

The Word of God Saves

Romans 1:16; 10:9-10; II Timothy 3:15

How would you answer this question: what is the gospel? You might say it is the free gift of God, freedom from sin, eternal life, good news, righteousness, moral purity, grace, unconditional love, healing and deliverance, redemption, faith in God, new life.

Those are all great answers, but then I might ask if anything was missing from the list. You might rustle through your Bible looking for some verses that may add to what was mentioned. You might conclude that something is not on the list, but not sure what it would be. What is missing is the source of those wonderful answers – Jesus. All those are possible only because of Christ.

No study on the Word of God and its importance to us would be complete if we didn't consider what it has to say about salvation and what it reveals about its source. Now while the title of the messages says the Word of God saves, I want to be clear that it isn't the Bible that saves, but what the Bible has to say about how we can be saved – the who and how.

This past Wednesday we began our series the Word of God speaks and discussed the difference between general or natural revelation and special revelation. Natural revelation is God revealing Himself in nature. **Psalm 19** says that the heavens declare the glory of God. **Romans 1:20** says that God has revealed Himself through creation so that no one is without excuse when it comes to knowing God. But natural revelation falls short in that, while it can show us that there is a Creator, that the Creator is all powerful, even that the Creator is eternal, natural revelation cannot show us that we are all sinners. It can't show us that God has a plan of salvation. That's why we need special revelation where God has spoken directly to us. **Hebrews 1:1-2** **“In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, and through whom He made the universe.”**

God audibly spoke and the universe was created.
 God audibly spoke to Adam giving him commands to obey.
 God came to the garden of Eden in the cool of the day to walk and talk with the first couple.
 God spoke face to face with Moses.
 God spoke the written Word by writing 10 commandments on tablets of stone.
 God spoke through prophets, and to prophets through dreams and visions.
 God spoke as the incarnate Jesus.
 God has and continues to speak through His Word. From Genesis through Revelation we have the written word of God communicating His redemptive plan for mankind.
 God is knowable through His Word.
 God's plan of salvation is knowable through His Word. So that's why I say the Word of God saves because it shows us how mankind can be brought back into a right relationship with God. Without His Word, we would not know that we need to be saved or how to be saved.

Let's consider three passages that show us the power of the gospel; the path of the gospel; and the propagation of the gospel.

Turn first to **Romans 1:16** where we will take a look at the power of the gospel.

I. THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL – Romans 1:16

Right away Paul tells us about the power in the supremacy of the gospel.

A. The Power in the Supremacy of the Gospel

Paul says he is not ashamed of the gospel. Shame means feeling disgrace or dishonor, a loss of respect for a person because of some improper behavior or incompetence or having done something regrettable. In Scripture the word is always used in the passive voice signifying a feeling of shame or fear that prevents a person from doing something. Paul says that when it comes to sharing the gospel, he has no shame or fear.

Some people today might argue that when it came

to sharing the gospel in Paul's day, that he had it so much easier than we do. But consider the culture in which Paul was writing and then see if you agree with those who say it was easier then. Rome was the home of great philosophers and philosophies. But while it was open to every kind of new thought, it had no particular liking for the Jews or Judaism with its monotheism. At one point in Paul's day Jews were purged from the city.

Crucifixion was the lowest form of execution given to a criminal. We decorate with crosses, wear gold crosses, put crosses on or in our churches. But in Paul's day it was a form of capital punishment, an instrument of execution. It was so atrocious, it wasn't even mentioned in the circles of polite society.

It was into this culture that Paul bravely proclaimed the gospel telling Romans to put their trust in a Jew who came from a poor socio-economic status, who had been crucified on a cross. Why put faith in the fable of a common man who Christians said had risen from the dead? To them the resurrection was laughable. No wonder the cross was foolish to those among the Gentiles who were perishing. The cross was of no value to them. That's why when Paul stood before King Agrippa and Festus proclaiming the gospel of the resurrected Christ, Festus interrupted Paul and declared he was crazy.

But in the midst of this culture, Paul was not ashamed of this gospel. With all that Roman and Greek culture had to offer, it fell far short of providing anything of lasting value, but Paul said this gospel saves. He tells us in another letter what the Gospel is that he was proclaiming.

I Corinthians 15:1-8

Now notice what the gospel is not.

The gospel is not good works.

The gospel is not good giving.

The gospel is not good intentions.

The gospel is not good morals.

The gospel is not good church attendance.

