

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

GALATIANS 1:6-7 • TV073B

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Galatians 1:6-7

“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.”

I want you to open your Bible today to the book of **Galatians**, the first chapter of **Galatians**. I'm going to read in a moment **verses 6 and 7**.

My subject today is: **“WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?”** We hear a lot of talk about the Gospel. I would like to define it for you from the Word of God: **“WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?”**

Paul says: *“I marvel; (I'm amazed), that you are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel which is not another gospel (but is a perversion of the Gospel of Jesus Christ).”*

Now I believe that I can truthfully say three things. I will be totally and perfectly honest with you from my heart. I believe I can truthfully say three things occupy my thoughts more than

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anything else, more than anything else, now here they are; here are three things that I'm more concerned about than anything:

First of all: I want to know the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

More than anything else I want to know the Gospel, the Gospel which Paul calls, "*The Gospel of God,*" not another Gospel, not any Gospel, not some but, "*The Gospel of God.*" I want to know that Gospel.

I want to know the Gospel which He calls, "*The gospel of God's glory;*" don't you? I want to know the Gospel which He calls "*the gospel of God's grace*" and the Gospel He says in **Romans one**, "*That is concerning His Son.*"

Now Paul very strongly charged some people with not preaching the Gospel. He said, "*They're preaching another gospel.*" That's right; he says in **2 Corinthians 11:3-4**: "*If he that cometh to you, preacheth another gospel and another spirit and another Jesus; you might well bear with me.*"

And then he said in **Galatians 1:8-9**, just a few verses from where we've been reading, he said: "*Though we or an angel from heaven; (it doesn't matter who it is, what his credentials are) though we or an angel from heaven preach unto you any other gospel, let him be accursed.*"

He repeated it again in **verse 9**: "*As I've said before; so say I again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you; let him be accursed.*"

And then he said this, "*Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel.*" You can't preach it if you don't know it and it's got to be taught. Everybody doesn't know the Gospel. It has to be taught us by the Holy Spirit.

I want to know the Gospel. If I were you I would make it my prayer to God daily: "Lord; teach me the Gospel, reveal unto me the Gospel. Don't leave me to myself."

"*There's a way that seemeth right unto men but the end is death (and destruction).*" God says, "*My thoughts are not your thoughts; my ways are not your ways.*" I want to know the Gospel.

Secondly: I want to believe the Gospel!

Now, in **1 Corinthians chapter 15** Paul said: "*Brethren; I declared unto you the gospel which I preached unto you in which you have received and wherein you stand and by which you are saved if you keep in memory what I preached unto you unless you believed in vain.*"

How are we saved, by hearing, by receiving, and by believing the Gospel? That's how I may. It's not by doing, it's not by deciding; it's by believing the Gospel. Paul said, "*I'm not ashamed, of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*"

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And when our Lord had risen from the tomb and had met with His disciples before He ascended to the Father; He gave them this commission: *“Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel, to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. He that believeth not shall be damned.”*

I want to be saved. I just don't want religion; there's enough of that in the world. I don't want to perish in religion. I don't want to be left to my tradition, my heritage, my customs, and my religious training.

Read **Philippians the 3 chapter** sometime. Read how the apostle Paul listed all of his religious training, his religious heritage, his religious works, his religious zeal and his religious accomplishments.

He listed all those things and his religious morality. He said: *“I count these things but dung that I may win Christ and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law but the righteousness of God which is by the faith of Jesus Christ.”*

It is foolish for me, you, or for anybody else to perish defending a doctrine, denomination, custom, ceremony, law, or anything else. Don't miss Christ resting in a false religion. He said: *“Many shall say unto me in that day, (many; think about that) many shall say unto me in that day; Lord we've preached in your name and cast out devils in your name and did many wonderful works in your name. Then will I profess unto them: I never knew you. Depart from me ye that work iniquity.”*

Brethren; this is serious. If this doesn't occupy your thoughts; don't die in the bed of presumption, don't lie in the rut of presumption, and let Christ pass you by like the Pharisees: “We're all right. We don't need a Saviour. We don't need a Redeemer.”

I want to know the Gospel. And I don't only want to know it in my head I want to believe it in my heart, *“for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.”* Salvation is not a head work, although God doesn't work apart from the mind; you know that and I know that, but salvation is a heart work.

“With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.” They were pricked in their hearts, convinced in their hearts. Repentance is a heart-work. Faith is a heart-work, *“With the heart man believeth.”*

That's where the work of redemption takes place. It's not just deciding some things with your mind and your emotions but its God dealing with you in your heart.

This occupies my thoughts more than anything else, these three things. I want to know the Gospel; I want to personally believe the Gospel.

Thirdly: I'd like to preach the Gospel to you!

