

What Is the Gospel?

by Voddie Baucham

Voddie Baucham's sermon clarifies the true nature of the gospel, contrasting it with common misconceptions and emphasizing its centrality in the Christian faith.

Duration: 57:36

Scripture: Exodus 12:13, Numbers 21:9, Matthew 11:28-30, Romans 9:30, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Ephesians 2:8-9

Topics: "Gospel"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding and proclaiming the gospel. He warns against the tendency to focus on other issues while assuming the gospel. The gospel is described as the power of God for salvation, and it is the means by which man is made right before God. The speaker outlines five characteristics of the gospel: it is news, it is cross-centered, it is Christ-centered, it is faith-dependent, and it is universal in its scope. The sermon references the book of Romans and Acts to support these points.

Transcript

Well, as we continue here in Romans chapter 9, we have come to that last paragraph in Romans chapter 9. We'll look at verses 30 through the end of the chapter. Romans chapter 9, beginning in verse 30. If you remember, this excursus here in chapters 9 through 11 are dealing with the issue of Israel and the apparent forsaking of Israel.

It's dealing with what is seen outwardly of Israel and the explanation of it. In that context, we come to this last paragraph that really sums up what he has begun here in chapter 9 in what I like to call a tale of two sinners. Beginning in verse 30.

What shall we say then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it. That is, a righteousness that is by faith. But that Israel, who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness, did not succeed in reaching the law.

Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone, as it is written, Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, a rock of offense, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame. Whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.

This is not new. We have seen this juxtaposition of the Jew and the Gentile, for example, in chapters 1 and 2. And specifically in chapter 2, as he talked about the law and the Gentiles being a law unto themselves. The whole point that Paul is making here is that our only hope is the gospel.

It is the gospel that is the power of God unto salvation. And here he points to and answers the question, what is going on and what is wrong with Israel? What is wrong with Israel, he says, is that they have pursued righteousness through the law. And the Gentiles have attained righteousness that they did not pursue, and they have attained it through faith.

It is the difference between works righteousness and the gospel. That is what this all boils down to. It is the difference between works righteousness and the gospel.

Now, we say that, and as we look at this paragraph, and as we hear again this word, gospel, and as we say that it is the difference between the Jew and the Greek in this paragraph. Again, not saying that there are no Jews who have been saved. Paul himself is a living denial of that.

He is a Jew who has been saved, but not through pursuing the law. He has been saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, and it is that gospel that he is proclaiming, and it is that gospel that is the hope of the Jew and the Greek alike. But when we use that word gospel, it is weighty and misunderstood.

And so, what we're going to deal with today is the gospel, what the gospel is not, and what the gospel is. Because that's Paul's overarching point here in chapter 9. The difference between those who have come and those who have not, is that those who have come, have come by way of the gospel, which is where Paul starts in chapter 1, and those who have not, have not come because they have trusted something other than the gospel. Now, he talks about this distinction between the Jews and the Gentiles, and we've seen that distinction, as I've said, throughout his letter.

But here, he comes to the crux of the matter. In order for us to deal with this, let me unpack these terms, realizing that I'm using these terms in the context of a culture that has perverted them. We no longer know what the terms mean.

When I say gospel, there may be several things that come to your mind that are anything but the gospel. Let me give you three things that the gospel is not, that we need to understand in this day and age. And I am indebted to the work of D.A. Carson here on this, in an article that he wrote in the Spurgeon Journal about what the gospel is not.

There are several pieces out there about what's being touted out there as the gospel, and how those things are off base, and you can get anything from one or two things, from seven to ten things, but these three, I think, boil it down best. Number one, the gospel is not just how we get saved. The gospel is not just how we get saved.

You talk to the average Christian, and you ask them what the gospel is, and more than likely, they're going to give you a plan of salvation. The gospel is not the plan of salvation. The gospel is not the four spiritual laws.

The gospel is not just how we get saved. Listen to Carson's statement here. For some Christians, the gospel is a narrow set of teachings about Jesus and his death and resurrection, which, rightly believed, tipped people into the kingdom.

