

# The Essentials of the Gospel

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I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL

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(Romans 1:16)



IN MANY FUNDAMENTAL/EVANGELICAL CIRCLES, MEN HAVE BECOME SUCH ACADEMICIANS AS TO INTELLECTUALIZE THE GOSPEL BY TAKING LIBERTIES WITH THE USE OF THE WORD. CONSEQUENTLY, THEY HAVE LOST THE SPECIFICITY OF ITS MEANING, THEREFORE THEY PREACH IN THEIR CHURCHES A VAGUE MESSAGE THAT IS NOT THE TRUE GOSPEL OF GOD.

## INTRODUCTION:

The gospel means *Good News*, but not all good news in the Scriptures is the gospel. The salvation of souls is good news; the performance of miracles is good news; healing is good news; the second coming of Christ is good news, but these things are not the gospel Paul defined in First Corinthians:

*Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:* (I Corinthians 15:1-4).

Here Paul tells us specifically what the gospel is. He declared what was divinely revealed to him. Therefore, this is the authentic gospel that Paul preached—the **death, burial, and resurrection** of Jesus Christ. This is the gospel.

I take no credit for this acrostic of the word, “gospel.” I use it to describe the gospel.

**G – God Originated Gospel: Romans 1:1; I Corinthians 9:16**

Paul stated that he was *Separated unto the gospel of God.*

**O – Obligating Gospel: Romans 1:14**

Paul said *I am debtor both to the Greeks and the Barbarians; both to the wise and the unwise.*

**S – Separating Gospel: John 3:36**

*He who believes on the Son has everlasting life; he who believes not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.*

**P – Powerful Gospel: Romans 1:16**

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto Salvation.*

**E – Establishing Gospel: Romans 16:25**

*Now to Him who is of power to establish you according to my Gospel.*

**L – Life -Transforming Gospel: II Corinthians 5:17**

*Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things have become new.*

## 1. The Gospel - The Message of the Church

### ❖ A Precious Message

The good news and promise of the gospel is **salvation**. Oh how wonderful to proclaim the gospel to the condemned for the forgiveness of sins. In shame and disgrace, the woman taken in adultery stood before Jesus with her accusers who sought to stone her. Realizing that Jesus knew her sinful life she stood exposed before the Son of God. We can only imagine what it was like to be there. Yet, all of us who are born again have been there. After the death-thirsty men were gone, who could not stand the heat of exposure of their own sins, Jesus asked the woman, *where are your accusers*. She replied, *there are none*. And she heard the words of Jesus, *neither do I condemn you. Go and leave your sinful life behind*. **Forgiven, cleansed, restored, in peace and with joy** the woman left. Amen!!! **Oh, What a Savior!!!**

### ❖ A Powerful Message

Consider the numerous lives of people who have been saved and transformed by the power of the gospel. Think of Saul of Tarsus who became the Apostle Paul. I have known addicts to all kinds of vices, men and women from every sinful background you can name, and yet they sat on the pews of my church of which I was pastor. What a joy to observe them, having been saved from out of a life of sin and corruption, but now filled with gratitude and the joy of salvation. Hebrews 7:25 states:

*Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by him.*

It is wonderful and amazing what God does in a church that proclaims faithfully the gospel. Like a gentle steady rain on a summer day the unique, hallowing, manifest presence of the power of the Holy Spirit hovers over a congregation and settles in the hearts of compassionate people hungry to see souls come to Christ. As the Holy Spirit creates a conducive atmosphere and conditions the hearts of the lost, I have witnessed His convicting drawing power at work, opening their understanding as Jesus did in Saul of Tarsus. And they came weeping their way in repentance and faith to the Lord Jesus and were transformed into new creations in Christ.

## 2. The Gospel - The Means of Salvation

People have tried every possible way to find forgiveness and peace outside of Christ but to no avail. The Bible states, *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved* (Acts 4:12).

