

## **How Do We Preach the Gospel?**

Sunday, July 26<sup>th</sup>, 1987

### **1 Thessalonians 2:9**

*“For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.”*

I have pastored the 13<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church for 36 years, since 1951. During those years I have tried to preach to them and to all that would hear by radio, television, tapes or whatever means the Gospel of the Son of God, the Gospel of God's grace. I've tried to be true in preaching the Gospel.

There is something else that I have tried to do. I have tried to get into the hands of our people good reading material. When I say, good reading material, I mean books and papers that are true to the Word of God, true to the Scriptures. I look for reading material that exalts and magnifies Jesus Christ. I look for material that does not shame the glory and the preeminence of our God. I look for literature that glorifies God.

Then, I try to put into their hands literature that they can read. Most of the books of theology and the commentaries are just too weighty and too heavy and too intellectual. The ordinary person cannot understand them. They cannot grasp them and they are too involved and too complicated.

I have written some commentaries from the New Testament. The newest book is the Book of the Gospel of John. This is a verse by verse commentary in plain, simple language on the Gospel of John. It has 212 pages and we are selling it to you for exactly what it costs us to buy them from the company in England that is publishing them. The name of the company is Evangelical Press. It will cost \$3.00. If you want it we will give you the address at the end of the program. This book has just been published and I want you to have it.

Also, our six-volume set of commentaries on the 21 Epistles of Paul and other writers, Romans through Jude. This Volume is \$10.00 and it has six books. It has been translated now into French, Spanish and Portuguese. It is being used by missionaries. If you would like to have this set of books, it is \$10.00.

I'm showing you the Book of John right now. I am kind of enthused and excited about it. Many people have talked about what a blessing it has already been to them in helping them to understand and rejoice in the book of John. This book presents our Lord as the Son of God, and shows the Deity of Christ.

Matthew presents him as the King of the Jews. Mark presents Him as the servant, in Luke as the Son of man and John comes along saying, *“In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.”*

My subject today is: “HOW DO WE PREACH THE GOSPEL?” Open your Bible to 1 Thessalonians chapter 2:9, *“We preach unto you the Gospel of God.”* How do we preach the Gospel?

The apostle Paul loved the people at Thessalonica; he loved them very much. They meant a great deal to him. By the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he wrote this epistle to the church at Thessalonica. In Chapter One (if you have your Bible) open it to 1 Thessalonians and look at verse 4.

Paul says this, *“Brethren, beloved; I know your election of God.”* “I know that you are God’s elect. I know that God has chosen you to salvation. I know that you are highly favored of God and I know that God has given you a saving interest in Jesus Christ, I know this.”

How did Paul know that these people were the elect of God? I know that he loved them. Did it make him that prejudice? How did he know that they were the elect of God? What was it about these people that caused Paul to be so sure and so confident that they knew God, that they were the elect of God?

Well, he tells us; he doesn’t stop there. He says, *“I know, brethren, beloved, you are God’s elect for...”* Do you see that little word “for?” For, he said; *“Our Gospel of God’s grace and glory didn’t come to you in word only.”* It did not come to you merely, as religious facts, but the Word of God, the Gospel, *“came to you in power,”* (in life changing power, in regenerating power), *“in the Holy Ghost and much assurance.”* That is how our Gospel came to you!

The Gospel came not just to your ears, your mind and to your intellect; it came to your heart and changed your life. The Gospel changed your hearts and it changed your nature. The Gospel came in power, convicting power, converting power, regenerating power and reconciling power.

In verse 6, he goes on and gives reasons why he believes these people are the elect of God. He says, *“You became followers of us and the Lord.”* You weren’t indifferent to this Gospel. Your faith was not in word only but in conduct and conversation, deed, truth

and attitude. You became a follower. Sheep follow the Shepherd. The Shepherd goes before them and they follow Him.

He says in verse 7, "*You were examples*" to people who live in your home, next door to you, down the street and in your neighborhood. You became an example in your conversation, in your conduct, in your attitude and in your spirit. You became examples. People saw that God had done something for you. They took note of them that they had been with Jesus. There is something different about them.

In verse 8, he says; "*From you sounded out the Word of God.* You became witnesses and missionaries. You couldn't keep it within; you had to tell somebody about it. You had to send the Gospel to other places and to other countries."

