

Lighthouse Bible Church

January 5th, 2014

1st Corinthians 15: 1 - 8 *Scripture Reading: Galatians 1: 3 - 9*

A New Year with an Old Message

Stand – Read – Pray

This is the beginning of a New Year and undoubtedly some people are reflecting on this past year while others are looking ahead to what the new year holds.

Some people at this time of year make resolutions or determine to **stop doing** something they had been doing or **start doing** something they hadn't done before.

Whatever the case, this time of year seems to be a time for refocusing on what is truly important in our lives. And for many of us, that focus may be directed towards different things. One focus that we should all have who are born again believers is our focus on the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It is a message as old as the Bible itself but it is a message that never gets old. It is a message that transcends all times, all countries, all peoples of all cultures. It is the message that is able to transform the vilest of sinners into the righteousness and likeness of Christ.

It is the gospel message, the good news message of salvation that is offered to all mankind through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is also the same message that Satan wants to change, to pervert, to water down, to do away with or to portray as unimportant.

That was apparently what was happening to the church in Galatia and why Paul had to say in **Galatians 1: 6 – 9** that he **marveled that they were turning away so soon from Him who called them in the grace of Christ to a different gospel which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.**

That is what Satan, the God of this age as he is called in **2nd Corinthians 4: 3 – 4**, tries to do, is veil, is to blind people to the gospel. It says **but even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing whose minds the god of this age has blinded who do not believe lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ ... should shine on them.**

Remember the parable of the soils in **Mark 4: 3 - 20** where the word of God, the gospel message, was given out like a sower spreads out his seed, but this seed is the word of God, the parable says. And some of the seed falls by the wayside and it says this; **when they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts.**

That same attack on the gospel message is still going on today. But now Satan has his own forces on the inside, pretending to be Christians and telling people a different gospel. In **2nd Corinthians 11: 13 – 15** says that Satan's forces, **false apostles, deceitful workers are transforming themselves into apostles of Christ and no wonder for Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light therefore it is no great thing if HIS MINISTERS also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness.**

And as such, they are able to get into churches, seminaries, Christian organizations and tell people about a perverted, watered down, different gospel that is no gospel at all.

And because the gospel is central to the Christian faith, we must earnestly contend for the clarity, simplicity, exactness and presentation of that message that God has declared as powerful enough to change the most hardened heart and sinful soul.

And it is the same message that the world, **1st Corinthians 1: 18** says, is **foolishness. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.** It goes on to say in **Verse 21** **it pleased God, through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. ... Christ crucified is to the Jews a stumbling block to the Greeks foolishness but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God.**

In our day and age when there is so much confusion and so many attacks on the gospel of Jesus Christ and so many false conversions because of a false, emotionalized, trivialized, meet my needs kind of gospel being shared ... we need to know what the pure gospel is and how to share it biblically and consistently. This is a New Year's resolution that I wish all of us would make.

So what is the gospel message that **Mark 16: 15** says we are to go into all the world with? In its simplest form it is found in our passage here in **1st Corinthians 15: 1 – 7**. Paul says:

Verse 1: it is the gospel which he **preaches**. He said in **1st Corinthians 1: 17** that **he was sent by Christ to preach the gospel**. He said in **1st Corinthians 9: 16** **woe is me if I do not preach the gospel** and the reason is, is because it was **entrusted to him** **1st Thessalonians 2: 4** says. It is the gospel we are called to preach as well.

It is the gospel which some **receive** and they **stand** in

Verse 2: it is the gospel **by which you can be saved** by.

Then in Verses 3 – 7 Paul tells us what that gospel message is and it is a simple message that as **Romans 1: 16** says **is the power of God unto salvation.**

Verse 3: Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures

Verse 4: He was buried and He rose again the 3rd day according to the Scriptures.

Verses 5 – 7: He was seen alive by many.

So what is the fullness of the gospel message that is timeless and transforming in which many of us here today stand because we were saved by it?

First of all, it begins with the **holiness of God**. Our creator God is absolutely holy and perfect and just and righteous and truth and in Him is no darkness at all. In **1st Samuel 2: 2** it says **no one is holy like the Lord for there is none besides You nor is there any rock like our God. 1st Peter 1: 16 but as He who called you is holy you also be holy in all your conduct because it is written be holy for I am holy.**

When God made us, along with everything else, **Colossians 1: 16** says, **all things were created through Him and FOR Him**. We were created by God for God and He has absolute rights and ownership over us. And His demand for us, as **Matthew 5: 48** says is to **be perfect just as your Father in heaven is perfect**. God gave us the moral law, the 10 commandments, to live by and when we violate one of those, **James 2: 10** says, it's as if we violated them all. Which leads us to a second aspect of the gospel and that is that;

Mankind is sinful by nature. None of us has or can measure up to God's perfect and holy standard.

