

1912- Rom 1:15 - THE GOSPEL FOR CHRISTIANS!

PRELIMS. The gospel is normally understood to be something **only** for sinners, unbelievers! But this being unBiblical! The gospel is for **Christians** also! What is in the gospel, is something Xns, as well as others, need **every day**. We need the gospel the day after our conversion as much as the day before! Without the gospel, we perish!

Xns **stumble** every day! Xns **do** wrong things every day. Xns **think** wrong things every day. Xns **desire** wrong things every day! So, is it not necessary for **them** to **accept** the gospel - every day? Daily repent!

Why was Paul so eager to preach the **gospel** to the **Roman Xns**?

Because they, albeit their **regeneration** and **conversion** (*loved by God and called to be saints* (v7) were in **need** of the **essential** element in the gospel - the **forgiveness** which **heals** the soul, and bestows the **grace** which stimulates/energises/enables the soul to serve its Master!

Paul remember, is a 'sent one', an **apostle**, *set apart for the gospel of God* (v1)! He has been **called** to the **specific** work of **ministering** the **gospel**! If anyone knows anything about the gospel, it is Paul!! Look at what Paul says about himself *we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith...among all the nations including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ* (v5,6)

Xns are supposed to be **conquerors** over the flesh and the evil around them. **Overcomers!** *everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world* (1J5:4) But these days it can be very hard to tell who are the Xns and who are not? Their **lives** seem little if at all, **different** from others! Piper: 'American church-goers...are indistinguishable from the world, and who sin as much as the world, and sacrifice for others as little for the world, and embrace injustice as readily as the world, and covet things as greedily as the world, and enjoy God-ignoring entertainment as enthusiastically as the world'. Many Xns are not obedient!

The gospel friends is for those who are carrying sin in their **hearts**. And that means **you/I!**! Peter says to the **elect exiles**: *So put away malice... deceit...hypocrisy... envy...slander...like new born infants*

*long for the pure spiritual milk that by it you may **grow up** to salvation. If indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good!* (1P2:1) He is speaking to Xns who are constantly sinning by being **malicious, deceitful, hypocritical, envious and slanderous!** (1Pet2:1). All sins of the heart!

You see, Salvation is a **process!** Paul: *I am **sure** of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion* (Phi1:6) You are not finally saved until you are **in heaven!** It is one of Satan's greatest tricks to convince the **new convert** he need **not now worry** about his **sinning** and the way he lives! 'Don't let it bother you. All your sin is forgiven, past, present, future, you can live as you please'!

But God has saved us in order that we might serve Him and obey Him. God will punish His people for their sin Look: ***You only** have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities* (Amos 3:2) And 2 other prophets said **double!**! Re His Covenant people that God promises to save *first I will **doubly repay** their iniquity* (Jer 16:18) + *Speak **tenderly** to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she **has received** from the Lord's hand double for all her sins* (Isa 40:2).

One of the biggest problems today in the Church is that Xns are not living like Xns - and don't seem to **care!** And don't seem to **want** to reach a godly standard of Xn life! *An appalling and horrible thing has happened...the prophets **prophesy falsely**...My people love to have it so, but what will you do when the end comes?* (Jer 5:30,31)

Do you know that many of the problems in the Church is due to many Xns being **depressed!** They are depressed because of **unconfessed** sin! And **unacknowledged** sin! Many Xns today do **not realise** that their lives are very far from what God would want them to be. They are **content** to live as the world lives and have the **values** and ideals which the world seek after! ****Do you know what such people need?** Yes, these Xns - they need the **gospel** the **plain gospel!**

Xns need to **learn** to **repent** and come to Christ - **daily!** That is what Peter expects from Xns with a **living** faith **regularly** coming to Him as a **living** stone, to be **built up** a spiritual house!