"*You turned to God from your idols to serve the Living God.*" You recognized and bowed to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in your life. Jesus Christ is your life and is your hope. You turned from your idols to serve the Living God and to wait for His coming from heaven.

These are strong evidences that a person indeed is the elect of God, that he has a saving interest in Christ. That is what Paul is saying, he says; "*Brethren, beloved; I know that you are God's elect* because only God can do these things. Only God can bring these things to pass."

In order for a man to hear the Gospel of God's grace in power, in the Holy Ghost and in assurance and understanding is for God to reveal it to them. In order for a man to become a true follower of the Lord, he doesn't become a follower of religion or doctrine or denomination, but of the Lord. They are the sheep of Christ. Christ has to do something for you.

A man becoming a new creature does not mean that he just dresses up outwardly, but inwardly. His conduct, conversation and attitude are changed by God. God has to do something for him. In order for a man to be a faithful, true witness, a generous witness, God has to do something for him.

In order for a man to really bow to the Lordship of Christ and give evidence of that bowing he must turn from his idols. His blueprint will be torn up. His bridges will be burnt up behind him. He will turn to God and God must do something for him.

Do you know what? I want you to listen to me; I know that is a tall order isn't it? You say, "Man, that is some Christian, a believer." The Gospel comes in power; he becomes

a follower, an example, and a witness. He turns from his idols and he bows to the Lordship of Christ.

I contend this and I want you to listen; (hold on to your chair; get a good grip on this) because I sincerely believe this and God's Word teaches it. I contend that where the true Gospel of Jesus Christ is preached and where the Holy Spirit gives men and women ears to hear, eyes to see and hearts to understand and believe Christ (and this will always be the results), that men will hear the gospel (if God is in it).

If a messenger is sent of God and he brings a message and the Holy Spirit inspires him to preach it and God has a target for that arrow, I'm telling you that something will happen. It always happens when the Gospel is preached in power.

Paul tells us why and it is how we preach the Gospel. It is how we preach it and it is the Gospel we preach. I'm going to work on some things today and I want you to listen to me. I want you to listen to me with an open mind.

I say, when the Gospel is preached in the power of the Holy Spirit and is anointed of God, something magnificent, something spiritual, something supernatural happens. God is going to do something (always). And it all depends on how we preach it and what we are preaching.

Let's go to 1 Thessalonians. He says, *"I know that you are God's elect."* He even tells them why. He starts Chapter 2:1, *"For; we preach not the Gospel in vain."* Paul said, *"I didn't preach the Gospel in vain; I didn't come down there to Thessalonica and labor in vain; God sent me. I don't preach the Gospel in vain."*

The Father didn't establish His Covenant of Grace in vain. He said in Isaiah 46, *"I've spoken it; I will bring it to pass. I purposed it; I will do it. Our God's in the heavens; He hath done whatsoever He pleased."* God said, *"I will do it."*

He didn't draw up the Eternal Covenant of Grace and Council of Grace in vain; it is going to be done. The Son didn't die in vain. Christ didn't come to the earth in vain, go to the cross and suffer in vain. He didn't go to the tomb and rise again for nothing. *"He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall not fail nor be discouraged."*

Then, the Holy Spirit does not call in vain. The Scripture says in Romans 8, *"For whom he foreknew He predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son. Whom He*

*predestinated He called and who He called He justified and whom He justified He glorified.*” The Holy Spirit does not call in vain.

I will tell you this, a true prophet of God, a true servant of the Lord, a true preacher of the Gospel never runs in vain. He never preaches in vain. If God sent him, He sent him for a purpose. If God sent him He sent him on an errand. He never preaches in vain. If the true Gospel is preached in the Holy Spirit and God is in a situation and God sends a man, He didn't send him in vain. That's exactly right!

Paul says that in 2 Corinthians 2:14. I want you to write it down and read it later. *“Thanks be unto God who always causes us to triumph in Christ for our Gospel is the savor, (the fragrance, the odor) of death unto death and life unto life.”* For some it is the sweet savor of Christ that is life unto life. For others, it hardens them in unbelief and hardens them in their rebellion. It hardens them in their indifference but it accomplishes what it is sent to accomplish.

God said, *“My Word shall not return unto Me void; it shall accomplish that whereunto I sent it.”* What I am saying is if He sends it, if He sends the man, if He sends the messenger, if He sends the message, if He sends the Word, it will accomplish what He sent to accomplish.

