

“BENEFITS OF PREACHING GOSPEL TO YOURSELF.”

Rev. Robert T. Woodyard

First Christian Reformed Church

June 30, 2019, 10:30 AM

Scripture Texts: I Corinthians 15:1-4

Prayer: Holy Father, may the words of my mouth and the responses of all our hearts glorify you, exalt Jesus, honor your Word and edify your people according to our need. Come, Holy Spirit, help us I pray.

Introduction.

You have heard of the song that does not end. Well this sermon series on preaching the Gospel to ourselves may seem like the Lenten sermon series that does not end.

This series has been like going into a mine and finding a vein of gold and start digging. That vein leads to another one a little deeper, and then another one, and another one. And here we are several months later still digging, still uncovering nuggets, truths.

But today we come to the end, where I sum up what we have been talking about when we say we should preach the Gospel to ourselves every day.

One of the main points I have tried to make over these many weeks is that the Gospel is not a one-time thing for when we get saved. We never outgrow our need for the Gospel, it has everyday relevance for all of our lives. We never mature past the point of needing to know how the Gospel applies to every situation and circumstance in our lives.

What is the Gospel?

Paul gives one answer in I Corinthians 15. Paul has passed on to us a wonderful and beautiful gift, the best gift, the gift of first importance. Having received it now we must pass it on, first to ourselves. But to do that we have to know the benefits of preaching the Gospel to ourselves.

Let me give five of those benefits.

Benefits of preaching the Gospel to yourself.

First, the Gospel reveals to us the glory of God.

In the Gospel God shows us what Moses asked to see and what God showed Him. In my second sermon in this series I preached from those texts in Exodus 33 and 34 where

Moses dared to ask God to reveal God's glory to Him and God answered in an unexpected way.

Exodus 34:6-8 The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, 7 keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."

In the OT God showed Moses His glory through the Gospel. He showed Him His moral perfection, His righteousness and holiness and justice, His wrath on sin and iniquity. And He showed Him the beauty of His grace and mercy, His steadfast love and faithfulness.

Everything in this world exists to draw attention to the glory to God and everything happens in this world to draw attention to the glory to God. If it doesn't seem like it or I can't figure it out that's about me, not God. But preaching the Gospel everyday is a sure way to see God's glory.

If you want to see and know what Moses saw, reflect on the Gospel, speak the truth of the Gospel to yourself. To know God, you have to know the Gospel, without it God is a faint, distant deity, not very accessible or useful to us.

To know the glory of God we must know Jesus who reveals the glory of God to us in the Gospel. We have been given "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (II Corinthians 4:6).

Preach the Gospel to yourself to see and know what is of first importance, the glory of God.

Second, the Gospel reveals the grace of God in the cross of Jesus and our need.

The cross is the very heart of the Gospel, it is as Paul says of first importance. It is as important to you as food and drink are to your physical body. Without it you die spiritually.

More than any other event in human history the cross reveals the fulness of the glory of God to us. It reveals His just and righteous wrath on our sin and iniquity, and it reveals the riches of His grace and mercy and love toward repentant sinners. We see the horror and danger of sin and we see the totally undeserved answer and deliverance from our sin.

The great news of the Gospel humbles us at the greatness of our need and the greatness of our Savior to meet that need. This produces a great humility in our souls, concerning ourselves and toward others.

You don't have to try to impress people, put on appearances, act like you have it all together, be the perfect son or daughter, husband or wife, father or mother, church member.

The truth be told Jesus had to die on the cross for each one of us, so just how great a person are you? You are a sinner saved only by grace. Get over yourself. We are worse than we think or know, and it's OK, because Jesus is a greater Savior than all our sin.

Paul boasted in his weakness and failings and shortcomings. This is the effect of knowing the Gospel and being able to preach it and apply it to himself.

I Timothy 1:15-16 NIV Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. 16 But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life.

Preaching the Gospel to ourselves means facing the truth about our sins, and feeling the guilt and shame of our sin, but then running to the cross, to Jesus and reminding ourselves of the undeserved forgiveness and mercy and grace of God.

And after you have preached it to yourself, apply it to others, to your spouse and children, relatives, church members. Extend the Gospel, be gracious, merciful, slow to anger, quick to forgive, patient as God is patient with you. When you preach the gospel to yourself you can extend it to others.

Third, preaching the Gospel to ourselves causes us to grow in the grace of God.

The Gospel is foundation that you can spend the rest of your life building on. The Gospel is what grows in you the graces of love, kindness, compassion toward others. The Gospel is the Holy Spirit and the life changing and life transforming and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.

The Gospel is the way not to stay the way you are, the way not to continue in your sin and sinful ways and habit. The Gospel is the way to break free from the chains that keep you in bondage. The power of the Gospel is greater than the power of my sin. The Gospel is the way to freedom, the way to self-control and self-discipline.

Preaching the Gospel to yourself and believing what we preach and relying on the Holy Spirit for its application is the strongest way to grow in grace and Christ-likeness.

Some of you feel stuck where you are. Some of you haven't made progress in the Gospel since we started talking about this. For some of you the Gospel has not become greater to you since we started. The Gospel gets greater when grace becomes greater because your sin gets uglier. The Gospel gets greater when Christ becomes greater to you, and His resurrection more astonishing and His forgiveness more mind blowing and His love more incredible.

