

Original Transcript by Dan Owen: Sunday Morning Oct 11, 1987

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the ancient story of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ, which we've sung about in these great songs this morning.

In one of the greatest passages in the New Testament,(...) the Apostle Paul has told us what each of us must do in relationship to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. When we talk about the Gospel,(...) we're talking about primarily and principally that story of what God has done for us in Christ, namely in his death and his resurrection, to procure the salvation of mankind.(...) In 1 Corinthians chapter 15 verses 3 through 8, the Apostle defines what he means when he talks about the Gospel.(...) He says, "For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,(...) and that he was buried, and that he rose from the dead the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared unto Cephas, and then to the twelve, and then he appeared unto above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain until now, but some have fallen asleep.(...) Then he appeared unto James, and to the rest of the apostles, and last of all, as unto a child untimely born, he appeared unto me also. In that brief passage, the Apostle Paul says that the Gospel preaching, the preaching which he preached when he came to Corinth, was the preaching of the atoning death of Jesus. It was the preaching of the great and glorious resurrection of Jesus, and what that means to you and to me.(...) The Gospel has two primary facets, two primary events that are important and crucial to every one of us in our salvation and the way that we live our lives. The first of those, of course, is the death of Jesus, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. In 1 Corinthians 2, Verses 1 and 2, the Apostle Paul said, "When I, brethren, came unto you, I came not to you with excellency of speech or wisdom, making known to you the testimony of God, but I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified." So in 1 Corinthians 1, 18, the Gospel is called there the word of the cross.(...) Paul says, "For the word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us who are saved, it is the power of God." The other great and primary element in the Gospel is the message of Jesus' resurrection as a historical fact. The fact that Jesus rose from the dead is tremendously important to all of us. There would be no Christianity. There would be no Gospel. There would be no Son of God. There would be no atoning death were it not for the fact, the historical fact of his resurrection.(...) In 1 Corinthians 15 and 12, the Apostle says, "Now if Christ is preached that he has risen from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection from the dead?" That verse indicates that Christ was preached that he has risen from the dead. In verse 14 of 1 Corinthians 15,(...) he says, "If Christ be not raised, then our preaching is vain, and your faith is vain, and we have been found false witnesses of God. For we witnessed of God that he raised up Christ, whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead are not raised." The resurrection of Jesus was part and parcel of the Gospel preaching. In Acts 4 and 33, as the preaching was described of the Apostles, it says, "With great power gave they their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. I believe with all my heart that the time has come in the Lord's Church for us to realize the fundamental facts that lie at the basis of our faith, and to re-emphasize those facts, and to re-ground ourselves in those facts, and to really believe in those facts, and to live as we believe them." The Gospel is the foundation of Christianity. The Gospel is the message of Jesus and what God has done in him. There are four documents in the New Testament,

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, which are called Gospels. The Gospel of Mark begins like this in Mark 1.1. It says, "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God."

In Mark 16 and 15, as it draws to a close, Jesus says, "Go therefore and preach the Gospel to every creature." Go into all the world and preach the Gospel unto every creature. Everything between those two passages is the Gospel, the message of Jesus Christ. As we conclude our definition of the Gospel, let me give you a short excerpt from a sermon that Peter preached to the household of Cornelius. This ancient sermon is capsule, the message of salvation. I want you to listen carefully to what he says. Acts 10.38, he says, "Even Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all those that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with him.(...) We are witnesses of these things and all the things that he did in Jerusalem in the country of the Jews, whom also they slew, hanging him on a tree.