After that, real discipleship and personal transformation began, but none of that is integrally related to the gospel. In other words, we believe the gospel is what you need to get saved, but you need to graduate to something beyond the gospel after you've gotten saved. We say a person preaches the gospel if a person preaches a, you know, a Billy Graham crusade salvation message designed and geared toward the altar call at the end, but if they preach something that is not designed and geared toward the altar call at the end, we say it's not the gospel.

I've often gone to preach places and had people ask me, are you going to preach a gospel message, or will this be for believers? That's how we think. Is it going to be a gospel message, or will it be for believers? Yes, because believers need the gospel. The gospel is not just how we get saved.

Listen to Tim Keller. We never get beyond the gospel in our Christian life to something more advanced. The gospel is not the first step in a stairway of truths, rather, it is more like the hub in a wheel of truth.

The gospel is not just the ABCs, but the A to Z of Christianity. The gospel is not the minimum required doctrine necessary to enter the kingdom, but the way we make all progress in the kingdom. So mistake number one, we see the gospel as just how people get saved.

The gospel is the ABC. Acknowledge your sin, believe in Christ, confess him as your savior. Y'all heard that one? That's not the gospel.

It's a cheap substitute. That's not the gospel. Nor is it correct to say that unbelievers need the gospel, but believers need something more.

Folks, there is nothing more than the gospel. You never move beyond the gospel. You never outgrow the gospel.

You never become too sophisticated for the gospel. If you think you're too sophisticated for the gospel, you don't know what the gospel is. Secondly, the gospel is not just the two great commandments.

The gospel is not just the two great commandments, and that's what's popular in our day. You just boil it down to love God, love people. Listen to Carson's word on this.

Other voices identify the gospel with the first and second commandments. The commandments to love God with heart, soul, mind, and strength, and our neighbor as ourself. These commandments are so central that Jesus himself insists that all the prophets and the law hang on them.

But most emphatically, they are not the gospel. Love God, love people. It's not the gospel.

In fact, here is the irony. That phrase, love God, love people, is actually a summary of the law. It's the opposite of the gospel.

Listen to what Paul says about that in Romans chapter 13, verses 8 through 10. Owe no one anything except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet, and any other commandment are summed up in this word.

By the way, notice he's talking about the second table of the law, the horizontal commandments, summed up in this way, or in this word. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Love does no wrong to a neighbor.

Therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law. We use that phrase as though we've unlocked a magic key to the gospel. And the irony is, we have run right back to the law like a dog running to its vomit.

And it sounds so good. And it's ubiquitous. Do a search sometime for love God, love people, and church.

You'll find thousands of churches like Southside Christian Church. Love God, love people. But then you find others who get creative with it.

Morrow Baptist Church. Love God, love people, change the world. Inglewood Baptist Church.

Love God, love people, serve the world. Believer's Church. Love God, love people, tell the world.

Victory Baptist Church. Love God, love people, reach the world. Or Gulfgate Baptist Church.

Love God, love people, serve the world. How about Doubleheads Baptist Church? Love God, love people, serve both. Or The Rock.

Love God, love people, do something about it. Eastside Christian Church. Love God, love people, build relationships.

Smithwood Baptist Church. Love God, love people, make disciples. The Gathering Place.

Love God, love people, live life. Prairie City Church. Love God, love people, love life.

How about Destiny Church? Love God, love people, love life, love our city. How about Courageous Church? Love God, love people, prove it. North City Church of Christ.

Love God, love people, be changed. Keep the law, be changed. And finally, Experience Church Safety Harbor.

Love God, love people, period. It's ubiquitous. That is the catchphrase of our day.

And it's a catchphrase that is used by people who intend to say, get away from all that law stuff. Get away from all that legalism. Just love God and love people.

And what they just said was, get away from the law, obey the law. Because if you just obey the law, then you don't have to worry about the law. Now, am I saying that we don't love God and we don't love people? That is what the gospel produces, not what the gospel commands.