It will either break the heart or harden the heart. It will either melt the heart or mold it and harden it in its rebellion. His heart will be put under judgment, blindness and a veil. Paul said, *“We don't preach the Gospel in vain.”*

Paul says, *“We are bold in our God to preach the Gospel unto you.”* We don't only preach the Gospel (not in vain), but we preach it boldly. Listen to me; will you? Paul didn't seek to please men. I'm not here before this television camera trying to win friends and to influence people to like me, love me, support me or applaud me; I am preaching Christ.

The apostle Paul didn't seek to please men. He would never compromise his Gospel for your approval or for your applause or even for your appreciation. Paul said, *“I kept back nothing profitable unto you; I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole Council of God.”*

My friends; there is only one way to preach the character of God and that is to preach it. There is no way to beat around the bush or compromise and say, “Well; you know, everybody has a point.” We are not preaching everyone's points; we are preaching God's points.

I know that everyone has their own opinion. I know that and that is what is wrong with us. We have got to quit preaching opinion and preach what God says. There is only one way to preach man's fall in sin and that is to preach it. We need to preach it just like it occurred and just like it is with the same consequences.

There is only one way to preach the righteousness of Christ and that is to preach it. Nothing else will do; there is only one way to preach the blood of the cross, the substitutionary work of Jesus Christ. We have to flat out preach it.

There is only one way to preach the Gospel of God's free and sovereign grace and that is to preach it. If it is foolishness to natural men than that is all right too. Thank God it is the "*Wisdom and power of God*" to some. Paul said in Acts Chapter 20; "*I didn't covet your silver or your gold.*" I didn't covet your approval, your assistance or your applause. God will take care of me. I covet your soul. I don't covet yours but I covet you.

What we need in this year are men who preach the Gospel with boldness and without compromise, fear, covetousness, flattering words and beating around the bush. We try to get along with everybody. We try to raise an umbrella that everyone can get under. It is impossible; we have to be true to God and true to His Gospel.

Paul says; "*We don't preach the Gospel in vain.*" God sent me and He will accomplish something. It will be His glory too! He raised Moses up for His glory and He raised Pharaoh up for His glory. They both accomplished His purpose.

In verse 3, he said; "*For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile.*" We do not preach the Gospel to deceive men. That is not our purpose to deceive men. Paul was in the Gospel-preaching business. Listen to me; I don't want to hurt your feelings but I am going to tell you the truth. The apostle Paul was never in politics. He was never engaged in them and never promoted them. He was never in the school business. He was not a denominational promoter. He had no money to raise and he had no debt to pay and he had not a budget to meet.

You might say, "What was wrong with him?" He was God's preacher. He had one occupation, one vocation, one profession and that was to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He had nothing to gain from any man but the glory of God and the salvation of sinners. He had his name written on nothing. He had no reason to con anyone or deceive anyone. He didn't have to compromise with anyone.

Wouldn't that be something in this day if the preachers of God, (and God's preachers are), totally free from entanglements, from any debt, from any promotion, from any publications, from any politics, from any organizations, that men would be free in Christ to tell the truth about God? Think about it! *"He that warreth doth not entangle himself."* That is what the Word says. No budget to meet, no debt to pay, no school to promote and nothing to sell. They need to just come before the people preaching the good news of Christ and Him crucified. Maybe God would bless.

In verse 4, he says; *"But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts."* We preach the Gospel as a sacred trust. We don't preach it in vain; we preach it boldly. We didn't come to deceive or con men. We preach it as a sacred trust. He said, *"I've been put in trust with the Gospel."*

Suppose my son, who has a two year old daughter, the only child, came to me and said; "Dad, my wife and I have to leave town for two weeks and we are going to leave with you our little daughter. Do you know what she means to us? Do you know how precious she is to us? We are going to leave her in your care. We are going to trust you to keep her for two weeks and then we will be back."

What an awesome trust; what a responsibility! What a dedication I would give to that; I would protect her with my life. I would die protecting her. I say unto you, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is a more awesome trust than even keeping that little girl. It is a greater responsibility and I plan to discharge it with all my ability, consecration and dedication. Pleasing you is no consequence to me whatsoever! I would die for that Gospel.

Everybody that knows it will die for it too. Everybody that believes it will die for it. He would cut off his arm rather than to compromise it for any reason in this world. I'm talking about bar-none. I mean not ever for peace sake. We have peace but it is a peace of the graveyard. The graveyard is at peace too. Everybody there is dead.

