

The Gospel Our Trust #1

by Ernest C. Reisinger

Ernest C. Reisinger emphasizes the vital role of every believer in sharing the gospel and understanding its foundational truths.

Duration: 34:02

Scripture: Exodus 20:3-17, Matthew 6:33, Romans 14:10-12, 2 Corinthians 5:10, 1 Thessalonians 2:3, 1 Thessalonians 2:9-12, Revelation 20:11-15

Topics: "Gospel"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of understanding the bad news before embracing the good news of the gospel. He states that the gospel presupposes the fact that there is some awful bad news. The preacher highlights the role of the commandments in leading people to Christ, stating that they bring grace but not good news. He shares a personal anecdote about witnessing to a moral man who needed to understand the bad news before accepting the good news.

Transcript

Paul's first epistle to the Thessalonians, chapter 2. Thyself, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain, but even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as you know at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention. For our exhortation was not of deceit nor of uncleanness, nor in guile, but as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God which trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak of covetousness, God is witness, nor of men sought we glory, neither of you nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome as the apostles of Christ, we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherishes her children, so being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because you were dear unto us.

For you remember, brethren, our labor and travail were laboring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God. Ye are witnesses, and God also how wholly and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe, as you know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, that he would walk worthy of God who called you unto his kingdom and glory. For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when you receive the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, as it is in truth the word of God which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus. For ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews, who both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us. And they pleased not God, and are contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved, to fill up their sins always.

For the wrath of God has come upon them to the uttermost. We, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavor the more abundantly to see your face with great desire. Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again that Satan hindered us.

For what is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming. For ye are our glory and joy. For who may not have known him.

Thank you, Pastor, and I thank you elders and those of you who would entrust a layman with this holy task and this holy hour. I am pleased to see such a nice group here this morning. I feel like that evangelist was telling a preacher friend, he was telling about starting a series of meetings in a church.

And he said, he said, I started on Sunday morning and he said I had 200 decisions. He says, 200 people heard me and decided not to come back. Now, I hope that that's not the case this morning, that you'll decide not to come back.

Although it does always amaze me in a church, and I can speak of my own church, I don't have to be, because I have not come to scold you or chide you or bring censorious remarks to you. But as a leader in a church, we do, if we're honest, recognize some problems. And you know, as I go from church to church and look at my own church, I see that really there's about three quarters of the Sunday morning crowd are wonderful spectators and wonderful people and nice, but at the best they are spectators of the program.

I think of, I could close my eyes now and think of a dozen men in our church that would do anything you'd ask them. If we were going to paint, they'd come and paint. If we were going to have a softball team, they'd work their head off.

But when it comes down to getting to grips with some eternal verities and eternal truths and spiritual truths, they just, they're just not there. I trust you'll be praying this week as we come to you to do what St. Paul said in 1 Thessalonians chapter 2, verse 3, he said, he's an exhorter. He was a preacher, but I'm just an exhorter.

So if it's kind of along the lines of exhorting, I believe it's scriptural to exhort now and again. Now, before we look to the book this morning, let's just pause for a moment and look to the author of the book. Because if he doesn't speak, if the only voice you hear this morning is my voice, you've missed it.

You've missed it. If the only voice you hear Sunday by Sunday is the preacher's voice, you've missed it. So we need to hear that voice from heaven that speaks through the book.

So let's ask him to meet with us. O Holy Ghost, we said with our lips this morning, I believe in the Holy Ghost. We pray that thou would come.

Lord, thy church needs the Holy Ghost more than any gimmicks or gadgets or tricks. So we would cry out in our feeble voice this morning, O thou God of heaven, send the Holy Ghost, not only here, but to thy needy church, that universal body of blood-bought men and women. Send the Holy Ghost.

We ask it in the name of Jesus Christ, the Lord. Amen. In 1 Thessalonians chapter 2, verse 4, there's a little text that I'd like to use for springboard.

And unless I feel directed otherwise, I would probably be entitling this little series, this, at least this morning's message, A Layman's Trust. A Layman's Trust. And when I say laymen, I mean laywomen.

