

Good Morning!

It is a joy to once again to open our Bibles and to humble ourselves under the means of grace that our Lord gives to His Church.

Over the last few weeks Pastor Barry has been teaching us about the mission of the Church and how we as a local body of believers fulfill our responsibility in the great plan of God to restore mankind that has been created in the Image of God yet through the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden - all of mankind due to the curse of sin and death reflects a marred- skewed - flawed image of God.

Not only do we as the Church of Jesus Christ have an obligation to share the Gospel within our homes, schools, places of work and venues of entertainment - we also have an obligation to share the Gospel to people throughout the world from every tribe, every tongue and every people group.

The title of my sermon this morning is:

How The Gospel Fits Into The Mission of the Church

This morning I will read from 4 sections of Scripture.

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.

(Genesis 3:15)

But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

(Romans 3:21-26)

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

(Romans 8:1-4)

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.

(1 Corinthians 15:3-6)

Let's ask the Lord's blessing on our time together:

PRAY

This morning in answering the question:

How Does The Gospel Fit Into The Mission of the Church?

I want to answer 2 questions as a matter of review from the last two weeks of Pastor Barry's Sermons.

The First Question - What is the Church?

The Second Question - What is the Mission of the Church?

The First Question - What is the Church?

Perhaps the best way to answer that question is to list some of the phrases that are used throughout the Bible that refer to the church:

Here are some Titles and Names of the Church:

Assembly of the saints - Ps 89:7

Assembly of the upright - Ps 111:1

Body of Christ - Eph 1:22,23; Col 1:24

Branch of God's planting - Isa 60:21

Bride of Christ - Re 21:9

Church of God - Ac 20:28

Church of the Living God - 1Ti 3:15

Church of the first-born - Heb 12:23

City of the Living God - Heb 12:22

Congregation of saints - Ps 149:1

Congregation of the Lord's poor - Ps 74:19

Family in heaven and earth - Eph 3:15

Flock of God - Eze 34:15; 1Pe 5:2

Fold of Christ - Joh 10:16

General assembly of the first-born - Heb 12:23

Golden candlestick - Re 1:20

God's building - 1Co 3:9

God's husbandry - 1Co 3:9

God's heritage - Joe 3:2; 1Pe 5:3

Habitation of God - Eph 2:22

Heavenly of Jerusalem - Ga 4:26; Heb 12:22

Holy city - Re 21:2

Holy mountain - Zec 8:3

Holy hill - Ps 15:1

House of God - 1Ti 3:15; Heb 10:21

House of the God of Jacob - Isa 2:3

House of Christ - Heb 3:6

Household of God - Eph 2:19

Inheritance - Ps 28:9; Isa 19:25

Israel of God - Ga 6:16

King's daughter - Ps 45:13

Lamb's wife - Re 19:7; 21:9

Lot of God's inheritance - De 32:9

Mount Zion - Ps 2:6; Heb 12:22

Mountain of the Lord's house - Isa 2:2

New Jerusalem - Re 21:2

Pillar and ground of the truth - 1Ti 3:15

Sanctuary of God - Ps 114:2

Spiritual house - 1Pe 2:5

Spouse of Christ - So 4:12; 5:1

Sought out, a city not forsaken - Isa 62:12

Temple of God - 1Co 3:16,17

All of these refer to a people - a distinct and separated people taken from every tribe, every language and from every people group throughout the world.

The church contains people known as the Old Testament Saints and the New Testament Saints.

One evening I was preaching at Pottstown Bible Church and I was pointing out that there is a distinction between people who by saving faith have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ and those who have not trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ - when a young man shouted out from the back - "Yeah, the Saints and the Aint's" - Now, I must say I was taken aback for a moment but he was right.

All of mankind is divided between those who have been chosen and called to be a part of the church of Jesus Christ and those who are not.

Saints are those who are set apart - made Holy - not by anything that they have done or have accomplished but purely as a sovereign act of a gracious and merciful God.

They are those that respond to the call of the Gospel - the Good News concerning Jesus Christ.

What then is the church? The church is the people of God in all ages.

It is made up of just not any people but people who are in covenant with God through Jesus Christ.

The OT saints looked forward to the promise of Jesus Christ

The NT saints - we look backward to the fulfillment of that promise found in the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

So I believe that is the answer of the **First Question:**

What is the Church?

So that brings us to **The Second Question - What is the Mission of the Church?**

I want to state this briefly as Pastor Barry has answered this question in his last two weeks sermons - I encourage you if you weren't here and missed them that you would go onto the Internet and listen to them.

What is the Mission of the Church?

The **first** thing the church is to do and always to do is to **Glorify God** - to bring glory to God in all that we do - so

that what ever our mission is - it is to be done with the goal of bringing the maximum amount of glory to the only One who deserves glory - the Lord God Himself.

In 1 Corinthian 10:13 the Apostle Paul says: "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do **all** to the glory of God."

The essential task of the church as we bring Him glory is to **evangelize** and to **nurture**.

Historically we have come to call this the Great Commission.

