

DOCTRINE MATTERS: ESSENTIAL TRUTHS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

Message 18: The Gospel Call

If you will realize that conversion always accompanies proclaiming the gospel and the Spirit's work, then you will stop trying to do the Spirit's work, and you will give yourself to proclaiming the gospel. Just because we don't know everything doesn't mean we don't know anything!

- Mark Dever, *The Gospel and Personal Evangelism*

God so calls as He allures; He does not force, but draw. The freedom of the will is not taken away, but the stubbornness of it is conquered. 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power' (Psalm 110:3).

- Thomas Watson, Puritan

"You would not have called to me unless I had been calling to you," said the Lion.

- C.S. Lewis, *The Silver Chair*

1 Corinthians 1:1-31 (ESV)

¹ Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes, ² To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours: ³ Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴ I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵ that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge— ⁶ even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— ⁷ so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁸ who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. ¹⁰ I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. ¹¹ For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. ¹² What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ." ¹³ Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? ¹⁴ I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, ¹⁵ so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name. ¹⁶ (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) ¹⁷ For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. ¹⁸ For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart." ²⁰ Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. ²² For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, ²³ but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. ²⁶ For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸ God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, ²⁹ so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. ³⁰ And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, ³¹ so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

Three types of "Gospel Call":

Ours' (_____)

1 Corinthians 1:18-21 (ESV)

¹⁸ For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart." ²⁰ Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.

2 Corinthians 5:20 (ESV)

²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

2 Corinthians 4:1-6 (ESV)

¹ Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. ² But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. ³ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴ In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵ For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

God's (_____)

1 Corinthians 1:9 (ESV)

⁹ God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Peter 2:9 (ESV)

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Acts 2:39 (ESV)

³⁹ ... the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.

Romans 8:29-30 (ESV)

²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Theirs' (_____)

1 Corinthians 1:2 (ESV)

² To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours ...

Acts 2:21 (ESV)

²¹ And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

Romans 10:13 (ESV)

¹³ For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Three Elements of the Gospel Call

The good news is that the one and only God, who is holy, made us in his image to know him. But we sinned and cut ourselves off from him. In his great love, God became a man in Jesus, lived a perfect life, and died on the cross, thus fulfilling the law himself and taking on himself the punishment for the sins of all those who would ever turn and trust in him. He rose again from the dead, showing that God accepted Christ's sacrifice and that God's wrath against us had been exhausted. He now calls us to repent of our sins and to trust in Christ alone for our forgiveness. If we repent of our sins and trust in Christ, we are born again into a new life, an eternal life with God.

– Mark Dever, *The Gospel and Personal Evangelism*

1. A clear _____ of the _____ concerning salvation.

The Gospel is more – but never less than – _____!

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 (ESV)

³For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,

- 1) All people have _____.

Romans 3:23 (ESV)

²³ ... all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God ...

- 2) The penalty for sin is _____.

Romans 6:23 (ESV)

²³ ... the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- 3) Jesus Christ _____ to pay the penalty for our sins.

Romans 5:8 (ESV)

⁸ ... God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

- 4) Jesus _____ to give us everlasting life.

Romans 8:11 (ESV)

¹¹ If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

2. A clear _____ to respond to Christ personally in _____ and _____.

Matthew 11:28-30 (ESV)

²⁸ Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Any genuine gospel proclamation must include ...

Acts 20:18-21 (ESV)

¹⁸ And when they came to him, he said to them: "You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, ¹⁹ serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews; ²⁰ how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, ²¹ testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Luke 24:46-47 (ESV)

⁴⁶ "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, ⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

Acts 2:37-38 (ESV)

³⁷ Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" ³⁸ And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 3:19-20 (ESV)

¹⁹ Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, ²⁰ that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus ...

2 Corinthians 7:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.

3. A clear _____ of _____ and _____.

While our salvation includes so many peripheral benefits, the primary promise of the gospel message is a restored relationship with God culminating in life with Him forever.

John 3:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

The **Importance** of the Gospel Call:

2 Corinthians 5:16-19 (ESV)

¹⁶ From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸ All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

Romans 10:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?

Theology is for **doxology** and **devotion**—that is, the praise of God and the practice of godliness.

- J.I. Packer

NEXT WEEK: **Regeneration**