

WHEN IS THE GOSPEL THE GOSPEL?

1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-4 • TV187A

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1 Corinthians 15:1-4

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.”

I’d like for you to turn for our message to the **Book of 1 Corinthians Chapter 15**. I am going to read two verses, **verses 1 and 2 of 1 Corinthians 15**.

Now, here is the subject; I am asking a question: **“WHEN IS THE GOSPEL THE GOSPEL?”**

We say that we preach the Gospel (everybody says “we preach the Gospel”), but when is the Gospel we preach actually God’s Gospel, the Gospel?

Paul said in **1 Corinthians 15:1**; *“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel, (the Gospel, definite article, not a Gospel but the Gospel) which I preached unto you and which also you have received and wherein you stand; by which you are also saved if you keep in memory what I preached unto you unless you have believed in vain.”*

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Now, this man Paul was confident of one thing, he knew the Gospel, Paul knew the Gospel. He would not be shaken by the legalists who would add man's works and man's righteousness to the work and righteousness of Christ.

He said; *"I do not frustrate (confuse; I do not distort) the grace of God; if righteousness come by the law then Jesus Christ is dead in vain."* He would not be swayed and he would not be shaken by the legalists. He knew the Gospel.

Paul would not be shaken by the libertine who would turn the grace of God into a license to sin. They said; *"let us sin that grace may abound."* Since God saves by grace and grace alone, since works and man's righteousness makes no contribution to his salvation, "then let's sin that grace may abound." This was Paul's answer to those people: *"God forbid; how shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?"*

Paul knew the Gospel. He wouldn't be swayed or shaken either by the legalists or by the libertine, nor would he be shaken by those who put a question mark on his apostleship. He said, *"I am an apostle. I am not one wit behind the chief apostle."*

He said, "I have seen the Lord; I have seen the Lord and the Gospel which I preach was revealed to me by the Lord himself." He said in **1 Corinthians 15:10**, just ten verses down from where I was reading; *"by the grace of God I am what I am."*

"I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." So, he would not be shaken by those who charged him with being a false prophet and not being an apostle.

Then, he knew this; he knew that he did not receive that Gospel from men. He said in **Galatians 1: 11 and 12**; *"I certify you brethren that the gospel which I preach is not after men. I neither received it of man. I wasn't taught it by man. I was taught this gospel by the revelation of Jesus Christ."*

He knew the Gospel and he knew that he knew the Gospel. He wouldn't be swayed by legalism; he wouldn't be swayed by licentiousness; he would not be swayed by those who charged him with being a false prophet.

He knew that he received his Gospel by divine revelation and he would not be diverted. He would not be turned in away in anyway by what anyone said to him or about him.

Secondly: I know this about the apostle; he was confident, absolutely confident, not only that he knew the Gospel; he was confident that he did preach the Gospel. He called it *"My gospel."*

He called it, *"My Gospel"* because God gave it to him and God called him to preach it and he was saved by that Gospel. He was obsessed with that Gospel. He said in **Romans 1**; *"Paul, a bond-*

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servant, (a willing, loving, obedient, bond-servant) of Jesus Christ, called by God to be an apostle and separated unto the gospel of God.”

Paul said. “I have been chosen, I’ve been appointed (anointed by God), and I am separated to one thing and that is the Gospel of God concerning his Son.”

In **Galatians 1:9**, he said this; *“If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that which I have preached,”* (now that is confidence and that is assurance); *I don’t care if it is an angel from heaven. If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that gospel which I have preached, let him be accursed.”*

Then, in **1 Corinthians 15:1**, which I shared with you a moment ago, he said to the church at Corinth; *“moreover brethren, I declare unto you the gospel. It is the gospel which I preached unto you. It is the gospel which you received. It is the gospel wherein you stand. It is the gospel which you believe and it is the gospel by which you are saved.”*

“And woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel.” Woe is unto you, (might be added) if we preach the Gospel and you do not receive that Gospel.

Now, here are four indisputable facts: If you will listen carefully; I want you to pull your chair up a little closer now. I want you to listen very carefully. Here are four indisputable facts. I know this to be so. It cannot be questioned. It is beyond question; it is beyond argument, and it is beyond debate:

First of all: The Gospel, is the Gospel of God.

It is God’s Gospel. It began with God. He purposed it, He planned it, He executed it, He applied it, He sustains it and its ultimate completion will be by His hand. *“He is Alpha and Omega, and the author and finisher of our faith.”*

No one can question that. Paul said, *“I am separated unto the Gospel of God.”* It is God’s Gospel. It is not the Baptist Gospel or the Catholic Gospel or the Jewish Gospel. It is not even the Gospel of Abraham; it is the Gospel of God, it is God’s Gospel. Now, that is an undisputable fact!