This charge that was given orginally to the Apostles and their disciples and then to the church of all times...

We read in Matthew 28:18 "And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Which leads me to the **3rd question-**

How Does The Gospel Fit Into The Mission of the Church?

We have briefly defined what the church is and what the mission of the church is and we will amplify both of these as we seek to set out the place of the Gospel in the mission of the church.

What we must do is define The Gospel.

If you have had any exposure to Christianity I'm sure you have heard that the word Gospel means "good news"

Gospel comes from the Greek word εὐαγγέλιον

It is a compound word made up of two parts the first

εὖ - the prefix - which means good -

we see this in the word - eulogy - when at a funeral we speak a good word or words about the departed.

We also see it in the word euphemism - where we say a good or pleasant word in the place of a more harsh or offensive word

The second part of εὐαγγέλιον is the word -αγγέλιον

Message or news - a declaration - a proclamation - we see in the Greek word the word we know as Angel - a messenger - one who has been sent

So then our term εὐαγγέλιον - is a message - proclamation - a heralded message - this word has OT roots where in the Prophet Isaiah says: in chapter 40:9

"Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!"

Or again in Isaiah 52:7

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."

In ancient times before radio, TV or the Internet - news was delivered by a herald - one who would be dispatched with a message to be delivered.

A runner would come running into a village and cry out:

Hear ye - hear ye - the messenger would gather a crowd and proclaim the message - herald the good news that he was sent to deliver.

To know that our Gospel - the Gospel of the church of Jesus Christ - God's Gospel is Good News causes us to first ask:

Why is it good news?

What is the Bad News that we knew and understood previously - that makes this Good news - good News?

On Sunday evenings many of us have been gathering in 4 locations in small home groups to study Foundations - a series that sets out to establish the foundation of Our Christian beliefs and how they are grounded in a biblical understanding of the first 11 chapters of the Book of Genesis.

One of the things we have learned is that it is in Genesis chapter 3 that we learn of the ***bad news***.

Have you ever watched the evening news and night after night - you seen murder, death, beatings, abuse - people selling drugs, stealing, robbing banks, traffic accidents and the list of bad news goes on - have you ever shook your head and said, "What's wrong with people?"

Or maybe even more appropriately - "What's wrong with us?"

We find the answer in Genesis Chapter 3

1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?"

2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden,

3 but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'"

4 But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die.

5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

9 But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"

10 And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself."

11 He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?"

12 The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate."

13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

14 The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.

15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

16 To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."

17 And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; 18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field.

19 By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

It is here in the beginning of the Bible in the Book of Genesis that we find out where this bad news originated-

It came from the rebellion and high treason of the first man and woman... Who disobeyed God's command to them.

And the entire Bible is a narrative of God taking us from the Bad News of sin and death to the Good News of the Gospel...

The Apostle Paul in the Book of Romans brilliantly lays before us this picture from Bad News to Good News -

In the Book of Romans Paul breaks it up into 3 sections:

GUILT, GRACE AND GRATITUDE

The first Division - after a brief greeting and introduction to the Romans he begins in verse 18 of Chapter 1 in establishing the Guilt of all mankind.

Like a prosecuting attorney in a courtroom he builds his case first against the Gentiles then against the religious Jews then in Chapter 3 to all of mankind where he states:

"9 What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin,
10 as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one;
11 no one understands; no one seeks for God.

12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."
13 "Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive." "The venom of asps is under their lips."
14 "Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness."
15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood;
16 in their paths are ruin and misery,
17 and the way of peace they have not known."
18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes."
19 Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God.
20 For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin."

Paul reveals to us from the OT Scriptures that all of mankind stands condemned in our sin with NO excuse -

That my Friends is indeed Bad News

But Paul goes to the next section of his brilliant exposition and takes us right from the bad news to the good news to the GRACE section of the book of Romans - beginning in Chapter 3 verse 21 one of the texts I read earlier -

"²¹ ***But now*** the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it-

22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction:

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.

26 It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."

This indeed is the Good News - if time permitted I would like to take you through the book of Acts and through every epistle/letter of the NT to show you the message of the Apostles - that in every sermon or Gospel statement we find 4 main points they deal with

God

Man

Christ - and

Response

Who is God?

Who is man and what is his state?

Who is Christ and the telling of His person and Work?

And then the required - What is your response Oh, man to these great truths?

The Good News of Jesus Christ stands out like a brilliant sparkling diamond under the high intensity of white lights against the pitch black dark bad news of sin and death!

Just as a jeweler puts the diamond ring on a black velvet background to highlight the sparkle of the gem so it is that we must see the hopelessness of our bad news before we can grasp all of the beauty of the Good News

The Puritans stated it is hard work to get a man unsaved so that he can be saved.

I would say it is impossible for us to make a man or a woman understand that they are lost -

It is a Gospel gift that the Holy Spirit brings to a man or a woman or young person that they would come to understand that they are lost and without hope - that should they continue in their sin they will spend eternity in a sinner's hell - that knowledge / that understanding is a Gospel gift!