1 Thessalonians 2:5 says, *"We don't preach the Gospel with flattering words as a cloak of covetousness."* Do you know what Paul is saying here? Now, you listen to this. He says, *"I don't preach the Gospel with flattering words as a cloak of covetousness."* Do you know what he is saying? He is saying, "False preachers lie to you and flatter you and speak smooth, flattering words to men and women. They brag on them and praise them; why?"

It is used as a cloak to cover their real reason which is covetousness or to get support, money and gain. They dare not preach the offensive Gospel; they will lose support.

They dare not tell men and women the truth; they will quit supporting them. They might get fired and lose their ministry\_or their salary, fine car or something like that. They might have to start depending on God. Wouldn't that be something?

Catering to the flesh to profit; that is dishonesty. Oh, that God would raise up fearless, bold, preachers of the Gospel for our day who have no one to answer to but God. Oh, that men would have no one to praise but God and no one to glorify but God. Paul says, *"Nor of men, sought we glory, but gentle as a nurse and affectionately, (not hard), we preached unto you the Gospel of God."*

What is this Gospel that we preach? That is how we preach it; that is how every one of God's preachers have preached the Gospel for the last six thousand years; they have all been just alike. They have all had the same message; they have all been just alike. They have all been sent of God and none of them has ever failed. They have come in the power of God and the power of His Spirit with the power of His message.

Some have died for what they preached and for what they believed. Paul had been persecuted, hated and despised; that's right! Some have gone to jail, some have gone to prison and some have been beheaded. They have all preached the Gospel. They have never pleased men. They have always sought the glory of God.

What Gospel did they preach? I'm going to give it to you quickly in about six statements:

First of all: This Gospel is the Gospel of God. It originated with God. He planned it and He purposed it in His everlasting council before the foundation of the world. He purposed to save a people. He gave them to His Son. He made Christ their Surety, the Chief Shepherd, the Good Shepherd, the Great Shepherd.

He was the Mediator of the Covenant. He turned the mediatorial kingdom over to Christ and said, "My Son, bring it home; it is the Gospel of God." That is what Paul called it in Romans 1:1; *"I'm a servant of God, (dedicated, obsessed with), separated unto the Gospel of God, God's Gospel."*

I'm not talking about a Baptist gospel or a Catholic gospel. There is only one Gospel; it is the everlasting Gospel. It is the one Moses wrote about, Abraham believed, Isaiah wrote about and Paul rested in.

Second: This Gospel is the Gospel of His Grace, pure Grace, not works but pure grace. It cannot be both. *“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.”*

There are only two religions in this world. There are ten thousand cults, sects and denominations but there are only two religions. The two religions go back to Cain and Abel. Cain brought his works; Cain brought the fruit of the field. Cain brought what he did for God. Abel came through the blood. Abel came through the grace of God, resting in the slain lamb and that was it, pure grace, free grace, sovereign grace and all grace.

Cain came with works. You have to come to one or the other. It doesn't matter how you spell your name or how long you have been in it. You are either trusting in your works or you are trusting in the grace of God in Christ, the Gospel of Grace. This is the Gospel of His Son, concerning His Son.

Who is Jesus Christ? He is the creating God; *“All things were made by Him; without Him was not anything made that was made.”* He is the Incarnate God. He is the God-man. *“The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.”*

He is the obedient Representative. *“By His obedience we are righteous.”* He is the crucified Substitute. *“He died the Just for the unjust to bring us to God.”* He is the risen Justifier. He is the reigning Mediator and He is the coming King. *“Christ is all and in all, from Alpha to Omega, the author and finisher of our faith.”* We look to Him.

What is this Gospel? It is the Gospel that enables God to be Just and Justifier. He is the only one that will. Listen to me; God is a holy God; God is holy; God is righteous, just and truth. He will never do anything in which He has to compromise His holy, perfect, pure, spotless character. He will never do anything that compromises righteousness and truth.

The only way that He can justify you, pardon you, receive you and fellowship with you is to have His holy Law honored and His justice satisfied by one who is able to do both and that is Jesus Christ. By His obedience and death He enabled God to be holy and still have fellowship with us, the sinners.

It is the Gospel of the glory of God. He gets all the glory. *“Let no flesh glory in His presence.”* God gets all the glory.

It is the Gospel of Peace. *“Therefore, being justified by faith; we have peace with God.”*