Him God raised up and gave him to be made manifest, not unto all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before by God, even unto us, apostles, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he, Jesus, charged us, the apostles, to preach to the people and to testify that it is he, Jesus, whom God has ordained to be the judge of the living and the dead." There's the gospel of Christ in a nutshell, and that's what Paul is talking about in this great passage today. Having made that clear, I would like for us to notice from our passage this morning four ways in which every single one of us needs to relate to the gospel of Christ. Paul says, "Now I make known unto you, brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also you received, wherein also you stand,(...) by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word that I preached unto you, except you believed in vain." Point number one, Paul says the gospel must be preached.(...) The gospel must be preached. You know, some of us, I think, have the idea that since there are a lot of Bibles, and they're printed in different languages and tongues, and people have them on their living room tables, that people ought to be able to just sort of figure out the gospel on their own, read their own Bibles, and come to their own conclusions and figure out salvation on their own. Couldn't be further from the truth as far as God's plan is concerned. It has always been the plan of God that the gospel be preached by warm bodies, by warm human beings, to other human beings. In Luke 24, 46, as the risen Jesus explained God's eternal plan to his disciples, he said, "Thus it is written three things, that the Christ should suffer, and that he should rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sin should be preached in his name among all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved, but how shall they call upon him whom they have not believed?(...) How shall they believe on him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?"(...) Preaching was the way that God told his apostles to spread the gospel. Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. Preaching was the method used by the first century church in spreading the gospel. By preaching, I'm not necessarily talking about a fellow in a nice suit standing up behind a box in a church auditorium and talking to people like I'm talking to you in a public manner. But preaching is a human being communicating in some way the gospel to another human being or a group of human beings. In Acts 2 and 14, it was Peter standing up with the 11 that preached the gospel of Jesus on that day to the people on Pentecost. In Acts 3 and 12, the scene is the beautiful gate of the temple, and there Peter and John are preaching the message of Jesus to the people who gathered. Acts 10, 34, Peter went to see a man

at his house, Cornelius. Cornelius had his family and friends gather, and there Peter preached the message of Jesus to the man Cornelius.

In Acts 8 and 12, when they believed Philip preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God in the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. But did you know that preaching was not only done by the apostles or the leaders in the church in the first century, but it was done by others. On one occasion, on a desert road from Jerusalem down to Giza, there was one Philip who spied this eunuch. It says in Acts 8 and verse 30, Philip ran to him and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. Now listen to this part.(...) He said to him, "Do you understand what you're reading? Understandest thou what thou readest?" Remember the reply? "How can I accept some man guide me?"

And yet many of us persist in our erroneous belief that it is God's will that people just be left on their own to figure out the gospel on their own and thereby come to salvation. Hogwash! How can I accept some man guide me? It has always been God's plan that the gospel be preached. In Acts 8, beginning in verse 1, where the paragraph begins, there's a record of the persecution that came on the Jerusalem church and how that church was scattered. Acts 8, verse 1, "There arose on that day a great persecution against the church that was in Jerusalem," now listen to this part, "and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria except the apostles.

The apostles stayed in town. The rest of the Christians were scattered abroad." Now drop down to verse 4. "They therefore that were scattered abroad," who's that? Well, it's not the apostles. Go back to verse 1. "They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word." No, I'm not saying this morning that every one of us is a preacher.

I'm not saying this morning that every one of us, as it now stands, can teach a Bible study. But collectively, as the body of Christ, as the church of Jesus at this place, our God-given mission is to preach the message of Christ to the lost of this world. The gospel must be preached, and that is our mission from heaven. Secondly, Paul says, "The gospel which also you receive."(...) Not only must the gospel be preached, but every human being on the face of God's green earth must accept or receive this message for himself or herself.(...) In 1 Corinthians chapter 15 and verse 1, Paul says it in Romans 5 and 17, talking about how Adam made death available to all men and how Christ made life available to all men. He says, "If by the trespass of the one man death reigns through the one,(...) much more shall they that receive the abundance of grace and the gift of life reign in righteousness through the one Jesus Christ. They that receive, the gospel must be received."(...) Now, the people on the day of Pentecost accepted the gospel of Christ. What they accepted, and we need to rethink this a little bit, what they accepted was the message about what God had done in Jesus Christ. They accepted the fact that through the determinant counsel and foreknowledge of God, God had delivered Jesus up to die for our sins.(...) Most of the sermon on the day of Pentecost has to do with the resurrection.

