

Subject: *A Gospel-Centered Life*
Scripture: *Philippians 1:12-18*

In most cases there is one thing that is most important to every person. For some it is work, for some it is family, for some it is a hobby. We describe a person by that driving passion: he is a workaholic; he is an avid golfer; he knows how to make money. How would we describe the apostle Paul? He was a man fully committed to the gospel of Christ. His life counted for something important. His life made an eternal difference.

1. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE GOSPEL

A. Important in Paul's ministry

We see how many times Paul referred to the gospel in his letters, especially this one to the church at Philippi:

Paul wrote about fellowship in the gospel (Phil. 1:5), the defense and confirmation of the gospel (1:7), furtherance of the gospel (1:12), defense of the gospel (1:17), striving together for the gospel (1:27), serving in the gospel (2:22), laboring in the gospel (4:3), and spreading the gospel (4:15).

They understood and believed the truth of the gospel. They experienced the life-changing power of the gospel.

Romans 1:16 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

1 Corinthians 1:18 *For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.*

B. Important in Christ's ministry

Mark 1:14-15 ¹⁴ *Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, ¹⁵ And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.*

C. Important in the way it is described

It is the gospel of God, of Christ, and of the kingdom of God. It is the gospel of grace, of peace, and of salvation. It is supernatural in its origin, in its power, and in its results. It is the source of our hope, the reason for our faith, and the guarantee of eternal life.

D. Important in the way it is received

The gospel is to be understood, believed, and obeyed.

Romans 10:13-15 ¹³ *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*
¹⁴ *How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?* ¹⁵ *And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!*

2. THE PROGRESS OF THE GOSPEL

In verse 12, Paul states that his circumstances have turned out for the furtherance of the gospel. The word “furtherance” (Gk. *prokope*) is found only three times in the NT (1:12, 25; 1 Tim. 4:15), and it means progress or advancement. Paul’s joy didn’t depend on his circumstances, but to the spread of the gospel.

A. The gospel was shared with many others

He was being held as a prisoner in Rome, but it actually turned out to be a blessing because he was able to share the gospel with the palace guard (vs. 13). He was able to share with members of Caesar’s household (see Phil. 4:21-22).

B. Fellow believers were encouraged to share the gospel

Because of Paul’s example, others were becoming confident and bold in their witness.

C. Some unbelievers preached the gospel with sinful attitudes

Some preached the gospel out of envy. They were jealous of Paul’s apostolic power and authority and his evident giftedness. Some preached out of strife. They were trying to discredit him and his ministry. Some people were preaching with evil motives and trying to make things worse for Paul, but he still rejoiced because the gospel was preached.

3. THE DEFENSE OF THE GOSPEL

Paul was set (appointed) for the defense of the gospel. The word “set” (appointed) describes a soldier who was placed on duty or given a special assignment. Paul understood that God saved him and gave him an assignment to preach the gospel. God entrusted him with this precious message of truth about salvation through Christ, and he was committed to preach it and defend it with every fiber of his being. The gospel is the one message everyone needs to hear, understand, believe, and obey. The eternal destiny of every person depends on what they do with the gospel.

The word “gospel” means good news, and it is found 76 times in the NT. It was not a new word that was invented by Christ and the NT writers, but was already used in the ancient world of good news in connection with a birthday, a leader’s rise to power, the emperor’s decree of hope for peace and well-being in the world. Christ and the writers of Scripture used the word specifically as the good news of Christ and salvation for sinners.

For the good news of Christ and salvation to make any sense we first have to know the bad news of sin and death (Rom. 3:10, 23). Then the good news is truly good news (Rom. 6:23; 1 Cor. 15:22).

The word “defense” implies that the gospel will have enemies that hate and try to destroy the gospel. Satan hates the gospel. The world hates the gospel. The enemies of the gospel try to discredit it, destroy it, and distort it. Paul defended the gospel against all enemies.

Galatians 1:6-9 ⁶ *I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:* ⁷ *Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.* ⁸ *But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.* ⁹ *As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.*

The one true gospel is based on scripture alone, and it teaches that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone and for the glory of God alone.

- Scripture alone
- Grace alone
- Faith alone
- Christ alone
- Glory to God alone

Paul had a Gospel-centered life. He was fully committed to Christ and the gospel. As you examine yourself can you honestly say that your life is centered on Christ and the gospel? Is that what you are really living for every day? Does your life reflect that?