God's plan of salvation originated in eternity past. **It was in the mind of God before sin was in man's heart**. Not an after-thought in the mind of God, **the gospel is God's way of obtaining the demands of His justice toward sin so He could be just and the justifier of the ungodly**. Paul called it *the power of God unto Salvation*.

*But look what has happened to the gospel*. The "old ship of Zion," beaten and battered, has been under attack for over two thousand years, but she has survived every form of opposition—yet the true church still proclaims the gospel that is *the power of God unto salvation*. Please give careful attention to these three ways whereby the gospel has been subjected to the evil minds, pens, and voices of demons and liberals in every media available to them:

### A. The Distortion of the Gospel – Deception

Jesus asked a searching question that illustrates the distortion of the gospel that leads to deception.

*If a son shall ask bread of any of you who is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent* (Luke 11:11)?

Oh the tragedy of benighted souls who were given a stone or a serpent instead of God's answer for forgiveness and peace, but that has happened in many churches and in many shortcut witnessing situations in which a decision only is sought instead of faith in what God has done in Christ to save the lost. My friend, never take a shortcut when dealing with the souls of lost sinners. Take time to tell the sinner just what happened at Calvary when Jesus hang on the cross. Don't be guilty of distorting the truth of the gospel and deceiving precious souls. **Tell them what Paul wrote I Corinthians 5:1-4.**

### B. The Deviation from the Gospel – Departure

*I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed* (Galatians 1:6-8)

Paul here addresses a problem that we are facing in our day – a gospel devoid of the essentials Paul named in his letter to the Corinthians: the **death, burial** and **resurrection** of Christ. These are the powerful essentials of the gospel—essentials we dare not depart from. Paul tells us that he received the gospel by divine revelation and he tells us that the gospel was committed to his trust. And Paul proved that he was a trustworthy steward of the gospel—*According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.* Not only was it committed to his trust, Paul was committed to the gospel and never departed from it. May God have mercy on a preacher or a church who turns away from the gospel—by failing to proclaim it or by substituting other means for it.

### C. The Decimation of the Gospel - Destruction

The regenerated soul feeds on the spiritual nourishment derived from the truth of the gospel. A divinely implanted curiosity compels an understanding of its message. We must know why Jesus was virgin born, why He died and the meaning of His blood, why He was buried, why He was raised again. Let's examine: *The Essentials of the Gospel.*

**We will consider a limited discussion of the reason for the exclusion of these truths by liberal theologians and why Satan hates the truth. The liberals advocate...**

#### A Depreciated Message

##### ❖ The Virgin Birth of Christ

Through the years, the messengers of the gospel have been without adequate knowledge of why Jesus had to be born of a virgin. Hopefully, in the limited space I have I can share some truth one needs to proclaim a **biblical** rather than a **perverted** gospel.

Jesus was God's perfect Lamb. The blood of bulls and goats in the old covenant could not atone for sin, but it pictured the Lamb of God, Jesus, who came to take away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. In the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, to shed His blood once for all. The blood of the sacrificial animals of the Old Testament was corruptible, but the blood of Jesus is pure and incorruptible. Peter wrote: *Forasmuch as you know that you were not redeemed with the corruptible things as silver and gold...but with the precious blood of Christ as of a Lamb without spot or blemish.* All the blood Jesus shed on the cross still exists as pure as it was when He died on Calvary.

The Bible teaches us that Jesus was a sinless man. Every person from Adam to the present was born with Adam's nature, and subject to the curse and eternal death. Jesus was without sin and therefore deathless until He took our sin on Himself and died our death. All the people of this world have had Adam's sinful blood, but although Jesus had Adam's flesh, **He did not have Adam's blood. WHY?**

God provided a way for Jesus to be perfectly human according to the flesh and yet not have the blood of sinful humanity. BY THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF JESUS THAT PROBLEM WAS SOLVED. The following is information gleaned from the writing of Dr. M.R. DeHaan who was not only a scholarly author and preacher, but a trained Physician.

