

VI. The Gospel of Jesus Christ in Biblical Perspective
The Majesty, Message and Ministry of the Gospel
“The Gospel Is a Message of Faith and Repentance”

Luke 24:44-49

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October 14, 2012 – Morning Sermon

We will be looking at Luke 24. Here Jesus has risen and come into the upper room. The disciples are in chaos and they don't know what to think of this report that their Savior has risen. It's the first day of the week, the Resurrection Day. Luke 24:44-49 says [44] *Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”* [45] *Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,* [46] *and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead,* [47] *and **that repentance and forgiveness of sins** should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.* [48] *You are witnesses of these things.* [49] *And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”*

The grass withers, the flower fades, God's Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

At the end of our time today you can bring your card forward that has the name of the person(s) you shared the Gospel with this past week, those we have bathed in prayer. I have gotten many messages of many of your stories and some of you have shared how Satan has tried to keep you from sharing the Gospel. I certainly understand all of that. I also know that a number of you have shared and one of our elders was praying about his opportunity. He rode by a fellow not far from the church who was standing on the side of the road asking for assistance with a sign. He was going to offer the fellow a job that he could pay him to do for assistance and then the elder said to him “May I ask you a couple of questions?” The man said “Sure.” The elder said “Did you know that the whole message of the Bible kind of comes to us in one verse. One verse tells us about the whole Bible where Jesus Christ is the Bridge...” and as soon as he said the word bridge the fellow said “Are you from Briarwood?” So that's a dead giveaway and a number of you are sharing your faith, praise the Lord!

We have been in this series and we have come to a little bit of a break. This series has three parts to it. There is the majesty of the Gospel, the message of the Gospel and the ministry of the Gospel. What does the Gospel do in the lives of those whom He saves? We'll answer that in about two weeks and walk through that during the Advent season but we've looked at the majesty and the message of the Gospel. I've shared with you why I believe this is so important and it is because the Gospel is the foundation, formation and the motivation of the Christian life. If you don't get the Gospel right you can't be saved, you can't lead anyone to Christ and you can't know the doctrines of God's Word because they're at the root of every doctrine in God's Word. If you don't get the Gospel right it undermines true motivation in the Christian life. So we want to take the time to make sure we understand the Gospel.

First of all the Bible tells us that the Gospel is majestic. It's a majestic proclamation. In fact the very word *euangellion* was devised to talk about kings

publishing Good News of the victory over the enemies. That's what the Gospel is and the way Isaiah uses it. That's the way the New Testament uses it. *Euangellion* is translated Gospel, Good News, to publish glad tidings. What is it? The King of Glory has come into this world and triumphed over all of His enemies. He has fulfilled His mission. He has come to save His people from their sins. Because He has gloriously fulfilled His mission we proclaim the Good News, publish glad tidings of the King's victory to win sinners from the death of their sin over all of His enemies to Himself for all of eternity. So that's the majesty of the Gospel.

Now we said that if this is a royal proclamation, then what are we proclaiming? What is the message? The Bible says that through the foolishness of the message preached that we are being saved, so what is that message? I claim no ingenuity here at all. I simply went to the time where Paul preached to the philosophers, to the book of Romans where he gave this exposition of the Gospel and to all the titles in the Bible concerning the Gospel. Then I have tried to lay out for you what I believe are the five elements of the Gospel message.

Number one it is a message about God. Number two it's a message about sin. Number three it's a message about Jesus Christ. Number four it's a message about grace. We covered these four elements in the last four studies but God who is righteous and holy must judge sin. We are sinners. We are born sinners and therefore we sin but God has designed a way to save us through His Son Jesus Christ. So we preach Christ and Him crucified, the Word of the Cross, because at the cross holiness of God met the love of God to save sinners for the glory of God. So we preach the cross of Christ where the atoning life of Christ took all of our sins and paid for them. He sends His perfect righteousness to clothe us. So the gates of hell are shut because He erased the charges against us. The gates of heaven are opened because His righteousness that we received by faith now sends us into glory.