Romans 3: 10 - 18 says, in essence, **there is none righteous, no not one and there is none who does good, no not one.** Because the Bible says in **Romans 3: 23** for **ALL have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God,** fallen short of the standard of God, which is perfection and absolute holiness.

Ecclesiastes 7: 20 puts it this way **there is not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin.**

We are not inherently good as many people want to think we are, we are inherently bad because we are born with a sin nature, that's what **Romans 5: 12** says. The Psalmist wrote in **Psalms 58: 3** that we are all **estranged from God from birth, from the womb and we go astray as soon as we are born, speaking lies.**

You see when you were born, you were born separated from God by your sin nature and continuing sin. You can have no fellowship with God because you are not perfect and holy, you fall short of the glory of God. The very thing God created us for we are unable to do because we are cut off from our relationship with Him. Which leads us to a third aspect of the gospel.

There is a penalty for our sin. God, in His holiness, has set down a penalty for our sin that must be paid. **Romans 6:23** **the wages of sin is death.** **Romans 5: 12** says **for as by one man sin entered the world and DEATH through sin and thus death spread to all men because all have sinned.**

That penalty or wages or earnings for our sin, being death, is not just a physical death but a spiritual death. This is a separation from God forever in a place where we will reap the eternal, everlasting punishment for our sin in a place called hell **Matthew 25: 41** and **Revelation 20: 15** and many other places in scripture tell us.

One writer said this “the idea of hell grates against the sensibilities of modern people because nobody thinks they’re really bad enough to deserve something like eternal torment. They might admit that they’re not the greatest of people but surely they don’t deserve that. But their reasoning is skewed. The punishment for sin isn’t measured by the sin itself. In other words, it’s not like some sins get a worse punishment than other sins. Murder, lust and lying all receive the sentence of an eternity in hell. That’s because punishment for sin is measured by the One sinned against. All sin is fundamentally a sin against God, and He is infinitely holy. Therefore, sin against an infinitely holy God demands an infinite punishment. That’s why the punishment is so serious; because God is actually that righteous”.

Cripplegate 12-30-13.

And by the way, our good works, our goodness, our merit, our niceness, our religious practices cannot save us from the penalty of our sin. **Ephesians 2: 8 – 9** says we are **saved** from the penalty of our sin, **by grace through faith and that not of ourselves it is a gift of God not of works.** **Titus 3: 5** says **not by works of righteousness that we have done but according to His mercy He saved us** from the wages and penalty of our sin.

So the gospel up to this point is not very good news, as a matter of fact it is very bad news. We are sinful, we are separated from God because of our sin and we will spend forever in hell as punishment for our sin; and there is nothing we can do about it. *That is the hopeless condition we are all in B4*

We can’t just say to God, what so many people say today, ‘I’m sorry God I know You’ll forgive me because You are a loving forgiving God’. Listen, try that in a court of law as you stand before a judge who is about to sentence you for a serious crime you just committed. Try to say to him ‘listen judge I’m sorry, I won’t do it again, so please let me go’. Is he or should he let you go? No! Not if he is a just judge.

You see, because God is perfectly holy and just and judges perfectly and righteously and justly, He demands that sin must be punished and the only punishment is death and eternal punishment in hell. Which brings us to the fourth aspect of the gospel message and the good news of hope and help.

God became a man in the person of Jesus Christ. God saw the state of sin that the world was in and knew that they could do nothing about it; so He did something about it because He loves His creation.

He came to this earth conceived by the Holy Spirit of God and was virgin born to Mary and Joseph. Because of that miraculous birth, as we have seen, Jesus is both God and man, God and human. Yet in His humanness, because He is God, He was without sin. He was able to bypass sins curse at birth because of the virgin conception and birth.

Jesus lived His life serving God the Father and doing the Father's will and living a perfect, sinless, absolutely holy life that we were called to live but couldn't because of our sin. Jesus never broke one of God's laws as **Hebrews 4: 15**, and **Hebrews 7: 26**, and **2nd Corinthians 5: 21** and other places say. Which brings us to the fifth element of the gospel message.