It is a scientifically proven fact that the blood that flows in an unborn babe's arteries and veins is not derived from its mother but is produced within the body of the foetus, the unborn child. When the sperm has entered the ovum and the foetus begins to develop, blood appears. Read carefully this lengthy quote that you may understand **why Satan and the liberals hate the Virgin Birth of Christ.**

"It is unnecessary that a single drop of blood be given to the developing embryo in the womb of the mother. Such is the case according to scientists. The mother provides the foetus (the unborn developing infant) with the nutritive elements for the building of that little body in the secret of her womb, but all the blood that forms in it is formed in the embryo itself. From the time of conception to the time of birth of the infant not one single drop of blood ever passes from mother to child. The placenta, that mass of temporary tissue known better as "after birth," forming the link between mother and child, is so constructed that all the soluble nutritive elements such as proteins, fats, carbohydrates, salts, minerals and even antibodies pass freely from mother to child and the waste products of child's metabolism are passed back to the mother's circulation. No actual interchange of a single drop of blood ever occurs normally. All the blood that is in that child is produced within the child itself. The mother contributes no blood at all." – M.R. DeHaan

All descendents of Adam are partakers of both his flesh and blood, but Jesus partook only of Adam's flesh—the blood was given Him by supernatural conception. AMEN!!!

*And the angel answered and said unto her, (Mary), The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God (Luke 1:35).*

Thus God provided a perfect sacrifice for our sins—and that is the purpose of the Virgin Birth of Jesus. To proclaim a gospel that denies or omits the virgin birth of Christ is to proclaim a depreciated message that does not have the power to save. *Paul wrote in I Timothy 3:16:*

*And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.*

This was made possible by the entrance of Christ into our lives and into our nature by His virgin birth. That night in Bethlehem it was God in human flesh who was born. We get an understanding of God's plan in providing salvation for sinful humanity: Dr. W.A. Criswell, former pastor First Baptist Church of Dallas, Texas for fifty years wrote: "Jesus was born of the womb of the virgin Mary by a creative act of God, by which God broke through the chain of human generation and brought into the world a supernatural Being. This four-fold act of God is in keeping with His work and divine order:

1. Out of the dust of the ground was brought forth man,
2. Out of man was brought forth woman,
3. Out of woman was brought forth the seed that would bruise the serpent's head,
4. Out of the promised seed, the work of the Son of God our Savior, was brought forth the Church, His body, the glory of his ministry and His praise forever."

Now let's focus on the Essentials of the Gospel. First, take note of what happened at Calvary:

### ❖ The Death of Jesus

A number of years ago, a well-liked and respected seminary professor, a *claim-to-be-theologian*, was alleged to have made an utterly absurd statement that the death of Jesus was not essential to the gospel. This was an outright denial of Paul's definition of the gospel. The very heart of the gospel is the atoning substitutionary death of Christ in which He shed his blood for the remission of sins.

I encourage you to hide these truths in your heart and mind and as you read the Scriptures recall and search for them. We should have a growing understanding and appreciation of them. If they should ever become commonplace to you, something may have gone awry in your spiritual life.

#### 1. A Demonstration of God's Love for Us.

Jesus laid down His life in love for us. He says, *I lay down my life for the sheep; And, I lay down my life that I may take it again. No man takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again* (John 10:15, 17, 20). *For God so loved the world.*

2. **The sinless Son of Man was God in human flesh.** After He was scourged and crowned with thorns, Jesus was nailed to the cross. Men drove spikes through His hands and feet.

3. **While Jesus was on the Cross the Father laid on Him our sin.** He knew no sin but was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. (II Corinthians 5:21)

4. **Jesus became our substitute in death.** He paid the penalty for the broken law and satisfied the demand of God's justice.

5. **By His death, Jesus shed His blood to redeem us** from the curse of the law and became a curse for us. He bore our sins in His own body and shed His blood for the remission of sins. (Hebrews 9:22).

