

THE GOSPEL

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I want to bring to you a message based on a clause in the 16th verse of the first chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans. The term "Gospel" is distinctively and exclusively a New Testament term. This exact term is not used in the Old Testament at all. In a few places in the Old Testament the equivalent of that term is used, but the word itself is not to be found. You will recall that Isaiah speaks of the "Glad Tidings." That is one of the places where we have the equivalent of the New Testament term, the Gospel. There is just one final definition of the gospel of Christ to be found in the whole Bible. There are only a few final definitions in the Bible. The majority of explanations of Bible terms are to be caught by the trend of the whole Bible, but here is one place where we clearly have a final definition of a term. "*The Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth.*" I want us to hold in mind that particular definition as we proceed in our meditation this morning.

We are the only people on the face of the earth who have a Gospel. I speak of the Christian religion. Other religions do not have a gospel to offer. They have ethical standards that are very beautiful; they have moral standards; but the Christian religion is the only one on the face of the earth that offers the power of God for the lifting of the soul from all its uncleanness. Now let me define in my own terms: *The Gospel is the way out of what we are, into what we ought to be; the Gospel is that power which lifts us out of the condition in which we naturally are, to that condition in which God wants us to be.*

The Gospel of Jesus Christ! If you would go to the average churchmen and ask them what the Gospel is, fifty per cent of them would have no adequate definition of that term. There is much that is said, and there is much that passes for gospel which is not Gospel at all. A man may be a preacher and preach according to the general acceptance of that term and not be a preacher of the gospel.

Let us think of two general propositions; first, the place of the gospel in the Bible; and then second, the place of Christ in the Gospel. Much of the Bible is not Gospel. We need to know that. There is much of the message of the book that is not gospel. Let us look again at the general definition: The gospel is "Good Tidings" and "the power of God unto salvation." For instance, the story in the Bible where Moses killed the Egyptian is not good news, nor is it the power of God unto salvation. Then take Jacob deceiving his father and becoming a fraud as he did. That is not good news, and that is not the power of God unto salvation. David's adultery, nor is Saul's jealousy of David and his suicide good news neither is it the power of God unto salvation. So I want you to bear in mind that though much of the Old Testament is not gospel, we need it; it is a preparation and it gives us a back-ground and a portrayal of human nature in the likeness of which there is made a revelation of the need of the gospel. And there is a difference between that thing which will be to you the need of the gospel and the gospel itself.

I come now to say something that may seem strange to you: Parts of the New Testament are not gospel. You will find as you study the New Testament that the ministry of Christ was divided into three great avenues: First, preaching the gospel, then there is the ministry of teaching. These are different and you will find

that there is a great distinction made in the New Testament between the preaching of the gospel and the teaching of the people on the part of Christ. And then one other: His healing or His miracle mission. He preached the gospel, He taught the people, He healed the people that were sick. You will find nowhere in the New Testament where it is said that Christ taught the gospel. You will not find the word gospel connected with the word teach. You will find nowhere where the disciples went out and taught the gospel. They went out and preached the gospel. There is a vital distinction there.

There is a sense in which you can't teach the gospel. The gospel must be preached. Teaching involves information and explanation and you can't explain the gospel. God never called us to explain the gospel. He called us to proclaim the gospel. I say you can't teach people to be good. You can teach them to do good. You can no more teach a man to be good than you can teach a goat to be a sheep. There must be some power that will transform the goat into the sheep other than your teaching. The gospel of Christ is something other and something more than simply good teaching. The gospel is not to be explained as much as it is to be proclaimed.

To the most part the Sermon on the Mount is not the gospel. It is the greatest ethical, moral, and spiritual standard that the world has ever had. But mark you, there isn't a verse in the Sermon on the Mount that offers Christ for the delivering of your soul from its moral deadness. You will find that the Sermon on the Mount is teaching. And then you will find at the close of the Sermon on the Mount it says, "He taught them." Please understand me, when I say that there is nothing in that great message that shows how the power of the devil may be undone. The Sermon on the Mount has to do with those things which are the results of the gospel. You let someone slap you on the cheek with their hand you are not going to turn your other cheek unless you have the Gospel in your own heart. You can't walk down the Highway of the Sermon on the Mount until you have had something supernatural done on the inside of you.

