

GOSPEL ESSENTIALS



“To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus...” -Colossians 1:27-28

The depth and quality of our revelation of Jesus Christ determines our understanding of the gospel. Hence, our notions about God mold and shape the Christianity we live. Moreover, what can be known and comprehended of God is revealed through His Word.

Col. 2:9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

Jesus Christ is the Word of God.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

We must see that Jesus and the Word of God are synonymous. To whatever degree men are submitted to God's Word, likewise, they will be submitted to the Lord Jesus Christ. This is an absolute. Hence, the aim of every gospel preacher must be to present every man perfect in Christ/Word. We must never be content to see men get just a dab of religion. Sadly, shallow Christianity, if that can be called Christianity at all, is the norm in our day. The root to this spiritual malady is found in the gospel that is being preached today. Sadly, many have been convinced to come to an altar while they refuse Calvary. True gospel preaching is far more than an intellectual communication. Jesus said of His gospel...

John 6:63 ...the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

There must be a unveiling of the very nature of God. True gospel preaching offers such a revelation and with it, the cost and conditions of salvation are clearly seen by the sinner. If we are to present men perfect in Christ, there are certain essentials that

we must communicate, not merely mention. We are obligated to warn and teach every man. In this hour of deception, it's not only *what the false teachers say, but what they refuse to say*: they have gutted the Gospel of the essentials. In this post, we want to recover the discarded elements of the Gospel, namely, *repentance, faith, submission, and endurance*.

REPENTANCE

Luke 13:3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Unfortunately, we no longer call men to repentance, but reformation.

Acts 17:30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent...

John the Baptist, the forerunner to Christ, from the wilderness of Judea cried...

Matthew 3:2 ...repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Jesus Christ began His public ministry by preaching repentance. When the Holy Ghost fell on the day of Pentecost, an anointed Apostle Peter declared that men must repent. Thus, repentance is the first oracle of the gospel presentation. Remove it and you have another gospel. But what is Biblical repentance?

Repentance: (*Webster's 1828*) Sorrow or deep contrition for sin, as an offense and dishonor to God, a violation of his holy law, and the basest ingratitude towards a Being of infinite benevolence. This is called evangelical repentance, and is accompanied and followed by amendment of life.

The prevailing thought in our day is that repentance means mere sorrow. Yet, sorrow alone is defined as worldly in the Bible...

2 Cor. 7:10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

Thus, the Scriptures clearly defines sorrow alone as a counterfeit repentance that must be repented of.

Proverbs 28:13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

Repentance: (Greek) *met-an'-oy-ah*, Compunction for guilt, including reformation, by implication reversal.

“When there is no fear, there is no change of conduct. Where there is no change, there is only a vain 'repentance.' For it lacks the fruit for which God purposed it - the salvation of man.” -Tertullian

Men must be made to see that God commands them to stop sinning. Few people, even in church, believe this is possible.

“Man cannot turn to God without first turning from sin.” -Richard Taylor

If we don't believe it's possible to turn from all sin, how will we persuade the world to truly repent?

TRUE FAITH IN THE FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST

John 8:24 ...if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.

Real faith is rarely communicated in today's gospel. In our modern day gospel presentation, we have reduced faith to nothing more than mental assent. The rallying cry of the Protestant reformation was, "saved by faith alone." For centuries this expression has been promoted and cherished as the official slogan of orthodox Christianity. Nevertheless, no matter how revered, all things must be tested by Scripture. Ironically, the only place in the N.T. where the two words "faith" and "alone" are presented in the same verse is found in...

James 2:17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

This proves that a faith void of works is not saving faith. Faith that confesses the Bible but refuses to act on God's Word is nothing more than devil's faith.

What is meant by the word believe?

The Greek word translated into the English word "believe" speaks of commitment

and covenant. However, in today's gospel presentation urges self-centered, unconvicted men to try God, to give God a chance. How tragic, the only folks who tried God in the Bible met a terrible fate:

Hebrews 3:17 ...whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?

SUBMISSION TO THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST

2 Cor. 4:5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord...

Lord: (Greek) *koo'-ree-os*, Supreme in authority, master.

To deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow demands that we submit to Jesus as Lord. The Bible declares Jesus Christ to be Lord.

Isaiah 9:6-7 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder ...

If men are to know Jesus, they must know Him on the ground of Lordship.

Matthew 23:8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.

The Gospel call of repentance not only addresses acts of sin, but the principle of sin itself. Man's problem is not merely one of behavior, but of nature as well. The gospel is an invitation to sinners to forsake their independence from God. Thus, Christ's appeal, "follow me" communicates the condition of discipleship, or the Lordship of Christ. Discipleship is to come under the discipline of Jesus, or God's Word. The false idea that a man can be a Christian without becoming a disciple is common today. However, the Bible teaches discipline is a condition for sonship...

Hebrews 12:8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

You may be surprised to learn that the title Savior, in reference to Jesus, is only used 24 times in the N.T., while the term Lord, is used 555 times. Perhaps that tells us what our emphasis should be in declaring the person of Christ? Jesus must be Lord or He will not be Savior. Much gospel preaching today deals only with externals, only scratching the surface, but the Word of the Lord judges the motive. If a man

truly makes Jesus his Lord, then he reserves no rights, he will relinquish all control. He will give Jesus free-course to search, try, pluck-up, and to pull-down. Nothing more incenses that proud, independent, religious rebel than Christ's claim to all his life.

2 Peter 2:10 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

Government: (Greek) *koo-ree-ot'-ace*, Lordship, rulers, and dominion.

Israel was never in a worse spiritual state as when the Bible says she did, "every man what was right in his own eyes."

ENDURANCE

Matthew 10:22 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

Salvation is a everyday, lifelong commitment, we must endure. We are saved now by faith, but to truly experience full and eternal life we must endure until the end. Obviously, errors like O.S.A.S. fail to communicate this condition. But there are other more subtle errors in our gospel preaching. Today's evangelism pushes for decisions when God wants disciples. Too often, sinners are coerced and manipulated before they know the costs involved. False expectations lead to discouraged pilgrims (remember "Pliable" after the "Slough of Despond," replying, "..is this the bliss ye spoke of?" in Bunyan's progress).

Luke 14:28 ...sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?

Are we willing to communicate to prospective converts the costs involved? My policy? If I can't discourage them with brutal spiritual reality, then perhaps they are ready to commit. God give us courage not to obscure the blessed cross of Christ.

–B.W.

