

Section: Doctrine of Salvation (Soteriology)

Wednesday, October 21, 2020

Joshua Kirstine

**TEACHING NOTES**

Tonight we continue our study of the Doctrine of Salvation.  I am thankful for our teaching team who continues to prepare great lessons for us to learn and grow in each week. I am thrilled God is equipping our church like He is.

Tonight, I get to cover 2 questions.  Let’s start with question number 82 and then we will work towards number 83.

**Q 82. How does God ordain His good news of salvation to be spread?**

God commands His saved saints to faithfully proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to all people everywhere, unto the ends of the earth.

This first catechism question gets to the reality that the Bible commands all followers of Jesus to follow His example- and the example of His first disciples- to preach and testify the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to those God has put in our lives.

We see Jesus do this in Scripture in His ministry:

**Matthew 4:17** From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

And we see in Scripture that the disciples were active in this:

**Acts 16:30-31** Then he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved...”

And we see in Scripture that God requires saving faith in Jesus Christ alone of all people.

For those who don’t believe, it will be one of the many sins they are held accountable for.

**Acts 17:30** ...[God] commands all people everywhere to repent.

Church: Our call to testify the Gospel is one of the primary God given reasons for the days he gives us in this life after her has saved us and made us his. So it is essential that we grow to understand this call and practically how we should put it to work daily.

Tonight I want to look at:

1. what the General Gospel Call is,
2. that the General Gospel Call is commanded by God of His people,
3. that the General Gospel Call is the perfect means that God chose to use,
4. how we practically obey the command to be proclaiming this General Gospel Call,
5. in what condition the hearers of the General Gospel Call are in,
6. and, what we will see next week in detail, how God uses the General Gospel Call to effectively save the elect.

The WOTC gives us a great definition for the General Gospel Call in our glossary:

**General Gospel Call**: The gospel of Jesus Christ being proclaimed to all tribes, tongues, and nations. God has ordained that gospel proclamation is the vehicle by which He sets the table for salvation.

First we must understand that God wants us to share the Gospel with words!

We will see later that the way we live our lives and prioritize our days is surly a catalyst to gospel conversations, but the gospel can only be shared by WORDS.

Many have loved the old saying *“preach the gospel and if needed use words”* .

The problem is this doesn’t reflect the actual way God has His gospel to be shared. Think for a moment: unregenerate people do all kinds of things horizontally that can seem good on the surface. They can feed the poor, clothe the homeless, make a meal for a friend in need, give money to charity, care for their spouse well, work hard in the job, on and on…you surely have seen unbelievers who do those things! So, see now that a person watching those actions doesn’t come to the facts of the gospel by watching those actions. Likewise, see that a Christian doing these things *without any testimony of the gospel* does not actually preach the gospel! We must speak and write gospel truths to people! We are not sharing the gospel if we are not using WORDS! Do you see that? Sinners need to come to KNOW the facts about Christ and His work. Regular human actions, as ”good” as they may be or seem, do not inform the needed gospel truth about Christ in the way God has required for salvation. We must speak and write gospel truths to people! We are not sharing the gospel if we are not using WORDS!

This command on the saved is all throughout the New Testament, but let me quickly highlight two of the most important places God commands us to testify the Gospel to a lost world.

First the great Commission!

**Matthew 28:18-20** And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

We are called to go on Jesus’ authority and to make disciples, to baptize new believers, to teach them to obey God.

People are not baptized and disciples are not made unless first the gospel has been testified of and God’s elect have been saved to new life in Christ.

Jesus gives great clarity to what the church was commissioned to do in…

**Acts 1:8**  “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

We the church need to take very seriously this battle cry of Jesus. This order is from our General.

We are to be His witnesses.  **What does a witness do?**   He/She testifies.

It is the gospel of Jesus Christ being proclaimed, being shared, that God has decided to be the vehicle by which he sets the table for salvation- so much so that without this gospel call, no one will be enabled to respond and be saved! The gospel is the news about the only way of salvation! Without coming to know that news, one cannot trust in the Christ of that news!

Listen to Paul’s words in..

**Romans 10:14** "How are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?"

**Romans 10:17** So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ.  (NLT)

**This is the ministry we have been given, Church!**

This is God’s call on our lives for these days we are in

We are to put out the General Gospel Call to those that God puts in our path.

**2 Corinthians 4:1-3** Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. 2 But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.

“having this ministry by the mercy of God”

-  The ministry Paul speaks of here is:  **the proclamation and testimony of the gospel.**

The word gospel comes from the Greek term ev-angelion.