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I'd like for the Spirit of the living God to so come upon me and fill me and give me understanding and power and wisdom so that I can preach to you the Gospel, not just preach to you, but preach the Gospel to you.

The judgments of God rest upon the man who does not preach the Gospel. *"We preach as one who must give an account."* I can't spend my time dealing with churches, dealing with schools, building orphanages, and building hospitals and these things.

I must preach the Gospel. These things will be done if we spend our time preaching the Gospel, if we'll tell men about Christ, not about ourselves and our programs and our great works that we're doing. Let God take care of these things. Let them stay in the background. Preach the Gospel to people.

Spend our time proclaiming the good news, the glad tidings of great joy that Christ died on the cross for sinners. The judgment of God rests upon the man who does not preach the Gospel. Paul said, *"Let him be accursed!"*

And then you know; the people we preach to, they can't trust an unknown Christ. We tell them, "Believe on Christ." Well they say: "Who is He, where did He come from, what did He do, why did He do it, where is He now, what does He say, what do we believe?"

The preacher says, "believe, believe, believe." Well, tell me what to believe. Spend some time telling me what God says. What do I believe? *"How shall they call on Him in whom they've not believed? How shall they believe in Him of whom they've not heard and how shall they hear without a preacher?"*

And how in the world are they going to hear anything by the kind of preaching that's going on today? There's no teaching of the Word of God; it's just skimming the surface. It's just talking about things that are totally contrary to the real Gospel of Jesus Christ.

If our hope is a good hope it'll be founded first of all on the Word of God, if our hope is a good hope. You'll be able to give a man who asks you a reason; if he asks you what is your hope; you'll be able to give him a reason, the Word of God.

And then, if our hope's a good hope it'll rest in Christ. It'll not rest on our experience, or our feelings, or our morality; it'll rest in Christ. *"I know whom I have believed,"* Paul said.

He didn't spend his time saying, "I know when I believed and I know what I believed; he says *"I know whom I believe, (not in whom) I know whom; (I know Him) and I'm persuaded that He is able to keep that which I've committed unto Him against that day. I know who He is."*

And then if our hope is a good hope it'll be felt in the heart. It'll be a genuine experience. It won't be something that's here today and gone tomorrow. It won't be something we'll feel today and is totally contrary tomorrow; it'll be felt in the soul and in the heart.

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Oh we know our inability, weakness, failures, and imperfections, but we know His perfection and His righteousness and our hope is seated at the right hand of God.

And if our hope's a good hope it will be manifested in our life; people will be able to see it, to recognize it and take note that we've been with Jesus. We'll be different people; we will be, "*New creatures in Christ.*"

I want to preach the Gospel as Zachariah called it, "*the burden of the Word of God.*" And one great, old, Puritan said: "Well, I'll tell you this; if the Word of God is not a burden to the preacher now, it will be at the Judgment."

I wish God would burden some of our television, and radio, and pulpit preachers today with the terrible, awesome, responsibility that is ours to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and not just tell people to believe but tell them what to believe and tell them why they should believe and tell them what to expect when they believe. Teach them the Word of God!

We ought to spend less time playing church and more time preaching the Gospel. We ought to spend less time with our promotions and programs and more time examining our Gospel and examining our hope and examining our faith.

You know, I heard about a preacher one time that visited one of his deacons. He'd been a pastor of this church a long, long, time. And he visited one of the men of the church in the hospital. The man was critically ill and he was dying.

The man knew it, the preacher knew it, the doctor knew it, and everybody knew it. And the pastor visited with him a little while and when he got up to leave he had prayer and then he shook hands with the man and just in commenting and passing he said, "Brother; are you saved?"

And do you know what the man replied? "I am if you told me right, preacher. I am if you told me right." Now, a lot rests upon what we tell men. "*How shall they hear without a preacher and how shall they preach except they be sent?*"

Now, I'm going to give you a definition of the Gospel which I preach. If I preach the Gospel of God, the Gospel of God's glory, the Gospel of God's grace, it'll meet five requirements. And if anybody else preaches it, it'll meet these five requirements and I'll give them to you:

First of all: The Gospel that saves, if it's the Gospel of Christ that really saves a sinner, it must, it will, it has to honor God's law, it has to honor God's law

What do I mean? Well, I mean this; God's holy and the moral and spiritual law of God is the very character of God. God is holy and God's holy, moral, law, is a revelation of God's character.

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And the law reveals not only God's holiness but it reveals my sinfulness. As I see His perfect love I see the absence of it in myself. As I see His perfect holiness I see my imperfections. The more I see of His holiness; the more I see of my sinfulness.

The more I look into the perfect, holy, moral, law of God, the more I see God's holiness. *"Thou shalt have no other gods before me. I shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. Thou shalt not bow down to any graven image. Thou shalt not have any idols. Remember the Sabbath Day and keep it holy. Honor thy father and thy mother. Thou shalt not steal, kill, commit adultery, covet, lie;"* all of these things are a revelation of the character of God.