Here is the second thing and I want you to listen to this. There is a word that I am going to emphasize and I’m going to emphasize one word each time in these four things, it is the Gospel of God. Underscore it and circle it; it is the Gospel of God.

Secondly: It is the Gospel of God’s free grace *“for by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. It is not of works lest any man should boast. It is not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to his mercy he hath saved us.”*

So, this Gospel is not only the Gospel of God but it is the Gospel of grace, free grace. If it is of grace it is not of works. If it is of works then it is not of grace and it cannot be both. You have to take sides either on the side of works or the side of grace and you cannot have both.

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Thirdly: This is an indisputable fact, beyond question; the Gospel is the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Now, you underscore that; it is the Gospel of Christ. This is what Paul says in our text; *“it is the gospel of Christ (concerning his Son) who died for our sins according to the Scriptures, who was buried and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.”*

The Gospel is the Gospel of Jesus Christ; it is concerning His person and His work; that is an indisputable fact; Christ is the Gospel.

Fourthly: This Gospel, the Gospel; I said when I began this that there are four unquestionable, indisputable facts; you cannot take issue with them, not if you know the Word of God. The Gospel is the Gospel of God; it is the Gospel of grace; it is the Gospel of Christ and then the Gospel is the Gospel of the power of God unto salvation, it is a powerful Gospel.

It is a Gospel which is the power (dynamite) of God that is the word in **Romans 1:16**: Paul said, *“I am not ashamed of the gospel of God, it is the power, (the dynamite of God) unto salvation, to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek, (to all nations).”*

Our God *“has a people out of every tribe, kindred, nation, and tongue under heaven,”* and these things cannot be questioned. I challenge anyone who is listening to this program to question any of these four statements.

This is the Gospel. These things cannot be disputed. The Gospel is God’s Gospel; it originated with Him. It is the Gospel of God’s free grace. It is the Gospel concerning a person, Christ alone, and it is a powerful Gospel.

It is a life-changing Gospel. It is an awakening, quickening, Gospel. It is a Gospel that is the power of Almighty God Himself.

So, when is the Gospel we preach the Gospel? I am saying that when the Gospel is preached, you listen for these four things. It will not only be evident, but also clearly defined. When you listen to a man preach, listen with these four things in mind:

- The Gospel is the Gospel of God,
- It is the Gospel of grace,
- It is the Gospel of Christ, and
- It is the Gospel of the power of God.

You listen for these four things and they will be evident, they will be evident in his message, they will stand out in his message. Not only will they be evident, but they will be clearly defined in his message, clearly defined.

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So, this is what I am going to give you now and this is my outline. I want you to listen to it and I want you to think carefully on these four things.

When is the Gospel the Gospel, when is the Gospel the one and only Gospel, the Gospel that God honors, the Gospel that God blesses and the Gospel that God will use for his glory?

First of all: We preach the Gospel, as I said before, when God is given His rightful place, when God all the way through the message, from beginning to end, from the reading of the Scripture, through the message and the prayer, when God Almighty is given His rightful place, we are preaching the Gospel.

When Moses came down into Egypt and demanded of Pharaoh that he let God's people go, Pharaoh asked Moses a question and I want you to listen to it: Pharaoh said to Moses; *"Who is the Lord, who is the Lord that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord you speak of, neither will I let Israel go."*

Now this is a good question for you to consider today: *"Who is the Lord?"* We listen to preachers preach. They say that they are preaching God. They are talking about God and using God's name.

"Who is the Lord?" That is what Pharaoh said. Moses came into his throne-room and said, *"God said; let the people go."* He said, *"Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice? I know not your God."* Who is our God, who is our God?

First of all: Our God is eternal.

In **Psalm 90:2**, David said as he was talking about the Lord God; *"before the mountains were brought forth or ever thou has formed the earth and the world from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."* We preach God who is eternal *"from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."*

Our God is holy. He is just and He is righteous. All of the prophets talked of God's infinite, immaculate, holiness. Isaiah said, *"I saw the Lord high and lifted up and his train filled the temple: And the cherubim's and seraphim's cried; holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty."*

Our God is not only infinite and eternal, but also God is just. *"He will by no means clear the guilty."* He is a righteous and holy God.

Our God is sovereign. What do we mean by (sovereign)? I mean by this; the definition of the word (sovereign) is right there in the Word, (s-o-v-e-r-e-i-g-n), *"God reigns, God reigns."*

They said, *"David; where is your God?"* David said, *"Our God is in the heavens. He hath done whatsoever he pleased: Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, in earth, in the seas, and in all deep places."*

Our God is absolutely sovereign. He is Almighty, all-powerful in creation, in providence, and in redemption. Our God is love and *"He delights to show mercy."*

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Moses asked God; *“Lord; show me your glory.”* The Lord replied; *“I will cause all my goodness to pass before thee.”* God’s glory is His goodness.