They accepted the fact that Jesus was risen, that he was living, that as verse 36 says, God has now made him Lord and Christ and that he's alive.

When they heard this,(...) that Jesus is alive, that he's Lord, when they heard this, they were cut to the heart. They said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "What shall we do?" You see, when we really come to the conclusion legitimately in our minds that Jesus Christ has in fact died an atoning death and that he has in fact risen from the dead and that he is in fact alive, then we're driven to say, "What shall we do?"(...) And these people were told what to do. In Acts 2.38, you've heard 10,000 times, they were told to repent, to change their minds, to turn from sin and turn to God and to be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins.(...) And those that did what they were told to do received the gospel. In Acts 41,(...) they therefore gladly received his word, were baptized, and they were added to them that day about 3,000 souls and they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship and the breaking of bread and in prayers. Those people who truly received the gospel of Christ's lives were changed. They continued steadfastly. Those people were made different people than they were before. It's fitting, I think, that the gospel is received, according to the ancient scriptures, by imitating the very events which the gospel depicts.(...) The death of Jesus we imitate when we become Christians, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away, Romans 6 and verse 6. And we're buried with him in baptism as he was buried, and we're raised to walk a new life, Romans 6 and 4. And then if we've been united with him in the likeness of his death, so shall we also be in the likeness of his resurrection, Romans 6 and verse 5. The ancient convert imitated those events in which he was putting all his faith. He was putting all his eggs in that one basket. He was putting all his hope on those events, and so he imitated those events, the death and the resurrection of Jesus, as he became a Christian. The gospel must be received. And then thirdly, the apostle Paul says, "Wherein also you stand."(...) "Wherein," of course, refers back to the gospel. The gospel, "wherein also you stand." Once it's been received, brothers and sisters, we must stand in the gospel of Jesus. To stand in the gospel means that we must continue to live our lives in the context of the great events of the gospel in which we've put our faith. We cannot live as if Jesus hadn't died for our sins. We cannot live as if Jesus hadn't risen from the dead. But to stand in the gospel means that we're going to live every single day of our lives as if these things are true, and they are.

And so to stand in the gospel means that I'm going to live every day realizing fully that Jesus has died for my sins. If I really believe that and I carry it with me up here, that's a tremendous motivation to live for him. Paul put it this way. He said, "The love of Christ constraineth us, for we thus judge that one died for all and therefore all died. And one died for all so that those that live," that's us, "might no longer live for themselves, but for him who for their sakes died and rose again." The heartstrings of the Apostle Paul were tugged on by the love of God that was demonstrated at the cross. And every day, remembering the death that had been died for him, he was driven to live for Jesus. And furthermore, when we really live realizing the death of Christ, there's tremendous grace and assurance in that. We realize that we've been justified freely by his grace through the redemption that's in Christ Jesus, Romans 3, 24. We realize that we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, Romans 5 and verse 1. And when we realize that, we're going to have a powerful motivation to live for the Lord Jesus Christ. Standing in the gospel means living every day realizing that there's been a resurrection. Brethren, do you realize that there's been a resurrection?

Is it really real to you? It's what I'm asking this morning. There has been a resurrection. Jesus said to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believes on me, though he die, yet

shall he live. And he that lives and believes on me shall never die. Do you believe this?" He said to Martha. And I think we should say that to ourselves. Do you believe this? Amen. I believe this. John 5, verse 28, Jesus said, "Marvel not at this. The hour is coming when all that are in the tomb shall hear his voice and shall come forth. They that have done good under the resurrection of life and they that have done evil under the resurrection of damnation."(...) Jesus raised from the dead, and that means that we're going to do the same thing. We're going to not stay in the cemetery. We're not going to be like Rover dead all over. My soul lives on and will be united with a new body in the resurrection and will face the judgment. Christ is risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that are asleep. 1 Corinthians 15, 20. The word first fruits means the first after which there is more to follow. Friend, if I believe that Jesus is risen and that there will be a resurrection, I can't live my life every day like everybody else does that's unaware of that fact.(...) I can't go on just oblivious to the fact that I'm going to face eternity. I'm going to have to live in the context of that resurrection of Jesus and live my life based on that great and glorious fact. Standing in the Gospel means that I'm going to continue to live every day of my life expecting Jesus to come again to be my judge.