The Golden Rule can only be carried out successfully after a person has yielded himself to God. The Golden Rule is something that a man should, and will do after he has accepted the Gospel. And so the gospel of Christ is more than simply praying some nice prayer; it is more than a good moral code; it has to do with the preaching of the power that *lifts a man out of what he is into what he ought to be.* The gospel is never preached until Christ is offered as the remedy for sin. You have no gospel message into which Christ is not centrally involved. A man can be a Bible teacher and not preach the gospel. Just because a person is preaching something that is morally beautiful it does not at all indicate that he is preaching the gospel.

You can go out and teach and preach any thing that is true and nice and yet leave out the very heart of the Gospel. Jesus Christ is the very center of the gospel. Whatever you preach is not gospel unless Christ is put at the heart of it.

Now I want you to note the example of Christ; we have no parallel to Him. But even at that, the gospel of Christ is more than His example. The example of Christ is not synonymous with the salvation of this world. An example can never bring a remedy to any disease that you have. For instance, I meet a man on the street in the city of Chicago. He is hungry, starving to death; I see the signs of it, and I say:

"Sit down, mister, I want to show you something. Now, look at me. I am well fed. I weigh 180 pounds and eat three square meals a day. I am in good health. I want you to look at me and then get up and be well." You can very well see that example does not feed a man who is starved for food.

I might go to a man who is ill at the hospital. His face is emaciated; he is in bed. He says, "Preacher, can you help me?" "Sure," I reply, "just look at me. Watch me walk, see my muscles." But my example to this sick man won't help him to rise and straightway recover his health and strength.

I go to a sinner. His very life is saturated with sin. I say to him, "Watch some of these saints, and then get up and walk and act like them." A man can't get rid of sin that way. Just an example will not suffice. And yet there are people who go about telling people to follow the example of Christ. No man can be saved by the example of Christ. We are not to be saved by the precepts and principles of Christ. The Gospel of Christ is the power of God that makes us what we ought to be, on the inside; and then the beautiful standards that we have—the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount become our criterion for living. We must show the world that we have the Gospel inside us and that we are thus enabled to live it on the outside.

The gospel is Christ; He is "the power of God unto salvation." The gospel is pardon for your guilt; the gospel is purity for your pollution; the gospel is rest for your unrest; the gospel is peace for war; the gospel is victory for defeat; the gospel is light for darkness; the gospel is faith for doubt. The gospel is fellowship with God instead of loneliness; the gospel is music for discord; the gospel is love for fear; the gospel is life for death; the gospel is hope for despair; the gospel is freedom from bondage and heartache. The gospel of Christ is the power of God that lifts us out of what we are to what we ought to be.—*Heart and Life.*

WEDDINGS

Baker—Frost

The Reformed Baptist parsonage at Calais, Me., was the scene of a quiet wedding, when on Saturday, February 27th, at eight p. m., Edna Roberta, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas E. Frost, of Alexander, Me., was united in marriage to Francis Earl, son of Mr. William Baker and the late Mrs. Baker, of Woodland, Me., by the writer, in the presence of the groom's brother and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Alden Baker, who are members of the church here. The single ring ceremony was used.

The bride was becomingly attired in a midnight blue silk crepe dress.

Luncheon was served after the wedding service.

The bride and groom will reside at Woodland, Me., where the groom is employed by a dairyman.

To the happy young couple we extend our wishes for a long, useful and joyful life.

E. R. BRADLEY

When he says, "The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruit," he means that it is hard to promote an experience which you do not enjoy yourself.—*The Christian Witness.*

"He who has become an expert in the art of talking with God has attained to the loftiest form of speech."—*Herald of Holiness.*