And the holy law of God requires doing, not just agreeing with it, but doing it, performing it, not just knowing it and not just memorizing it. I know that we read it on Sunday in our congregation. We memorize it. We are for it, 100 percent for it, but the law of God requires doing and perfect obedience.

And not only perfect obedience outwardly but perfect obedience inwardly. Not only perfect obedience in deed but perfect obedience in thought. This is where people are missing it. That's where Christ said; *"You say you've never killed anybody but I say unto you to hate is to be guilty already of murder."*

And these thoughts of ours, these imaginations of ours; the law of God requires perfect obedience and God can accept nothing less than perfection. He can demand no more than perfection but He can be satisfied with no less.

And God can't forgive you or me at the expense of His holy law. It's got to stand. How good does a man have to be to go to heaven? He's got to be as perfect as God, as good as God. *"Two can't walk together except they be agreed."*

And God can't receive you and me in our imperfections without the law being honored. And that's what I'm saying about the Gospel of Christ; He honored the law. **Galatians 4:4-5** says: *"In the fullness of the time God sent forth His Son made of a woman, made under the law, (in subjection to the law, from the requirements of the law, in order) that He might redeem those that were born under the law."*

By the disobedience of Adam we were made sinners. By the obedience of Christ we were made righteous. Jesus Christ came down here in the flesh as a man, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh. *"He was tried, tempted and tested in all points as we are, yet without sin."*

And as our perfect representative, the God-man; He obeyed the law. He honored God's law. And that's the only way that God can save sinners, is by His law being honored. In that way, the attribute of righteousness is satisfied. Do you see that?

So, whatever Gospel you preach, if you preach the Gospel of baptism; it better honor God's law. If you preach the Gospel of morality and the Gospel of good works or the Gospel of church

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membership, the only thing I ask you is; does it honor God's law? Have you honored God's law?

Does the righteousness you claim honor, perfectly obey, give to its rightful position, God's holy law? Now God won't be satisfied with any less than perfection.

Now, you who believe the Gospel of Christ can rest in what He did. He honored God's law. He did it; you didn't, you can't and you won't, but He did as your substitute.

Now listen to me; this is so: The Gospel that you preach, if it's the Gospel of grace, if it's the Gospel of God, if it's the Gospel that saves and honors God's law!

Secondly: It will satisfy God's justice!

Now, God must punish sin; He must if He's going to stay God, He has to. God will punish sin. God cannot allow sin to go unpunished. If you have a god who will not punish sin, then you don't know the God of the Bible. He will punish sin. Listen to what He said; "*The soul that sinneth; it shall surely die, (not perhaps, not maybe) it shall surely die.*" He says: "*I will in no wise, (under any circumstances), clear the guilty.*" God says; "I won't do it, the guilty will be punished."

So, if our Gospel is the Gospel that saves, somehow it's got to honor God's law and it's got to satisfy God's justice. God will punish sin. He must punish sin. He can do no other. Sin has got to be punished.

Now I'll say this to you, if we come forth with a Gospel that does not satisfy God's justice; it is not the Gospel of God because a god who can pardon without justice might just one day condemn without reason. Think about that!

A god who can set aside his righteousness may one day set aside his mercy; you can't trust him. If your god can set aside his justice and set aside his righteousness he may someday change his mind and set aside his mercy.

A god that can deny his law may one day deny his gospel. That's right! And a god who can change his character may someday change his promise. But God is never unjust in order to be gracious. He does save sinners. He does forgive sinners but not until their sins are paid for by the death of His Son. That's right!

"God sent forth His Son into the world to be a propitiation for our sins that He might be just and the justifier of him that believeth on Jesus. God spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all. How shall He not with Him freely give us all things?"

"Who can condemn us? It is Christ that died; was buried, rose again, and is even at the right hand of God interceding." That's our hope. He satisfied God's justice. I'm telling you the truth.

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The Gospel that saves, if it's the Gospel of God, it must honor that law; it must satisfy God's justice and that's what Christ did.

Thirdly: It has to be free, completely free!

Don't you put any strings on it. If you do it's powerless to save. When you put a condition under the Gospel, when you put a strain under the Gospel, you make it absolutely impossible for any son of Adam to be saved because God says in His Word: *"We are without hope, we are without help, and we are without strength."*

And if there's a payment to be made then I have no hope because I have nothing to pay and you don't either. If there's a righteousness to be presented then I have no hope because God said, *"My righteousnesses are filthy rags."*

That's what He says and I've got no hope and you don't either. If you knew your heart you would have to confess it and you have no hope either.