An 'ev-angel' was news of a great historical event, such as an important victory in war or the rise of a new king. It wasn’t just news you heard about and then forgot, but instead, was news that changes everything and demands a response after hearing it.

So the Christian gospel, also known as “the good news”, is the news of what God has done to reconcile us to him.

**Q68. What is the gospel?** The gospel is the good news of the grace and power of God to redeem undeserving sinners to eternal life through Jesus’ perfect, sinless life; substitutional, sacrificial death; and victorious resurrection from the grave. These sinners are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus alone from the eternal wrath they deserved, and they are reconciled into an eternally secure relationship with God.

We commonly refer to sharing the Gospel with non-believers as: evangelism

The root word of Evangelism is EVANGEL (the GOOD NEWS).

**Evangelism =  The proclamation and testimony of the gospel.**

We are announcers of the good news of Jesus Christ. See then, that we all are to one’s that evangelize!

Looking further at what Paul says here in

**2 Corinthians 4:1-3** Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, **we do not lose heart. 2 But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word,** but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.

The gospel we proclaim is from the Word of God and nothing else. This is critical because there are many false gospel that man has crafted and schemed over the generations. This is Paul’s point here: **We refuse ..to tamper with God's word**

So we **renounce disgraceful, underhanded ways and refuse to practice cunning..**

This is an important clarity because all too often man has decided he can present a better gospel in order to attract people to Christianity. The problem with this is: in the end, they are not attracting people to Christianity but something else altogether.   For example:  Talk about the prosperity gospel!

**So:  #1 We are to proclaim and testify of the gospel of Jesus Christ.**

**#2- We proclaim what the Word of God says and not the ideas of man.**

**Church: Let me get really practical with this.**

**Do you know the WOTC answer for What is the Gospel.**

**Q68. What is the gospel?** The gospel is the good news of the grace and power of God to redeem undeserving sinners to eternal life through Jesus’ perfect, sinless life; substitutional, sacrificial death; and victorious resurrection from the grave. These sinners are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus alone from the eternal wrath they deserved, and they are reconciled into an eternally secure relationship with God.

**This is what we must know and remember to articulate. Every aspect of this is the good news we profess and an essential part of what we must testify. Maybe your increased ownership and practice of Gospel testimony is to memorize this answer and begin to really think about how you would articulate this to someone else in a way that honors God’s word.**

**Paul builds on this in verses 3 & 5:**

**2 Corinthians 4:5-6** For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. 6 For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The people of God practicing the discipline of evangelism is God’s vehicle by which he sets the stage to open the eyes of his elect to see the truth and beauty and worth of Christ. We are the light of the world, Church. We must shine the light of Christ bright. We must shout from the roof tops, speak from our cubicles, share at our dining tables and everywhere else what Jesus has done to save sinners.

I want this for our church. I want us to have a true passion to testify. I long for us to be fearless about what others will think but to love them enough to speak up and share what they need more than anything else in the world.

I want us to learn to be relentless in our willingness to share the gospel with others.

I believe that when you begin to truly understand the gospel and God’s radical intention for evangelism, it will feel less and less like a duty and more and more like an unbridled passion.

**It will become in us an excitement.**Like Andrew had when he came to faith….

**John 1:40-42** One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which means Christ). 42 He brought him to Jesus..

-Andrew didn’t just start thinking about how great his life was now that he was saved from sin and death.

He didn’t keep Jesus to himself.

He didn’t make excuses as to why he wasn’t equipped to tell others about Jesus.

-**He immediately went and began to bring others to meet Jesus.**

**Realize: the call to share the gospel is not optional if you are a Christian.**

All believers in Christ are called to evangelize.

All Christians are told to **go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. (Matthew 28)**

This command is for “ALL” believers.

Christian: Why did God give your life today instead of taking you into heaven. Because he wants you to be his witness. Because He has ordained interactions that He has put in front of each of us to testify of His life-changing good news.

For the people around you, the hearing (especially when paired with the opportunity to watch of your story of life transformation in Christ) is powerful.

They will not see your witness nor hear you speak the gospel of Jesus unless you are engaging them intentionally, praying for them daily, spending time with them, sharing Jesus with them.

Realize, God’s active hand in the way your days go. Realize that many times the things that happen are because God intends to change lives simply through the “GOD APPOINTMENTS” he puts in your path each day.

The question is: are you prayerfully prepared to recognize these appointments and share your faith with them.

