

"The Gospel"

We receive many important messages in life, but none is more vital to our salvation and eternal life than the gospel. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Stay with us as we look at the gospel.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. God will make a difference in your life, if you'll listen to Him and obey what He teaches. God has spoken, but you must respond. Proverbs 3:5 to 6 says, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight." We hope you will trust the Lord to guide you to righteousness and joy. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

In Search of the Lord's Way began on Sunday morning, September 1, 1980, 39 years ago. Mack Lyon spoke on the first program on KTEN in Ada, Oklahoma. Since that time, SEARCH has broadcasted more than 2,000 programs. Today SEARCH covers all the USA! Because of SEARCH, millions of souls in many countries have heard the gospel, many souls have come to the Lord to become Christians, and many others have returned to faithful service to the Lord. God has blessed us and opened hundreds of doors for this ministry, and we're grateful to Him, to our supporters, and to you, our viewers, for watching this program each week.

The word "gospel" refers to "good news." The New Testament speaks of the "good news" about the Messiah and His kingdom and how Jesus Christ gives us salvation and eternal life. Wherever the gospel is preached and received, lives change for the better. The Lord Jesus said in John 7:17, "If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself." If you take the words of Christ seriously and practice them, you'll know that they show the wisdom of God.

We offer this study free on the gospel of Jesus Christ. And if you'd like a printed copy or a CD of our study and you live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Romans 1:14 to 17, and explore the wonderful news of the gospel.

Our reading today comes from Paul's letter to the Romans chapter 1 verses 14 to 17. Here he talks about what the gospel can do.

I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it *the* righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS *man* SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.

Oh how badly we need the gospel in our lives. To touch us in every way. Let's pray together. Father we're thankful that in Your wisdom and in Your grace and love You gave us the good news that leads to salvation. And that leads to the transformation of our lives. Help us to love You and to be obedient to Your will. In Jesus name, Amen.

The gospel is the power of God for salvation. We hear the gospel, believe it, and obey it in order to be right with God. The Lord Jesus said in Mark 16:15 to 16, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel

to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned." Now the Lord charged the church to preach the gospel to everyone, because everyone needs to hear it. God will save those who believe and are baptized, but He will condemn those who refuse to believe it. Those who believe will not be content merely to say so; they will act on their faith.

While everyone agrees that faith is necessary to become a Christian, some mistakenly teach that faith alone is sufficient for salvation. Is obedience to the gospel necessary? Well, let's see what the Scripture says. John 3 verse 36 says, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." Now, some versions say in the latter part of this verse, "does not believe" instead of "does not obey"; but the word here in the original language is different from the word for "believe." It means to refuse to follow or to disobey. Jesus asked His followers in Luke 6 and verse 46, "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"

The Lord Jesus made obedience to His teaching a necessity. He said in Matthew 7:21 to 23, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'" Now, a lawless person is one who will not do what the Lord says. The disobedient, according to the Lord Jesus, will not enter heaven.

Again, Hebrews 5:8 to 9 says about Jesus, "Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation." Now, the Scriptures link obedience to salvation just as they do faith. Paul said in Romans 1 and verse 5 that he "received grace and apostleship to bring about *the* obedience of faith." You see the faith that saves is an active, living, obedient faith.

In Romans 2:6 to 8, Paul says about God, how that He "WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation." Now we're all obeying something. And if we refuse to obey the truth and we live in unrighteousness, we can't expect to gain eternal life.

That obedience to the gospel is necessary to our salvation and is clearly seen in 2 Thessalonians 1:7 to 10. Paul said, "and *to give* relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power."

Well what then does God expect of us in our obedience to the gospel? Well, He, of course demands that we believe in Him as God's Son and Lord. The Lord Jesus said in John 8 and verse 24, "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins." Hebrews 11 and verse 6 says, "And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him."

Now, beyond this, the Lord expects those who come to Him to repent of their sins. Paul said in Acts 17:30 to 31, "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all *people* everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising

Him from the dead.” Now, failure to repent is a salvation matter. 2 Peter 3 verse 9 says, “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”

Now, if you wish to be saved, you must repent. This is what the Lord was talking about when He said in Luke 9:23 to 24 that, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.” Now, unless we deny ourselves, take up our crosses daily, and follow the Lord, and all of that is repentance, we’ll lose our life and our soul.

Now if you wish to be saved you must obey the Lord by being baptized. Faith and baptism are intertwined. The New Testament never speaks of a Christian saved by faith alone; it always speaks of a Christian as a baptized believer. Now, our faith is expressed through being baptized, but we’re not free from sin until we are baptized. Well, you ask, well “where does the Bible say that?” Well, that’s a good question and important. The answer can be found in several passages.

