

SOLI DEO GLORIA

Official Newsletter of Southwest Christian Church



What is the Gospel: God the Creator

BY MARK MANDIO

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” Genesis 1:1. The first chapter of Genesis describes how God created the entire universe and everything in it including man and woman. This is not just Adam and Eve, this means you! “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb” Psalm 139:13. You are a created being. This means you are under God’s power; He has authority over you and you are obligated to him for your life. In fact, God owns you. “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it” Psalm 24:1. Nor, do we need a special revelation from the Bible to know these things:

Because you are a creature and your Creator is divine, you are obviously subject to his power and authority

“The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world, God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse” Romans 1:18-20.

When man looks at creation, the earth, sky, stars, and living creatures, he must see its inconceivable vastness, power, organization, integration, and order. “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge” Psalm 19:1-2. It is illogical

to observe the creation and conclude that it is the result of accident and chance.

More than this, because the universe is a creation, there must be a Creator of such immense power and intelligence that the Creator has to be divine. Because you are a creature and your Creator is divine, you are obviously subject to his power and authority. The logical response is obedience to the Creator.

However, “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23. Like Isaiah, suddenly finding himself in the presence of the living God, we must say: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts” Isaiah 6:5. Just like Isaiah, we are lost. We desperately need salvation from our Creator.

Youth Spaghetti Dinner Fundrasier

It's a time for the annual Spaghetti festa! This Saturday at 6PM for only \$10 you will be served a wonderful Spaghetti just like The Mama makes with youth students providing live entertainment!



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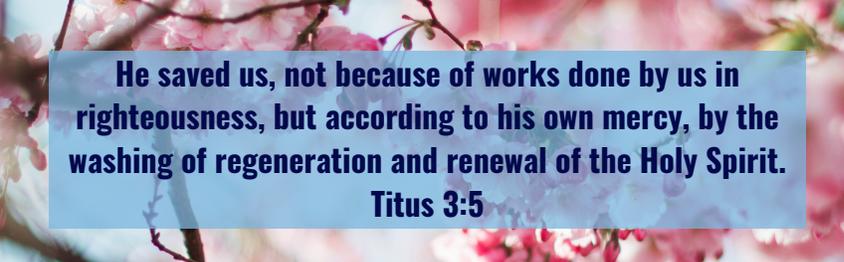
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He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.

Titus 3:5

A Gospel Glossary

LAW: In the Bible, the law often refers specifically to the commandments. Salvation through the law is summed up in the words, “Do this and live” (Lev 18:5, Rom 10:5), meaning if you obey all the commandments, you will be given eternal life. However, this is not the solution but the problem not because the commandments are bad but because we are.

GOSPEL: In contrast, the gospel, which is Old English for good news, presents the solution. “God has done what the law could not do... by sending his own Son” (Rom 8:3) who lived for us, keeping the law, and who died for us, paying for sin. The eternal life that he won is now freely given to Christians.

SIN: Sin is the breaking of God’s commandments. It’s not just making mistakes, but was a serious term in Bible times, which is why in the accounts of Jesus’ life we see people reserving the word “sinner” for prostitutes and low-lives. This is also why it’s a radical statement to say that we are all sinners and even more radical that the Messiah would die for us.

PROPITIATION: A propitiation is a sacrifice that appease the wrath of an offended deity. Because God is just, he must punish sin and because he is good he, hates it. Jesus on the cross was a sacrifice. He was punished not just by Roman cruelty but by the wrath of God. And because he was a perfect sacrifice, he satisfied that wrath.

EXPIATION: Expiation is the removal of guilt accomplished by sacrifice. If you’re a Christian, your sins have been completely paid for. Your guilt is washed away. So, expiation is what Jesus’ sacrifice accomplishes in reference to you. Propitiation is what it accomplishes in reference to God.

JUSTIFICATION: In our legal system, someone accused of a crime can be found either innocent or guilty. The term justification is also a legal term but beyond being declared innocent, it means that a person is declared just or righteous. Christ was condemned guilty in our place so that we could be declared to have his righteousness.

REPENTANCE: Repentance is a change of mind/heart. It is always used in a negative sense i.e. realizing you are wrong, and often has an emotional connotation of feeling great regret. In becoming Christians, we first realize that we were wrong in our disposition towards God, about what we believed, and how we lived.

FAITH: If repentance is the negative side of the coin, then faith is the positive. What do we replace our rebellion with – faith. Faith is understanding, agreeing, and trusting in what God says. Most especially, we need to trust that Jesus death and not our own efforts save us. This changes how we think, feel, and act.

What is the Gospel: Man the Sinner

BY KAREN ENFIELD

From a very young age, I remember being taught that we are all sinners. I knew that I wasn’t perfect and that I made mistakes, but I didn’t really think too deeply about it. I am thankful that I learned that truth repeatedly at a young age even though I didn’t understand it until I was saved as an adult. To understand ourselves as sinner, we have to go way back, to the first man on earth, Adam.