But the Gospel of Christ declares that salvation's free. Our Lord said when they had nothing to pay He freely forgave them. *"The wages of sin is death."* That's what we earn and that's what we merit and that's what we deserve, *"But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

"For God so loved the world that He gave His Son." He didn't sell Him to you. He gave Him to you, *"That whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life."*

The great Augustus Toplady wrote that hymn **Rock of Ages**:

**"In my hand no price I bring
Simply to the cross of Jesus Christ I cling
Could my tears forever flow?
Could my zeal no respite know?
These for sin could not atone
Christ must save and Christ alone."**

That's the Gospel; it's free, it's free. It's free to all men everywhere. Don't bring anything but empty hands. Don't bring anything but a need.

**"All the fitness He requireth
Is to feel your need of Him.
Let not conscience make you linger
Nor a fitness fondly dream
All the fitness He requireth
Is to fill your need of Him."**

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Christ meets a need. Now don't you try to buy salvation from God. Don't you try to bargain with God. Don't you try to offer anything in return. I hear a lot of people say, "Now Lord; if you do this I will do so and so." God doesn't deal with men that way; it's free, free, free grace!

The Gospel that saves; it must honor God's law, it must satisfy God's justice, and it's got to be totally free, without charge. We are justified freely by His grace!

Fourthly: It's got to be available to any sinner, that's right, to any sinner!

Now, the Word of God plainly declares that Jesus Christ will have a people out of every tribe, kindred, nation, and tongue under heaven. That's right! The Lord Jesus Christ in glory is going to have a people.

You will find every tribe; I don't care, in the center of the deepest, darkest, jungle; He's going to have a people; that's what it says in **Revelation**; "*Out of every kindred, every tongue, every nation, and every tribe on this earth.*"

Now that's not possible, now that's not possible if Jesus Christ is only a Jewish Saviour. So you see, your sectarianism won't do here; it won't bring the Gospel message. It won't do if He's only a Catholic Saviour; it won't do and not if He's just a Baptist Saviour.

You people who are wrapped up in your little, "sectarianism and your landmarkism" better back off because; He's got a people in "*Every tribe, kindred, nation, and tongue under heaven.*" That's what He says.

And if He's a Sectarian Saviour, if He belongs only to the Jew or to the Catholic or to the Protestant or any other tribe by any other name, then He's not the Saviour of sinners. This Gospel has got to be preached to every creature, to every creature under heaven.

"*And he that believeth;*" salvation is not in your chance or mine; it's in Christ. Salvations not in your doctrine or mine; it's in Christ. Salvation is not in your works or mine; it's in Christ. Salvations not in your standard or mine; it's in Christ.

He's able to save even a thief on the cross. Can your Gospel do that, your gospel tells; "A fellow yet to come to the front and yet to pray through and he has to be baptized and he has to wait six months before the church will receive him."

He has to fulfill this law and that law and yet he has to be catechized and circumcised and confirmed and ceremonialized. How about that thief on the cross? Would your Gospel save him? Could it help him?

You say: "Well, I don't think he can make it." Well then it's not of God, it's not of God. That's not God's Gospel that you got a hold of. That's your gospel.

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That's another gospel and that won't save a flea, you or me or anybody else because the Gospel of God can save even a thief on the cross who believes, who couldn't work, who couldn't wash and who couldn't witness, and who couldn't walk. He was nailed to a tree but he could believe.

He could look, he could look. Christ said: "*Look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth I am God, there is none else.*" So, we better study our Gospel a little bit and find out if it honored God's law and if it satisfied God's justice and if it's free, totally free, and if it's available under any circumstances, at any time, to any son of Adam in his need.

Fifthly: The Gospel that saves has got to be eternal!

It can't fix me up today and leave me tomorrow. Now, if this Gospel that I believe, if it won't take me all the way to heaven I don't want it. It's of no use. The Israelites who died in the wilderness might just as well have stayed in Egypt for all the good it did them.

Why, a Gospel that won't take you all the way, a Gospel that won't finally bring you to glory, is at least not worth the time that it'll take to preach it. You tell me that I can be saved today and a child of God today and next week I'm lost, I'm not a child of God anymore?

I don't want any part of that Gospel. That's not an eternal Gospel. Christ said, "*My sheep hear my voice. I know them; they follow me. I give them eternal life and they shall never perish.*" Now that's the Gospel I want to hear. That's the hope that I want to hold to. That's the Christ that I want to believe.

I want to believe a Redeemer who can take me all the way from Egypt to Canaan. Whatever the trials, the mountains, the valleys, the dark places, the deep places, the shallow places, and the rocky places, all away, trusting Him, not myself, trusting Him all the way.

That's the Gospel to honor God's law and satisfy God's justice. It's free, it's available to any needy sinner and it's eternal!