The gospel produces that in the life of the believer. And it's evidence that we love God, that we've been born again. We love God and we love others because of what Christ has done in us.

It's because of the work of the gospel in our lives. It is not a substitute for the gospel. That is blasphemous.

It's blasphemous. And again, all of these churches may communicate that clearly somewhere. Generally not on their websites.

I looked. Three, the gospel is not the moral teachings of Jesus. The gospel is not the moral teachings of Jesus.

Okay? Listen to this one carefully. Especially those of us who live in homeschool circles. Because you hear this one a lot.

That the gospel is all of the moral teachings of Jesus. The third option today is to treat the ethical teaching of Jesus found in the gospel as the gospel. Yet it is the ethical teaching of Jesus abstracted from the passion and resurrection narrative found in each gospel.

Think about this for a moment. If we say that the gospel is all the moral teachings of Jesus found in the gospels, then here's what we've said. You see, God in the Old Testament gave us a law.

But that law either wasn't righteous enough, wasn't clear enough, or wasn't effective enough. So Jesus came and gave us another law so that that one could be kept. Because our problem wasn't us, it was God.

Made a mistake the first time, had to come correct it. First law didn't work, gave us another law. All that stuff about his son dying.

Don't know how that fits into this mindset. If all he came was to just give us another law. Folks, that's not the gospel.

That's not the gospel. That looks more like Israel. Here, listen again.

What shall we say then that the Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it. That is a righteousness that is by loving God, loving people. Or that is a righteousness that is by keeping all the moral teachings of Jesus in the gospels.

Or that is by, no. That is by faith. But that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness.

Do these things and these things will lead you to a right relationship with God. Keep God's law and you will become acceptable before God. Do this.

Sounds like all these things are not the gospel, doesn't it? And that's not just true here. As Paul was writing Romans. It's true today as we read Romans in the 21st century.

It has always been true and it will always be true. Because man is allergic to the gospel. It breaks us out in moral hives.

We don't like the gospel. We don't trust the gospel. That is why even those who say, yes, I believe the gospel.

But I've also got to have the law in order for me to maintain my standing in the gospel. No, you need the gospel to maintain your standing in the gospel. Jesus did not come to give you a kickstart.

Because you weren't just a little bit off course. You're ruined and rotten from the core. That's your problem.

Jesus didn't just come to be an example. As though somehow all you needed was the right person in front of you. So that you could get in line.

You actually have an aversion to righteousness. And in fact, in Galatians Paul tells us that was one of the main purposes of the law. That you could stare at God's holiness.

Stare at God's righteousness and hear something echoing in your mind. I don't cut it. I can't get there from here.

I can't make it. No matter what I do. No matter how I try.

I absolutely positively cannot in any way, shape, form or fashion. Even approximate anything close to the righteousness that is required of me in the law. And even when I do something that approximated.

I'm so proud of it that now my pride is another sin that I have to deal with. Amen somebody. That's the picture that Paul paints.

They're following the law in order to be right with God. And again, if you've been listening. But I'm still going to say it again and again and again and again and again.

If you've been listening. Paul's not arguing for antinomianism. Paul's not arguing that the law is bad.

He says the law is good. The law is righteous. The law is holy.

And in fact when we come to Christ. When we are in Christ. Christ not only has kept the law for us.

So that God because of the active obedience of Christ. Sees us as law keepers. But Christ also keeps the law in us.

He kept the law for us. And he keeps the law in us. Not he gives us the ability to work harder for the law.

I'm just so grateful that we read Matthew chapter 11 today. Come unto me all who labor and are heavy laden. And I will give you work.

Take my yoke upon you. And learn of me. And then you'll have the strength to grit it out.

Not what it says. Come unto me all who labor. How do we know if we've come to him? Because we're resting.

Take my yoke upon you. And learn of me. Because I'm meek and lowly of heart.

My yoke is easy. My burden is light. If you see Jesus.

As merely having given you an example. That you can work hard to follow. You're under the wrong yoke.

You're under the wrong yoke. Don't just take it off. Break it into pieces and burn it.

