

THE GOSPEL SIMPLIFIED

Program #979

Eddie Parrish

Host

What is the gospel of Christ? I'm sure you've heard that terminology before. But have you ever wondered what the terminology means? What's involved in the gospel of Christ? The title of our program today is The Gospel Simplified. Stay tuned.

(Singing)

Introduction

Welcome to the Truth In Love. Thank you for watching the program today. And I hope that you brought your Bible with you and that you have it handy, because I'd like for you to open it up as we begin to the book of I Corinthians, chapter 15. We're going to be reading verses 1 through 4 as we think about today the gospel of Christ. Let's read what Paul had to say, I Corinthians 15, beginning in verse 1. "Moreover brethren, I declare to you the Gospel which I preached to you which you also received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved if you hold fast that word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures and that He was buried and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."

Have you ever wondered about the gospel of Christ? It's a term that you hear oftentimes by preachers, and on religious programming, you hear a lot about the gospel. But have you ever taken the time to investigate the

word and to not just investigate the word, but to investigate the concept and what all is involved in the gospel? If you want to embrace the gospel, what does that mean? What does that involve? What do you have to do? That's going to be the topic of our program today. We're going to try as best we can to simplify the gospel message today. And so as we do that, I want you to consider these points.

Facts to be Believed

First of all, the gospel involves facts to be believed. There are certain things in the Bible that we simply have to believe. Facts, truths about a number of things that we have to accept, that we have to embrace based upon the fact that God has told them to us and He expects us to embrace them. The gospel is good news. That's what the term itself literally means. Good news. Glad tidings. And if we want to be pleasing to God, we have to believe the good news.

But what is that good news? Good news about what? Good news involving whom? That's what we're going to look at in this first point today. What are the facts of the gospel that we have to believe? Here they are.

Jesus is the Son of God

Number one, we need to believe that Jesus is the son of God. That's one of the things that is of paramount importance in our being pleasing in God's sight. We have to believe that Jesus was exactly who He claimed to be. It's interesting today that in some religious circles there are those that claim some kind of belief in Jesus Christ, but they don't believe that He is exactly who the Bible presents Him as, as deity.

In Matthew chapter 1 verse 23, the Bible says, "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and shall bear a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which is God with us." When we talk about Jesus being God's son, we're talking about the deity of Christ, the fact that He was God in the flesh. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God," John 1 verse 1. "And the word became flesh and dwelled among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the father, full of grace and truth," John 1 verse 14. In

Matthew 27:54, we read about what the Roman soldier said at the time that Jesus died. And that Roman soldier got it right when he said, "Truly, this was the son of God." In Matthew 16 verse 16, we find Jesus coming into the coasts of the city of Caesarea Philippi. And as He was walking into the outskirts of that city, He's walking with His disciples and talking with them, and He asked the question, "Who do men say that I, the son of man, am?" It's a good question. He knew that people were talking about Him and saying various things about Him, and so He asked His disciples to get them to tell Him what they were hearing. "Who do men say that I am?" And they said, well, some say you're John the Baptist or Jeremiah or Elijah or one of the prophets. And then Jesus made the question more personal when He said, "Who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered that question correctly when he said, "You are the Christ, the son of the living God." And Jesus told Peter, "Flesh and blood has not revealed that to you, but my Father, who is in Heaven." In other words, Peter, what you've just said about who I am is exactly the truth. I am the son of the living God.

In John 8 verse 24, Jesus said very plainly and clearly, "Except you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins." Interestingly, the Greek text in John 8:24 literally reads, "Except you believe that I am," the very terminology that's used in a number of places in scripture to refer to deity. Jesus is saying if you want to be pleasing to God and you don't want to die in your sins, then you must believe in my deity, my divine nature. "Except you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins." And so as we think about the facts to be believed, that's the first one. We've got to believe that Jesus is the son of God.