Paul says he is **not ashamed** to preach the **gospel** which he feels needs to be preached to the Roman Xns, for the **righteousness of God is revealed** in it and they need to know **more** about the righteousness of God that is **from faith for faith!** (v17) ie, for those who **have faith!** *I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are at Rome!*

The **object** of life is to be like X! To live in this world as X would live. In order to live like X, we must **keep our eye** on Him! Right? We must **follow** Him wherever He goes and wherever He leads us. We must **watch** Him and **learn** from Him! Paul: *Follow me - as I follow Christ*

There is a **principle** that God has appointed. It is this: whatever you focus on, whatever you concentrate on, whatever you are captivated by, whatever you are engrossed by, you **become** like that thing! Some people it this way 'You become what you eat!' If you are reading and consuming communism, you will soon become a communist. If you are **feeding** your mind and absorbing what you read, you will become like that thing. That is actually true. In fact....

Its actually a **Biblical principle**. Speaking of Xns, Paul said *we all... are being **transformed** into the **same image** from one **degree** of glory to another* (2Cor3:18) ie, the **same image** we are **focussing** on - we **become transformed** into **that** image! There are **degrees** of glory! Some Xns are more like X than others! What are **you** striving to achieve? Listen to Paul: *But **whatever gain** I had, **I counted as loss** for the **sake of Christ**. **Indeed, I count everything as loss** because of the **surpassing worth** of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord...**one thing** I do: **forgetting what lies behind** and **straining forward** to what lies ahead, I **press on** toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus* (Phi 3:7cf) Are you **straining forward**?

APP How are **you**, brother/sister, doing on the **scale** of Christlikeness? Are you climbing the scale? Are you more like X this year than last year - or are you **backsliding**? Paul had to **warn** the Romans about that *Do **not be conformed** to this world, but be **transformed** by the renewal of your **mind*** (Rom 12:2) ie, by what your **mind** is focussed on!

What can really help you? This: the **gospel!** Come and confess to X

you have forgotten about **reaching forward** to become more Christlike - **tell Him** you thought the gospel was really a **one-off** experience but you **now realise** that we come to X each day confessing our faults and seeking the grace offered in the gospel to serve and honour X!

The **more** we come to Christ as a living stone in His building, the **stronger** Xns we become! The more we are in **contact** with X, the more of X **rubs off** on us! *When you **fail**, instead of trying to **work harder** at being perfect, come to X **in the gospel!** Hear Him say 'I will give you rest, give that burden to Me!' Drink out of My cup of **forgiveness and love!** As someone else said 'It is **more Jesus** we need, **not** more discipline!' The **gospel promises** the embracing arms of God every day and every time we sin - **provided** we **give up on ourselves!**

No Xn will ever **graduate** from the **humble school** of free grace! **There are no stages** of progress whereby a Xn **no longer needs** the grace of God - all Xns sin and need pardon! There are **no super-saved** Xns! Every Xns needs the **gospel** of free grace every day!

You would think the '**experienced**' Peter would have known better than to **complain** to X that He was too **negative** in His vision for the Church when Jesus told them He was going to die at Jerusalem. But he **didn't know** any better! X was **disappointed** in Peter's **ignorance** - no growth in knowledge there - and referred to him as **Satan!** *Get behind Me, Satan! You are a **hindrance** to Me. For you are **not setting your mind** on the things of God, but on the things of man* (Mat 16:23)

Yes, the gospel is for the **unconverted** - there is absolutely **no hope** whatever for them, without their embracing the gospel - and if **you** have never embraced X as your saviour for the forgiveness of your sins then you **must do so** if you ever expect to be in heaven!

But the gospel is also for Xns - and of course it is **only** Xns who can **value** and **appreciate** the gospel. It is only Xns who **enjoy** the gospel and **make use** of the gospel! In fact it is precisely because they **have come** to X **for** the **gospel** that they **keep on coming!** Because they have **tasted the honey** of the gospel! The experience is so wonderful And it is **only** Xns who can **give praise** for the **gospel!**