If God is holy and must judge sin, and we're sinners then why did He send His Son in our place to die for us? That was the fourth thing that dealt with the Gospel being the message of grace – the Father's sending grace, the Son of God's saving grace and the Spirit of God's securing grace to bring us from death unto life. If this is the glorious message that we have, how does it get to lost people that they might come to Christ? What is it and how do you come to Christ? How do you receive the benefits of this? That's our fifth and final element of the Gospel message.

It is a message about faith and repentance. So what is our message? For each one of these elements I have tried to give you one simple sentence that explains them so you can work this in when you are sharing with people your testimony as you talk about the Gospel. This sentence came about through the influence of people in my life like Al Martin, J. I. Packer and John Murray on this framing of what the message of faith and repentance is. The Gospel is a gracious yet Royal summons to faith in Christ and repentance from sin to Christ. The Gospel is gracious. It's an invitation but it's a commanding invitation. It is a summons from the King. The King who came and died on the cross to save us from our sins, is risen, enthroned and all authority has been given to Him. Go with this Royal Kingly proclamation of victory and summon people from death unto life.

Evangelism isn't that there is a God up there who is kind of defeated unless you help Him out. No He has won the victory. Evangelism while it's a plea, why will you

die when you can live? It is not the plea of helplessness. It is the summons of the King. Leave this sin and come to your Savior, this King who died for you. In the Luke 24 text you'll notice that the Apostles are in the upper room and Jesus appears to them. They are having trouble believing this and Jesus says to them, "The God of glory and the God of judgment has sent Me in fulfillment of all of the Scripture and I have come just like the Scriptures have said, to suffer and die. Now I have risen (this is the statement of victory)." He was delivered up because of our transgressions and was raised because of our justification. Now this victorious Christ then as He is ascending as King of Kings and Lord of Lords then sends us out into this world to summon people to faith and repentance for the remission of sins.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ has many blessings but its purpose is to set us free from our sins. Does it bring peace? Does it influence countries, neighborhoods, people, homes, marriages etc? Yes it does but those are effects of the Gospel. The immediate purpose of the Gospel is to set us free from sin and bring us to that Savior. That's its purpose so how do you get there? Two arms and you receive this gift of faith and repentance. I want to lay out this study for you by answering four questions. I am confessing to you my absolute angst over this. So here is how I have tried to resolve my angst to get this in for you. I will be coming back to do a series on saving faith and Godly repentance because I'm having to skip over so much that God has overwhelmed me with in preparing for this study.

So why am I talking about saving faith and Godly repentance? Remember everybody believes. The question isn't do you believe because I know you believe. You either believe there is no God or you believe your sins are not sins, etc. Everybody believes and everybody worships. The question is who and what do you believe? So what is saving faith? James says there is a faith that saves. He says that the devil believes but he is not saved. So what is saving faith and Godly repentance? I'm not talking about worldly sorrow.

I want to try and illustrate this. I was not a model child from particularly about age 12 on. So my dad who didn't go out and read all those books on parenting would basically say "you did wrong so you get punished." That's the way it went in my household and I didn't like those moments so I would get caught in those moments and say "Oh no Daddy, I'm sorry!" I was not sorry I had done what was wrong but I was sorry for getting caught. Godly repentance isn't sorrow simply over the consequences but it is a Godly sorrow over sin and its sinfulness and I have sinned against You, O God, who made me and so loves me that He has given His Son to die the death I ought to have died and lived the life I should have lived that I might be summoned to life by faith and repentance in You.

So here is the first question. Why do we invite, summons, lost men and women to Christ as Lord and Savior, by faith and repentance? We do this for two reasons. One is because Jesus commanded it. We just read where He said to go and bring them by faith and repentance. Whoever believes in Me shall not perish but have everlasting life and they would turn from their sins to Me. Not only did Jesus command it but Jesus modeled it. Let's look at Mark 1. In this passage Jesus begins His public ministry. Mark 1:14-15 says [14] *Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, [15] and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."* So what did Jesus do? He not only commanded us to call

people to believe and repent but He modeled for us. The very preaching of the Gospel was believe in Christ and turn from your sins to Christ.