The Gospel doesn't let us play church or play religion or dabble in our faith or come to worship when we don't have anything better to do or when we are feeling guilty.

The Gospel shakes us to the core. The Gospel is a hostile takeover of enemy territory, transforming our hearts into a dwelling place of the Holy Spirit who reconciles us with our Father in heaven.

Don't let the Gospel become small or boring or a matter of indifference. Make it to increase by reminding yourself daily what is of first importance.

Fourth, preaching the Gospel to yourself produces great hope.

Our greatest and worst sins are completely forgiven by the blood of Jesus and there is opened up for us a way to be in the presence of a holy God.

The future of every Gospel believing and Gospel preaching Christian is utterly glorious. The hope of the Gospel is a new heaven and a new earth and eternal life.

Romans 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

II Corinthians 4:16-17 So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. 17 For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.

This hope enables us to more than survive, but even thrive in difficulties and long trials. The Gospel reminds us the world is fallen and we must prepare for suffering by learning to trust in God's sovereign grace, knowing that he loves us, because he gave us his Son.

Knowing the Gospel means your journey is going to end in a perfect, sinless, uncorrupted, untainted, tear free, feast and festival of pure eternal joy, and this completely changes your perspective on the trivial, temporal, fleeting, passing pleasures of this life.

The Gospel gives us hope and hope removes fear and gives us strength and peace.

Fifth, preaching the Gospel to ourselves increases gratitude for grace and is great cause for worship.

Why and how? Because speaking the truth of the Gospel to ourselves reminds us of how we deserve so much worse and we have received so much more than we could ask or imagine.

There are times my mind wanders off to think about what I have been saved from, from the staggering consequences of eternity in hell. Why is that not my future and destiny? There is no good reason in me, there is nothing good enough to deserve what I am getting rather than getting what I deserve.

Christians should increasingly be thankful people as they preach the Gospel to themselves. Can you imagine an experience of getting told the worst news of your life and then later being told the very best news of your life? There is someone in our congregation who experienced that two months ago.

I got an urgent call from an elder who picked me up and told me the police were at Shelley Leender's home to inform her, her husband Dave had been killed in that bad accident on I-5. As we drove to her home the grief just moved in on me and I blurted out a prayer for God's Gospel grace and mercy for Shelley.

Those who know the health issues Shelley has been through the past years can feel how even more devastating this news would be. Put yourself in her shoes for just a moment. The crushing blow, the fears, anxiety, grief, sadness, the pain of the loss. Some of you know exactly.

As we were walking up the stairs the police officer was there and said he was talking to Dave on the phone. They had wrongly identified the person who was killed. For about 45 minutes Shelley was in the darkest place imaginable, and then came the most incredible news. I told her it was like going from Good Friday to Resurrection Sunday in 45 minutes.

The down side of this story is the man killed was Dave's employee driving Dave's truck and that man's wife received bad news from which there was no good news.

Shelley gave me permission to tell her story. I remember thinking when I was with her this was probably a story I could never tell in a sermon. And then yesterday as I was trying to wrap my head around the kind of gratitude we should have from the Gospel her story came to mind.

We have the worst news there is, our sin eternally separates us from God and eternal life. We are dead in our sins and trespasses. How can we grasp the seriousness of our situation? And then to be told, you were dead, but Jesus died for you and now you are raised to life with Christ.

Which wife are you? The one facing utter grief, or utter joy? Good Friday or Easter?

Can you multiply Shelley's joy by ten thousand times? Can you apply that to your life and let it put everything else into a different perspective? Does the Gospel increase your thanksgiving and joy and your love for Jesus each day?

We were dead, eternally dead, and now we are alive.

What infinite goodness and grace and mercy we have received from the infinitely good and gracious God who has revealed Himself to us just as to Moses.

Does it drive us to church every Sunday, compel us to sing and praise God? Does it change everything, if God will do this for us, what more will He not do.

Do you know what drives the saints in heaven to worship? Seeing the Lamb of God who was slain and by who's blood we are ransomed, who alone is worthy to open the scroll.

Revelation 5:12-13 Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!"
13 ... "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!"

This morning may it lead us to the most robust singing of In Christ Alone ever.

Implications and application.

"The gospel is so foolish (according to my natural wisdom), so scandalous (according to my conscience), and so incredible (according to my timid heart), that it is a daily battle to believe the full scope of it as I should. There is simply no other way to compete with the forebodings of my conscience, the condemning's of my heart, and the lies of the world and the Devil than to overwhelm such things with daily rehearsings of the gospel" (Milton Vincent).

Preach the Gospel to yourself when you are shaving, driving, when you are happy, and everything is really great, when you are going on vacation, when you are discouraged, when you hear bad news, when you fail, when you sin, when you wake up and when you go to sleep. Help those you love, preach the truth of the Gospel to themselves, especially when they are spouting off lies about themselves or some situation.

Don't let the gospel get small. Don't let the gospel get boring or old hat.
Don't let the gospel be something you grow out of or grow beyond.
Make it of first importance to speak it to yourself every day.

Prayer: Holy Father, I pray that you would reveal to us your glory and grace in the Gospel and stir in us a greater desire to see your glory, to know the Gospel and the live it out in practical ways every day.