

Scripture Memory Passage - 1 Chronicles 16:28-29

How do you know the love of God, and on what ground do you relate to God? We see the love of God manifest in uncountable ways, but where do we see it most clearly, where do we see it most concentrated and most fully? And then, how is it that we relate to God? Do we relate to God by earning his favor, showing him how deserving we are, convincing him through our own efforts that we are worthy? Not hardly. The answer to both of these questions is the gospel. We know the love of God most clearly as we know and understand the gospel. We relate to God based on the love of God manifest in the gospel.

Last week we looked at Core Value 1 - Working for God's glory. We saw that this is God's chief end, and it is ours as well. We said that this is at the top of the list for our Core Values because all of the other Core Values help us to work out how to glorify God. This morning we're going to look at our second Core Value, Growing in Gospel-Centeredness. This is the chief way we can work for God's glory. **The Christian life that brings glory to God is the Christian life always growing in gospel-centeredness.**

Scripture Passage: Various

The Gospel is First

1. **1 Corinthians 1:17-18; 2:1-5** Paul preached the gospel to them, because it was of primary importance (**1 Corinthians 15:3**). When Paul first came to Corinth, he knew it wasn't the election of a new president, outward moral reform, "niceness", or a universal acceptance of everything somebody might believe in, that would bring about the needed change. The gospel alone is the power of God for salvation, as it works to transform you each day to live a life to glorify God.
2. **Romans 1:16-17** Here also Paul says the gospel is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes.
3. What is the "gospel"? The gospel is the transformational good news of the forgiveness of sins and eternal life that God has achieved for us through Christ, received by faith, and the eventual restoration and renewal of all things that have been distorted by sin. It tells us of a good and gracious God who created all things very good, it tells us of the Fall, which affected all of God's good creation, it tells us of Christ's appearing to live a life fulfilling all righteousness, dying as a substitute for sin, and rising from the grave victorious over sin, Satan, and death. The gospel tells us how to be in right relationship with God, and how, through Christ, God will bring about "*new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*" (**2 Peter 3:13**).
4. **Ephesians 2:1-10** The gospel, then, deals with our relationship with God, and puts us in right relation. No longer relating to God by works, but through faith in his Son who loved us and died for us. As long as we try to relate to God based on our work or merit, we stand guilty and condemned. But the gospel reveals to us that we can relate to God based on the work and merit of Christ, and instead of guilty and condemned we are innocent and free to live for God.

Transition: If the gospel is first, then what do we do once we have believed the gospel and by faith received its promises? This is where we must understand that the gospel is first, but also, the gospel is all.

The Gospel is All

1. But having been made right with God through faith, do we move on from the gospel and count it as an elementary thing, or do we make the gospel our habitation and ground for always relating to God?
 1. **Think about the way we progress through math classes in school, beginning with learning to identify the shapes of numbers, then learning to add them together, then subtract, multiply, divide, figure out what "x" is, and so on. It might be the tendency to think of the gospel like basic math, simply adding or subtracting, but once we learn that we move on to more advanced classes. But don't think of the gospel as the class for basic Christianity to prepare you for things more advanced. This is going to require a shift in thinking for some of us here this morning - think instead of the gospel as the entire school in which all good Christian instruction and experience takes place. The gospel should be permeating all of the Christian life, so that everything you think, say, and do have the gospel as the heart and soul.**
2. **1 Corinthians 15:1-2** Paul was zealous to preach the gospel to believers, not because they needed to be saved again, but because the gospel is the ground for our continued relation to God and with each other. We never outgrow the gospel or graduate from it.
 1. D.A. Carson says of this letter to the Corinthians that it, "repeatedly shows how the gospel rightly works out in the massive transformation of attitudes, morals, relationships, and cultural interactions... Just as Paul found it necessary to hammer away at the outworking of the gospel in every domain of the lives of the Corinthians, so we must do the same today..."