Genesis 1:26 says, “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our own likeness.’” God created us in the image of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit... he did say “our” image and after “our” likeness. Adam was the first man who was created by God and walked on the earth. He was given a strict command in Genesis 2:16-17, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” In Genesis chapter 3, we see the account of the “Fall of Man.” The serpent deceived Eve, and she ate the fruit of the tree that was forbidden. Adam was with, her and he also ate the forbidden fruit. Adam should have stopped Eve as

The hard part for us to understand is that when we sin, it is against a Holy God.

he was the leader of the household, and he knew what God had commanded. He didn’t stop her, but willingly participated in the sin. This is the first recorded sin in the Bible, and it earned them death. They had been warned by God, but did it anyway. We are descendants of Adam and have inherited and earn death with our sin. Thankfully, God had a plan to rescue us from death, through the sacrifice of His Son on the cross.

The hard part for us to understand is that when we sin, it is against a Holy God. It is serious. Psalm 51:4 says, “Against you (God), you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight”. Romans 3:23 states, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”. Romans 3:10-11, “as it is written, ‘None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.’” I John 1:8-10, “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”

I Corinthians 15:20-22 “But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man (Adam) came death, by a man (Christ) has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.” I would expand on that, but that’s another article! We are all sinners in need of a Savior



What is The Gospel: Christ the Savior

MARRE LAPORTE

Substitutionary atonement refers to Jesus Christ dying as a substitute for sinners. Because Jesus never committed a sin, His perfect righteousness and holiness qualified Him to be propitiation for the sins of the elect. He is perfectly righteous and holy because He is God. Therefore, He could bear the punishment for the sins of people as a substitute in God's penal justice system.

In the Old Testament, the sacrificial system clearly laid the foundation for penal substitution in awaiting Israel's coming Messiah. Throughout the Old Testament, sin was expiated by animal sacrifice. This began at the Passover when God spared

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guilty Israelites through the deaths of animals substituted for the firstborn in each household. It was also illustrated with the institution of the Day of Atonement. Sins were "placed" on the scapegoat by the priest to symbolize the removal of Israel's sin to allow people to enter the presence of a holy God. The Day of Atonement compensated the nation's sins, cleansed the sanctuary from sin's contamination, and removed sins from the Israelite community. These acts were only coverings for the sin. Only the Messiah could be the one and only sacrifice for sin. In Isaiah 52:13-

53:12, the prophet anticipates the Messiah's coming substitutionary death describing in detail the Messiah paying the penalty for His peoples' sins.

We are sinners and unable to save ourselves or anyone else from the clutches of the Hell that we deserve. If someone you love commits a crime and is sentenced to die, you may wish to offer to die in their place. However under God's law, if you have also committed crimes (sins) worthy of death and hell, your death cannot satisfy the law's demands for your crimes or your loved ones in addition. Just like the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament, you cannot be atonement for sin. We need a sinless sacrifice.

God's response to our sin, though deserving of death, is not to bring judgement but to show us His wonderful mercy, grace, and unending undeserved love. "He gave up His own son as a ransom for us, the Holy One for the lawless, the innocent one for the wicked, the righteous one for the unrighteous, the imperishable one for the perishable, the immortal one for the mortal" (Epistle of Mathetes to Diognetus 9).

The doctrine of penal substitution states that God gave Himself in the person of His Son to suffer instead of us the death, punishment, and curse due to fallen humanity as the penalty for sin. "He was pierced for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned - everyone - to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Isaiah 53:5-6

In 2 Corinthians 5:21, Paul summarized the heart of the gospel: "For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." Now, that's the true definition of love - The Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Resurrection

BY LINDSEY BOGERS

Jesus's death on the cross is part of the ultimate and final sacrifice for the believer's sins, but God's plan for salvation is not finished at the cross. It is what occurs on the third day that completes the victory. "Christ was declared the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by His resurrection from the dead" Rom 1:4. "He is alive and lives forevermore and has the keys of Death and Hades" Rev 1:18, "and being raised from the dead, he will never die again; death no longer has dominion over Him" Rom 6:9.

The resurrection of Christ is the foundation of Christianity. Anyone who would deny that this event occurred, would not be a true Christian. Paul states in I Cor 15:13: "If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised, then our preaching is in vain, your faith is also in vain". There is no faith, salvation, and no hope. He goes on in verse 17 to say that "you are still in your sins."

1 Cor 15:4 states that "Christ was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures". These scriptures come from the Old Testament. The Pharisees were aware of the Old Testament scripture references to the Messiah: (Job 19:25-27; Ps 49:15; 73:23-28; Isa 25:8; 26:19; Ezek 37:1-14; Hos 13:14; Dan 12:1-4 etc.). Connections between Psa 16:10, Psa 22, Isa 53:10-11, and Dan 12:2-3 reveal that the Messiah, in particular, would be raised from the dead.

Jesus himself said "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." This is recorded in John 2:13 and the scripture goes on to say in verse 21 that he was speaking about the temple of his body. Due to the Pharisees knowledge of the Old Testament references mentioned above as well as Jesus's references to be the Son of God, they put forth all their efforts to try and keep Jesus in the tomb.