A second reason why we do this is because the Apostles did it and modeled it. Peter said when he preached, “What must we do to be saved? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Repent of your sins.” The Philippian jailer was told to repent and believe, you and your household. I could go on and on throughout the book of Acts but for the sake of time I’ll just show you the Apostle Paul’s summation of His Gospel ministry. For three years the Apostle Paul had ministered at Ephesus and sums up his ministry in Acts 20.

Acts 20:17-21 says [17] *Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him. [18] And when they came to him, he said to them: “You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, [19] serving the Lord **with all humility and with tears and with trials** that happened to me through the plots of the Jews; [20] how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, [21] testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of **repentance** toward God and of **faith** in our Lord Jesus Christ.* He summoned them with faith and repentance, repentance and faith.

Sometimes it will just say faith, sometimes it will just say repentance and sometimes they put them both together. The reason why is that they are inseparable. They are interdependent. They are intertwined with each other. If you truly believe in Jesus as Savior of your sins then you turn from your sins to Him. You repent and you won’t repent until you believe God that you’re a sinner, you can’t save yourself and Jesus is the Savior. They are like God ordained inseparable Siamese twins. Where you have faith you’ll have repentance and where you have repentance you’ll have faith. That’s why we do it. Jesus commanded it, modeled and the Apostles did it and modeled it for us as well.

The second question is what is saving faith and Godly repentance? I’m not talking about the faith of Simon the magician which was temporary or the faith of just intellectual ascent or the faith of knowing about something. What is saving faith? What is Godly repentance? Here is where I want you to come back to hear me in a series in the future but very briefly saving faith is the whole person, wholly committed to the whole person of Jesus Christ, as Prophet, Priest and King and as Savior and Lord of my life. Do I understand all of the implications of that in my life? No I don’t but that’s why the Bible says those who live by faith die in faith.

I want to give you an example of this from the Apostle Paul. Let’s look at II Timothy 1. Here Paul is moments away from death and before he dies this is what he says. Normally I would quote this from the ESV but I will be using the NASB on this verse. II Timothy 1:12 says [12] *For this reason I also suffer these things (he is talking about death under Nero), but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day (NASB).* That is the day of Christ’s return. This is one of the most important verses for me to define saving faith. Here is a man who lived by faith, ready to die in faith and he faces it with no regrets. Why? It is because he faces it with the whole person. What word is repeated the most in that verse? It is the shorted word in that verse and it’s the word ‘I’. It is repeated six times in that verse. There aren’t any group plans to get you into heaven. It is the whole commitment of the whole person. You personally must commit to Jesus.

Secondly, it is a knowledgeable commitment. It is a rational commitment. It is an intellectual commitment. It's a reasonable commitment. "I am not ashamed for I know..." It's rational, reasonable. It is not only rational and reasonable but it is also emotional. I suffer these things. I know whom I have believed. I am convinced...it has conviction. We believe it not only in our mind but we've embraced it in our heart. I personally in mind and heart have come to Christ but that's not all. Now you have to act on it. Now you have to trust Him. Now it's volitional. It's personal, rational, requires knowledge, emotional and requires conviction of the heart.

The fourthly thing about saving faith is its volitional; it requires an act of the will. *I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have **entrusted** to Him.* Finally saving faith is the whole person, wholly committed to the whole Christ. It's directional. **He is able...** It's not Christianity is able. Christianity is the result of people with this relationship with Christ. It's not that my church is able, not my baptism is able, not my sincerity is able and not my faith is able. It is He that is able, to guard what I have entrusted to Him. He doesn't say I know when I believe or what I believe or that I believe and he didn't put his trust in an experience or in his faith or what he had amassed in terms of theological knowledge although all of that was present in his life. Paul had an experience and all of those things but it brought him to the person of Jesus Christ. I know **whom** I have believed! **He** is able to guard what I have entrusted to **Him**. That is where saving faith is. It's the whole person (rationally, emotionally, and volitionally) to the whole Christ. It is person to Person.