3. Turn to **Romans 1:15**. It's been said that there are 3 ways we respond to God. First, we can respond to God by rejecting his law and living however we want. Second, we can also reject God by embracing and obeying his law in an attempt to earn our salvation. Both of these wrong, and neither is better than the other. The third way of responding to God is submitting to his law in response to the gospel.
 1. Look at **Romans 1** where Paul speaks to the irreligious, and there you see the rejecting of God's law and living to please self. **Romans 1:32** *"Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them."*
 2. Then in **Romans 2** Paul addresses the moralist. **Romans 2:17-24** *"But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God and know his will and approve what is excellent, because you are instructed from the law; and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth— you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law. For, as it is written, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."*
 3. Then, Paul continues in his writing to the Romans, and in chapter 3 he says that the only way to be justified, to gain a right standing before God, is by faith in the work that Jesus has accomplished (**Romans 3:23-25**).
4. Nearly all of Paul's letters are this way. They are written to Christians, but they are explanations of the gospel; explorations of the impact of the gospel upon the Christian life.
5. Tim Keller writes that, "you must let the gospel argue with you. You must let the gospel sink down deeply until it changes your views and the structures of your motivation. You must be trained and disciplined by the gospel."
 1. **Practically, what does this mean? How do we apply this?** We're still in Romans 3, and here we see how the gospel deals with our sinful pride. **Romans 3:27** shows us that there is no place for boasting when we understand the gospel. It's not human achievement, the great decision to trust, but the kindness of our God through Jesus Christ. As Christians, we should be humble people serving a mighty and holy God, boasting only in him. See also **Philippians 2:5-11**.
 2. Maybe your struggle is greed, or stinginess, or selfishness. What would motivate you to be generous? Do we say, "Give, because God will give you back ten-fold"? "Give, because then God will approve of you"? This isn't a change of heart, but only a change of behavior, unpleasing to God. Do we just abandon generosity, then? That would be swinging the other way, from moralism to relativism. Instead, what we need is for the gospel to be at the center of our lives and actions. **2 Corinthians 8:9** *"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich."*
 3. What about our marriages, then? Does the gospel help us in our marriages? It certainly does. Let's take the husbands first. Do we try to motivate men to be good and godly husbands just because we said so? That will only get us a rung or two up the ladder before it falls backward on us. **Ephesians 5:25-28** *"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself."*
 4. Wives, especially those whose husbands don't lead them in the ways of the Lord, does the gospel give you help in relating to your husband? **1 Peter 3:1-4** Peter says it is respectful and pure conduct toward your husband that will accomplish a great deal, not perishable external beauty, but the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit. But maybe your husband isn't worthy of respect. Do you see how **v.1** begins, though? That word "likewise" should make us look back to see what was written earlier. Let's read **vv.21-25**. Do you see Christ, suffering for you when you were an enemy, sinless but bearing our sins, healing our wounds? Did we deserve what Christ accomplished for us; were we worthy of his great sacrifice? Again, "let the gospel argue with you...let the gospel sink down deeply and change your views and the structures of your motivation."
 5. These are just a few examples of how we can and should be applying the gospel to daily life. The gospel should help transform our relationships with others, and shape our heart-motivations. There is no part of our life that should be untouched and unaffected by the gospel.

Conclusion: People of Pillar, we are committed to the gospel. We want to glorify God by knowing Christ more fully and making Christ more fully known. We know Christ more fully as we allow the gospel to work in our lives, and we make Christ more fully known as we allow the gospel to work out of our lives. We are committed to teaching and preaching gospel-centered sermons, to show how all of Scripture relates to Christ and helps us to understand and apply the gospel. We are committed to the application of the gospel as we work it out in Community Groups and conversations each week. We are determined to stand firmly on the gospel, and to understand that the gospel is the ground for our right relationship with God and with each other.

Family

Table Talk



October 9, 2016

Family Discussion

1. We see over and over again in the New Testament the gospel being proclaimed. Even as we read the Old Testament, we see the culminating work of God pointing us to the promise of the gospel through the coming Savior, Jesus Christ. No part of God's Word can be removed from the context of the gospel- it is the center of our Christian faith and the axis of God's plan regarding all of creation. If the gospel is so vitally important, we must know what it is. So, what is the gospel? Read the listed Scriptures and discuss as a family the definition of the gospel.
2. Knowing what the gospel is is essential, but we should not, and cannot, stop there if we desire it to change our lives to the glory of God. The gospel isn't just a definition to log away in our minds, it is the living truth that should inform and guide all our thinking and living. Without the gospel of Jesus Christ, we have no hope. Therefore, do not hope in anything other than the gospel. How can you make the gospel the center of your thinking and living?

GOD'S TRUTH

The Christian life that brings glory to God is the Christian life always growing in gospel-centeredness!

Key Verse

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

Romans 1:16

TABLE READING

Lead your kids into God's Word...

1. EPHESIANS 2:1-10; ROMANS 3:21-26; ROMANS 5:1-2; 1 PETER 1:3-5
2. PHILIPPIANS 2:1-16

SCRIPTURE MEMORY:

I CHRONICLES 16:28-29



"AND THESE WORDS THAT I COMMAND YOU TODAY SHALL BE ON YOUR HEART. YOU SHALL TEACH THEM DILIGENTLY TO YOUR CHILDREN, AND SHALL TALK OF THEM WHEN YOU SIT IN YOUR HOUSE, AND WHEN YOU WALK BY THE WAY, AND WHEN YOU LIE DOWN, AND WHEN YOU RISE. YOU SHALL BIND THEM AS A SIGN ON YOUR HAND, AND THEY SHALL BE AS FRONTLETS BETWEEN YOUR EYES. YOU SHALL WRITE THEM ON THE DOORPOSTS OF YOUR HOUSE AND ON YOUR GATES." - DEUTERONOMY 6:6-9 (ESV)