Acts 10 and 42. As Peter stood in the house of Cornelius, he said of Jesus after the resurrection, he said, "He, Jesus, charged us to preach to the people and to testify that it is He, Jesus, whom God has ordained to be the judge of the living and the dead."(...) Brothers and sisters, do we realize that the very Lord Jesus, who through the love of heaven hung on the cross and bled for our sins, will be the same one who will be the eternal judge of our souls on the Judgment Day? It will be the very one who loved us, the very one who gave himself for us, who stands to be the judge of mankind on that great day. What kind of a reply would a man have to the judge of heaven who actually came and lived his life and bled and suffered and was beaten and abused and died?(...) If we say to him on that day, "Your grace didn't mean very much to me.(...) I didn't want your grace. I didn't care about the fact that you died and raised. I didn't care about what you did for me." I certainly would not want to be in that position, and I don't think anyone else would. "We must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ," 2 Corinthians 5, 10, "that each one may receive the deeds done in the body according to what it done, whether it be good or evil. And that will be on the day that God shall judge the secrets of men according to my gospel by Jesus Christ," Romans 2 and verse 16. To stand in the gospel, brothers and sisters,(...) means that we are going to live every single day of our lives, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, as well as Sunday, in the context of the great events of salvation in which we truly believe, the death and the resurrection and the coming of Jesus Christ. And then finally, the Apostle Paul says,(...) "By which also you are saved." We are saved by the gospel.

That's a simple statement. It's a simple fact. But I wonder if we believe it.

We may be good moral people.(...) We may be good husbands, may be good wives, may be good citizens of the community.

We may do a lot of things that are good and right.

Brothers and sisters and friends that are visiting with us today, if we have not received the gospel of Christ and obeyed it in the way the New Testament describes, we're lost.

There's only one way to be saved, and that's by the gospel.

In 2 Thessalonians chapter 1 and verse 8,(...) we're told by Scripture that Jesus will come with his angels, rendering vengeance to them that know not God and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might.(...) But if we do receive the great grace of God in the gospel, we have tremendous comfort in Romans 1 and 16. I'm not ashamed of the gospel, for if the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth to the Jew first and also to the Greek, for therein that is in the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith unto faith, as it is written, the righteous shall live by faith. Now, what about us here at Broadway?(...) What about those of us that are here visiting? What about our family here? Let's talk to us directly. Do we realize here that the gospel must be preached, that this is our God-given mission before heaven? As a body of people working together, each doing our part, this is our goal that we're going to try to accomplish. Do we realize, all of us that are here this morning, that the gospel must be received?(...) We're so, friend, have you received the gospel? For if you have not, you're lost in sin and need to be saved this morning. You need to come and confess Jesus as Lord, be buried with him in baptism, and obey the gospel and become his child. Do we realize that we must stand in the gospel, live for it every single day?(...) And do we realize that the only way we or any of our neighbors or friends will ever be saved is by the gospel of Jesus Christ. The gospel is good news. God loves us. He's shown his love for us. He extends his love to us. And this morning, if you need to respond to the gospel in faith, believing that Jesus died for your sins, believing that Jesus has risen from the dead,(...) if you need to respond and confess and be baptized, we invite you to do that. And if there's any other way in which we might help you more perfectly serve your Lord, we hope that you'll respond while we stand together and sing the song.