**One of the things that greatly impacted me in celebrating Roger Pelz’s graduation from this life to eternal life with God in heaven is…..  how many people “OUTSIDE” the church were impacted and changed because of Roger’s life of testimony.**

**I want my legacy to be that many know Jesus because I was bold enough to tell them about His saving grace.**

**The danger you and I, who are in the church, run is that we learn to like it in here!**

**And we don’t really take time to be out there.   Investing into the lost.**

**Luke 10:2-3** And he said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. 3 Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.

It is clear that going out there, investing in the lost, serving others, risking persecution and ridicule as we proclaim Jesus is going to be HARD. Jesus says, I am sending you out like lambs among wolves.

It will be uncomfortable.. a struggle, it will cost us!

BUT

He says the harvest is PLENTY!   And the workers are FEW.

I am calling you to GO and know I am with you ALWAYS!

**Matthew 5:13-16** “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Jesus is saying:  you (the church) the redeemed ones, the family of God, are the light of the world.

You are the salt of the earth.

Jesus also says that we are to be like **“a city on a hill”.**

He is reminding us.. that the church is not a country club.

It is not a destination to settle into apart from the world.  It is a new community of people who in unity, beauty and joy are sacrificially engaged in the culture to testify of the one who saves sinners out of darkness. The members of the church should know and live out their task to proclaim the gospel as it’s what God has determined as the means to save his chosen people from decay and eternal death.

And, as mentioned before, our living (our doing, or actions) should be in alignment with Christ as we want to confirm our spoken testimony with what is seen by others. We don’t want to tell the truth with our mouths only to lie with our actions. Church, display what life in Christ looks like, show how it changes not just our eternal destination, but everything in our lives.

To put on display how God is redeeming business practices, family interaction, community divisions, etc

J Piper once famously said: **Missions Exist Because Worship Doesn’t:**

Look at the last verse of our 2 Corinthians passage today.  Verse 7.

**2 Corinthians 4:7**  But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.

**What is the treasure it speaks of?**

In verse 4, this light is called the “light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.”

“We have this treasure (this light of the gospel) in jars of clay.”

**Jars of clay is a reference to us.** We are the jars of clay.

That is, compared to the treasure that is in us, we are clay.

We are not platinum, gold, silver, or bronze. We are humble jars, holding what is valuable. The gospel is the treasure of infinite worth!

This means that if you feel average or below average in your fitness to share the gospel treasure, you are closer to the truth than someone who feels powerful and wise and self-sufficient.

Paul wants us to realize that we are clay pots. Not precious metals or fine jewels. This should humble and encourage us.

He wants us to realize that from the most sophisticated to the most average, we are all clay pots when it comes to containing and sharing the gospel.

**The treasure is so valuable and so powerful that any thought of its container being something special is foolish.**

Paul modeled this for us when he talked about himself and Apollos, the two most eloquent Christians in the first century!

**1 Corinthians 3:5-7** What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. 7 So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.

This passage is a great reminder to take the pressure of conversion off of you.

It is not your job to get those in your life or path saved!   We proclaim, and God does the saving!

So what’s the point of being a clay pot?

Back to **2 Corinthians 4:7**  But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.

God commands His saved saints to faithfully proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to all people everywhere, unto the ends of the earth.

Be encouraged, ordinary Christian. You are appointed, precisely in your ordinariness, for the greatest work in the world: **having and speaking of the Treasure of Christ.**

NOW before we talk about the difference between the General Call of the gospel and the Effective Call, Steve’s focus next week, we must remember the state of those who are listening to us.

Let’s now consider: In what condition the hearers of the General Gospel Call are in.

**Q83. Can people respond to the gospel by their own power, will, or choice?**

No. Since the fall, we are all born spiritually dead in sin and unable to truly will or choose to have saving faith in Jesus. We need the Holy Spirit to first give us new life and the gift of saving faith.

The fact is that mankind is totally depraved due to the fall of Adam, we are unable to respond to the Gospel call without the divine regeneration of the HS.

There are two important doctrines I just mentioned and so I want to take a moment and remind you what Total Depravity is and Human Inability.

Again in the glossary of the WOTC we can find great definitions for both. First Total Depravity:

**Total Depravity**: As a result of Adam’s sin, every person born of both man and woman has inherited a sin nature and is utterly dependent on saving grace exerted by God for a new nature and salvation. Because of the fall, every part of natural man has been corrupted by sin: his mind, will, emotions, and flesh. Sin affects the whole person; all people sin because they are sinners by nature. All men are conceived in sin, dead in sin, slaves to sin, and deserving of God’s wrath. Total depravity does not mean that man is without a conscience or any sense of right or wrong, nor does it mean that man is as wicked or sinful as he could be. Total depravity recognizes the Bible teaches that even the apparent “good” things unregenerate man does are ruined by sin, because they are not done out of faith in Jesus for the glory of God.