By the grace of God. Amen? You're under the wrong yoke. Well, that raises the question again.

Not that begs the question. Begging the question is a logical flaw in an argument. That was extra.

Don't say that begs the question. When what you mean is that raises the question. Okay? That was extra.

So that raises the question. What is the gospel? What is the gospel? Here's what's interesting. It came down to the last phrase.

And as I'm working through the whole time we've been in Romans. Just being saturated in the gospel, the gospel, the gospel. Asking myself, how would you communicate what the gospel is in a succinct manner? As I'm thinking through it, he makes this statement.

He goes and he looks at Isaiah. Several passages in Isaiah. And he brings them together in this statement.

And look at what he says. Go to verse 32. Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith.

But as if it were based on works. There's two ways. It's either faith or works.

They have stumbled over the stumbling stone as it is written. And then here's the statement. Paul is not saying here that this is the gospel.

But if you look at the elements in the statement that he makes. What you see are the elements of a gospel-centered statement. And I'll explain that in a moment.

But for now, just look at the statement. Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, a rock of a fence. And whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.

There's the difference between the two. The difference between the two is that the Gentile has come based upon this truth that we find in the Old Testament. Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of a fence.

And whoever believes in him shall not be put to shame. That is a succinct statement that has all the major elements of the gospel. Let me explain.

Paul makes a statement earlier on in chapter 1. Let me say it. Read it. I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, the Jew first and also the Greek.

This statement for the book of Romans, basically. Everything else that I'm about to say is about this right here. What is the gospel? How is man made right before God, the Jew and also the Greek? For in it, righteousness, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith as it is written.

The righteous shall live by faith. How are we right before God? The answer is the gospel. The gospel is that power that makes us right before God.

So what are the main elements? Let me give you these five things that I believe you see here in this statement. It has all of these characteristics that will help us to remember these five things about what the gospel is. First of all, the gospel is news.

The gospel is news. How does he start his statement out? Behold, listen up. Hear ye, hear ye.

I'm making a statement. I'm making a declaration. The gospel is news.

The word for gospel, euangelion, it means announcement. It means news. The gospel is news.

By the way, let me put this footnote here. We do not live the gospel. We cannot live the gospel.

Okay? That's foolishness. You don't live news. For me to say I'm going to live out the gospel is like me saying I'm going to live out the front page story in the newspaper yesterday.

If I came to you and I said, hey, man, I've decided I'm going to live out the front page story in the newspaper yesterday, what would you say to me? Actually, that's news that happened yesterday. You can't live it out. You don't live the gospel.

And so if somebody walks up to you, well, you know, like St. Francis said, preach the gospel at all times and when necessary, use words. You look at them and you say, he didn't know what the gospel is,

obviously, because nobody who knows what the gospel is would say such foolishness. You have to use words to preach the gospel.

Whether they're written words or spoken words, you have to use words. Why? Because the gospel is news. That would be like saying give the news at all times and when necessary, use words.

And then you turn on the television and there's a bunch of people out there just sort of living their lives. And you look at it and somehow you're supposed to determine what the news is. Are you following me? Is it beginning to register? Because you don't like what I just said because you hear it so often that you've begun to accept it and maybe even say it yourself.

We just have to live out the gospel. You can't live out the gospel. The gospel is news.

Now, you can live in light of the gospel. You can live because of the gospel. But you cannot live the gospel.

Here's the other thing. The gospel is news about what God has done in Jesus Christ. For me to think that I can live the gospel is to put myself in the place of Christ.

That's blasphemy. You don't need the news about Jesus. Just watch me.

Help you if you can say that without having a desire to crawl up under one of these chairs. The gospel is not something we live. The gospel is news from, about, for, through God.

Because the gospel is God-centered. The gospel is not just news. But it is God-centered news.

The center and the core of the gospel is what God has done, not what I have done. The center and the core of the gospel is what God has done. Let me say that again.

The gospel is news from, about, for, and through God. The gospel is not just news. It is God-centered news.

