

03 | The Power of the Gospel

REACHING THE LOST Series

Welcome back to this teaching series, we are on the third message, The Power of the Gospel. This is a good one. Let's open in a word of prayer and ask the Holy Spirit to open our hearts, and to stir us up fresh. This is a very familiar passage and something that most of us know very well, but if you can remember from the last teaching, the sin of complacency is something we want to avoid. So, let's get freshly reacquainted with the power of the gospel. Heavenly Father, I thank You so much. I thank You so much for this opportunity, and for the people that are hearing these teachings, that are drawing closer to You, that are engaging in the commission, which You have called us to, to reach the nations and make disciples, to preach the gospel to every creature. We love that You have partnered with us in these last days to reach this great final harvest. We thank You for the outpouring of Your Holy Spirit that you have given us to empower us, to give us a boldness, and courage, and confidence to go after the lost remembering the simple power of the Gospel is what saves them and brings them into eternity. We know that Your son Jesus is on His way, and we want to do our best. We want to do all that we can to partner with You in this great commission. So, we give this time over to You, and in the name of Jesus, I pray that Your Holy Spirit would teach through me, preach through me. I can't do this without Your help, and they don't need to hear anything I have to say, they need to hear what the Holy Spirit is saying. So, I give this session over to You and I thank You for it, in Jesus' name.

I just want to share this brief description with you as we get started. These are not the days to be timid about our faith or to be ashamed of God's Word. We have the lifesaving knowledge of Jesus Christ that the lost and dying world desperately needs to hear. For the gospel alone is the power of God for salvation to those who believe, and we cannot be afraid to proclaim it. It's ridiculous to think that we would be afraid to say something that we know is true. If I said to you, "Hey, two plus two is four." You would say, "Well, yeah." But even if you, for whatever reason, disagree with me, I wouldn't care. I wouldn't feel bad. I wouldn't be embarrassed, I wouldn't be ashamed. I wouldn't be like, "Gosh, I'll never say that again." And yet we know the gospel is the power of salvation unto God, to those who believe, and we're timid about it. Oftentimes we don't share it. We know it's true. We know it's the only thing that can save people. And yet, so often, we get locked inside of ourselves, our own thoughts, our own fears, our own agendas, and of course, we've got the enemy who wants to hinder the Word of God from going forth. He wants to keep people's minds under darkness and their eyes blinded. He wants to keep them in bondage and in darkness, and he doesn't want us coming with the light of the gospel, the truth of God's Word, the only thing that can save them. We know that it's true, we know that God said it, and we should have no problem repeating it. We should have no problem saying what God said because we know who He is. We know He's God and we know He said it and we know it's true, and yet we struggle with this very simple truth. This very simple truth, and yet Paul reminds us in Romans 1:16-17, he says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, 'The righteous shall live by faith.'" The righteousness of God is revealed to the power of

God for salvation. His Gospel reveals the righteousness of God to us. Doesn't it? Paul said, "I'm not ashamed." He was willing to go through beatings, stonings, whippings, shipwrecks, being stuck in the ocean for a whole day and a whole night. I don't know about you, but I'm thinking, "Gosh, there's sharks out here. The water is cold." There are all kinds of things. Shipwrecked on an island, getting bit by a snake, then to deal with the islanders trying to figure out what to do with him. He was always in trouble. His own people wanted to kill him. And yet everywhere he went, he went and he proclaimed the simple truth of God's word that the Gospel is the power of salvation unto all who believe. And nothing could stop him. Nothing could stop this man and his zeal. And it's because he had an encounter. He had an encounter with the risen Lord Jesus, whom he didn't believe and had spent most much of his life persecuting. And here we are with His spirit, alive on the inside of us, and we're just so casual about it. We're not experiencing persecution. We're not doing it under the threat of being shipwrecked. Being stranded in shark infested waters, or being beat with rods, or whipped, or stoned to death, thrown into prison, dragged into court, falsely accused of this and that. We live pretty good lives. We've really got nothing to fear when it comes to sharing the gospel. And yet we've gotten so stuck inside of ourselves and our own insecurities and our own feelings of comfort.

