

What the Gospel Needs

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The Bible tells us good news. The Gospel is about God bringing salvation to the human family through His Son, Jesus. In the opening lines of Paul's letter to the saints at Rome, he stated that the Gospel was "...promised beforehand through his (God's DF) prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 1:2-4).

The facts of God's good news can be quickly acknowledged. Paul writes about how God sent us Jesus. But, what does the news mean? A few verses later, Paul explained that the Gospel was/is God's power to save everyone (Rom. 1:16).

The Gospel is perfectly equipped to accomplish God's purposes. Yet, the Gospel demands our participation for it to be effective. In this article, we will consider what the Gospel needs.

1. The Gospel needs believers. The Gospel is about specific, historic events which have major consequences in the world. Paul said that Jesus was declared to be the Son of God by His resurrection from the dead. Therefore, Jesus is the Christ/Messiah and our Lord. These events are the process by which God made Jesus our King. As our King, Jesus can save us from our Adversary, but only if we believe (Rom. 1:16). But, what is a believer?

A believer has convictions. They have been convinced by certain evidence that the Gospel is true. Producing belief is the purpose of evidence. We were not present when Jesus was raised from the dead. Yet, we can examine eye-witness accounts of the events in question. When Paul showed evidence of the Gospel in Corinth, some believed (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

A believer is obedient. The Gospel declares Jesus to be God's Son and our King. Therefore, the Gospel demands our obedience to Jesus. For example, Paul thanked God that some in Rome had obeyed the Gospel from the heart and committed their lives to Jesus (Rom. 6:17-18). Believers submit themselves to the rule of Jesus.

A believer is exemplary. The Gospel is designed to change our character, purpose, and outlook on life. Believers become living examples of the Gospel's power to transform. The new manner of life for a believer shows the worth of the Gospel in one's life (Phil. 1:27). We must be examples of believers in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity (1 Tim. 4:12). Such an example is one of the powerful ways we influence others to believe and obey the Gospel.

2. The Gospel needs teachers. The Gospel is a message needing to be communicated. At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus taught, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15). Jesus wanted everyone to know that He was going to fulfill their hope. Jesus spent the rest of His life teaching people about the good news of God's kingdom.

After His resurrection from the dead, Jesus commanded the apostles to, "...Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:15-16). In time, the apostles would teach the Gospel and convince many to believe and obey. Everywhere they went, these believers would preach the word (Acts 8:4).

We must learn from the earliest Gospel believers. As believers, we must accept our responsibility to share this good news with others. Paul told Timothy to entrust the Gospel to faithful men who would be able to teach others (2 Tim. 2:1-2). The Gospel is passed from one person to another.

People need to learn the Gospel. Some are seeking and searching for what only Christ can give them. We must learn from Paul's trip to Athens, Greece. He opened his eyes and heart to the people and taught them (Acts 17:16).

3. The Gospel needs defenders. There are times when the Gospel needs to be defended. From its first proclamation, the Gospel has had critics, skeptics, and opponents. The Gospel has endured tremendous hostility. Therefore, the Gospel needs defenders who are convinced of its authenticity, recognize its value to change the heart, and are skilled in persuasion.

As believers, we are to support one another in the defense of the Gospel. Paul wrote the saints at Philippi, "Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, and not frightened in anything by your opponents..." (Phil. 1:27-28).

Today, there continue to be those who oppose the Gospel. We must not allow critics to weaken our beliefs or restrict our work. We must defend the Gospel for the sake of the lost, even those who oppose us.

A word of caution, though. We are not to defend the Gospel with bitterness towards enemies. Rather, we are to seek to change their minds. Paul told Timothy, "And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will" (2 Tim. 2:24-26).

Conclusion

The Gospel continues to have the power of God to save everyone. Nothing lacking in the Gospel itself. The Gospel does not need changed. However, the Gospel is not intended to stand alone in the world. The Gospel needs you.