God’s chief glory and greatest glory is His redemptive glory. He said, *“I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and I will be merciful to whom I will be merciful.”*

So, when is the Gospel that we preach the Gospel? You can preach a gospel that is not the Gospel. When we are preaching *“the gospel”* we are preaching the Gospel that glorifies God. It will bring God all the glory, glory for all that He has done, which He is doing, and all that He will do, *“to God be the glory, great things He hath done.”*

Now, that is the first part of Gospel preaching; God will be glorified. When we compromise God’s character, when we compromise God’s attributes, when we bring God down from His rightful place of glory, God must have all the glory, not some of the glory, but all the glory, He will not share His glory. He is a jealous God and we must not share His glory with anyone.

Secondly: When is the Gospel the Gospel?

We preach the Gospel when man is put in his rightful place. Do you know where God’s place is? God’s place is on the throne. Do you know where man’s place is? Man’s place is in the dust. That’s right; man is a fallen, depraved, guilty, helpless, sinner.

The Scripture says, *“At his best, he is altogether vanity. In our flesh dwelleth no good thing: From the soul of our feet to the top of our heads there is no soundness in us, nothing but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores.”*

Man is a fallen, wretched, depraved, guilty creature, and *“in the flesh no man can please God. Even our righteousness, (even our goodness) in God’s sight are filthy rags.”* Now, that is so!

We are not preaching the Gospel unless we shut man’s mouth and render him unable to offer one alibi or one excuse for his sins unless we put man in the position where he has no justification but the mercy of God.

Listen to some Scriptures: In **Ephesians 2:1** it says, *“and you hath he quickened who were dead, dead in trespasses and sin:*

My friend, there is no final word like dead; dead means without life, dead means without hope, dead means without any, anything at all, just dead and lifeless. That is what God says we are by nature.

In **Romans 5:12** it says; *“By one man sin entered into this world and death by sin, so death, (spiritual death), passed upon all men for all have sinned. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God.”*

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Romans 3:19 says, *“What the law saith, it saith to everyone under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty.”*

The reason I preach this so emphatically and so strongly is because no man will ever be saved, no woman will ever know God in grace until that individual is firmly convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt that by birth, by nature, by choice, by practice, we are sinners.

“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” He said, *“I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.”* The angel said to Joseph; *“Thou shalt call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins.”*

John said, *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. If we say that we have not sinned, we make God a liar and his word is not in us.”*

The song writer said:

**“In my hands no price I bring
Simply to the cross of Christ I cling.”**

The Gospel of Christ is addressed to sinners. Our Lord came to save sinners; He came to minister to sinners and He came to call sinners. He said, *“Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden. Ho everyone that thirsteth; come to the waters. Come let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, I will make them as white as snow.”*

So, it is perfectly clear; if I preach the Gospel; I preach God in his rightful place and I preach man in the place he has chosen, in the place where he has fallen. I preach him in the place where God’s grace finds him, in inability, *“dead in trespasses and sin.”*

Thirdly: When is the Gospel the Gospel?

The Gospel is the Gospel when Christ is given his rightful place. I want to ask you the question of questions: *“What think you of Christ?”*

Our Lord asked the disciples that question, He said; *“to whom do men say that I am?”* They gave some answers, they said; *“some say that you are the prophet, a healer, or some great teacher.”* He said, *“But whom do you say that I am?”*

On another occasion He asked the religious multitude; *“what think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?”* I ask you, *“What think ye of Christ?”*

If you want to, turn the question back this way and ask me what I think of Christ and I will tell you.

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First of all: He is God Almighty.

Yes, Jesus Christ of Nazareth was born of Mary, was brought up in the carpenter's shop. He lived in Nazareth and walked the shores of the Galilee. He died on the cross and was buried and rose again. He is none other than God Almighty.

“In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.” The disciples said to the Lord Jesus Christ; *“show us the father and we will be satisfied.”* He said, *“If you have seen me, you have seen God; I and my father are one: believest thou that I am in the Father and the Father in me. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.”*

Let me tell you something: God is Spirit. You will never see God except by one revelation and that is in Christ. When He says that *“he sat down at the right hand of God,”* that doesn't mean that there is another human body there; that is speaking of His position, that is speaking of His authority, and that is speaking of His power.

Jesus Christ is the one embodiment of God. *“In Christ dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.”* He is God. Every appearance of God in the Old Testament is the Lord Jesus Christ.

When He came down to this earth, God walked on this earth. When He ascended to glory He ascended in a body, in the body of a man, and Jesus Christ is God. Our God is one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. If you see Christ you will see God.

Not only that, He is a man. *“The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.”* Jesus Christ came down to this earth and was manifest in human flesh and walked on this earth.