Jesus Died for All

We also must believe that Jesus died for all mankind. The Bible plainly teaches that. That's part of the gospel message. It's not enough just to believe that Jesus was the son of God, though that's important and necessary. We also have to accept what the Bible teaches about what He did for mankind. In Hebrews 2 verse 9, the Bible says, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that He by the grace of God should taste of death for every man." Friend of mine, you ought to be glad that Hebrews 2 verse 9 is in the Bible, glad that God revealed that great fact to us, that Jesus tasted of death for every person. That includes me and

that includes you. In Matthew 26 verse 28, Jesus said, "This is the blood of the new covenant which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Jesus said as well in Mark 10 verse 45 that, "The son of man came not to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many." When you start talking about the gospel facts, it ought to bring joy to our hearts to think about the fact that Jesus tasted of death for us.

Jesus Arose from the Dead

But the story doesn't even end there. An additional fact that's a part of the gospel has to do with what happened three days after Jesus died. He was raised from the dead. They placed his battered, bleeding body in a tomb. But thanks be to God, that body didn't stay there. Three days later, up from the grave he arose. As Paul mentioned in I Corinthians 15 verse 4, "He was raised again according to the scriptures." Romans chapter 1 verse 4 says that God proved Jesus to be the son of God with power. How? By his resurrection from the dead. What a great fact. In Peter's great sermon in Acts chapter 2 on the day of Pentecost, as he began that sermon, he talked about some of these facts that they had to believe. And he said, "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by Him in the midst of you as ye yourselves also know, Him being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken and by the hands of lawless men have crucified and slain" ~ now notice this ~ "whom God has raised up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by them." Peter in that great gospel message said Jesus was raised from the dead. And he would say later, "Of which resurrection we are all witnesses."

In Acts 17 verse 31, as Paul on Mars Hill was describing to those Greek philosophers and Greek people what they had to do in order to be pleasing to God, one of the things that he said in trying to convince them and encourage them to do what was right was that one day God was going to "Judge the world in righteousness by that One whom He has ordained." Who is that? Well, he explains it. "By that One that God has raised from the dead." And so as gospel preachers went out in the first century telling others about Jesus Christ, they told them about who He was, His deity, that He was the son of God, they told about His death, that He tasted of death for every man, and they told about his resurrection and how much that means to us.

Jesus Built His Church

There are facts to be believed. And another one of the interesting facts that's important about the gospel and a fact that we must embrace and accept is that not only did Jesus die for us, not only was He raised from the dead, but He also built His church. We mentioned Matthew 16 earlier when Jesus comes into Cesarea Philippi and He asks the question about, "Who do men say that I, the son of man am," and they give these answers, and Peter finally says "You're the Christ." In response to Peter's confession, Jesus said to him, Matthew 16 verse 18, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock" ~ the rock there being not Peter, but the confession that Peter had just made, the truthfulness of the deity of Christ, that Jesus was the son of God ~ on that rock Jesus said, "I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." Jesus promised to build His church. And as a part of the gospel message, that is a part of it.

Do you hear sometimes today people say, you know what? Give me Jesus, but don't give me the church. Let me have Christ, but I don't want any part of the church. I just don't have time for that. I don't want that. Friend of mine, it was Jesus himself who said, "I'll build my church." If it was not something that was important, Jesus wouldn't have purchased it, built it. In Acts 20 verse 28, the Bible says Jesus "Purchased the church with His own blood." When Jesus died for all mankind and allowed himself to be treated so shamefully and allowed himself to be crucified on a Roman cross, why did He do that? To purchase the church. Now, if someone wants to come along now and say, well, the church is not that important, you can take it or leave it and still be pleasing to God, with all due respect, I beg to differ. Jesus poured out His blood to purchase the church. It is vitally, vitally important.

In Acts chapter 2 verses 37 through 47, we read about people responding to the gospel sermon of Peter. When they said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do," and Peter told them to "Repent, be baptized, and you'll receive the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit," the Bible says that, "They that gladly received his word were baptized," Acts 2 verse 41, "and there were added to them that day about 3,000 souls." That chapter goes on to say in verse 47 that God "Continued to add to their number," ~ to add to the church ~ "those that were being saved." And so the church is very much a part of the gospel message. And if we want to understand the gospel and embrace the gospel as it's revealed in the New Testament, then we must make the church a part of that which we

embrace, because it's very much a part of the message.