I mean everybody that's born again. Now, we will be thinking along the lines of propagating the gospel. Everybody, everybody that's been twice born, every Christian that knows Jesus Christ in a saving way, is meant to be a propagator of the gospel.

I don't know where we ever got this idea that this is only for missionaries and a few super-duper Christians in the church and the pastor, but propagating the gospel does not come under the head of my business. Now, I'm not primarily this time thinking about challenging you to witness. I'm not thinking about that particularly, but I would, because that's a symptom.

If you don't witness this morning, that's a symptom and there's a reason for that. Every, every person within the confines of these walls today that claims to be a Christian and does not witness, the fact that they don't witness is a symptom. Now, if you go to the doctor and you say, oh, doctor, I have a terrible pain, and he gives you some, something just to kill the pain or a sleeping tablet, sends you home, you wake up, you have to run back to the doctor and say, oh, doctor, I still have that pain, and he gives you another sleeping pill, he's a poor doctor.

He's a poor doctor. A good doctor will say he may give you the pill, but he's also, if he's a good doctor, he's going to want to seek the cause, because the pain is only a symptom of a cause. And the fact that Christians do not witness and do not seek to witness is a symptom.

Now, I don't know the cause in every case, but I do know that if you're twice born this morning, if you have savingly clothed with Jesus Christ as he's offered in the book, and you do not witness, there's a cause. And I'm primarily thinking of causes. How can a man or a woman in a Christian church, five years, ten years, twenty years, stand behind a hymn book year after year, week after week, month after month, stand behind a hymn book from time to time, pious as you please, and say, I love to tell the story, and the next time you tell it, it'll be the first time.

The next time you tell it, it'll be the first time. There's something wrong, my dear heart, and I have not come to scold you about that. I've come to try, by God's grace, to help you.

I'm here today in this church because of a witness. Somebody, not a preacher, but somebody on a construction job that told me about the Son of God. And as a result of that, Jesus Christ came into a whole family, and I could give you a whole series of events, because of one man.

Thank God that it pleased him in his providence to ever send a man, a simple, humble carpenter. He hadn't taken Dale Carnegie's course on how to make friends and influence people. He hadn't had all the polish that you might, he didn't have all his hair, he didn't have all his teeth, and he didn't have such a wonderful vocabulary.

There was no particular thing about his personality that drew you to him. The fact is, maybe you'd shy away from him. But he knew God.

He'd been in touch with heaven. He had been a recipient of the gospel. Therefore, as a recipient of the gospel, he was constrained to share with those he could that which God had done for him.

And so we're not thinking so much about symptoms. If you don't witness, we're not going to scold you about it. But oh, I trust that God the Spirit would help us and assist us as we seek to try to find out some of the causes.

Maybe, maybe you feel that this is not our task. Let us look at this little verse. There's a couple things in it.

First of all, I see the layman's trust. Now when I say the layman's trust, this is the pastor's trust also. Because in this particular sense, as far as making the gospel known, I believe that in the old confession, and incidentally I might say at the outset of these meetings, I'm sure that what I have to say, and if I should fail here, I would want corrected.

But what I say in these meetings will be from that frame of doctrine expressed in that confession of confessions, your confession, the Westminster Confession. And I would seek and want to, and if ever I know that I speak outside the framework of doctrine expressed there, I would want corrected. Now there's one subject in that book that I don't speak on, and so I'm safe when I say if I speak on a subject that is not within the framework of doctrine expressed there, I would want corrected.

So you don't have to wonder what kind of a Joe I am and doctrine me. That ought to be enough to suffice there, and I want to put you at ease at the outset. Now the text.

But as we were allowed God to be put in trust with the gospel. The gospel is our trust. It's a trust from Almighty God to all those who have savingly embraced it.

Now I believe one of the causes about the gospel, why people don't propagate it, of course I think the basic cause, and let me say this at the outset. I believe the real, the biggest reason, the biggest cause, is that people have never received it. I don't know how you could be the same.

I don't know how a father, for instance, let me just share this. I don't know how a father or mother could have savingly embraced the gospel and not desire that for their children above everything else. And so therefore it's difficult for me, and I have reason to question, a man and a woman who have lovely children, and they're interested in their education, they're interested in their physical welfare, they're interested in every phase of their life.