The power of the gospel is so simple. It's so easy, and it's true, there's no reason to be afraid to share it, and yet, so many of us are. But I feel like God is reminding us of what really matters most. Not your own comfort. Not your own ease. Not your own feelings. What are you going to do with the power of the gospel? The truth that it's the only thing that can save a lost and dying world who desperately needs it? There are people, we talked about this earlier in the series,

who are hurting. They're dying and they're going to hell, and we have the simple truth that the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. Everyone who believes this Word will have eternal salvation. We can offer that to them, and it's as simple as telling them. Yet we shy away from it for various number of reasons. We each have different reasons for shying away from sharing the gospel, and yet it's so simple and it's powerful. I like how Paul said it, "It is the power of God." No one can resist. No one, nothing, no person, no demon, no devil, no force of nature can resist the power of God. There is nothing that can stop or resist the power of God's Word. And yet, we don't think of it like that. We're scared to say it because of what people might think or how they might feel, or how they might look at us after that. You know, maybe you have a good relationship with your neighbors, but you're afraid if you tell them the truth, that'll ruin it, spoil the relationship. Let me tell you, that relationship is temporary, and 100 years from now, when your neighbors are burning in hell, are you going to care? You had a good rapport with them while you were here on the earth. I'll tell you what, they're going to wonder why you never told them. You live next to him all these years and you're friendly, you're polite, you get along, but have you told them? Listen to me, this is what the Bible says. Have you pleaded with them? Have you told them the simple truth that the gospel is the power of God to salvation, and without it, you're damned for eternity to hell. I know, you're not used to hearing people talk like this, but this is gospel truth. Eternities are at stake, and we have the answer. Not only that, we have the power of God in our mouths. We have it in writing, so we'll never forget. It's written on the tablets of our heart. That power that saved us from eternal damnation is our, and we just need to say it. Say it to your neighbors, say it to your coworkers. You don't have to start with that, take them out to lunch, get to know them. It can be awkward if you walk up to your

neighbor and say, "Hey bud, Jesus is coming back. Are you ready?" It might strike a chord and make them think, or it might not. But if you say, "Hey, man, do you barbecue? Or what do you like to do?" Set up a lunch meeting or just invite them over. My wife and I, we invite our neighbors, and we try to get them to join us around the barbecue, and some of them have. We've invited them over and invited them to our house church and we've been declined, but that's okay. We don't stop trying and we certainly don't stop praying for opportunities to give them the simple truth, the power of God unto salvation, His word.

I hope as we've been going through this series, that God has begun stirring you, stirring your heart, renewing your mind, shaking you out of your complacency and reminding you of the simplicity of sharing God's word. It is so simple. It is so easy. It doesn't need to be difficult. It's not this thing that we have to overthink and plan out. Oftentimes in the moment where we're scared and we're nervous, God's already given us the word that they need to hear, and sometimes that won't make sense, but you say it and it makes sense to the person who's on the other end of it. God's speaking to them through you. He's given you His word. He's given you His Holy Spirit. He's given you the power of God unto salvation, He's put it in your hands, He's put it in your hearts, He's put it on your tongue, and in your mouth. And it is the power to save. Let's take this power, and it is power, that has been given to us. The very power of God has been entrusted to us. Let's do with it what God asked us to. Let's preach the gospel to every creature, make disciples of every nation. Let's not just read it for ourselves. I like to build myself up and edify myself, I need it. I need it to live in this world. I need it to be a godly husband. I need it to be a godly neighbor, and a godly employee. I need it. And I need it because it's the bread of life, God has given this to us to

live by. We need to digest His word every day for our own good, but that is not the only thing that it's for. Your Bible on your nightstand next to your bed is not just for you to read, to build yourself up, and to feel good, and remind yourself to find comfort in the Psalms when you're having a hard time. Look, you're having a hard time, but you've got eternity with Jesus to look forward to. Your neighbors are having a hard time and they're on their way to hell, let's start thinking about them a little more. I realize this is a very evangelistic style that maybe you're not used to, but it's the simple truth. The power of God for salvation has been entrusted to us. We're responsible to take it to the lost. This world is dying. They're lost, they're dying. And they are on their way to hell, and Jesus is coming soon, and we have precious little time to do something with it. And many of us, if we're honest, have wasted many years not doing this. But the Lord is gracious, He's merciful, He's forgiving, and He will help us to redeem the time, and He will help us to make the best of the time that we have left. If we'll take this Word and we'll run with it, He'll put His anointing on the words that come out of your mouth. It will pierce your neighbor's heart, your coworker, your family, your friends, whoever. Whoever it is that you know doesn't know the Lord and needs to hear the gospel. The Lord wants to use you to minister to them. As you pray and ask the Lord to send laborers, He'll send others. They'll hear it. Multiple sources will be speaking into their lives. God is after people. He wants you to be one of them. For some people, nobody is speaking into their life. But, as we take up this commission, let us also remember to pray for the laborers who will take the gospel.

