

What The Gospel Cannot Do

Introduction. Paul declared that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16-17). Man's true hope of going to Heaven through Jesus is revealed in the powerful gospel (Hebrews 4:12; 1 Peter 1:23). Yet, for all its power, there are some results the gospel cannot produce.

I. The Gospel Cannot Save A Rebellious Person

- A. The gospel has the power to make believers and save obedient believers (Romans 1:16-17), but it cannot save those who will not repent of their past sins and submit to God's word.
- B. Through the agency of the prophets, God begged Israel and Judah to repent or perish in destruction. This admonition still rings out today (Acts 17:30-31; 26:20; James 4:9).

II. The Gospel Cannot Help A Resistant Couple

- A. The New Testament has specific helpful instructions for every wife and every husband (Ephesians 5:22-33). They need to have good attitudes toward one another (Proverbs 5:18-19) and they need to speak gentle words to one another (Ephesians 4:29-32).
- B. When such teaching is carried out properly, marriages will not only survive, they will blossom. But as long as only one spouse, or worse, neither spouse, is willing to craft their marriage in God's way, the gospel cannot help their situation.

III. The Gospel Cannot Do The Work Of The Church

- A. The gospel does not preach itself (Mark 16:15). It needs faithful, hardworking people who will teach it in the world (Acts 8:4).
- B. The gospel itself cannot help the needy saints (Acts 11:27-30). God's gospel can motivate Christians to be compassionate, but His children must step up and share their bounty (2 Corinthians 8:5).
- C. The gospel contains complete instructions that can strengthen and equip the church (1 Corinthians 14:12, 26; Ephesians 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:11), but the gospel itself cannot take what Christians have learned and teach it to others (2 Timothy 2:2).

IV. The Gospel Cannot Serve As A Substitute For Prayer

- A. The same Savior that tells us to preach the gospel also tells us to pray (Luke 18:1; Hebrews 5:7). The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write that the gospel is God's power unto salvation, but He also led that same apostle to pray for opportunities to preach the gospel (Colossians 4:2-3; 1 Thessalonians 5:25).
- B. We live the gospel, teach the gospel, and defend the gospel, but we still bring our petitions and thanksgiving before our Father in prayer (Ephesians 6:18; Philippians 4:6-7; Hebrews 4:16; James 5:16-20). The gospel is great, but it cannot take away the need to pray.

V. The Gospel Cannot Take The Place Of Faith

- A. We cannot be deceived into thinking, “Hey, we have the gospel, so why do we need to have faith?” It is true that faith comes by hearing God’s word (Romans 10:17). It is equally true that the word of God can build us up and give us an inheritance among the sanctified (Acts 20:32).
- B. Faith is man’s proper response to the gospel message (John 1:12; 3:16; 8:24). The faith that pleases God is the faith that acts by love (Galatians 5:6). There is no benefit or consolation in having several copies of the Bible in our house if we are not going to put its teaching to use. It is still true that “without faith it is impossible to please Him” (Hebrews 11:6) and “the just shall live by faith” (Hebrews 10:38). People in the Bible lived out these beautiful maxims.

Conclusion. I am so thankful that precious people taught me the gospel. I thank God for the power of the gospel to change people’s lives and eternal destiny. But even the gospel of the Lord Jesus cannot accomplish everything. It cannot take the place of faith, prayer, and work. If you have faith in the gospel and are ready to yield to its directives, then do so while we sing our invitation song for you.