

The Gospel Is the Power of God

Scripture Reading: Romans 1:14-16

Romans 1:14-16 (ESV)

"I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. 15 So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

The gospel is the power of God for salvation. We are working **out**, not working **for** our salvation. We (you and I) need the gospel; we need to remind ourselves of the gospel. Many Christians who are struggling in their Christian walk, don't remind themselves often, or even daily of the gospel.

Romans chapter one tells us that the gospel is not just for the unsaved, but for the saved. Often saved people think it is only for unsaved people. My hope is in the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation and my transformation.

1st Corinthians 1:17-18 (ESV)

"For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. 18 For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."

We are to share the gospel. God doesn't need us to try and trick people to believe. We just need to present Biblical Truth, and let the Holy Spirit do the work. Nothing in all the Bible is called the Power of God, but the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The cross of Christ is powerful for those who are being saved. It is the power of God.

The gospel of Jesus Christ, if believed, has the power to change anyone, to help anyone persevere, to endure any heartache, or hardship that life throws their way. On that note, our great, loving God, may not want to change your circumstances, but maybe He wants to change you? Maybe he wants you to be conformed into the image of His Dear Son. Romans 8:28-29. Who or what is God using in your life to make you more like Jesus?

Colossians 1:27-29 (ESV)

"To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28 Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. 29 For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me."

If you are saved, born again, then Christ Jesus is in you! He is the hope of glory. Our goal, as a believer, should be to grow spiritually mature and to make disciples, who will also make disciples. As gospel witnesses, we proclaim Christ Jesus, Who is the wisdom and power of God. We attempt to do this in His power, relying on the Helper.

Sometimes I struggle remembering the gospel and that it is His power working wonderfully in me. Sometimes I get my eyes off Jesus and onto this world. I lose focus of my hope.

John 12:32-33 (ESV)

"And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." 33 He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die."

Notice that Jesus said, **"All people."** This includes Jews, Gentiles, and unreached people groups. Notice how Jesus predicted his own death. Jesus suffered. The sinless savior suffered for sinners! Sinners and sufferers both need a suffering savior. One who can identify with their pain and suffering, and One who can win their hearts because He loved them so much to be willing to die the worst possible way – to die by a Roman Crucifixion. Jesus Christ is the most Romantic Man that has ever lived. Think of what he went through: the agony, the betrayal, the isolation, the loneliness, the rejection, the pain, etc. He suffered all to demonstrate God's love. He came to win your heart and to give you a new heart and a new life.

Galatians 3:1 (ESV)

"O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified."

When Emily and I counsel others from God's Word, we try to paint a picture for those we counsel, so they can almost see the King of glory, suffering and dying, pleading and bleeding for them. The world, the flesh, and the devil have allured many. Our hearts are idol factories. We need to

be reminded of Jesus and His demonstration of Love. We also need the reminder of the awfulness of sin, and then of the hope we have of the resurrection and the power to be transformed.

2nd Corinthians 3:12-18 (ESV)

"Since we have such a hope, we are very bold, 13 not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not gaze at the outcome of what was being brought to an end. 14 But their minds were hardened. For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away. 15 Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. 16 But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."

Please look at verses 17 -18 again. When someone turns to the Lord for salvation they will find freedom: freedom from sin, freedom to serve God like they never had before. The Old Testament law was glorious, because it showed us how holy God is. But the Old Testament law could not do what Jesus can do.

Dear friends, can I encourage you today to behold, to look, to gaze at Christ Crucified? Gaze at him, who was lifted up on the tree. Gaze at him, resurrected and glorified, with scars all over his body. Look and see the hole on the left side of his chest where blood and water flowed. See the scars on his feet and hands for you and me.

As Jesus was resurrected from the dead, my friends, God will one day resurrect all those in Christ. Till that day, gaze at Christ. Glance at the world. Be saved. Be transformed. Be changed. We are changed (transformed) into the same image. What image? Changed into the image of God's Dear Son. How does He do this? Often it is little by little, one degree at a time. He does it by the power of God (the Gospel), and the Holy Spirit. But you and I do our part, as we gaze at our Savior. We think on Him. We delight in Him.

We have such a hope, dear friend! Are you in dire straits today? Can I encourage you to think of Jesus, who said, *"Father, not my will, but thy will be done."*? Jesus initially sought relief, hoped for a different way, but submitted his will to the Father. Maybe your prayer has been, "God change this situation. Change that person. Change my circumstances." Maybe your prayer should be, "Lord, change **me**, change my heart. Not my will, but thy will be done."

The world teaches us that we are victims. You may have been a victim, but Christ suffered on your behalf more than you and I can ever imagine suffering. Remember, while we were yet sinners, Christ Jesus died for us. You and I are spiritually weak. We cannot live a God-honoring life in our own power and strength. We need a redeemer, not more rules.

For those who come to us for help in our counseling ministry, we offer them hope in the person and the work of Jesus Christ. We offer this to those who have been victims of other people's sins or are suffering because of their own sins. The saved, the unsaved, both sinners and sufferers need to hear the Good News of the Gospel.

God promises to give a new heart. The Holy Spirit helps change our desires, so that we want what He wants for us. So, we can offer them a transformed life, because of a transformed heart. When we meet with folks for the first couple of sessions, our mission is to attempt to discern if this person is saved or unsaved. This can be very hard sometimes. Sadly, because of the deceitfulness of sin and our desires, a Christian can do some horrible things and not look like a Christian. Think of King David when he sinned horribly before the Lord. A saved person has the Holy Spirit and an unsaved person doesn't. The unsaved person doesn't have the power to obey and please God. They need a new heart.

Sufferers and sinners, saved and unsaved persons need the gospel of Jesus Christ. A question to be asked is does this person need to be restored to Christ? Or do they need to be reconciled to God? King David needed to be restored to God. Psalm 51 is a beautiful prayer of restoration. King David lived a miserable life when he was living in unrepentant sin.

Think of Jesus and His undeserved suffering. What did he do to deserve his suffering? – Nothing. However, Jesus knew that His suffering was the only way for you and me to have freedom, to have life, to have joy, to be acceptable before a Holy God.

Your suffering is not a free pass to sin. You may be suffering today because of how you have sinfully responded to your suffering. What you have suffered is not an excuse for you to sin. Suffering is often an entry point to find help, and to identify with Christ.

Many folks are going after empty cisterns that can't satisfy. These false sources of help make promises, but they don't deliver. You and I need a greater delight that truly satisfies. My friends, Jesus promised a fountain of living water, springing up from within.

How a person truly changes is not found in trying harder, or getting a good system or process, or getting an accountability partner. It is not a radical amputation or some medication. People need a Redeemer, a Savior. After hearing the gospel, one turns to the Lord, not only to be saved, but to be transformed. We teach folks to gaze at the Savior and not at the world, to focus not only on the Cross, but also on the resurrected Savior, who lives in them, or can live in them. Only by Him may they walk in victory.

Lastly, I would like to close with an observation from Pastor, and Biblical Counselor Dr. Nicolas Ellen: There are 3 Reasons why a Christian is not obeying God.

1. They lack knowledge / They don't know they are sinning.
2. They lack the skill / They don't know how to change.
3. They lack the will / They are stubborn and just want what they want.

Your pastor can help you with numbers one and two, but not number three. He can't give you the will. You will need to ask God to change your heart, to change your desires, to get you into the word of God and gaze at Christ, to renew your mind, and to do what the Word says.

Maybe you are here today, and you may not be saved. You can be saved today, look to Jesus, call out to Him to save you.