutely Just. He is Righteous and Truth. *“He must punish sin”* if He is to be God. He always has and He always will.

He cannot clear the guilty. *“He can by no means clear the guilty. The soul that sinneth shall surely die.”* Isn’t that what God said? That is the reason that Job asked three times in the Book of Job, *“How can man be just with God? How can he be clean that is born of a woman? How can he that drinks iniquity like the water be clean and holy in God’s sight?”*

Well, that is why Christ died on the cross. In Second Corinthians 5:21 it says, *“He was made sin for us.”* He actually took our sin in His body on the tree. *“He was made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”* He had no sin of His own.

God set forth His Son to be propitiation, a mercy seat, a substitute, sin-offering, sacrifice and atonement for our sins, to declare God's Righteousness, that God might be Just, Holy and the Justifier of them that believe in Christ.

Christ in death paid the debt and enabled God to forgive sinners. The debt was paid. Yes sir; God put Himself under a Divine requirement, under Divine obligation and under Divine necessity if He was to receive fallen creatures. Their sin has to be paid for. They couldn't pay for their sins, the angels couldn't pay for them, and God couldn't pay for them. God as a man could pay the debt, and as the God-Man Mediator, He did. He fully paid the sin debt for His elect.

Third: Watch this, if a sinner is to be saved and brought to God in righteousness, nothing must be left for Him to do. This is the Gospel. Nothing must be left for the sinner to do. It has to all be done for him. The whole of the righteous work must be fulfilled; otherwise, there is no hope.

If Jesus Christ came down here in righteousness, obedience and death and left one thing for me to do, just one thing, one thing pleasing to God, one thing in keeping with God's Holiness, one thing of perfection, perfection has to be perfect or God can't receive it. The sacrifice must be perfect or God can't receive it. If He left one thing for me to do, then I am damned, as sure as you are a foot and a half high. Why?

The answer is because of what man is. *"In the flesh no man can please God. Man at his best state is altogether vanity."* If God with a magnifying glass of sovereignty put you under the microscope of sovereign, piercing eyes, He couldn't find in all of us put together, one righteous act, thought, word, or deed. So, if Christ left anything for you and me to do, we are damned.

Christ paid it all
All the debt I owe

This is what the Gospel says, *"But of God are you in Christ who has made unto us everything we need, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. We are complete in Him."*

My friends; do you hear that word complete? Complete means complete. Complete means nothing left to be added. Complete means that there is no lack. *"I am complete in Christ."* The work of Christ is sufficient to save a thief in his dying moment or a Pharisee like Saul of Tarsus and to leave him to walk this earth for thirty or forty years.

In Him, in Christ, there is no sin and no condemnation, *“Being freely justified by His grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.”*

You say, “What about my repentance and faith?” The Scripture says, *“God has granted repentance to the Gentiles.”* Even that regenerating work and that convicting work of the Holy Spirit and that repentance that is formed in your heart, is the work of God. *“It is God that worketh in you both to will, (that is to desire and to perform) and to do His good pleasure.”*

It is given to us not only to suffer for Christ, but to believe on Him. *“Faith is the gift of God, not of works lest man should boast,”* faith in our heart, is the work of God.

Fourth: In salvation, the sinner must be preserved by grace and persevere by faith, that sinner must be brought to Christ eternally and be glorified with Christ, or that salvation is no salvation at all. In other words, salvation is not eternal.

I hear people run around arguing all the time about being once saved, always saved. I hear about eternal security, once in grace always in grace. Let me tell you something; let me say this as plain as I can; a salvation for six months is no salvation. A salvation for six years is not a salvation. That is just prolonged agony. That is prolonged condemnation. Salvation for 60 years is no salvation.

An eternal salvation, now, that is salvation! That is salvation from the power of sin; that is salvation from the penalty of sin, that is salvation from the practice of sin and that is salvation (by the grace of God, someday) from the very presence of sin. *“Whom God foreknew He predestinated, He called, He justified and God will glorify.”* He said this in John Chapter 10, *“My sheep hear my voice and they follow Me and I know them and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish.”*

Yes, His salvation fully and completely honors His Law. His salvation fully and completely satisfies His Justice. His salvation fully and completely meets every need that the sinner has and His salvation keeps us.

He will keep me til the river
Rows its waters at my feet

“We are kept by the power of God through faith. He that hath begun a good work in you will fulfill it in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

