

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

There are two passages from the Bible that immediately jump out to me when I think about the truth of the gospel: Titus 3:3-8 and 2 Corinthians 5:21.

TITUS 3:3-8 (NIV) | *3 At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. 4 But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. 8 This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.*

There are a couple of core truths that the passage from Titus exposes about us.

1. WE WERE SLAVES TO SIN.

Paul (who wrote this letter to Titus) exposed sin as a foolish way to live. Sin is marked by disobedience to God and self deception. The outflow of sin is chasing after pleasure and passions that are never truly filled, but leave us envious of others. The end result is being overcome by hate.

2. BUT GOD...

“But” is a powerful word. It’s a transition word that carries a contrarian feeling. On the one hand, it’s true that we are slaves to sin, BUT it’s also true that God is kind and He loves us. God’s love for us is more powerful than sin’s slavery.

Verses five and six contain the very important truth that is often overlooked when talking or thinking about the gospel: God saved us. We did not save ourselves. We are not saved because of good things we do: praying a prayer, being baptized, attending church, reading the Bible. Those are activities that will help a person grow in trusting God, but (there’s that word again) we are only forgiven and saved because God has saved us.

How did God save us? Through the ministry of the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ. See more about that below when we look at 2 Corinthians 5:21.

3. WE ARE HEIRS OF HOPE.

Because we have been saved by God, we now have in our possession the gift of hope. Hope is cherishing a desire with anticipation. We cherish that we really have been forgiven and made new. We cherish that we walk hand in hand with the God who created us. We cherish with anticipation that eternal life with God is waiting for us.

Real hope will change a person’s life. If you’ve put your trust in Christ, you’re an heir with hope.

4. EACH PERSON MUST MAKE A DECISION.

Make no mistake that God is the one who saves us AND, at the same time, each person must make a decision to trust His offer of forgiveness. This is called faith. If a person does not intentionally choose to trust Jesus, it is the same as rejecting Jesus and His work.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:21 (NIV) | *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

This describes the great cosmic reversal: Jesus, the only One who has never sinned, took on the identity and punishment of a sinner so that we, the ones who have never chosen righteousness, can take on the identity and blessing of the Righteous One.

Take time this week to think deeply on these truths.

