

The Present Blessings of the Gospel

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Can we point to any benefits of the Gospel in our lives? Are there any positive aspects of our lives that we can directly attribute to the Gospel? Are there any improvements in our character or relationships that have changed for the better due to our faith in Christ?

Perhaps we do not think in such terms. When we consider the blessings of the Gospel, we tend to think of the future: eternal life. This is obviously a blessing; however, what about our present lives? Notice the following passages that identify both a present and future blessing(s) of the Gospel.

Mark 10:29-30: “Jesus said, “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life.”

1 Timothy 4:7-8: “...train yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.”

2 Pet. 1:2-3: “May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence.”

If Jesus, Paul, and Peter discussed the present and future blessings of the Gospel, why is there a tendency to emphasize one and the expense of the other? Why do we mainly focus on eternal life, but neglect the present? First, some fear they would be promoting the gospel of health and wealth. Many have falsely promoted the notion that if we obey the Gospel, we will get rich. In response to this deception, we ignore any hint of present, tangible blessing of the Gospel.

Second, we have disconnected the Gospel from daily life. For many, the Gospel is something they do on Sunday. The rest of the week is when “real life” happens. When our lives are changed for the better, we fail to attribute it to the Gospel. A good life is attributed to growing wiser with age or our accomplishments.

We need to connect the Gospel to our daily life. We need to acknowledge the present blessings of the Gospel in our lives. Doing so will help shine the light of the Gospel into the lives of others and strengthen our faith in our future eternal life. Notice several present blessings of the Gospel.

The Gospel Brings...

1). Inward renewal. Sin oppresses, dominates, and rules our lives. Paul used Israel's enslavement to the Egyptians to convey the tyranny of sin (Rom. 6). The guilt, shame, and anxiety of our sin crush our spirit. The Gospel offers freedom from sin. The Gospel alleviates the weight of guilt.

The cross of Jesus offers grace and mercy for our sins. The penalty for our sins was paid by the death of Jesus. Instead of death, we can receive new life if we believe what Jesus' death accomplished for us. If we would believe the Gospel, we would be free. We would become different people. Faith in the Gospel is what renews us inwardly. Inward renewal will beam outwardly into our world. Simply put, the Gospel will change our present lives.

Inward renewal had begun to occur in the lives of the Christians at Colossae. Paul wrote how they had, "put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator" (Col. 3:9-10).

2). Transformed families. Marriage was given for human flourishing. Yet, marriage and family life are frequently made miserable by sin. Husbands and wives can become selfish and ignore one another. They can become prone to anger and hostility towards each other. In such a marriage, children only intensify problems. Marriages and family often implode.

The Gospel can transform family life for the better. For example, if a husband begins to change inwardly by the principles of the Gospel, he will become a better husband. Instead of being selfish and hurtful, he will begin to cherish his wife as Christ cherishes(ed) the Church (Eph. 5). The Gospel equips families to become hopeful beacons of God's glory.

3). Genuine stewardship. Since the Beginning, God made humans stewards of the earth. As God's imagers, He expects us to wisely use our resources and abilities to fill the earth with His glory. This requires love, discipline, and sacrifice. These qualities will bring present blessings to our lives.

By becoming better stewards through the Gospel, we may become materially blessed. The book of Proverbs is filled with wisdom regarding hard work and financial responsibility. But for what purpose? The Gospel informs us of the proper use of material prosperity. We are to use what we acquire to be generous in serving the cause of Christ in the world.

The joy of generosity helps us experience the true meaning of our present lives: "As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life" (1 Tim. 6:17:-19).

Conclusion

Now, can you identify any present blessings of the Gospel in your life? Are there any parts of your life that have been affected by the self-giving love of the cross of Jesus? If so, then openly attribute the good in your life to the Gospel.

Tell people how the Gospel has saved you from the burden of sin. Let your children see mom and dad cherish and serve each other like Jesus has cherished and served us. Tell them about why being responsible, hardworking, and resourceful matters for the sake of the kingdom.