Jesus is Coming Again

And so what's involved in the gospel? All of these facts. And then let me add one more. The Bible teaches that Jesus is coming again. And one of the facts that we need to be embracing is the reality of His eventual return. In Acts 1 verse 11, as Jesus was ascending back to the Father after his resurrection, His disciples were standing there watching Him. And the Bible says that two men in white apparel stood by there and appeared to these 11. And they said to them, "You men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing into Heaven? This same Jesus whom you have seen go into Heaven will one day come again in like manner as you've seen Him go." Jesus is coming back. In John 14 verses 1 to 3, Jesus told His disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again" ~ notice it ~ "I will come again and receive you unto myself so that where I am, there you may be also." Friend of mine, you need to be thinking about the return of Christ. You need to be thinking about your soul's condition and how Jesus could return at any moment.

God has not revealed to us when the Lord's going to return. We don't know that. People speculate from time to time, but there's no way to know. Jesus said himself in Matthew 24 verse 36 that "No one knows the day nor the hour." And so we ought to be simply ready at any time and stay ready, and that way we'll be ready whenever He comes. Jesus is coming again, and that's a fact that you need to believe.

Commands We Must Obey

But the gospel also includes not only facts to be believed, but there are also commands that we must obey. Sometimes we don't like to hear about commands and obedience, and to some people those are almost dirty words. But not in the Bible. There are commands that we must obey.

We Must Learn the Gospel

And one of those is that we must learn the gospel. We have to be exposed to the truth, exposed to the gospel message. Some people have

adopted the false concept that a person can be saved without ever coming into contact with the preached or spoken or written word of God, and that's just not the case. In John chapter 6 verses 44 and 45, Jesus said, "No man can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up at the last day." Some people say, yeah, I've been drawn to Christ, but as they explain how that supposedly happened to them, it has nothing to do with the way Jesus himself said that drawing takes place. Verse 45, the very next verse, after Jesus said, "No one can come to me except to be drawn by the Father," He tells us exactly how that happens. "They shall all be taught of God. Therefore, whosoever has heard and whosoever has learned from the Father comes to me." Friend of mine, that's how the process begins, by a person hearing the truth and learning it. Romans 10 verse 17 says, "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God." And so if you want to take those steps of belief and the ones that follow that we'll look at in just a moment, it starts with your acceptance of the gospel truth, hearing about those facts that we're to believe, learning about what the Lord's done for you. That's where it all begins.

We Must Believe the Gospel

But it doesn't end there. You have to do more than just hear and learn. You also have to believe. Those facts that we've just talked about, you have to believe those. Hebrews 11 verse 6 says, "For without faith, it is impossible to please God." You want to please God? You've got to start by being exposed to these facts and believing them, embracing them. But even that is not sufficient in itself.

We Must Repent of our Sins

Not only must you believe the facts, then you must be willing to repent of your sins. In Acts 2 verse 38 when the people said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do," Peter's first response to them was, "Repent." Repentance is the change of mind that you have to have regarding your past sinful conduct. It's a determination of your mind that you're going to from this point forward live as God wants you to live and leave your past behind. And that change of mind is going to result in a change of your action. But it begins with the change of disposition. In Acts 17:30, Paul's sermon on Mars Hill we

mentioned earlier, Paul said, "God commands all men everywhere to repent." See, repentance is a very vital part of the process. Jesus said, "Except you repent, you'll perish," Luke 13 verse 3.