But when there is no interest in their spiritual life, I say it's a bad symptom. A very, very, very bad symptom. And there is a reason why a mother would not be interested in her children's relationship with the Savior.

There's a reason why a father would not be keenly interested in that. So the gospel is our trust. Now, I believe that we live in a day, even in the church, and this might sound that I think you're naive, but I don't mean it this way.

But I believe we live in a day when in the church we have to think about the gospel definition. I see people zealously want to propagate the gospel, and they run up to somebody and they say, are you saved? And they say no, and they want to tell them of John 3.16 or John 5.24, and they want to tell them the good news. There's something wrong with that fellow.

There's something he doesn't understand, if that's the way he approaches this thing. Because as I asked some young girl who was doing this, a very sincere, conscientious young girl working with children, and she said to me one day, she said, I was out preaching, propagating the gospel today to the children. And I said, Betty, I said, tell me, what does the word gospel mean? She said it means good news, glad tidings, and so on, and she was straight on the meaning of the word, the etymology of the word.

She was straight on that. And I said, Betty, did they receive it as good news? Did they embrace it that this was great news? She says, come to think of it, no. I said, well, then it was not good news to them.

You mean it's good news to you, but it was not good news to the people you told it to. Oh, she said, that's right, now I see. Now, my dear, this morning, let me tell you, the gospel, the word itself, the etymology of the word certainly does mean good news, glad tidings, joyful announcement.

But that good news presupposes a few things. And there's no use you and I, as lay people or pastor or whatever our task may be, our calling, there's no use us thinking about propagating the good news till somebody knows some of the suppositions, some of the facts that precede the good news. Now, I say to you this morning, I believe that this is a great lack in our evangelical day and in our evangelical circle.

Because before you ever embrace the good news, you must hear the bad news. You must hear the bad news. In other words, what is the bad news, as far as I'm concerned? I'll never forget my lawyer called me once.

He had a client, he was an old fellow, and he says, Ernie, this was quite a while ago, he said, I have a client and he's very wealthy, he's made a lot of money. I'm not going to tell you how he made it, you might not like that. He said, he's made a lot of money, he's getting old and his sins are bothering him.

And he said, he keeps coming to the office. And he said, he doesn't need a lawyer. And he says, I believe that this fellow, my client, needs what you have more than he does legal counsel.

He said, would you please stop over and visit this man? Well, I said, I'll be glad to do that. Because his sins were bothering him, and I just revel in getting with people whose sins are bothering them. The problem I find is that most people's sins are not bothering them.

So I was anxious, I couldn't wait to get there. When I find somebody that their sins are bothering, oh brother, I want to put my arm around you. You're for me.

So I got over there to see my good friend, Mr. W, I won't tell you his name, maybe he has some cousin here or something. But I got over to see Mr. W at his house, and when I went in his house, he had a stack of books. Oh, he had all these books on peace of mind and peace of this and peace of everything, you know.

He had Norman Vincent Peale. You know, to some people, Peale is appealing and Paul is appalling. And to others, Paul is appealing and Peale is appalling.

I'm in the last group. And so I saw all these books. And underneath there, he had his Bible.

He had his Bible underneath there. And I said, Mr. W, have you looked at that black book underneath this stack of books? And he said, oh, he said, I had to quit reading it. He said, I had to stop reading that book.

I said, why? He said, it condemned me. I said, wonderful, wonderful. I said, read on, read on, read on.

Oh, that's the function. What does the Ten Commandments do to you, my brother, my sister, my unsaved friend here this morning? How can you look at the Ten Commandments and feel comfortable? Can you look at that first commandment and say, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and feel comfortable? Eh? Does that make you feel good or guilty? It ought to make you feel guilty. You go down over the list.

Thou shalt. Hey, young people, how do you feel when you come to that great commandment from heaven that says, honor thy father and mother? Eh? That's a word from God. That's a word from God.