The gospel is not good behavior.

The gospel is not good religion.

Paul tells us exactly what the gospel is and what it

was he preached. And notice too, this gospel isn't something he made up himself. He received it and was passing it on to those he preached to.

The gospel he received and preached is that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and then rose again. Paul then tells us that the affirmation of the resurrection came through eyewitness accounts of people seeing Jesus alive after He had died and was buried. Notice as well that Christ didn't just die, but He died for our sins. He didn't die because He was a criminal and deserved it. There are a number of verses that tell us Christ, the sinless one, took on Himself our sin enduring its penalty so that we could have eternal life. Last week I said that the death of Christ saves us and spares us.

It saves us from sin and gives to us eternal life.

It spares us from the punishment of God's our sins.

In spite of everything that is stacked up against Paul culturally, he was not ashamed of the gospel. He knew that the gospel was far superior to any other religion or philosophy of the day, even to Judaism for which he had devoted his life prior to his salvation. He was not ashamed to debate the philosophers of Athens on Mars Hill. He was not afraid to engage the religious leaders, like himself, who had embraced the law of Judaism. He was not afraid to share the gospel with royalty. The power of the gospel is evident in its supremacy. Don't be ashamed of it or afraid to share it.

He also had the utmost confidence in the power of the gospel evident in its sufficiency.

B. The Power in the Sufficiency of the Gospel

Why was Paul not ashamed of the gospel? He tells us unequivocally that the gospel is the power of God for salvation.

If you had the cure for cancer, would you keep it to yourself?

If you had the means for absolute energy independence, would you keep it a secret?

Paul had the message of salvation in the gospel and he was not ashamed to declare it. It is sufficient for your sin, my sin, any sin, all sin.

The Old English word for gospel was godspell. It means good story or good news. In this case it is the good news of salvation.

Salvation means deliverance, safety, preservation, healing and soundness. It is an all-inclusive word that refers to the process of redemption and encompasses justification, redemption, grace, propitiation, imputation, forgiveness, sanctification, and glorification or more simply everything from the moment we are saved to when we enter our eternal heavenly home. The gospel delivers us from sin and the wrath to come because of that sin.

Scripture tells us we have been delivered from the penalty of sin accomplished on the cross when Christ bore our sin, dying the death we deserved, bearing the consequences of God's wrath. That was done in the past for us when Christ took God's wrath and includes the guilt we may otherwise have for our sin. We are no longer condemned.

Romans 8:1-2 "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death."

Scripture also tells us that we have been delivered from the power of sin, which refers to the habit and dominion of sin over us in the present.

Romans 6:1-2, 11-14

Romans 8:2 "through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death."

II Corinthians 5:17

We have been delivered in the past from the penalty sin. We are being delivered from the power of sin in the present. We will be delivered in the future from the presence of sin. There is a time yet coming when we will be free from all the affects of the curse of sin brought on mankind through the disobedience of Adam and Eve. Sin and the results of sin will be absent in heaven.

Revelation 21:4 "There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of

things has passed away."

Romans 8:18-23

I Corinthians 15:42-44, 51-58

I John 3:2-3

When the Lord returns to gather all believers, we will be brought into conformity or into the likeness of Christ in character.

Salvation through Jesus Christ delivers us from the past, present and future aspects of sin: its penalty, its power, and its presence.

Any time the Word of God is read or heard, it has the power to save through the gospel it proclaims.

John Phillips writes that "The gospel message grips the mind, stabs the conscience, warms the heart, saves the soul and sanctifies the life. It can make drunken men sober, crooked men straight and profligate women pure. It is a message sufficient to transform the life of any who believe."

Paul understood the transforming power of the gospel.

Peter understood the transforming power of the gospel.

Zacchaeus understood the transforming power of the gospel.

John Newton, author of Amazing Grace, understood the transforming power of the gospel.

Throughout the ages many have come to know the transforming power of the gospel to save from sin and give new life in Christ.

No one is beyond the reach and power of the gospel to save from sin and darkness to life and light.

Some may say they could never be saved because of what they have done. But Jesus says you don't know what I have done so you could be saved.

Would you be free from your burden of sin?

There's power in the blood, power in the blood:

Would you o'er evil a victor win?

There's wonderful power in the blood.

There is power in the sufficiency of the gospel to save.

There is power in the simplicity of the gospel.

C. The Power in the Simplicity of the Gospel

“The gospel is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentiles.”