While it is our faith in God's plan for salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus that makes us true believers, more scripture reading will reveal that Jesus revealed himself physically multiple times following the resurrection. But our faith must remain in God's promises and what the scriptures say and not look for physical validation that Jesus was resurrected. John 20:29 "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen me and yet have believed." With this fulfilled prophecy, resurrection was God's acceptance of sins being paid for by Jesus providing eternal life for all who believe.



Counsel to Converts, Part 2

BY GEORGE MULLER (1878)

CONVICTION OF SIN AND TRUST IN CHRIST

I now speak more especially to believers; and by this I do not understand those who at sometime or other have had some religious impressions. These may lead to nothing, and therefore there must be something more in order to be children of God. In order to be believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we must be regenerated, must be on the road to heaven and have been "delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of His dear Son." For all this, more is wanted than mere religious impressions. Many persons have these, and are brought no further; but there they remain. It is needful that we should have been brought in a greater or less degree to look upon ourselves as sinners in need of a Saviour. And therefore I ask affectionately, Have we been convinced of this?

I am not speaking of degree. With ten thousand different persons, God may work in ten thousand different ways. I myself had little of this serious, deep conviction of sin at the beginning of my new life, and yet was, I believe, really and truly converted; and from the very beginning there was a marked difference in me. Yet I did see I was a sinner deserving punishment and nothing else. As to the degree of this sorrow, that is quite a different thing. We must, if we are children of God, have been convinced in the light of His word, that we are sinners deserving of punishment, and that the Lord Jesus Christ alone can save.

Then, again, we must be led to trust in Him; for we may have been convinced of sin, and yet have gone no further. If so, we are not on the road to heaven yet. We must have put all our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of our souls. And all the more do I make these remarks, my beloved friends, because at such a time, when a wave of divine blessing has been passing through the land, and so many have been led to make a profession of faith, many may be trusting in a mere impression, perhaps a conviction, to some extent, of sin. All this is right as far as it goes, but not enough. Such are as yet in the state of which the Lord speaks - "Not far from the kingdom of heaven," and yet not in it. We must have passed from death unto life, ere we are the children of God, and there is no such thing as being a child of God without faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

This, then, is most important, that we trust in Him; and in Him alone, for the salvation of our souls, and that we have no other hope in the matter of our salvation, than the merits and the intercession of Him, who sits on the right hand of God.

If we have been convinced of sin, and have believed in Him, then, as it is said in Acts x. 43, we have received remission of sin. Then are we the children of God, as in Gal. iii. 26. And, again, it is said that "to as many as received" the Lord Jesus Christ, "to them gave He power to become the sons of God." It is to these poor sinners who have trusted in the Lord Jesus for the salvation of their souls, that I desire particularly to speak. Those alone are they who have the bright blessed prospect of heaven, and who know in their own blessed experience, the joy of the latter part of Rom. viii., or have the glorious confidence of Philipians i. 6, that "He who hath begun a good work will perform it." To you, brother and sister in Christ, I desire to say a few words as to the Christian life.

What is the Gospel: You and Your Response

BY JASON TAYLOR

The call for mankind in this fallen world is simple: repent and believe. These are the very words spoken by Jesus in Mark 1:15, which are at the very heart of the gospel of Christ. God the Father sent Jesus the Son to do the work that you and I could not do. The call for Christians is to turn away from our sin and turn towards Christ and have faith in His finished work. This process starts when the Holy Spirit opens the eyes and heart of the believer and causes us to see our rebellion against a holy and righteous God. Ezekiel 36:26-27 speaks of the new heart and the Spirit that has been given to us that cause new desires within us to love and obey God. Ephesians 2:8-9 gives us another picture of God giving us this gift of faith and that we cannot boast and brag as if there is some kind of work inside of us that causes this change. In fact, the very next verse, 2:10, goes on to talk about the good works that we go on doing as a result of this. Yet, we still cannot boast in anything within us. The only thing we can boast in is the Lord as stated by Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:31 and Christ who is our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

With a new heart and new desires, we now long to be obedient to God's law, not because we are legalistic and we are trying to save ourselves, but because we are responding to Christ's finished work and now live to bring him glory and honor. Now, we are able to fight against the desires of our flesh and do the good works of God because He has freed us from the slavery of sin and death. So as Christians, we are now more than conquerors through Jesus, who has justified us and intercedes for us at the right hand of the Father. We can rest in the finished work of this great God, who will never leave us or forsake us and will one day return to bring us home to an eternity of glory

Recommended Books for Further Reading

- WHAT IS THE GOSPEL*
by Greg Gilbert
 - WHO IS JESUS*
 - WHAT IS FAITH*
 - WHAT IS REPENTANCE*
 - HOW CAN I BE RIGHT WITH GOD*
 - ARE PEOPLE BASICALLY GOOD*
by RC Sproul
 - THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST
 - THE GOSPEL CALL AND TRUE CONVERSION
 - THE GOSPEL'S POWER AND MESSAGE
by Paul Washer
- * available for free online