Does that make you feel comfortable? If I know you young people, it shouldn't. You fellows that steal from your employer by loafing, and you employers that rob your people by not paying them enough of money, how do you feel when you come to that commandment that says, thou shalt not steal? Comfortable? Eh? No, I say to you today, my dear, that people, before they'll ever be a, they'll ever savingly embrace Jesus Christ and receive the good news, must know something about the bad news. And I say to you this morning that the commandments bring no good news.

There's grace in the commandments, but not good news. The grace is that they lead us to Christ. You remember what St. Paul said? The law was a schoolmaster to bring me to Christ.

I have a friend, one of my fish right now that I'm witnessing to. He's a very moral man. Doesn't drink, doesn't smoke, doesn't swear.

He's been an athlete. He's a dean of a college. My closest golfing partner.

I've been witnessing to him for years. One morning we were going to golf, and we had a little drive to make, and I got on my knees because I'd talked with him. We freely talk about the things of God.

I mean, I don't act like I'm in some underground movement and try to slip it in on him, you know. We have a, I despise that kind of witnessing. These people lay tracks down and hide them in people's car and stick them in doors and send anonymous letters and tracks without signing your name.

Go on home, take off your button, turn in your badge. You're not in some underground movement. You're not witnessing.

You're trying to save your conscience. That's what all you're doing. So I don't have that kind of an underground movement with people.

I'm in the greatest, this is the greatest job in the world. This is the greatest news in the world. This is the news that changed my life.

This is the news that gives me hope for today and tomorrow and hope for all eternity. That's not an underground movement. So I got on my knees that morning.

I was going to play golf with my friend, and I said, Lord, how do I, how do I talk to this man? He's better than most Christians. Morally, he'd put you to shame. And this has been his greatest problem because he looks in the church and he picks out Bill Smith.

He says, look at that joker. Well, I'm better than he is. Then he looks over to church, he sees that social sipper and he says, well, I, I look, and he measures himself with all these people.

And let me tell you, he comes up with the right answer. He just weighed himself on the wrong scale. That's all.

He comes up with the right answer. And I say, oh dear Lord, how can I talk to Ben today? How can I get at him? He has to see himself somehow. Know what the Lord brought to my attention? And I feel that if I was ever God guided, it was this time.

He brought a text to my attention that I'd read before. And I started to think of St. Paul and the text the Lord brought to my attention was found in Romans chapter seven, verse seven. Before I read the text, let me tell you what happened that morning.

I also prayed, Lord, I don't want to waste a half of this trip and talk about everything else. And then finally slip in a little bit about you and call it witnessing. And when I got in the car that morning, my friend said to me, Ernie, did you bring your Bible with you? I said, yeah, right in the glove compartment.

And it was too. Romans chapter seven. What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid.

Nay, I have not known sin, but by the law. Here it is. For I had not known lust except the law said, thou shalt not covet.

Anybody know what commandment that is? Where's the catechism class? What commandment? Number one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten. Yeah, she said it. Number ten.

That's the tenth commandment. And do you know that that's the commandment that does not deal with anything you do with your fingers or your feet? Do you know that that commandment is nothing you do outwardly? Do you know that the tenth commandment is kind of a recap of all of them? The tenth commandment slays that man who longs after some woman, but hasn't actually committed physical adultery. The tenth commandment is a fellow who wants what isn't his, and slays him, and takes the commandment that says thou shalt not steal and slay him, because it's in his heart.

This is the commandment that deals with the heart. This is the commandment which deals with that area of you where nobody can go. The preacher can't go there.

Mama can't go there. Daddy can't go there. Your neighbors can't go there.

Your wife can't go there. Your husband can't go there. But that commandment goes there.

It deals with you where nobody else can go. That's the verse he gave me. Now it's a long story.

That fellow's told me since, because I tried to get him to weigh himself on the right scale. And I say to you this morning, dear heart, the gospel, the good news, presupposes some things. The good news presupposes the fact that there's some awful bad news.

And that bad news makes you and me hopeless, helpless, with no hope in this world. You find somebody that's been slayed with the knife of Moses. I was reading a book the other day, or I think my brother gave me a book.

It says when you have problems with telling people about sin, bar the knife of Moses. That's a commandment. That's a knife.

Cuts away. What did the commandments teach me about God? That he's holy. And this generation needs to know about the character of God.