If you are at the center of your discussion about the gospel, then it's not a discussion about the gospel. If it's a discussion about the gospel, God will be at the center of it, not you. God.

It's God-centered. Listen to this. Now, after John was arrested, this is Mark 1, 14.

Now, after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of God. I love that. The gospel is God-centered.

This also means that the gospel is not man-centered. The gospel doesn't begin with God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life. The gospel is not about you.

The gospel is about God. The gospel is about creation, fall, redemption, and consummation. Creation by God.

Fall from God. Redemption to God. Consummation through God.

It is God-centered. What role does man play in the gospel? The role that man plays in the gospel is the foil. You're the problem in the gospel.

But the way we usually talk about the gospel is not at all God-centered. It's man-centered. And here's what it sounds like.

You are so awesome that God made the world just so that one day he could look at you. And you're also so awesome that God sent his son Jesus because he couldn't imagine life without you in eternity. And so he stands here right now pleading with you, begging you because he just cannot imagine his life without you.

Would you please do God the favor of accepting Christ so that he can finally be at peace because he's got you? That is not the gospel. The gospel is God-centered, not man-centered. The gospel is not about how special you are.

The gospel is about how sovereign God is. The gospel is not about how much God needs or wants you. The gospel is about how much you need God.

The gospel is not about how bad things are going to be for God if you don't come. The gospel is about how bad things are for you and will continue to be for you throughout eternity if you do not get God-centered like the gospel. That's the gospel.

Behold, I lay in Zion. That's the statement. Behold, I lay in Zion.

It is about what God has done. It is about who God is. It is not about you.

Thirdly, the gospel is Christ-centered. Behold, I lay in Zion. What? A stumbling stone.

Now, he's referencing here Isaiah 8, 14, Isaiah 28, 16. But in the New Testament, we see this in 1 Peter 2, verses 6-8, Mark 12, 10-11, Matthew 21, 42, Luke 20 and 17, and also in Acts 4, 11. And in all of those places, we see that that stumbling stone is a reference to Christ.

Behold, news, I lay in Zion, God-centered, a stumbling stone, Christ-centered. Christ is the crux of the matter. The gospel is Christ-centered.

Martin Luther says, gospel is and should be nothing else than a discourse or story about Christ. The gospel is Christ-centered, not man-centered. Listen to Andreas Kastenberger.

The gospel is not vaguely theological. It is decidedly and concretely Christological. That is, centered on the salvation provided through the victorious cross-death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The gospel is about Christ. It is news about what God has done in Christ. The gospel is news about what God has done in Christ.

So the gospel is a proclamation of news. It is a God-centered proclamation of news. And it is a Christ-centered proclamation of news.

The gospel is news about what God has done in Christ. Behold, news, I lay in Zion, God-centered, a stumbling stone. And then, a rock of offense.

What is the scandal? There is that Greek word, skandalon. What is the scandal in the gospel? What is it that makes the gospel scandalous news? Folks, it is the cross that makes the gospel scandalous news. The fact that the God of the universe killed His only begotten Son, pouring out His wrath on sin that is

justly deserved by every human being, but has been poured out on His Son as a substitute for those whom the Father had given to the Son before the world began.

The gospel is cross-centered. Listen to this, Acts chapter 2, verses 22 to 24. Men of Israel, hear these words.

Jesus of Nazareth, the man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through Him in your midst. As you yourselves know, this Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God. You crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

God raised Him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for Him to be held by it. 1 Corinthians 1, 22 to 24. For Jews demand signs, Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles.

But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God. It's the cross. 1 Corinthians 2, 1 and 2. And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom.

For I decided to know nothing among you except Christ and Him crucified. Finally, Galatians 3, 1. O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. It is cross-centered.

Now, let's be careful here. When we say it is cross-centered, there are ways that we can even miss that. Because we can use the cross the wrong way.

You've been there before. Haven't you been in Easter services or other kind of services? Where basically the cross is presented like this? Look at how gruesome the cross was. He did that for you.