6. **By His death Jesus opened up a fountain for uncleanness** that made it possible for us to confess our sins as Christians and receive forgiveness and cleansing (Zechariah 13:1; I John 1:9).

Consider three words that describe the liberal view of Jesus' death.

### 1. Denial

Their view holds that to lay sins of the guilty on Jesus was a denial of His Character and that if He was virgin born without sin, He could not become sin. They believe that the doctrine of substitution is contrary to the righteousness of God because He gave His innocent Son to die for guilty sinners. And they claim that Jesus was unwilling to die for the guilty. (Refer back to John 10:15, 17, 20). This view discredits the gospel because it is contrary to the Scriptures. Remember, it was God Himself in Christ on the cross reconciling the world unto Himself.

### 2. Indomitable

Their view states that Jesus' death was the courageous act of a martyr and an example of loyalty to the Father, and of one living by his conviction. But understand that while such a life may be commendable, it does not bring salvation.

### 3. Motivational

The death of Jesus reveals God's attitude toward sin, and it pleases Him for the sinner to forsake his sinful lifestyle—thus the motivation for reformation. But God's objective is not reformation, but regeneration and genuine salvation. Self-improvement courses are no substitute for repentance and faith. The liberals claim that if the sinner will follow the example of Jesus in self-sacrifice he will be motivated toward a change of lifestyle. But Jesus is not a mere example to follow, but a Savior to trust. He died to shed His blood to redeem the sinner not to be a mere example of courage.

Liberal objectives are to deny the credibility of the Word of God, to divest Jesus of His deity and cast doubt upon His supernatural power to perform miracles.

## Not for Sinners Only

Regarding the death of Jesus, we need an understanding that His work as our mediator was not for the unsaved only, but for the saints also. Jesus' death on the cross was a one-time event, but His shed blood continues to represent what He accomplished and what His victory there provides for us in our Christian lives. This is the reason Satan hates the blood of Jesus, why he stirs up liberal thinking propagators of the gospel to deny the efficacy of the blood. Satan cannot do anything to discredit Jesus' death now for it is a well attested fact of history, **but he hates what the blood can do for our daily victory over the world, the flesh and himself.**

The blood of Christ is repugnant to the liberal church—They call it a bloody religion. The blood is neglected, if not rejected in the liberal preaching and teaching of the Scriptures. Hymns and songs on the blood are left out of the hymn books in certain liberal churches.

When Jesus died, He took us all in His arms of love and grace and carried us to Calvary and His cross. Paul wrote, *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus* (I Tim. 2:5). By His death, He fulfilled God's plan of salvation. In His work of mediation, Jesus worked out everything for us, therefore we continue to live in the victory of the cross and the shed blood of Christ. Zechariah's prophecy of the *fountain for uncleanness* was fulfilled at Calvary. (Zechariah 13:1; I John 1:9).

Without the blood of Christ, we do not have the privilege of confessing sins and being forgiven and cleansed. Stored up in the blood of Jesus is the provision for all we will ever need for Godly living.

These results of Jesus' death cannot be cancelled by Satan and liberal men: **Remission of Sin, Redemption, Forgiveness, Justification, Cleansing, Access to God's Presence, Victory Over Satan**, but if you do not avail yourself of what Jesus accomplished by His shed blood in your Christian life, you will live a defeated life. You will be like **a well without water, a barren fruit tree, a silent trumpet, a dumb witness, a lighthouse without light**. You will be without the manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit. But you have **consignment privileges**. Sinful habits and ungodly character traits, lust, the self-life we cannot handle, but we may consign them to the blood of the cross where Jesus has already dealt with them.

### Debilitated Messengers

Please read carefully the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter of I Corinthians. Here Paul went to great lengths to not only defend his authority as an authentic Apostle, but to express his conviction and decision to forfeit his right to be supported by the Church, for he did not want to hinder the gospel.