They've heard about this benevolent, long-bearded fellow that just loves everybody, including sin and all that and all. No, no, God hates sin. He's angry with the sinner every day.

They've heard so much about the love of God that they forgot that God's holy. And he's just. You know how many times judge and judgment and judges is used in the Bible? I was interested in a murder in our county some time ago.

I talked to him about his soul. I went to visit his mother, talked to his sister, prayed with him. And I was interested in this murder.

And when his case came up, I was interested in the court. And so I went over to the courtroom a few days. And I'd see that little fellow stand up.

Every witness would come up there. And that little fellow stand up, say, raise your right hand, please. And then he'd say something like this.

I don't have it verbatim. I'm sure I never played this role, but he'd say something like this. You swear before almighty God, the searcher of all hearts, that the testimony that you're about to bring in the case now pending before this court is the whole truth, nothing but the truth.

And so shall you give an answer to God at that great day. And I kept hearing this. So shall you give an answer to God at that great day.

I thought, am I in church? No, I was in the courtroom. And as I got home, I thought, man, I've heard more about the judgment of almighty God today in the courtroom than I heard in the church in five years. God is holy and just.

And you know what I did? I went home and got out my concordance. I thought, I wonder how many times judge and judgment is used in the Bible. And I got out my concordance and I counted the lines.

First of all, I counted how many in a line, then I counted the line and I multiplied. So I may be off a few, but by doing that method, how many times do you think I came up with? Listen, my dear, 700 times plot that the word judge judgment and all the synonymous terms are used in the Bible. I look at you this morning and with the words of that great old Presbyterian pastor, and I've prayed it on my knees.

Oh God, help me to see people, help me to see them as a dying man and they're dying. And if there's anything true in this book, 700 times, it talks about a judgment that you're going to come to. Now the commandments teach me that God is holy and I believe this generation needs to hear about the character of God, but the commandments not only teach me about the character of God, oh bless your heart, they teach me about my condition.

And I think there's three things that a man who properly witnessed must press upon the unsaved and the ungodly, and that is the character of God, which reveals to them their own condition and the destiny of man. Now the Bible is full of this. And our generation, because we drive nicer cars and dress differently, a fellow came up to me, I was speaking to a group of Presbyterians this last weekend, four times from Friday night, I spoke to him three times yesterday.

And a fellow was a visitor there, he came up to me and he said, he started to talk about, well it just depends which way you look at it and give me a whole lot of who struck God. Wait a minute, I have to be honest with that man and tell him about the character of God. I got to tell him about his own condition and his destiny and his destiny.

Our trust is the gospel, but the gospel presupposes certain things. That is that nobody, nobody will ever savingly receive the good news until they know the bad news. And it's our duty to press upon people the character of God, their own condition, and the destiny of man.

And then they're ready to do what we'll talk about tonight. By the way, Pastor, what time do you close? 12 or 1230? I'll go by the clock or the counter, doesn't matter. 12? 12.

Well, you see, I got it clear. Tonight there's something in that text, I didn't get to it yet, but there's something in that text about our, about not only our trust is the gospel, but there's something in that text about our task. You come out tonight and I'll talk about our task.

It's right in that text. Our trust is the gospel and our task, I'll tell you about tonight. But the good news supposes a few things.

And that is that you've heard the bad news and you'll never savingly embrace the son of God. And you will never accept this wonderful story of the crucifixion as good news until you've heard the bad news. Because the facts in themselves are not good news.

No wonder the liberals say that bloody religion, they say it's a gory story and rightly so. There's no good news in the facts. It's repulsive to the human spirit, the crucifixion of Christ, apart from the fact that within this gory story lies my only hope.

And we can say with the songwriter, my hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. Let's pray. Lord, we would be farmers today and we would seek to sow a few of those seeds from heaven.

But Lord, we can't make them grow without rain and sunshine. And so we thank you that you've taught us in a measure that one may sow and another may water, but thou alone can give the increase. Hear our prayer today as we commit these scattered little exhortations to thee.

Blow away that part of them which is chaff, because that's from man whose breath is in his nostrils. But sanctify to thy glory and to the good of man those seeds which are from thee. We ask it through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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