Can't you live your life for Him? You remember when The Passion of the Christ came out? People would sit. I sat in a theater that the church where I was serving had rented. Watch that film.

One of the most gruesome, grotesque things I've ever seen. Pornographic violence. Awful.

One of the most jarring emotional experiences I've ever had. At the end of the movie, sitting there, silent and sobbing. And then somebody walks up to the front of the theater that's been rented to give an altar call.

Based on what? Do you see how gruesome that was? That's what He did for you. That's how much He loved you. When I say cross-centered, that's not what I mean.

That you use the cross as a tool to help men know how much they're worth. No. Cross-centered means you help men understand how significant and weighty their sin is.

The cross is a reminder how holy God is. The cross is a reminder that God demands payment and satisfaction. The cross is a reminder that you may not approach God with your sinful, filthy life and your filthy hands.

And that there must be propitiation. That the wrath of God must be poured out upon sin. That God's righteousness has to be satisfied.

Justice has to be served. And you were not worthy. Christ alone was worthy.

And on the cross, He suffered and He died because He was worthy. And He rose again on the third day because death had no right to hold Him. That's what cross-centered theology is.

We take the cross and turn it into man-centered theology. That's how egocentric and narcissistic we are. Whether it's southern gospel.

When He was on the cross, I was on His mind. Or contemporary Christian. Crucified.

Laid behind the stone. He lived and died, rejected and alone, like a rose trampled on the ground. You took the fall and thought of me above all.

How dare we? How dare we? It is the glory and righteousness and holiness of the Father that is vindicated on the cross. Not my worth. It is the worth of Christ that is vindicated on the cross.

It is the magnitude of my sin that is demonstrated on the cross. And that is why it's scandalous. It's scandalous.

Because we listen to that and what do people say in our day? People say in our day, I look at that and it's cosmic child abuse. To quote some. Famous Anglican rector has said that this view of the cross is like thinking of God as an angry man who comes home and he's angry with his wife.

But he kicks his dog to take it out on the dog. We don't understand the cross. We don't understand sin.

We don't understand the Levitical law. And how God foreshadowed for his people in types and shadows. The blood of bulls and lambs and goats.

Giving them a picture in their mind. That without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. And then one day on that high holy day when they're thinking back and remembering the exodus.

Remembering how a lamb was slain and his blood was placed on the door post so that the death angel would pass by. Remembering in the desert the serpent that was placed high on that cross. And that they would look at him and live.

And now Jesus Christ. Him who knew no sin becomes sin for us. That we might become the righteousness of God in him.

That is not cosmic child abuse. That is God vindicating his righteousness. And allowing himself to still have mercy on you.

A sinner who deserves to hang on that cross. And then spend eternity separated from God in hell. But the gospel.

The scandal. Is that it wasn't you. It was the spotless sinless lamb of God who died in your place.

That's the gospel. It is news about what God has done in Christ through the cross. That's the gospel.

You can't live that. But you also can't live without it. The gospel is grace centered.

The next statement he makes. Behold. News.

I am laying in Zion. God centered. A stone of stumbling.

A rock of a fence. Christ centered. Cross centered.

And then look. Whoever lives a life worthy of him. No.

Whoever believes in him. Whoever believes in him. That's the answer.

Here's the amazing thing. And a lot of people will go here and they will say. We'll see right there.

There's the work that man does. Man does the believing work. You're absolutely right.

Man must believe. He must believe. But watch this.

Go back to verse 30. What shall we say then? The Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness. Except for the fact that they made a determination.

No. Have attained it. That is a righteousness that is by faith.

Well faith was the pursuit. Well if faith is the pursuit. Then the first clause is a lie.

The first clause says that they did not pursue. If faith was a pursuit. Then the first clause is not true.

In other words. Even in this statement you have election. Even in this statement you have election.

It's grace. It's the grace of God. Listen to this.

John 1, 16 and 17. And from his fullness we have all received grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses.

Grace and truth come through Jesus Christ. It's grace centered. Acts 15, 11.

But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus. Just as they will. Romans 5, 15.

