

Preached at GBC on 9/4/22
"The Gospel Of The GRACE OF GOD"

Acts 20:17-24

In what seems like a lifetime ago, I was a false preacher, preaching a false gospel, to a group of other false professors, and **NONE OF US KNEW** the true and living God! **All of us** were moral, sincere, dedicated, and faithful to the god of our fathers, a "god" that was in reality nothing more than an **IDOL** - "*Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye that are escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and **PRAY UNTO A GOD THAT CANNOT SAVE.***" (Isa.45:20) **WE WERE IN REALITY ACTIVE IDOLATORS**, seeing our carnal minds were "*emnity against God*". But here's the thing: **We were convinced we were truly serving God.** We had "believed" (whatever our religious denomination declared we should believe). We had "accepted Jesus as our Lord and Savior". We had followed the **christ of our own imagination and creation** in what we called "believers baptism"; and we got busy and diligent about living what we called a "Spirit filled life". I'm pretty certain I can speak for every one who has been brought out of false religion, who has been "*delivered from the kingdom of darkness and translated into the kingdom of His dear Son*", and by God's Holy Spirit brought to rest in Christ **ALONE** as "*the Lord our **RIGHTEOUSNESS***" - **We ALL KNOW NOW** that the "*Gospel of the grace of God*" **IS NOT** the message of our former false religious profession. Because of some things I've recently read and heard by many who profess that they believe the "*Gospel of the grace of God*", I felt compelled to once again **DEFINE** from the Scriptures "*the Gospel of the **GRACE OF GOD***".

If anyone understood what it meant to serve an idol, even calling that idol "**JEHOVAH**", the Apostle Paul did - "*Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.*" (Phil.3:4-6) **Listen to me:** Paul did ALL OF THIS thinking he was in possession of eternal life EVIDENCED by the fact that HE DID all of it. Paul (Saul of TARSUS) **HATED** the true and living God - "*Because the carnal mind [is] **ENMITY** against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*" (Rom.8:7) But Paul also **KNEW, UNDERSTOOD, and HAD EXPERIENCED** deliverance from this state of hatred against God, and he **KNEW, UNDERSTOOD, and DOGMATICALLY DECLARED** how this deliverance was accomplished - Turn with me to **I Tim.1:9-15**. So, what was the **MEANS** by which this glorious deliverance was proclaimed? Paul tells us plainly in Vs.11 - "*According to the **glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.***" Paul wrote in Rom.16:25-27 - "*Now to **him that is of power to stablish you according to MY GOSPEL, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.***" Paul told those at Corinth - "*For I determined not to know*

any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."(I Cor.2:2) Paul told us in **Rom.1:16:17** - "*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. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.*" Notice how he stated it in our text - **Acts 20:17-24**. The **ONLY THING** of any lasting, eternal value is "*the **GOSPEL of the grace of God***". The **ONLY THING** lost sinners need to have proclaimed to them is "*the **GOSPEL of the grace of God***". And the **ONLY THING** justified sinners need to hear constantly is "*the **GOSPEL of the grace of God***."

So just what exactly **IS** "*the **Gospel of the grace of God***"? Can we define it? should we define it? Is it something God's holy Word clearly sets forth? The answer to all these questions is a **DEFINITIVE "YES"**! Let me begin by saying the Gospel isn't just something set forth by some **CONFESSION OF FAITH**, nor is it something mystical and ethereal. You can't declare "*the **Gospel of the grace of God***" by talking about the Mosaic law, or baptism, or reformation, or marriage, or good works, or **ANYTHING ELSE** done either **IN** or **BY** a sinner. That's just not a declaration of the Gospel. And unless "*the **Gospel of the grace of God***" is set forth in every message, we have not preached "the Gospel", nor have we worshipped the true and living God.

