

The Gospel to Guatemala

The biblical gospel is marvelous good news. For, it is about how God in Christ delivers believing sinners from the ruin of their sin. Sin separates us from God; it is damnable, defiling, and enslaving. We cannot have right-standing with God unless our sin is dealt with by Christ.

In the good news, God's way of man's right-standing with Him is uncovered; the way of faith that leads to greater faith (Rom 1:17). God's answer to our sin dilemma is found in His sending of Christ, for in Him alone, the believer receives right-standing with God. Christ alone is the source of forgiveness, cleansing, righteousness, grace, favor, and acceptance.

Our human natures, in an effort to escape the guilt of our sin before God, tend to make excuses for our disobedience to God. Man plays a dangerous soul-damning game with his conscience with rationalizations like these: "I could quit this sin if I really tried." "Because I am sorry that I keep doing this sin, God will overlook it." "Only truly wicked people are going to hell." "God is primarily loving, He will accept those who are sincere and who are trying to be good." "Jesus is a 'helper' who will provide the grace I lack at the end of my life."

We need to frequently hear the truth of the gospel, for our natural understanding does not receive the things of God. The gospel goes against our natural intuition and instincts about religion. The gospel is about a mighty work that God has done through Christ in accomplishing the salvation of sinners. And, God requires that we as guilty sinners believe and trust what He states that He has done through His Son. Only the gospel can cure us of our deadly addiction to self-justification.

The following summary points are not simply gospel essentials, these points overturn our stubborn ideas about religion.

The **work of Christ** on Calvary's cross is a finished work. It is a damnable error to attempt to add to it (Gal 1; 3; Heb 10).

The **work of Christ** was a willing work; out of love to us and to His Father, the Son of God took on Himself the guilt and penalty of His people (Eph 5).

The **work of Christ** was a promised work in the O.T. Scriptures. God gave many prophetic promises that Christ, the Messiah would suffer and die for His people in order to obtain salvation for them. Salvation is 'from the Lord' and not from man.

The work of Christ is the purpose and climax of God's plan of the ages (Ps 22, Is 53, Jonah 2, 1 Cor 15, Eph 3, Heb 9).

The **work of Christ** is a complete and all-sufficient work. The resurrection of our crucified Savior is proof that God the Father approved and accepted the work that Christ completed for all who believe. This is why believers are accepted in Christ by God the Father (Rom 5).

The **work of Christ** is a God-glorifying work. The sacrifice of Christ assures that God can be righteous when He justifies and forgives the guilty who believe upon the Son. Thus, God is glorified in the sinner's salvation because Christ has fully satisfied God's just demands through His suffering on Calvary's cross (Rom 3).

The **work of Christ** is received through faith alone. It is not received through works, or through a religious ritual, or through a minister or priest. Our faith in the Person of Christ, who is offered in the gospel, honors Almighty God. Our faith brings glory to God because by faith in the gospel we trusting what God says about the accomplishments of His Son (Jn 6).

The **work of Christ** received cannot be lost, for Christ is the Great Shepherd of His sheep who promises that those who trust Him will never perish (Jn 10).

The **work of Christ** does not depend upon our works in order to be adequate. If it did, then the work of Christ would be insufficient and incomplete. The wonder of the gospel is that God justifies the ungodly who do not work, but who believe (Rom 4).

The **work of Christ** of Christ, received by believing, is the only way to submit to God's absolute standard of righteousness (Rom 10).

The **work of Christ** received destroys sin (the 'works of the devil'). God saves a believer from hell by saving him from sin. Therefore, we must identify as sin what God identifies as sin. This is why we use the Law of God to identify sin (Rom 3).

The **work of Christ** was a guilt transfer for all who will ever believe. In salvation, Christ exchanges places with the sinner. The Son of God receives the penalty for the believer's sin, and the believer is credited with the righteous obedience of Christ (2 Cor 5).

The **work of Christ**, in providing this guilt exchange, does everything legally necessary for the believing sinner to be declared 'righteous' by God. So fully does Christ take the place of the believing sinner that God exalts His own righteousness when declaring a believing sinner to be right with Himself (Rom 3).

The **work of Christ** was a purchase; by His shed blood our Savior bought new hearts, new natures for all who would ever believe. Because God's way of our right-standing with Him through the gospel is opposed by our sin natures, a new work in our hearts was needed in order to embrace Christ and His work. This is why Christ said, "You must be born again" (Jn 3; Titus 3).

The **work of Christ** is received by coming to the Savior in faith; by coming 'empty-handed' with nothing but our guilt. The seeking sinner brings his sin to Christ, repenting of it, and receives cleansing and right-standing from the Savior as a gift of His grace and mercy (Mt 11). That is the promise of God in the gospel to sinners who believe (1 Pet 2; 3).