But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass. Much more had the grace of God and the free gift.

By the grace of that one man Jesus Christ. Abounded for many. Ephesians 2, 4 to 9. Perhaps the most beautiful presentation of this anywhere in the Bible.

But God. Being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us. Even when we were dead in our trespasses.

Dead in our trespasses. Made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved.

And raised us up with him. And seated us with him in the heavenly places. In Christ Jesus.

So that in the coming ages. He might show the immeasurable riches of his grace and kindness toward us. In Christ Jesus.

For by grace you have been saved. Through faith. And this is not your own doing.

It is the gift of God. Not as a result of works. So that no man can boast.

How many times do you see Christ Jesus in grace? In that one paragraph. The gospel is grace centered. Grace centered.

Not just for your salvation. But also for your sanctification. The gospel is grace centered.

Finally. The gospel is eschatological. In that last phrase.

Behold. It's news. I am laying in Zion.

It's God centered. A stone of stumbling. Christ centered.

A rock of offense. Cross centered. Whoever believes.

Grace centered. Will not be put to shame. That's eschatological.

That's not psychological. It's eschatological. When it says he will not be put to shame.

That is a reference to the judgment to come. That is a reference to that day. When you will stand before God.

That doesn't mean that you poke your chest out. Why would you? There is no boasting. When you understand that it is of grace.

Where is boasting then? Paul argues earlier on. It is excluded. There's no boasting.

So this is not psychological. This is eschatological. We have hope.

In the gospel. Now. Mind you.

Because it's eschatological. What do we eliminate? We eliminate any possibility. That somehow the gospel is just how we get in.

And then we have to work to keep ourselves. If that were the case. I have no eschatological hope.

Are you saved? Yeah I am right now. But. Depends on how firmly I hold on to this thing.

Now we laugh at that. But do you live like it? Do you live like it? Do you believe that the grace that saves you. Is the grace that keeps you? Do you believe that you will stand before God one day.

Because of this news. About what God has done. In Christ.

Through the cross. By grace. For your eschatological hope.

This has been John Hendricks. In short. The gospel is the life altering news that Jesus Christ.

The eternal son of God became man. Lived a sinless life under the law. Died for sinners and rose again to reconcile them to himself.

Eternally victorious over every enemy that stood between God and man. Now because of this redemptive work. There is nothing that separates those who believe.

From their creator. And all the benefits that he promises. In him.

That's the gospel. That's the gospel. And the difference between.
Israel. And the Gentiles. Is quite simply this.
One. Is holding out hope. Pursuing.
Racing towards. There's a racing metaphor here in the language. Racing toward a law.
With the belief. That eventually it will be attained. And through attaining it.
Righteousness. Right standing with God. And another.
Who simply believes. The pronouncement of the news. Of what God has done.
In Christ. Through the cross. By grace.
For the eschatological hope. Of those who place their faith in him. The difference.
Is the gospel. That's the difference. Our hope.
Is the gospel. And it's our only hope. Let's hold on to this.
Because we have a tendency not to. I'll close with this. It's a little bit more lengthy.
From Carson. But necessary. Especially for those of us who are in the process of raising children.
And desire to see them come to faith. And live their lives. In a gospel centered way.
Perhaps more common yet. Is the tendency to assume the gospel. While devoting creative energy and
passion to other issues.
Marriage. Happiness. Prosperity.
Evangelism. The poor. Wrestling with Islam.
Wrestling with the pressures of secularization. Bioethics. Dangers on the left.
Dangers on the right. The list is endless. This overlooks the fact.
That our hearers. Inevitably. Are drawn toward that about which we are most passionate.
Every teacher knows that. My students are unlikely to learn all that I teach them. They are most likely to
learn that about which I am most excited.
If the gospel is merely assumed. While relatively peripheral issues ignite our passion. We will train a new
generation to downplay the gospel.
And focus zeal on the periphery. Moreover. If in fact we focus on the gospel.
We shall soon see. That this gospel rightly understood. Directs us how to think about.
And what to do about. A substantial array of other issues. These issues.
If they are analyzed on their own. As important as they are. Remain relatively peripheral.

