

What is the “Gospel”?

“That’s the ‘gospel’ truth!” was once a phrase utilized to emphasize the validity of what was just said... often by people mostly unfamiliar with the concepts of either “truth” or the “gospel”! It’s one of those words that everyone knows and uses, but may not really be able to specifically define. So, let’s consider exactly what “the gospel” is, and perhaps a little of what it isn’t as well!

“**The**” often separates one particular *gospel* from *others*, because *gospel* (*euaggelion* {yoo·ang·ghel·ee·on}) generally means “good tidings” or “good news.” So, “**the**” is used to specify the “good news” pertaining to *spiritual* things:

- Mark 1:1-4, John the Baptist preached “*the gospel of Jesus Christ*” which *prepared the way* for the coming Messiah/King, and His *kingdom*, cf. Matt.3:1-12;
- Matt.4:23; 9:35 record that Jesus preached “*the gospel of the kingdom*,” and after John had been imprisoned, that Jesus *preached “the gospel of God”* (Mark 1:14);
- Luke 16:16 separates “*The Law and the Prophets*” of the Old Testament/Law from “*the gospel of the kingdom of God*” in the New Testament Law, with John the Baptist being the point of demarcation.

So what, exactly, is “**the gospel**”?

1. 1Cor.15:1-8, In its simplest form, Paul identifies “*the gospel*” as being comprised of:
 - a. *Christ dying for our sins according to the Scriptures*, v.3;
 - b. *His burial*, v.4a;
 - c. *His resurrection on the third day according to the Scriptures*, vv.4b, 12-20;
 - d. *His appearance (as raised from the dead) to the apostles, more than 500 brethren, and Paul*, vv.5-9 (cf. Acts 2:32; 3:15; 10:38-43 where the apostles were witnesses, testifying to His resurrection);
 - e. *His reign (implying His ascension to the Father’s right hand) over the kingdom until the end of time*, vv.23-28; and finally,
 - f. *The resurrection (and judgment) of all men*, vv.34-58 (cf. John 5:25-29).
2. Is that *all there is* to the “*gospel*”? Just “*believe*” and be “*baptized*” in order to be “*saved*” by the *gospel*? At least initially, “Yes” Mark 16:15-16; but also consider:
 - a. 1Tim.1:8-11 where the *gospel* also prohibits *lawlessness, rebellion, ungodliness (and sin), unholiness, profane (and profanity, Eph.5:4), patricide, murder, immorality, homosexuality, kidnapping, lying, perjury, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching “according to the glorious gospel”!*
 - b. 1Cor.1:17 where Paul’s preaching of the *gospel* to the Corinthians included the *wisdom of God* over the *wisdom of men*, 1:18 – 2:8; condemned *fleshly and divisive attitudes and actions*, 1:10ff; 3:1 – 4:21; condemned *sexual immorality* and *congregational impurity*, chp.5; condemned *improper attitudes and actions (going to law)* between brethren, chp.6; identified *wholesome* and *unwholesome* aspects of the *sexual relationship in marriage*, chp.7; urged the

proper use of *knowledge, liberty, and conscience* among brethren, chps. 8 – 9; condemned *idolatry, immorality, testing the Lord, grumbling, and over-confidence* regarding *temptation(s)*, chp.10; identified *abuses of headship*, 11:1-16; condemned *abuses of the Lord's Supper* and provide *instructions* for its proper application, 11:1-34; and condemned *abuses of spiritual gifts* and instructed in *orderly worship*, chps. 13 – 14. It sure sounds like “*the gospel*” Paul preached/wrote to the Corinthians (1Cor.1:17ff) included much more than the *death, burial, and resurrection* of Jesus!

- c. Eph.1:7-14, among other things, says that “*after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation- having also believed*” they were “*sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, to the praise of His glory,*” v.13. Great! Close the Book and sit back and wait for the Lord to come and get us, right? Well, not exactly, cf. v.18; 2:10; 3:10; 4:1-3,7,11-13,14-16,17-32; et al.
- d. The point of these examples from 1Tim., 1Cor., and Eph. is that “Yes, the ‘*gospel*’ (good news) of Jesus’ *death, burial, and resurrection*, when believed and obeyed, DOES save us! However, that is not ALL there is to the gospel. It also instructs us regarding *how to live* in a way that *gives glory to God* (cf. Eph.1:6,12,14) and *pleases God* (cf. Eph.5:10).

Now with these things before us, let’s make our applications...

1. The Gospel is “good news” (*glad tidings*) for those who:

- a. **Actually *desire* eternal salvation- not everyone does.** Some prefer the *fleshpots of captivity and the passing pleasures of sin* over the “*eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison*,” 2Cor.4:17.
- b. **Are willing to *walk in love* (Eph.5:2) by the *small gate and narrow way* (Matt.7:13-14).** Some would rather *walk “according to the course of this world”* and *indulge “the desires of the flesh and of the mind”* (Eph.2:3).
- c. **Are able to *love Christ* more and put Him *before his own family, his possessions, and even his own life*, Luke 14:26-27,33.** For you see, this, too, is as much “the gospel” as the *death, burial, resurrection, and love and mercy* of God.

2. The Gospel is God’s power to save (Rom.1:16), for such is its *purpose, intent, and ability*, BUT...

- a. It wasn’t given and isn’t intended to make us “*feel better*” *in* our sin, but to *deliver us from sin*, Col.1:9-14...
- b. And only when and if it is *heard and obeyed*, Titus 2:11-14.
- c. If *salvation from sin and eternal life in heaven* doesn’t sound enough like “good news,” would you prefer a life here characterized by *immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and such like; or love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control*, Gal.5:19-22? Only “the gospel” provides the latter!