We Must Confess our Faith

Another aspect of this point about commands that we must obey is that we have to be willing to confess our faith in Christ. Paul told Timothy or reminded Timothy about the good confession that he had made, I Timothy 6 verse 12. In Acts chapter 8 verse 37, in the King James translation, we read about the Ethiopian eunuch who confessed his faith and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God." See, we not only must be willing to believe that Jesus was who He said He was, but be willing to verbally confess that. Romans 10 verse 10, "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

We Must be Baptized

And so after hearing the word and believing it and repenting of our sins, confessing Christ, there's another part of obedience that we have to consider. And that is the need to be baptized. In Acts 2 verse 38, Peter, in response to the question, "Men and brethren, what shall we do," answered with these words: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins." Some people today say baptism's not essential, it's not important. Peter said it's essential for the remission of sins. In Mark 16 verse 16, Jesus said, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. He that does not believe shall be condemned." Baptism is very much a part of the commands that God wants us to obey. In Luke 7 verse 30, the Bible says there were a group of people that "Rejected the counsel of God against themselves, not being baptized." We should never be guilty of rejecting the counsel of God by rejecting the necessity of baptism. But not only must we be baptized. We also after we've done that have the responsibility to live faithfully before God, "To live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world," Titus 2 verses 11 and 12.

Promises to Enjoy

And so we've looked at the parts of the gospel involving the things we must believe and the things that we must obey. But there are also promises that we can enjoy.

Forgiveness of Sins

The gospel involves promises, not the least of which are these: Forgiveness of sins. Acts 2:38, "For the remission of sins." Not only are we able to enjoy the forgiveness of our sins, but we also are able to enjoy entrance into God's family. If you obey the commands, it enables you to be a part of the family of God. "Baptized into Christ," Galatians 3:27, where you are then considered in God's sight Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. That's a family relationship.

All Spiritual Blessings

Another of the promises that we're able to enjoy are all spiritual blessings. Ephesians 1 verse 3 says, "All spiritual blessings are in Christ." And so if you obey the commands, you can have access to every spiritual blessing because those blessings are located in the body of Christ.

Hope

Another blessing that we can enjoy is hope. Hope in the future. The Bible says, "God has begotten us again unto a living hope," I Peter 1 verses 3 and 4. A hope that's very much alive based upon the resurrection of Christ from the dead. And it's a hope for a place that is incorruptible, undefiled, that does not fade away, reserved in Heaven for you. Those are great promises that the gospel teaches us about. But they're promises only for those that have believed the facts and have obeyed the commands. Only then can you enjoy the promises.

Warnings to be Heeded

But a final thing that's a part of the gospel message involves warnings to be heeded. The Bible warns us about a number of things. And let me go

through them very quickly.

Number one, we're warned not to give up. "Do not be weary in well doing, for in due season, you'll reap if you faint not," Galatians 6 verse 9. So don't give up the fight.

We need to beware of false teachers that come to us "In sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves," Jesus said, Matthew chapter 7 verse 15.

A third thing that we need to remember as far as warnings has to do with us reaping what we sow. "Whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap," Galatians 6 verses 7 and 8. "If you sow to the flesh, you will of the flesh reap corruption." That's a warning that needs to be heeded.

A final warning that we need to consider very quickly is that we need to be aware of the fact that we can fall from grace. "If any man thinks he stand, take heed lest he fall," I Corinthians 10 verse 12. "You are fallen from grace," the Galatians were told, Galatians 5 verse 4. If it was not possible to fall from grace, there would be no warnings in the scriptures about it. But the warnings are there, and they must be heeded.

Conclusion

We've covered a lot of things today in a very quick amount of time about the gospel. And when we think about the gospel, we can't help but think about the love of almighty God. God loved us enough to tell us the facts, He loved us enough to tell us about the commands, He loved us enough to describe the promises, and He loved us enough to give us the warnings. It's up to us to simply embrace all of that, to embrace the gospel. And if you've not embraced it, you need to before it's too late.

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watching us, we'll be glad to respond. Or check out our website, www.thetruthinlove.com. You'll find a lot of interesting information there. Thank you for watching the program today. Until next time, may God bless.

(Singing)

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Eddie Parrish, Speaker

The Truth in Love
P.O. Box 865
Hurst, TX 76053

www.thetruthinlove.com
requests@thetruthinlove.com