Repentance matches that. The word repentance in the Greek is *metanoia*. It means to have a change of heart or a change of mind. Do you see how the two work together? Why do I know, am convinced or trust? It is because God has changed my mind. He has changed my heart. Now I see sin differently. I don't see it as a genetic disposition toward something or the victimization toward my environment. I see my sin as something I have done to assassinate the glory of God but in reality the sin is assassinating me because the wages of sin is death. I agree with God. This is sin. I agree with God that this is the sinfulness of sin. That is what the word confess means. When you repent you confess. You don't cover up your sins. You confess your sins. I confess Lord this is my sin, this is my sinfulness and I can't save myself but I have heard the Good News and now I agree with You that Your Son saves sinners. So Jesus, by faith and repentance, I come to You. That's what faith and repentance does.

Faith is knowledge, conviction and trust. Repentance is a radical change. One time I was preaching on this in my first year of ministry and I kind of got excited. I went to this wonderful text in II Corinthians 7:8-11 and then I went to Psalm 51. I said "Repentance is a radical change and God has called you to make a 360 degree change!" As people began to giggle I realized that if I turned 360 degrees I am right back where I started from. So I have even better news. Not only can you be forgiven when you turn from your sin to Christ as your Savior, but the turn is only 180 degrees.

By the way, it's not turning from sin to do better. God will do some stuff in you but you turn from sin to Christ. Lord, I have changed my mind. I no longer need the world. All I need is just a little more sexual immorality and I'll be happy. All I need to do is abandon my marriage covenant and I'll be happy. Lord, I've changed my mind. I not only see the sinfulness of my idolatry but I see the sinfulness of my arrogance in religion. I used to think my baptism, my church and my sincerity would get me to

heaven but no. Lord, I see my sin as sin. I see my righteousness as filthy rags. I confess it and I flee to Jesus. I turn to Him and by faith receive Him. That's who and that's what. It's that interdependent, intertwined relationship of faith and repentance.

Now the third question is how do you get it? This is astounding! Why did Jesus come? He came to save you because of God's grace. You get faith and repentance the same way. The Author of your salvation is the Originator of the faith and repentance whereby you lay hold of the Savior. To show you this bears true in the Scriptures I want to look at two more texts. First I want to look at Ephesians 2. What was my condition apart from Christ?

Ephesians 2:1-8 says *[1] And you were dead in the trespasses and sins [2] in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—[3] among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. (So I was born a sinner and I sinned) [4] But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, [5] even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—[6] and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, [7] so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. [8] For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this (faith) is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.* God's Son who gave His life because of His grace has given you by that same grace the ability to receive Him by faith.

What about repentance? Now I want to look again at II Timothy 2. Paul is telling Timothy that he needs to be consistent when he's in the ministry. He has to bear up and he shouldn't return evil for evil. Then he tells him how to live the life of a minister. II Timothy 2:24-26 says *[24] And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, [25] correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, [26] and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.* Paul tells Timothy he'll get opposition. Show the love of Christ and the fortitude of Christ. Stay the course but do so with gentleness. That doesn't mean weakness for meekness isn't weakness. As God blesses you He will use you to grant them repentance by the power of His Holy Spirit.

Faith is a gift of God's grace. Repentance is a gift of God's grace whereby we lay hold of Christ. Isn't that amazing? God gave His Son. His Son gave His life. His Son died for my sins. His Son gives me His righteousness, all because of His grace. Then His Son summons me to faith and repentance and the same King who summons me is the same King who sends me the ability to believe and repent so that I will come and say "Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I was blind and then the Lord opened my mind." In Luke 24 it says He opened their mind to understand the Scriptures.

The last question is whom do we share this with? We share with everybody. The Gospel is to be freely offered. What is the scope of God's redeeming work? John 3:16, For God so loved the **world** that He gave His only Begotten Son. Where is God calling His people from? He is calling them from the whole world. So where do I spread the Gospel seed? I spread it to the whole world – the up and inners, the down and outers, the

rich, the poor, the black, the white, the oppressed, the oppressors. It doesn't matter. I'm going to take the Gospel to everyone. I'm going to share a non-discriminating, impartial, full, free offer of the Gospel universally to all of mankind because Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

I know God promised through Jesus when He said "Father, all whom You have given Me I lose not one" but that's not an excuse for my indolence because the same God who ordained the end has also ordained the means which is His people going to them to bring them to Christ. I know of God's electing grace. That's not a secret thing. I don't know the number and I don't know the identity but I know they're in the world and I'm to take the Gospel to that world and offer it freely to invite them to the summons of the King.