Let me remind you that if the death, burial and resurrection of Christ were not historically true, then we have no gospel and there is no salvation. But because it is true, those who believe in the gospel, will be saved. The effect of the gospel is salvation for all who believe. The extent of the gospel is worldwide – it is for everyone. The condition of the gospel is to believe, to have faith in Christ who died for our sin and then rose again.

John 3:16

Because the Jews were God’s chosen people and the ones entrusted with God’s revelation of redemption and the people through whom Christ came, they had the first opportunity to believe the gospel. John says Jesus came to His own but His own people didn’t receive Him. When Paul visited a city, he went first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles. The gospel message is available to any and all who believe.

God didn’t say that in order to be saved you had to run around the parking lot. That wouldn’t be fair to people who can’t run.

God didn’t say that in order to be saved you had to read the Bible. That wouldn’t be fair to people who can’t read.

God didn’t say that in order to be saved you had to give \$1000. That wouldn’t be fair to the poor.

God didn’t say you had to be baptized to be saved because some, like the thief on the cross, don’t get that opportunity.

Psychiatry can’t save you.

Intellectualism can’t save you.

Reason can’t save you.

Wallstreet can’t save you.

Politics can’t save you.

Social reform can’t save you.

Science can’t save you.

But God did say that anyone and everyone who believes in the gospel will be saved, the gospel that Jesus died for sin, was buried, and rose again.

That is the power of the gospel to save.

The supremacy of the power of the gospel should give us confidence to share it.

The sufficiency of the power of the gospel should give us confidence to share it.

The simplicity of the power of the gospel should give us confidence to share it.

Isaiah 55:6-11

The gospel is the power of God to save anyone who believes. **But what is it we are supposed to believe?** Next, we see the path of the gospel.

II. THE PATH OF THE GOSPEL –

Romans 10:9-10

In these verses, we notice that it is an outward confession and an inward conviction.

A. It Is an Outward Confession

B. It Is an Inward Conviction

v. 9 “If you confess with your mouth.”

v. 10 “It is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.”

Some believe that for salvation to be real, you need to come forward in a service and make a public confession of faith. Let’s be clear that salvation does not occur by words that we say or by walking down an aisle. We are saved by grace through faith not by any works or words that we may speak. You must be convinced about the gospel in your heart.

Islam teaches that to become a Muslim all you need to do is repeat the Shahada or testimony: “There is no true god but Allah, and Muhammad is His prophet.”

Just saying words doesn’t make a person a Christian. And neither is it in just praying a prayer. Confession and conviction are what we might call different sides of the same coin. It isn’t two steps but something that happens simultaneously. Conviction is a strong belief based on what you know to be true and put all your trust in what you believe. In the case of the gospel, it is the conviction that Jesus’ death on the cross atoned for your sin paying its debt and the resurrection is God affirming that He accepted His substitutionary sacrifice for each of us. We then believe it by applying His

sacrifice by faith which then covers us in the righteousness of Christ giving us eternal life.

To believe means more than just agreeing in our minds that something is true. It means to trust God so strongly in what God says is true that you commit yourself to obeying Him. It is more than just an intellectual understanding who Jesus is from what the Bible teaches. The Bible says that demons believe who Jesus is, but they aren't saved. Belief is embracing the fact about Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection and then committing our life to Him.

If you come to a bridge that crosses a deep canyon, you might look at the bridge and believe that it can hold your weight safely so you can cross. You might even see other people safely walk across the bridge. But that is only believing in your head. Real belief is when you step onto the bridge and commit your life to it and walk across yourself.

To be saved, you must believe in your heart that Christ removed the barrier of sin and became our bridge to get back into a right relationship with God through His death and resurrection. We call that faith or trust. It's believing in what Jesus said that He is the only Way, the only Truth, and the only Life (**John 14:6**), that there is no other way, no other name given among men by which we can be saved. We trust Him as Savior.

Confession then reveals the content of the heart. It is an admission of what you believe and you are willing to testify about it. For a person in Rome to confess salvation in Christ generally meant persecution. So strong was their conviction they were willing to suffer for it.

Paul tells us what we are to believe and confess or testify to what our convictions are about Christ. There are two things we are to believe and confess. We are to confess that Jesus is Lord. We are to confess that God raised Him from the dead.