Paul says in **Titus 1:15** to the corrupt and unbelieving nothing is pure; their very minds and consciences are corrupted

Jeremiah tells us that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately corrupt; who can understand it?" **(Jer. 17:9).**

**The terrible and complete condition of man's heart will never be recognized by people who assess it only in relation to other men**.

--Unless we start here, we will never grasp the totality of our natural depravity.

The truth is:  ***totally depraved people*** can be very religious and socially minded and generous.

But these very things are rebellion against what is due to their Creator, if it does not come from a genuine, childlike heart of trust in the free grace of God.

In **Romans 14:23** Paul says, **"Whatever is not from faith is sin."**   Think about that for a moment.

The totality of our rebellion is seen in

**Romans 3:9-12** For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, 10 as it is written:

“None is righteous, no, not one;11 no one understands; no one seeks for God.

12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one

later Paul says,“There is no fear of God before their eyes...” **Romans 3:18**

**Now, listen carefully here!**

Fallen man, in a way, does seek God.

But if they are not saved by God, they do not seek Him for who He is nor truly for His glory.

They seek Him in a pinch as one who might preserve them from death or enhance their worldly enjoyments or they seek to add Him to their life as a comforting idea, a genie in a lamp, or eternal fire insurance.

Or for many years they are busy in service to God, but it is not the true God of the Bible, it is one they have made up.

The point is that apart from God’s gracious regeneration, **no one wants God for God.**

They want Him only for what he can give them unto another end. This is what it means to say, “no one seeks for God.”

Paul explains how “all of mankind” is dead in sin. This includes the saved saints before they were made new by God.

Many people, myself included, were taught growing up that **man has the ability, is free enough, to choose God** and believe in his gospel.  But as we have just seen, the Bible speaks often and clearly that man's will is not free, as many commonly think of “free will”.   Instead, man is opposite of free in our nature and will.  We are “enslaved” to sin.  We are totally depraved.

**We have seen now that fallen man is totally depraved, let’s see more detail now from God’s Word what implications that has on a person’s ability:**

Look at our definition in the catechism for ...

**Human Inability**:In and of oneself, a person can do nothing that honors God and has no will that longs to trust in Jesus. After Adam, all of mankind are born spiritually dead sinners; each person continues in sin, is unable to do anything that genuinely seeks for or glorifies God, and deserves only God's righteous wrath.

Contrary to what many of us were taught in the past….historic, biblical Christianity has seen in Scripture, and rightly taught fallen, unregenerate man’s total depravity and human inability. See, for example, in the historic 1689 confession of Christian faith, where it says “Humanity, by falling into a state of sin, has completely lost all ability to choose any spiritual good that accompanies salvation. Thus, people in their natural state are absolutely opposed to spiritual good and dead in sin, so that they cannot convert themselves by their own strength or prepare themselves for conversion.”

It’s so important to know what God’s word says about these things in order to know when teaching we’ve heard is not correct. Let’s stand with the faithful Christians throughout time who have carefully and rightly sought God’s word.

**See this in the text, Romans 8:7-8 says….**

**Romans 8:7-8** For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

**1 Corinthians 2:14** The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

I want you to see that all people are desperate for the effective call which we will learn about next week.

It is grave news that, in our fallen/unsaved state, mankind is helpless, unworthy, and enemies of God!

YET I want you to look forward to next week because Steve will take us to the next step in these truths to tell us how exactly GOD effectively rectifies this problem so that those He chose before time don’t remain His enemies, but instead get to enjoy Him forever!

**Q83. Can people respond to the gospel by their own power, will, or choice?**

No. Since the fall, we are all born spiritually dead in sin and unable to truly will or choose to have saving faith in Jesus. We need the Holy Spirit to first give us new life and the gift of saving faith.

**Ephesians 2:1-3** And you were dead in the trespasses and sins

It is essential that we see those who are outside of Christ for who they really are:

**Dead in our sin and not just sick in our sin.**

A helpful analogy for this is to consider the two kinds of people you can find in hospitals:

**First, hospitals have *really sick people*.**Their sickness is killing them, and they need help. So the doctor proclaims to them a remedy and in their own power they can cooperate with the doctor by choosing to the take the remedy. Because of the power of the medicine or practices the doctor prescribed coupled with the patient’s free choice to initiate the remedy, the patient is healed and can leave the hospital with a renewed lease on life.