That being said, I want to try as simply as I can to set before us this morning "*the **Gospel of the grace of God***". Turn to **I Cor.15:1-8**. **What is the Gospel?** **First of all**, it is the declaration of Christ's death **FOR OUR SINS** - "*For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins **ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES**.*" Now I know that just about every religion that calls itself "christian" states that Christ loves sinners and died for sinners. **But that's not what this verse teaches, and that's not what the entirety of God's Word teaches!** It declares that "*Christ died **FOR OUR SINS***". In other words, Christ **DIED** as a Substitute or Surety **for the sins of someone specific**, those Paul qualified by the phrase "*for our sins*". The true Christ sent by the Father didn't merely take a stab at it, or try to make it possible for sinners to be saved if they fulfill whatever condition their various religions place on them. He actually "*bore our sins in His body on the tree, and by His stripes we are healed.*"(I Pet.2:24) **Let me state this as clearly as I can:** You cannot proclaim the Gospel without setting forth Christ and His righteousness imputed as His people's **ONLY HOPE** and **CAUSE** of salvation. Maybe you're sitting there thinking: "All a sinner needs to do is believe in Jesus." Well, that is **TRUE**, but the question then is this: **WHICH JESUS?** If the gospel of your salvation directed you to a Christ that did not actually die for our sins "*according to the Scriptures*", you trusted in "*another jesus*" and you've believed "*another gospel*". The Scriptures are so clear on this matter. Listen to what Paul declared to us: "*For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth **the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works**, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven,*

and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."(Rom.4:3-8) The Gospel message is **SIMPLE**. The "*blessed man*" or woman is that sinner whose sins were imputed to Christ, and to whom God imputed **Christ's righteousness** "*without works*" done either **BY** or **IN** the elect sinner. That's why Paul declared that "*Christ died for our sins, ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURE*". Christ fulfilled in time **EVERYTHING** that was declared of Him by all the Old Testament writers, from Moses to Malachi. The Old Testament pointed out to sinners exactly what the Messiah, (**Christ**) would and did accomplish in time by His perfect life, vicarious death, as well as His triumphant resurrection and ascension to glory as His people's **Representative, Substitute, Surety, Redeemer, and Mediator**. This is the Gospel of which Paul wasn't "*ashamed*", and it is the Gospel message which none of God's redeemed are ever "*ashamed*" and never grow tired of hearing proclaimed. It is the **ONLY HOPE** for any sinner. I love the way Paul stated it in **II Cor.5:17-21**.

But **secondly** Paul stated that the Gospel of our salvation declares: "*And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.*" We know that it was absolutely essential for the God sent Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ to fulfill every requirement of God's infinite law and justice on the behalf of all those He represented. Christ declared: "*Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.*"(Matt.5:17,18) We know that it was absolutely essential that He die as the Substitute and Surety of all those He represented. But it was also necessary that Christ be "*buried*" and that He rise again the third day "*according to the Scriptures*". **WHY?** "*But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.*" (I Cor.15:13-18) The Old Testament Scriptures that set forth Christ's death, also set forth His burial. David, speaking prophetically of Christ declared: "*For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell* (literally, 'the grave'); *neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*"(Ps.16:10) The Prophet Isaiah declared: "*And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.*"(Isa.53:9) According to Christ's own words, Jonah being in the whales belly for 3 days and 3 night foretold His burial - "*For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*"(Matt.12:40) Now since Christ's burial was prophesied and had actually been accomplished, Paul made mention of it to confirm the certainty of Christ's death and burial in order to set forth the **ESSENTIAL TRUTH** of His resurrection. The fact that Christ has been raised from the dead is **PROOF POSITIVE** that God was well-pleased with His accomplished work of redemption as His people's Representative, Substitute, and Surety. The Apostle Paul confirmed this by his words to the believers in Rome -

*"Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if **WE BELIEVE ON HIM THAT RAISED UP JESUS OUR LORD FROM THE DEAD**; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."*(Rom.4:23-25)

The Gospel isn't complicated. It is a simple declaration of **ESSENTIAL TRUTH** - That Christ came in our name in nature; lived a perfect life of obedience to God's law and justice on the behalf of those the Father gave Him; that He would have their sins imputed to Him, including all the guilt and penalty of them, and that He would effectively bear them away. Seeing Christ actually accomplished **IN TIME** all the Father sent Him to do, the Father was faithful to His covenant promise to the Son, raising Him from the dead and giving Him a name that is above every name – *"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of [things] in heaven, and [things] in earth, and [things] under the earth; And [that] every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ [is] Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*(Phil.2:5-11)

Let me say this in closing: The Gospel isn't an offer of salvation for sinners to accept or reject. It is a declaration of **AN ACCOMPLISHED REDEMPTION** which God the Holy Spirit uses to call God's elect to true faith and true repentance - **Rom.10:13-17**. Have you believed the "Gospel of the Grace of God"? I hope that you have!!!!