So here is my takeaway for you. The Gospel is a gracious invitation and the Gospel is a royal summons. The Gospel is 'come' to Christ. Jesus says I have a feast and I want you to go to the highways and byways and compel them to come in. How am I going to compel them? Let me tell you what it doesn't mean. You don't go get a stick and beat them and say 'you better become a Christian' nor does it mean for a preacher to manipulate you to a momentary decision. How do you on the one hand graciously invite 'the Spirit, the Bride, Jesus says come' yet summons and compel people to come in?

Here are five words I would give you. An inviting gracious summons that compels men and women that the Holy Spirit uses is first of all personal. Go to people personally – eyeball to eyeball, heart to heart. Pursue them relationally. The Bible says to seek the lost. Light lamps and look underneath the bed. Sweep the floor for the lost coin. The Bible says to pursue them. You don't wait for someone to come to you. Where did the sower sow the seed? He sowed the seed everywhere. There were people thirty years ago in my life that I thought were ready to fall into the Kingdom and I'm still talking with them but I have met people I thought were going to hit me and that day came to Jesus Christ. That's hard ground, that's good ground. I found out the good ground wasn't good ground it was still hard ground and the hard ground I thought was hard ground became good ground.

I'll never forget preaching on Mother's Day in my first student pastorate and this dear saint of a lady asked her athlete student son from UTC to come to church that day. He drove up on his Harley motorcycle, revved it up, came in, sat down and turned his chair the other way to sit in it. He sat with his arms folding glaring at me for all 70 minutes of the service. When it was over he walked out just glaring at me. At 1:30pm that day I heard a Harley screeching into my yard and I looked out and there he was. I said "Honey I'm going out to meet him but you may need to pick me up at the hospital." I got out there, his face was red and tears were flowing and he said "I'm tired of running, I'm tired of being a rebel and I'm tired of the emptiness of my sin. I want that Jesus I heard about today."

Just spread the Gospel. The Lord works on the heart. You can't open minds, hearts or eyes but what you can open is the Gospel and you can spread it everywhere. So you pursue and speak with persuasion. Paul and Agrippa were talking and Agrippa said "Paul almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." I know I can't persuade but I want to speak persuasively and I want to speak with passion, pleading with them. You are between heaven and hell and there is only one Savior. Why will you die? We don't go into this thing cold. God takes no delight in the death of the wicked. Why would we not

be passionate? Jeremiah knew nobody would respond but he wept. Paul said in the passage we looked at earlier that he was with them with tears. As one theologian said “He had tropical eyes that were always watering that men and women would come to Christ.”

Lastly, this is why we are bringing up these cards with people’s names on them. We are going to pray for them. Evangelism is our privilege by the power of the Spirit. Conversion is God’s work. Only the Lord can bring people from death unto life but God loves to work through the Gospel sharing and praying of His people. So just think of this. Jesus came and went to the cross in your place that you could have life. Now He sends you to the world in His place that they may hear of life. As the Father sent Me now I send you (John 20:21). Every time you share the Gospel you glorify the Lord.

What if they don’t come to Christ? Then they will glorify God in the day of visitation that you loved them enough to tell them. We are to lift up the glory of God by presenting personally with pursuit, passionately, persuasively, bathed in prayer a summons, “Come to Christ for He came for you.” Let’s pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together this Lord’s Day. Thank You for the privilege we have to be in this Your Word and thank You for entrusting to us the Gospel of saving grace in Jesus Christ. Father, would You allow us to never cease the universal, impartial, non-discriminatory proclamation of the Good News that God saves sinners through His Son and you can receive Him freely by faith and repentance. By faith lay hold of Him and with repentance come to Him, I pray in Jesus’ Name, Amen.