Ironically. If the gospel itself. Is deeply pondered.

And remains at the center of our thinking and living. It powerfully addresses. Wrestles with.

All. Other. Issues.

You don't put the gospel down. To go deal with other issues. And then come back to the gospel.

You pick the gospel up. And look at everything. Through the prism.

Of the gospel. It's not. Yeah.

I know. I know. And we get the gospel right.

But there's this other stuff over here. That we got to give our attention to. No.

The gospel stays here. It is the gospel. That orients my thinking.

On every other issue. So that. I can approach it rightly.

Because if I don't. Then what happens is. I'm putting my hope.

In something else. A couple of examples. Politics.

If politics is what I give my focus and my attention to. And as I'm focusing on politics. And as I'm putting my attention on politics.

What I'm doing is I'm saying. Over here is where I do my gospel work. But out there.

Is where I do my other work. I've completely missed the boat. What does the gospel say.

About politics. And when I say. What does the gospel say about politics.

I don't mean. Is there a proof text that I can use to run off on. But when I look at this through a God centered.

Christ centered. Cross centered. Grace centered.

Eschatological perspective. How does it reorient the way I think. About this particular issue.

Marriage. Marriage. I can think about marriage.

And just go over here and say. Here are rules and principles about being married. These are things that we've found through surveys.

That help people be happier in their marriage. So you go over there. And you do this stuff in marriage.

Or I can say. Here's the gospel. There is news.

About what God has done in Christ. Through the cross. By grace.

With an eschatological focus. And in fact. My marriage fits into this picture.

How so? Well the book of Ephesians makes that very clear. Doesn't it? I'm speaking to you about Christ and the church. That's what he says at the end of his discourse about marriage.

Wives. Be submissive to your husbands. As unto the Lord.

Husbands. Love your wives. As Christ loved the church.

Why? Well because over in Ephesians chapter 1 and chapter 2 and chapter 3. We saw that the whole of life and the whole of the gospel. Is about Christ and his church and its unity. If you love Christ and his church.

And want his church to be unified. And you view your marriage as a living breathing picture. And here's how you exemplify that.

In the context of a marriage that is devoted to the gospel. Not just devoted to having peace in your house. Huge difference between the two.

One last one. Our children. I can go over here.

And focus on how I get my children to behave a certain way. Or. I can look at it through the lens of the gospel.

And what it is that we are trying to accomplish. There is news. Of what God has done.

In Christ. Through the cross. By grace.

That gives us our eschatological hope. And what I am doing today. Tomorrow.

The next day. As a father of children. Is rooted in.

Grounded in. And centered in that. Not.

The gospel is how I get saved. Parenting needs something more advanced. The gospel is how I get saved.

My marriage requires. A trained psychotherapist. The gospel is how I get saved.

But in politics. You got to make compromises to get along. Wrong answer.

Wrong hope. Wrong picture. Behold.

It's news. I am laying in Zion. It's God-centered.

A stumbling stone. It's Christ-centered. A rock of a fence.

It's cross-centered. Whoever believes in him. It's grace-centered.

Will not be put to shame. That's eschatological. Is this all? Of the gospel? You will spend eternity.

Marveling. Over the depths. Of the riches of God in Christ.

But. I tell you what. You keep this in mind.

Hold on to this text. Hold on to those. And I apologize.

I was misleading. I said there were five things. There were actually six.

Hope you don't mind. That I threw in your eschatological hope. Man.

Five things. Now I got six things. Hope you don't mind.

That we added that eschatological hope thing. Not just for today. But forever.

We remember that. It's news. It's God-centered.

It's Christ-centered. It's cross-centered. It's grace-centered.

Eschatological. What is the gospel? It is an announcement. Of what God has done.

In Christ. Through the cross. By grace.

To give eternal hope. To those who have faith in Him. That will do in a pinch.

Let's pray.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/22/SID22623.mp3>

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