

Ignorance of the Gospel

“Ignorance”: ‘not knowing, or knowing wrongly’.

Introduction

This virus makes believers think that the Gospel is a set of church rules, culture, or good behaviour. But the Gospel is a Person and an event. 1 Cor. 15:1-4 says “I declare unto you the gospel... how that Christ died for our sins... was buried, and rose again the third day”.

When we do not know the real Gospel, we preach Moses, culture, or ourselves instead of Christ. That is ignorance. The only remedy for ignorance is enlightenment, through Christ and His word.

John 8:12 “*I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.*”

2 Tim. 2:15 *Study to show yourself approved.*

Objectives

By the end of this virus, every learner will:

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(1) Know the basic elements of the Gospel: Death, burial, resurrection, ascension, return (1 Cor. 15:3-4, 24-26).

(2) See Christ as the only perfect model. Not Abraham, Moses, Elijah, John or Paul. Only Jesus lived sin free (1 Pet. 2:22).

(3) Understand the Gospel's power in real life. It saves eternally, unites Jews and Gentiles, and shows God's love through our hands (1 John 3:17).

(4) Keep unity without mixing error. We keep love, peace, unity (Eph. 4:3), but we do not cancel Christ's commands or call "culture" sin, or put stumbling blocks in the way of our brother (Rom. 14:13).

Presentation

1. What is The Gospel? Four Parts

1 Cor. 15:1-4, 24-26 state the four parts as follows:

(1) Death.

Christ died for our sins (1 Cor. 15:3). That is how God forgives us (Isa. 53:5).

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(2) Burial.

He was really dead and he was buried (1 Cor. 15:4). No fake death.

(3) Resurrection.

He rose on the third day (1 Cor. 15:4) and was seen by Cephas and others in turn (1 Cor. 15:5). The witnesses to His resurrection prove that He beat sin and death (Rom. 4:25).

(4) Ascension and Return.

He went to heaven in a real body (Acts 1:9). He is coming back in flesh and bone (Luke 24:39), not flesh and blood (1 Cor. 15:50).

He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet. At the end, when He puts an end to all authority and power, He will deliver the kingdom to God the Father. The last enemy to be destroyed is death (1 Cor. 15:24-26).

Whilst living by His Spirit, believers are reigning with Him to be culminated when He returns.

That is it. Simple. 1 Cor. 1:18 says “the preaching of the cross is... the power of God”.

Anyone who says “too simple, too foolish” (1 Cor. 1:23) has no other remedy. Rejecting this equates to no salvation (Acts 4:12).

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Acts 4:12 *Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*

2. Christ Is The Only Perfect Model

We do not preach Abraham, Moses, Elijah, John Baptist, or even Paul as the model. Why? They all sinned (Rom. 3:23).

Only Christ lived sin-free. Heb. 4:15 says that He was in all things “tempted as we are, yet without sin”.

So the Gospel is “preach Christ with His sin-free character”.

Follow Christ’s example. “Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps.” (1 Pet. 2:21)

God wants us to live as He would live among people:

1 John 2:6 *He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.*

3. The Gospel Enables Selfless Living

No-one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:3). To confess and believe,

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in accordance with Rom. 10:9-10, we must have the Spirit:

Rom. 10:9-10 ⁹ *If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

When we believe the Gospel, we are baptised with the Holy Spirit, and through the Spirit we are born again with a new heart to obey.

John 14:15-18 ¹⁵ *“If you love Me, keep My commandments. ¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.”*

2 Cor. 5:17 *If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*

The Spirit enables us to “keep His commandments”, to “keep the ordinances ... as I delivered them” (1 Cor. 1:2).

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The Gospel unites us as one body, having broken down the middle wall of separation (Eph. 2:14). Jews and Greeks (Gentiles) were mixed in the assembly. The Gospel did not break them into “Jewish church” and “Greek church”. It taught them to live together in Christ’s love (Rom. 10:12, 2 Cor. 5:14-17).

But “administering the Gospel has no traditional approach”. Rom. 14:1-23 means that we do not fight over food, holy days, dress, as long as we do not break Christ’s commands: “the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 14:17).

4. The Real Gospel is Love with Hands and Purity in Heart

***1 John 3:17 (NIV)** If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?*

If we preach the Gospel but have no pity, we are liars (1 John 1:6).

As James wrote: “pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit

orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world” (Jam. 1:27).

Rom. 13:1-7 says “honour authorities”. Holiness, hospitality, humility are the hallmark of a person following the true Gospel. And these should not be reserved only for believers. In 1 John 3:17-19, we are entreated to share love with all.

5. What about culture, food, dress, gender roles?

Christ has shown us “the Way” in which to walk. The Gospel:

- * Approves what is good: ordinances and behaviours that unite people (1 Cor. 11:7-16, Acts 13:1-3; Rom. 14:5-6). Jesus is not against culture unless it worships demons (1 Cor. 10:14, 1 Cor. 10:19-20; Acts 17:22-25).
- * Changes behaviours that are destructive, teaching us to drop sin and error.

We do not divide over food (Rom. 14:1-3, 1 Cor. 8:13), or worship days (Rom. 14:5-6).

Neither are we in bondage to “the elements”:

Gal. 4:8-10⁸ *Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no*

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gods. ⁹ But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? ¹⁰ Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. ¹¹ I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

We let no one judge us “in food or in drink, or regarding a feast or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ” (Col. 2:16-17).

But at the same time, we do not cancel Christ’s commands. 1 Cor. 11:7-16; 1 Cor. 14:34-35; 1 Tim. 2:11-15 are “commandments of the Lord” (1 Cor. 14:37); they are not culture.

Further, we “flee idolatry” (1 Cor. 10:14). We steer well clear of anything that has any hint of paganism or worship of anyone but God. We do not follow the multitude to do evil (Ex. 23:2).

We pursue peace “till we all come in the unity of the faith” (Eph. 4:13), on the foundation Christ laid (1 Cor. 3:10-11), not on traditions of men that break His Word. We “contend earnestly for the faith that was once delivered to the saints” (Jude 3) and “pursue the things which make for

peace and the things by which one may edify another” (Rom. 14:19, see also 1 Pet. 3:10-12).

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. What are the four basic parts of the Gospel?
 - * Death for sins, burial, resurrection on the third day, ascension and promised return (1 Cor. 15:3-4, 24-26).
2. Why do we preach Christ only as the model, not Moses or Paul?
 - * Only Christ lived without sin (Heb. 4:15). Moses, Paul, all men sinned (Rom. 3:23). We follow Christ: “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.” (1 Cor. 11:1)
3. Does the Gospel destroy all culture and tradition?
 - * No. It keeps good culture that unites (Acts 13:1-3; Rom. 14:5-6). But it destroys culture that worships demons (1 Cor. 10:19-20) or breaks Christ’s commands (1 Cor. 14:37).

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4. How do I know if I really believe the Gospel?

* Two tests:

- i. Your heart is pure like Christ, loving one another fervently (1 Pet. 1:22, John 13:35).
- ii. Your hands show love (1 John 3:17).
No pity equals no Gospel. “By their fruits you will know them.” (Matt. 7:20)

Prayer

Father, deliver us from ignorance of the true Gospel. Burn '1 Cor. 15:3-4' into our hearts. Make Christ our only model, His death our only hope, His return our only future. Teach us to live as You would live among people. Let love flow from our hands and holiness from our hearts. Keep us united in truth, not divided by tradition. In Jesus's name, the Gospel Himself, Amen.