Not only that, what do I think of Christ? He is God, He is man, and He is the God-man. He is our representative: *“By one man's disobedience, (transgression), many were made sinners.”* That is by Adam's transgression, our identification with Adam, we are made sinners by representation.

Even so, in the same way, *“by the obedience of one (Christ) many were made righteous. He who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. In Adam I die, in Christ I am made alive.”*

In Christ I am complete. He is my *“wisdom, my righteousness, my sanctification, and my redemption.”* Everything I need, everything that the law requires, everything that justice demands, everything that God Almighty Himself requires is mine in Jesus Christ. He is my representative.

Not only that; He is my sacrifice and my sin-offering. *“By one offering, this man, by one offering, hath perfected forever, them that are sanctified.”* Jesus Christ our Lord died on the cross burying our sins in His body on the tree and by that sacrifice all of our sins are purged, all of our sins are paid for, and all of our sins are put away; they are cast behind the back of God to *“be remembered no more.”*

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He is a perfect sacrifice and He is the end of all sacrifices. When that one final sacrifice and sin-offering is made and presented before the father in glory, *“there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin,”* there remaineth no more consciousness of sin and there remaineth no more guilt of sin; we are clean in Christ. In Christ there is no sin.

In the next place, what do I think of Christ? He is my great high priest. Seeing I have a high priest at the right hand of God, I can come boldly into the very presence of God. I can come *“boldly before the throne of grace, there to find mercy and grace to help in time of need.”*

He is our high priest. He makes our prayers holy. He makes our praise holy. He makes our gifts and sacrifices holy. He makes us holy. Without Christ we couldn't even come into the presence of God. Our communion with God is in Christ; *“we are accepted in the beloved.”*

He is our high priest and He is our Mediator. *“There is one God and one mediator,”* not a host of mediators but only one. Don't ever pray in anyone else's name but Christ. Don't ever look to anyone else but Christ.

Don't ever rest or trust in anyone else but Christ. Don't ever rejoice in anyone but Christ. *“Have no confidence in the flesh,”* only in Christ.

I don't care how long ago they lived. I don't care what office they held. It doesn't matter what the world thought of them. There is no one who can intercede for the sinner except Jesus Christ. There's one Mediator and that is Jesus Christ.

Then, He is our Lord. He is our Lord by decree; God has made him Lord. *“God hath given him a name above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow.”* That means every angel, every man, every devil, every demon, and every creature in heaven, earth, and hell will bow.

“Every knee will bow and every tongue, (every being that has a tongue), will confess that he is Lord.” He is Lord by decree; He is Lord by design, and He is Lord by death. *“He died that he might be Lord of the dead and the living.”*

He always has had and He has now and He always will have all authority in heaven and earth. He has all power over all flesh. He is our Lord!

It's not, “Will you make Christ your Lord?” God has already made Him your Lord. It is “when you will bow and confess his Lordship? He is not only Lord by decree, design, and death, but Lord by choice. We have confessed Him as our Lord.

Lastly, we have preached the Gospel when the Holy Spirit is given his rightful place. Paul said in **1 Corinthians 2:** *“Eye hath not seen, (the natural eye), and ear hath not heard; neither hath it entered the heart of man the things that God hath prepared for them that love him.”*

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“But God hath revealed them unto us, (unto the elect, unto the sheep, and unto the believer), by his Spirit. The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; they are foolishness to him.” But, *“He has revealed them to us by his Spirit.”*

That is what Christ told Nicodemus; *“you must be born again of the Word and of the Spirit. “It is the spirit that quickeneth the flesh profiteth nothing.”* It is the Spirit that giveth life. *“It’s not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit saith the Lord.”*

Our Lord declared that the Holy Spirit would *“take the things of Christ and show them to us. The Holy Spirit would not speak of himself, but he will glorify Christ.”*

The Holy Spirit regenerates; the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin. The Holy Spirit reveals Christ. The Holy Spirit teaches believers. The Holy Spirit causes us to pray and beg for mercy. The Holy Spirit seals us in Christ.

The Holy Spirit is our earnest or token of everlasting inheritance and the Holy Spirit empowers us for service and to glorify God by filling us with His power and with His wisdom.

Yes sir; the Gospel, the Gospel is the Gospel of God and the Gospel is preached when God is glorified, when God is exalted, when God is glorified in everything that is said.

The Gospel is not only the Gospel of God but it is the Gospel of his grace. When man is put where he is and where he belongs, in the dust, and he is made a recipient, he is not a giver, but a recipient of God’s mercy.

When Christ is given His rightful place and is honored and glorified in all things, and when the Holy Spirit is not put in front of Christ, the Holy Spirit is given His rightful place as the glorifier of Christ Jesus and the revealer of Christ Jesus.