Because the price or wages of sin is death and because Jesus, the God-Man, was sinless and perfectly holy and righteous, He could be the only substitute to die in the place of sinners that could appease God's wrath against sin.

And do you want to know something, that was in the plan of God all along, right. From **before the foundation of the world** Jesus was **slain** as **Revelation 13: 8** says. He was the promised seed who **would have His heel bruised**, at the cross, by **Satan Genesis 3: 15** says.

He was the suffering Messiah of **Isaiah 53: 5** that says **He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement for our peace was upon Him and by His stripes we are healed.**

He is the One who cried out in **Psalm 22: 1** **My God My God why have you forsaken Me?** And the reason He did is because He was predicting and at the same time experiencing what it would be like to be crucified because He goes on to say **My tongue clings to My jaws .. they pierced My hands and My feet. I can count all My bones and they divide My garments among them.** He was the only One, as we shall see, that was crucified and died and lived to tell about it.

You see, at that moment in time God was carrying out His punishment of death, and pouring out all His wrath against sin, that we all deserved, against His own sinless Son who willingly allowed Himself to go through all of that. But He did it for you and for me to pay the penalty for our sins.

You see, at that moment in time, Jesus was treated by God Father as if He committed all of my sins and when I put my faith and trust in Jesus then I am treated as if I never committed on sin and was as righteous and holy and sinless as Jesus. That is what **2nd Corinthians 5: 21** is all about.

1st Peter 3: 18 says **for Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust (why) that He might bring us to God...** You see that is the only way we can be reconciled to God and it is through the death of Jesus satisfying the wrath of God and the wages of sin by dying on the cross for us.

Because God is holy and righteous and perfect and demands us to be holy and righteous and perfect in order to get to heaven, we must receive the holiness and righteousness and perfection that only Christ offers through His atoning sacrifice for you and me.

How do we know that God was satisfied with the sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf? Because **Romans 4: 24 – 25** says that God raised Jesus from the dead **for our justification**, for our being declared righteous. **Acts 17: 30 – 31** and **Romans 5: 18** and other places say the same thing. That is the essence of what **John 3: 16** says, isn't it? And that brings us to the fifth and final part of the gospel message.

Our response to the gospel message of salvation. When we hear the gospel message of the holiness of God and the sinfulness of mankind and the punishment for that sin and the love of God that sent His own Son to be punished in our place and that we can receive the righteousness of Christ; then what should our response be?

First of all, we must acknowledge that we are sinners and have not lived a perfect, holy life because we have broken God's law.

We must understand that there is nothing that we can do to appease God's wrath against our sin and there is no way to earn or work or be good enough to be saved and that we deserve the punishment our sins deserve.

We must believe that God became a man in the person of Jesus Christ to die for your sins and for mine.

We must believe that God was satisfied with His sacrifice by raising Jesus from the dead so that sin and death have been conquered forever.

Then we must recognize our need to turn from our sin, repent of our sin, and give our life to Jesus.

Jesus is now the way and the truth and the life and no one comes to the Father except through Him. He is the resurrection and the life and that through Him, we can conquer sin and death and have eternal life in heaven.

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The Attack on the Gospel:

Galatians 1: 6 – 9, Mark 4: 3 – 20
2nd Corinthians 4: 3 – 4, 11: 13 – 15
1st Corinthians 1: 18, 21

The Simplicity of the Gospel:

Mark 16: 16, 1st Corinthians 1: 17, 9: 16
1st Thessalonians 2: 4, Romans 1: 16

The Message of the Gospel:

The Holiness of God:

1st Samuel 2: 2, 1st Peter 1: 16, Colossians 1: 16
Matthew 5: 48, James 2: 10

The Sinfulness of man:

Romans 3: 10 – 18, 3: 23, Ecclesiastes 7: 20
Romans 5: 12, Psalm 58: 3

The Punishment for Sin:

Romans 6: 23, 5: 12, Matthew 25: 41
Revelation 20: 15, Ephesians 2: 8 – 9
Titus 3: 5

God became a Man in the Person of Jesus Christ:

Hebrews 4: 15, 7: 26, 2nd Corinthians 5: 21
Revelation 13: 8, Genesis 3: 15, Isaiah 53: 5
Psalm 22: 1, 1st Peter 3: 18, Romans 4: 24 – 25
Acts 17: 30 – 31, Romans 5: 18, John 3: 16

Our response to the gospel message:

Believe, receive by faith, confess, repent

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