**Second, hospitals have morgues full of *dead people*.**The condition of all people in the morgue is the same: they are dead.

If a doctor were to walk into the morgue and proclaim a remedy to help the dead person it would not work. Why?

Because no matter how powerful the remedy, the dead person could not take it. They are dead, and dead people can’t do anything.

The only way a dead person is to find life again is if somebody miraculously gives the person a new life.

The sad reality is that far too many Christians hold to unbiblical view that mankind is spiritually sick and not dead.

Semi- Pelagianism is sadly an all to popular belief still held to and taught in many modern church’s and or held to by many misled and misunderstood, Christians.

In ***1996, the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals wrote this solid statement to right the ship of this gross heresy.***

*”Unwarranted confidence in human ability is a product of fallen human nature.*

*This false confidence now fills the evangelical world; from the self-esteem gospel, to the health and wealth gospel, from those who have transformed the gospel into a product to be sold and sinners into consumers who want to buy.” -*

What does this mean for your loved ones who are apart from Christ and Lord of their own lives and still dead in their sin?

**It means they don’t need, just the right remedy or speaker or church program or influence or circumstance to happen to them. They are not sick in sin waiting on just the right circumstances, they are dead in sin waiting on God to regenerate them if and when He so wills.**

This means we need not seek out trick ponies or perfect circumstances by which they will wake up or stand up on their own and choose Jesus. No, they need God to give them spiritual new birth.

They need to be revived.

They need the holy and divine hand of God to give them regeneration.

To give them as scripture says, ***Ears to hear and eyes to see*** and only then will they repent and believe in the Gospel that has been preached and or testified to them.

**Should we encourage them to attend biblically sound churches and should we testify the truth of God to them?** **Absolutely!!!!**

If they are only hearing the lies of the world and or false teaching they are not hearing the truth of God. But hear me clearly, **our hope is not in any person’s efforts**!

Our hope is in God alone who is the only one gives life to that which is dead**. Our trust is in God alone.**

As King David said well in the Psalms: Salvation belongs to the Lord -**Psalm 3:8**

For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation. -**Psalm 62:1**

For God himself declares in **Isaiah 43:11** I, I am the Lord, and besides me there is no savior. 12 I declared and saved and proclaimed, when there was no strange god among you; and you are my witnesses,” declares the Lord, “and I am God.

Listen to the words of our Baptist Historic Confession of Faith (chapter 10: section 1 & 2)

1. In God’s appointed and acceptable time, he is pleased to call effectually,1 by his Word and Spirit, those he has predestined to life. He calls them out of their natural state of sin and death to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ.2  He enlightens their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God.3 He takes away their heart of stone and gives them a heart of flesh.4  He renews their wills and by his almighty power turns them to good and effectually draws them to Jesus Christ.5  Yet he does all this in such a way that they come completely freely, since they are made willing by his grace.6’

2. This effectual call flows from God’s free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in those called. Neither does the call arise from any power or action on their part;7 they are totally passive in it. They are dead in sins and trespasses until they are made alive and renewed by the Holy Spirit.8  By this they are enabled to answer this call and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it. This response is enabled by a power that is no less than that which raised Christ from the dead.9

Praise God for His saving work in many. See our gracious and holy God save all of his elect out of their spiritually dead enslaved to sin condition. Church, we need this reminder so that we do not became calloused or lazy in our testimony of the gospel to others. For those of you who might be skeptical for why we even need to testify and preach if it is up to God who is saved please remember that we are to be responsible for God’s commands on us and he is responsible for His decree and what comes about.

**We testify and preach the Gospel because it is the God ordained way that those He will save are to hear about his saving grace and the completed work of Christ on their behalf.**

**We preach because our General has ordained our announcing to be the vehicle by which we saves lives for eternity. We preach because we trust God and we are thrilled to get to tell of what He has done!!!**

I want you to see tonight that we are commanded and commissioned by God to GO and testify and present the General Gospel Call on those whom God puts in our path every day of our lives.

We are never done doing this as long as God has us here, church!! Do you see this and more importantly, are you doing this?

Church, may we be convicted and rejuvenated tonight by these truths.

I am praying for your time in your groups as you discuss and pray and prepare to do this more and more with the days God gives us.