

## If the Gospel is for All...

David Flatt

The Gospel is God's good news for the world. Isaiah depicted messengers joyfully shouting the good news of salvation from the mountain tops (Isa. 55:7-11). God rules the world! We joyfully sing, "The Gospel is for All." As hopeful as this is, do we understand what this means? Perhaps not. Like Peter, we often fail to recognize the full consequence of the truths we confess.

The Gospel being for everyone puts a serious responsibility on the shoulders of the messengers. Christians are the messengers. We are the messengers. In this article, we will consider the implications of the Gospel being for all.

### If the Gospel Is for All, We Must...

**1). Change the way we view our fellow man.** We must reject the self-constructed walls of race, class, and social status (Gal. 3:24-29; Eph. 2:11-22). While the Gospel broke down ethnic barriers between people, the world constantly tries to rebuild them. Paul was concerned about this happening in Rome between Christians of Jewish and pagan backgrounds. Rather than forming Jewish churches and pagan churches, they needed to be united by faith and love. The Gospel hopes to unite believers to glorify God with one voice (Rom. 15:5-6).

Today, people continue to divide, conquer, and oppress through the use of race, class, and social status. The Gospel proves that our Creator does not show partiality within the human family and we must not either (Acts 10:34-35). Instead, we must promote the message of reconciliation through the resurrected Lord (2 Cor. 5:17-19).

**2). Learn love.** If we are going to take the Gospel to our neighbors, we must first learn to love them as we love ourselves. This is deeply challenging. We tend to be indifferent towards our neighbors. Some might even be hostile toward their neighbors.

Jesus had the difficult task of changing the attitudes of His disciples. For example, James and John wanted to call down fire from Heaven and destroy the Samaritans in response to their rejection of Jesus. They used Elijah to justify their request. Yet, Jesus rebuked them by saying, "...Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them..." (Luke 9:55-56 KJV).

James and John needed to learn love. They needed to learn to see the Samaritans as Jesus saw them: people made in the image of God needing a Savior. Love is the lens through which we must come to view our fellow man.

**3). Engage the world by love.** After we have torn down the walls in our hearts and learned to love, we are ready to engage the world with the Gospel. We all owe a debt of love to our fellow man (Rom. 13:8-10). Empathy and humility will greatly aid us in our work of sharing the Gospel with other people. Love proves we are genuinely concerned for the people we teach. Love is an indispensable asset in the work of evangelism.

Like Paul, we must find common ground with people to save them: “For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them...I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings (1 Cor. 9:19,23).

Pride is a hindrance to engaging the world in our efforts to spread the Gospel. The purpose of teaching the Gospel is not to win an argument. Preaching is not an exercise in self-promotion. Rather, we are to persuade hearts and minds through gentleness. The battle for souls is one when we make family from our enemies (2 Tim. 2:24-26).

**4). Everyone can be saved and transformed.** The Gospel is God’s power to save us from eternal death (Rom. 1:16). Once we are saved through faith in the Gospel, we are reborn into the family of God. We are given new life. We begin to be changed and transformed. If the Gospel is for everyone, then everyone can be saved and transformed.

We have a propensity to limit the transforming power of the Gospel. Sometimes we look at people whose lives are broken by sin and think, “They would never obey the Gospel.” This thinking demonstrates a lack of faith in the power of the Gospel. The apostle Paul attempted to dispel this biased notion. If the Gospel had the power to save and change his life, the Gospel could do this for everyone who believes.

“The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life” (1 Tim. 1:15-16).

### **Conclusion**

The Gospel is news about God’s unchanging, self-giving love for everyone. God wants to save everyone to be with Him eternally. The Gospel is how God has planned to accomplish this goal. As Christians, members of God’s family, we are His messengers and ministers of the Gospel. By love, we are to persuade everyone to be reconciled to God through Jesus. The Gospel is for all! Let’s get to work!

“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; 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. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God” (2 Cor. 5:17-20).