As we close, would we not take this lightly, would we not say, "Oh man, that's a good reminder." And "I needed to hear that" but not do anything with it. God's word can be like a hammer that breaks the hardness of your heart. We can

break down and weep for the lost and something will happen, we'll experience a change that when we get up, suddenly the urgency to reach our neighbors outweighs the awkwardness of the conversation that needs to happen. The compassion will outweigh the complacency. The sorrow that we feel for the lost, and for the dying will feel stronger than the empathy we had previously been living with. There could be an exchange and it can replace this lifestyle of comfort that you've lived. God can replace it with an urgency if you ask Him, if you say, "God, stir up my heart. Stir up my heart for the lost. I haven't been living like I should. I've been living for myself. I've denied the fact that You've given me the power of God for salvation. That you've entrusted me." He's entrusted us to get this word to them. He's done His part, He sent His son. Jesus came, died, and rose again. He made the way for eternal life and then left the message in our hands, to bring as many people with us as we can. Let's not take that lightly. I pray that if you have taken that lightly, as I did for so many years, and it's still a struggle at times. Jesus reminds us, "If you're going to follow Me. Pick up your cross daily and come after Me." We have to pick up that instrument of death and die to ourselves. Jesus said, "You're going to have to do it every day." There are times where I have to remind myself my comfort doesn't matter. What's important to me is not nearly as important as what's important to Jesus. The things that I consider, and meditate and think about, and stew over, and ponder, and can be so consumed with, in light of eternity mean absolutely nothing. They're all temporary issues, temporary problems that don't matter. But there's a serious problem. It's a sin problem, and the result is death and eternity in hell for so many people, and God has entrusted us with this message, this power of the Gospel unto salvation. It is so simple. In fact, I believe that's a very good verse to share and say, "Hey" to a neighbor or a coworker, "Hey, did you know? The Gospel is the power of

God unto salvation for anyone who believes." Let them know that's available to them. Just throw it out there and see. Start up a conversation. But take the time to pray, see how the Lord would lead you to engage your neighbors, build community, build relationship, show them that you care. They'll be more inclined to hear what you have to say if they know that you care. We don't want to come off as preachy or judge or condemning, but we do need to love our neighbors. We need to care, and we need to love them and care enough to tell them the truth. God is stirring up His people, He's moving, He's shaking the foundations of His church. He's saying, "Wake up, wake up. I've given you the power of God unto salvation. I've left it in your hands. I'm coming soon and you're not doing what I asked you to." He's shaking us up, He's stirring us. Don't ignore it. Don't come off this teaching and not do anything with it.

Let's close in prayer. Heavenly Father, thank You for this reminder. Thank You for trusting us with the gospel. For it is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe. Thank You for empowering us, and giving us the boldness, and for stirring us up, and waking us up. You're not going to let us miss the call of God in our life, You're not going to let us drop the ball. You're going to help us pick it up and run with it. Paul said. "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present yourself a living sacrifice." Put yourself on the alter. Die to yourself, Paul, saying, "I'm begging you to become a living sacrifice. Don't live for yourself anymore. Don't live for yourself any longer." Paul is crying out. He's reminding us that this life is not all we have. There's eternity. Die to yourself, be the person God called you to be, and make the sacrifices necessary to be a witness to Him and to reach your neighbors. Don't take this lightly, Church. Don't take this lightly. Saints of God, listen to me, rise up in the power of the Holy Spirit, and take this gospel

while there's time. You won't regret it. You will not regret stepping out in faith and being bold. If you're rejected, if you're turned down, that's okay, because you will be able to stand before God and say, "At least I did it. At least I tried. I did my best. I told them Your Word, I shared Your truth. I gave it all. I left nothing on the table. I literally went all out for You, Lord." You will get some, and some of you will get many. You will bring many to the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, but you have to step out. The Lord is going to be with you. Help us. Lord. Help us, Lord Jesus, we need Your help. In Jesus' name. We love You. We love You. Amen.