What is the Gospel then? - I don't want you to leave this morning with any confusion in your mind - the Gospel is Good News - and perhaps the most explicit statement about what the Gospel is - is found in 1 Corinthians Chapter 15:

"1 Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand,

2 and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you-unless you believed in vain.

3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures,

4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,

5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve."

The Good News of the Gospel is a proclamation - a statement - a declaration - an announcement - a forth telling of the basic historical facts of the life and works of the incarnated Christ - the son of God - the second person of the Trinity -

Notice in the passage I just read Paul tells us this Gospel he is reminding the Corinthians of is the Gospel that:

He preached to them -

It is also the Gospel that they **received** and **believed**.

It is also The Gospel in which they **stand** in and **it is this Gospel in which they are being Saved...**

Then Paul goes on to tell them that he delivered this message of the Gospel to them as one of first importance - it was the most important news that Paul had to declare to them... **There was nothing that was more important!**

What I want you to see in this 1 Corinthian passage is that this message that was of first importance was a **message that was grounded in the Scriptures**

In the 15 century when the church of that time was bogged down in superstition and the works and efforts of man

in the opposition of the tradition of men the Reformers sought to bring back the doctrine of the True Gospel under the battle cry of what has been called the 5 Solas of the Reformation

The word Sola is a Latin word meaning - alone or by it self

The Reformers spoke of the True Gospel

As **Sola Scriptura** - founded solely upon the truth as reveled in the Scriptures - Scripture alone

It is a Gospel that is **Sola Gratia** - based upon Grace alone - the message of the Gospel is that God saves not on the merit or work of man - but solely by the grace the unmerited favor of God.

It is a Gospel that is **Sola Fides** - it is a Gospel that is by faith alone - it is believed in - it is trusted in solely as an act of one's faith

It is also a Gospel that is **Solus Christus** - it is a Gospel that is grounded in Jesus Christ and His completed work for us - His perfect life - His death upon the cross and his resurrection from the dead to now sit at the right hand of the Father and to intercede for His church...

And 5th and last over all of the above 4 Solas - is **Soli Deo Gloria** - to the glory of God alone!

The 1 Corinthian 15 passage also tells us the basic facts of the Gospel:

#1. that Christ died for our sins *in accordance with the Scriptures,*

#2. that he was buried,

#3. that he was raised on the third day *in accordance with the Scriptures,*

And

#4. that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve."

Listen to Joe Thorn's definition of the Gospel in his book Note To Self - The Discipline of Preaching the Gospel to Yourself:

Quote: "At its core, the gospel is Jesus as the substitute for sinners. We could summarize the whole by saying that in his life Jesus lives in perfect submission to the will of God and he fulfills his righteous standard (the law). In his death on the cross he quenches God's wrath against sin, satisfying the sovereign demand for justice. In his resurrection he is victorious over sin and death. All of this is done on behalf of sinners in need of redemption and is offered to all who believe. This is therefore very good news." Close quote.

This is Good News indeed!

So then how does this Gospel this Good News fit into the Mission of the Church?

It is the life giving **message** of the church -

It is the life giving **proclamation** of the church -

It is the life giving **pronouncement** of the church -

That the historical facts of the Life and Works of Jesus Christ when they are believed in and trusted in bring eternal life.

Listen to my last Scripture of the morning:

Romans Chapter 10:

5 For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them.

6 But the righteousness based on faith says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down)

7 "or 'Who will descend into the abyss?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).

8 But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim);

9 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

11 For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame."

12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him.

13 For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

14 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?

15 And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"

16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?"

17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

18 But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have, for "Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world."

19 But I ask, did Israel not understand? First Moses says, "I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation; with a foolish nation I will make you angry."

20 Then Isaiah is so bold as to say, "I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me."

21 But of Israel he says, "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people."

Our Mission as a church is to be a people with beautiful feet - that we are to take the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all who will give us a hearing - to proclaim that Jesus saves sinners and that all who will repent of their sin and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ's life giving work will be saved.

PAUSE

Earlier I told you of the 4 components of an Apostolic sermon:

God

man

Christ and

The response -

This morning if you have never put your faith, hope and trust in Jesus Christ and in Him alone I call for your response - **Repent of your sin** and **Believe the Gospel**

If you have repented and believed then I call for another response - that you will see that you have been commanded to take the Good News of the Gospel beyond these four walls-

Some will do it by sharing the Gospel message with family friends and co-workers

Others of you will be called to missionary endeavors where you will in this country or throughout the world be given the honor to share the Gospel to the lost and dying -

Yet others of you will be called to give of your time and monies to support those who will go and bring the Good News of the Gospel to those whom God has set apart to hear.

So then to answer the question:

How Does The Gospel Fit Into The Mission of the Church?

Is to say:

That the Gospel is the center and core of the people of God the Church and her mission is to take this Gospel to the ends of the earth - in the power of the Risen Christ - The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe.

May the power in this Gospel change and transform us into the Spirit Filled Church that does His will by reaching the lost and glorifying His name throughout the earth!

Soli Deo Gloria