The phrase "**Jesus is Lord**" was often used in the early church at the time of a believer's baptism as their confession of faith. It acknowledged that Jesus

was now in control of the person's life. It was an outward expression of an inward decision. The word "**Lord**" is used over 6,000 times in the Septuagint, which is the Greek translation of the Old Testament. It was equivalent to the Hebrew term Yahweh or God. Combined with the name Jesus ascribes deity to Him.

Believing in one's heart that Jesus is Lord is to say that He now has sovereign rule of your life. In the Bible, the heart refers to your emotions, affections, will and intellect - the person's total being.

If you believe with your whole being that Jesus is Lord and that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved, and not only that, you must also believe that He rose from the dead. Paul writes in **I Corinthians 15** about the importance of the resurrection and says that if Jesus didn't rise from the dead then we are still dead in our sin. There is no hope of salvation if the body of Christ is still in the grave. It is just as important to believe Jesus rose again as it is to believe that He died on the cross for sin.

One author says that confession is faith coming forward to announce itself proclaiming what Jesus did for the believer.

Or as another author stated "Romans 10:9-10 is not establishing public confession as a prerequisite for salvation. Rather, it is asserting that, when someone trusted Christ and subsequently confessed Him as Lord, knowing that persecution was sure to come, that individual gave evidence of genuine salvation. Those who are saved will confess Christ as Lord because He has already instilled faith in their hearts. As with baptism and all good works, public confession is not the means of salvation; it is the evidence of salvation."

So when we believe, we are justified or declared righteous by God. He no longer sees our sin. And again, while the scope of salvation is universal, salvation is limited only to those who believe.

John 3:16

John 5:24

So what are we left to do after we believe for salvation in Christ?

The power of the gospel saves.

The path of the gospel is through believing or trusting in Christ for salvation.

Paul then shows us the propagation of the gospel.

III. THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL – II Timothy 3:14-15

Writing to his friend and protégé in ministry, Paul tells Timothy he must have resolve for the gospel.

A. Have Resolve in the Gospel – v. 14

First, he was to **continue** in the gospel.

Second, he was to have **confidence** in the gospel.

In other words, don't lose heart and don't lose hope in the gospel. No matter how difficult the road ahead may be, no matter how challenging your circumstances are right now, cling to the gospel.

Paul could encourage him with that advice because He was awaiting his execution. He wasn't about to abandon the gospel in which he had found so much comfort. The conviction he had about the gospel carried him to the end so that in the next chapter he could write his final farewell.

II Timothy 4:7-8, 18

How much resolve do you have in the gospel?

Continue in it; have confidence in it. It has the power to save.

He gives one final piece of advice to Timothy about the gospel.

B. Have Remembrance For the Gospel – v. 15

From what we know, Timothy's father was Greek and unsure if he was saved. He may have taught Timothy about the Greek gods and Mt. Olympus, but it was the influence of his mother and grandmother that had the greatest impact on young Timothy. Paul reminds him and tells him not to forget that they taught him about the Scriptures from infancy. They began when he was a baby. They taught him things from Scripture that would make him wise for salvation through faith in Christ.

Our culture is doing all it can to teach our children things contrary to Scripture. Seize the opportunity while your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren are infants and teach them about the gospel. Don't be ashamed to share it.

Fritz Kreisler was a world-renowned violinist who died in 1962. He earned a fortune with his concerts and compositions. In his travels he discovered an exquisite violin but wasn't able to buy it because in his generosity, he had given much of his wealth away. When he had finally earned enough money to purchase the instrument, it was no longer available because it had been sold to a collector. Kreisler traveled to the home of the new owner and asked to purchase the violin, but the collector indicated it had become one of his most prized possessions and would not sell it. Kreisler was quite disappointed and turned to leave when he thought of an idea. He asked the new owner if he could play it one last time before it was consigned to silence. The owner granted him permission and the great violinist filled the room with such heart-warming music that the collector's emotions stirred him deeply. He exclaimed that he had no right to keep it to himself and gave it to the musician telling him to take it into the world for everyone to hear.

Let us not be ashamed to take the gospel into all the world. It has the power to save all who will believe. Maybe today the power of the gospel is calling to you to trust Christ as your Savior.

Warren Wiersbe states "We are not saved by believing the Bible but by trusting the Christ who is revealed in the Bible."

Someone once came to Jesus and asked what he needed to do to be saved. From our passage, believe on Jesus Christ – in His death for sin, His burial and His resurrection – and you will be saved. That is the power of the gospel proclaimed in the Word of God.