

The Centrality of the Gospel

II Corinthians 5:14-21

I. The Christian life is all about the Gospel.

- A. "Gospel" means good news.
 - 1. The good news is that God loves us and has made a way for us to be reconciled to himself.
 - 2. "Reconciliation" implies that there is a broken relationship.
 - 3. God offers forgiveness and a new life, not earned or deserved.
 - 4. He offers it as a free gift to all who trust in Jesus.
- B. From conversion to glorification, everything is centered on the Gospel.
 - 1. God has intentionally made it that way.
 - (a) Jesus Christ deserves all honor and glory (Philippians 2:8-11).
 - (b) He is glorified when we realize that everything is based on his sacrifice.
 - (c) He is glorified when we remember his goodness in the Gospel.
- C. Sometimes we make the mistake of seeing the Gospel as only the beginning.
 - 1. We see the Gospel as the means of entry, conversion.
 - (a) We are saved by faith in the Gospel. It's time to move on.
 - (b) We think we move on to truths deeper than the Gospel.
 - (c) The truth is, there are no truths deeper than the Gospel.
 - 2. Tim Keller put it this way:
 - (a) We think of the Gospel as the ABCs of Christianity.
 - (b) The Gospel isn't the ABCs of Christianity.
 - (c) The Gospel is the A to Z of Christianity. It's everything.
 - 3. Growth is not about us going deeper than the Gospel.
 - (a) It's about the Gospel going deeper into us.
- D. So, what do we mean by the Gospel?
 - 1. From the perspective of followers of Christ who have trusted in him:
 - (a) We are alive and free because Jesus gave himself for us.
 - 2. That reality is the center of the entire Christian life.
 - (a) Yes, it is the means of our conversion (when we trust in it).
 - (b) And it is so much more than that.
 - (c) It is what fills us with love, and what generates our love.
 - (d) It is the motive in our motivation.
 - (e) It is the foundation of our identity.
 - (f) It is the drive that propels us to mission.
 - (g) It is the fire that gives us passion for the cause of Christ.

II. The New Testament writers base all their teaching, exhortation, etc., on it!

- A. Paul says we are to live for Christ (II Corinthians 5:14-15).

- 1. Why should we live for Christ?
 - (a) Because of the Gospel. Because he gave himself for us.
 - (b) We only grow in living for him, by looking at him giving himself for us.
 - B. John tells us that we are to love because of the Gospel (I John 4:10-11).
 - 1. Why are we to love one another?
 - (a) Because God sent Jesus to atone for our sins (I John 4:19).
 - (b) We grow in love for others by remembering God's love for us.
 - (c) We are to remember how Jesus loved us (Ephesians 5:1-2).
 - (d) When we remember the love of God it is the Gospel (John 3:16)
 - C. "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation..."
 - 1. Our identity as adopted, accepted, children is based on a sacrifice.
 - (a) We are a new creation because "God was in Christ reconciling us to himself" (the Gospel).
 - 2. It is also the motivation to share the story of Jesus and salvation.
 - (a) "...He has committed to us the message of reconciliation."
 - (b) Why? "Because he was in Christ reconciling us to himself."
 - (c) If you need motivation to share, look at what Jesus did for you.
 - (d) Christ gave himself for you. That's the motive (the Gospel).
 - D. Why should we be generous? (II Corinthians 8:7,9).
 - 1. Jesus became poor so we could be rich (spiritually).
 - (a) Paul is showing them Jesus' generosity in the Gospel.
 - (b) He gave everything for us (in the Gospel)!
- ### III. As the New Testament writers encourage us toward growth and transformation, they always base it on the Gospel!
- A. Why? Because our entire lives as followers of Christ, are to be a grateful response to the love of God demonstrated in the cross.
 - 1. It is our joy, our strength, our comfort, our identity. It is everything
 - B. "The Gospel is the power of God for salvation" (Romans 1:16).
 - 1. The word salvation doesn't always refer to just conversion.
 - (a) It refers to progressive growth in our salvation (I Peter 2:2).
 - (b) Also, to our future deliverance when Christ returns (Rom 13:11)
 - 2. The Gospel is the power of God for the whole Christian life!
 - (a) That's why the Gospel writers point us to it again and again.
 - C. Application: whatever the need, we go to the love of God in the Gospel.
 - 1. See bookmark.