According to Paul the gospel may be hindered. He was careful not to be viewed as self-serving. He maintained pure motives and a ministry that was above reproach. His reason was, *Lest I should hinder the gospel* and *that I abuse not my power in the gospel*. And he never became a debilitated messenger. Oh, that all the preachers and teachers and others who proclaim the message of the gospel would follow the example of Paul.

Consider this illustration. The gospel is hindered when the messenger's life is not clean and his motive is not pure. For example – although it is scriptural for a pastor to receive a salary from his church in support of his ministry, it would be wrong for a pastor to use church funds illegitimately for his personal desires. This would be, as Paul implied, an abuse of his *power in the gospel* or liberty. This dishonest practice would *hinder the gospel* and cause the pastor to be a debilitated messenger. I have known of such situations. Isaiah wrote:

*Be you clean who bear the vessels of the Lord* (Isaiah 32:11).

But men have become debilitated messengers by excluding the heart of the gospel, using these brief words, *Jesus died for our sins* and by never dwelling upon the meaning of the essentials that are the *power of God unto salvation*. They rely on a *decapitated message* to lead souls to Christ, but the Holy Spirit does not take shortcuts. Many poor lost sinners have been denied the truth they needed and have been left empty and bewildered without peace and assurance of salvation, having been told that they were saved by a mere decision void of faith in Christ. I have preached the gospel in churches where I was told by some that they had never had heard what I preached. *How Sad!*

What devices of the flesh, the world, and the devil do you think are effective tools to entice us to impurity? What about the "thou shalt nots" of the commandments, the desires of the flesh, the sins of the spirit and of the mind? There are many, but space does not allow me to list them. The fact remains—the Lord requires **purity of heart, mind, and motives**. The violation of our integrity surely causes us to hinder the gospel. **But a clean Spirit-filled believer proclaiming a pure gospel message is a powerful instrument God honors and uses to make the gospel the power of God unto salvation.**

### ❖ The Burial of Christ

The Burial of Christ authenticated His death. The same body that was crucified was prepared for burial and placed in the sealed tomb. His burial also represented His destruction of death, His putting away of sins and corruption, and the giving of new life. *For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying; Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?* (I Corinthians 15:53-55)

### ❖ The Resurrection of Christ: The Cornerstone of our Christian Faith

The Bible teaches that if we are identified with Christ in His death, we are identified with Him in His resurrection: *For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection* (Romans 6:5). The average Christian gives more thought to death than to resurrection. God's promise of resurrection should compel us to *"Make our calling and election sure"* and our identification established. The doctrine of resurrection goes all the way back to Job in the Old Testament. He said, *For I know that my redeemer lives, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth* (Job 19:25). Job not only affirms his own resurrection, he implies that all men shall ultimately be raised. The New Testament is replete with Scripture references where Jesus predicts His own death and resurrection. The fulfillment of these predictions verifies the accuracy of the prophecy.

### ❖ Evidence of Jesus' Resurrection.

Jesus made seventeen appearances after His resurrection. After Jesus was buried, the tomb was sealed. After His resurrection, the tomb was empty.

#### Seven Reasons Why Jesus Was Raised:

1. **Absolution – Forgiveness of Sin** (I Corinthians 15:7)  
*If Christ be not raised your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins.*
2. **Justification** - Romans 4:25).  
*Who was delivered for our offenses, and raised for our justification*
3. **Declaration** - (Romans 1:4).  
*And declared to be the son of God...by the resurrection from the dead*
4. **Confirmation** - I Cor. 15:20  
*But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them who slept*
5. **Redemption** – John 6:39-40.  
*And this is the Father's will who has sent me, that of all He has given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of Him who sent me, that everyone who sees the Son, and believes on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.*
6. **Retribution** - Acts 17:31  
*Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*
7. **Incorruption** – I Corinthians 15:42-43  
*So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power.*