Many say Paul was saved on the road to Damascus, but I, I question that. All Jesus told Saul to do was to enter the city and “it will be told you what you must do” (Acts 9 and verse 6). Three days later after Saul fasted and prayed, Ananias told Saul of Tarsus in Acts 22:16, “Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.” Now, Saul or the apostle Paul still needed to have his sins washed away; he was still in sin, and had a dirty soul, until he was baptized. Baptism is how we call upon the name of the Lord.

Now, Paul explained what happens in baptism in Colossians 2:12 to 13. He says, “having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, (that is with Jesus) having forgiven us all our transgressions.” Now, baptism is when we’re buried and raised together with Christ; baptism unites us with Christ. Before baptism we were spiritually dead in our sins; during baptism God makes us alive together with Christ and forgives our sins.

Someone says, “Phil, are you saying we earn our salvation in baptism?” The answer is no. Look at the passage again. We’re raised up with Him through faith in the working of God.” The command is to “be baptized”; that’s a passive command. We submit to baptism, and someone else baptizes us. They are working on us physically. And in the same way, God is working on us spiritually in baptism. God is the active One and we are passive in baptism. We want Him to act upon us, to raise us up together with Christ, to make us spiritually alive, and to forgive our sins.

God is indeed active in baptism! He saves us, He forgives us, He adds us to the church, He makes us His children, He washes us in the blood of Christ, and He causes us to be born again, and He unites us with Christ in His death and resurrection. When a person says one doesn’t have to be baptized to be saved, he’s actually interfering with what God does to us.

Titus 3 verses 5 to 7 says, “He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being (and listen to this) justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to *the* hope of eternal life.” Now, God saves us and He does it through the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit. Now, every ancient voice that talk about these matters spoke of the washing of regeneration as a reference to baptism. We are saved and justified by His grace through this washing that causes us to be born again, and that’s baptism.

Peter said in 1 Peter 3 and verse 21, “Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal (or an inquiry) to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” In baptism we call upon the name of the Lord and we appeal to God for a good conscience. Baptism is when God saves us and frees us from guilt and shame.

Not only does the gospel message bring eternal life; it puts us into the grace of God. Once we’re baptized we are united with Christ and in Christ. Ephesians 1:3 says, “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ.” You know from that time on, we have God’s favor and blessing. And since we’re with Christ, Christ is with us. That means God hears our prayers, God counts us as His children and heirs with Christ.

God saved us to transform us from sinners to saints, from lawless to people who take God’s word seriously. He gave us His words to teach us and to protect us. Romans 12 and verse 2 says, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” When we live out the will of God, we show that it’s good and it blesses everyone. God’s will is indeed perfect, and we must never stray from it.

Paul knew the Christians in Rome would face struggles and persecution at the hands of the Emperor. And he wrote words of encouragement to them, letting them know that God was with them. He said in Romans 8:35 to 39, “Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Just as it is written, “FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED.” But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” God won’t stop loving you, but you can lose God’s blessing if you turn from Him.

Remember the church at Laodicea who became lukewarm and foul. They thought they were rich and didn’t need anything. They didn’t realize they were wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. They were blind to how God saw them. What about you? How does God see you? Does He see you as His faithful and obedient child, or does He see that you don’t need Him in your life?

Let’s pray together. Oh, Father help us to take Your Son Jesus and the gospel, the good news about Him, seriously. Help us to be faithful all the days of our lives and to be obedient. In Jesus name, Amen.

I asked a moment ago, “How does God see you?” I hope you aren’t like the church in Laodicea. I hope you’re right with God. I wouldn’t want God to reject you. If you have ignored God and decided that you didn’t need anything, including Him, God may look at you like He did the Laodiceans. You remember the Lord Jesus told this foul church that He wanted to spew them out of His mouth. But His love for them caused Him to say in Revelation 3:19 to 20, “Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.” Now, even though they had no need for Jesus, Jesus wanted to renew a close relationship with them. He was knocking at the door, hoping they would repent and let Him in. Will you let Jesus into your life?

To become a Christian, place your faith and trust in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Listen to Him and obey Him. Repent of your sins, because the Lord rejects everyone who refuses to repent. Confess Jesus Christ, and be baptized. Peter told the guilty people on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:38, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and

you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” If you were once a faithful Christian but have fallen away, repent and let Jesus back into your life? He’s knocking and asking to come in. Let Him in.

We hope that today’s study of the gospel has encouraged you to come to the Lord and enjoy His promises. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy or a CD of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now, you can download these lessons or a newsletter online at our website: www.searchtv.org. There’s also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches that are in your area. You can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Why not subscribe to our channel, “SearchTVMinistry.” There are many programs with Mack Lyon on that website. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don’t worry, we’re not here to get your money. We’re here to help you get to heaven.

There’s no better day than today to get your life back on track by worshiping at church. There’s probably a church of Christ in your area. Why not worship with them today? If you’re looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we’ll be happy to help you find one. We’ll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God’s Word with us and tell a friend about this program. And as always we say to you, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord’s Way.