

THE GOSPEL MESSAGE THAT IS FOREVER NEW

Rom. 10:13 whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be saved.

It's coming up to my fourteenth year with you, and it has been a privilege to be sharing in the Lord's work. There is much change going on around us though. One of the greatest changes that affect us is how many are attempting to adopt the Gospel to make it more suitable to the world. Many of these attempts are very well meant, and I know they are being used by people who love the Lord and who desire to see souls saved, as we do. Nonetheless, since we are in the Lord's work we must be committed to doing it His way.

At another important date in my personal calendar, I was instructed at my ordination to ... II Tim. 4:2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. That means it is not my remit to speak about politics, social issues or anything else, but to strive to preach the whole counsel of God, according to His Word. In particular, following the apostles' example, we must not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord (II Cor. 4:5). To many He is a stumbling-block and foolishness ... but He is the centre of our Gospel and He only must be preached.

When Peter was preaching on the Day of Pentecost in Jerusalem he used as his text Joel 2:28 And it shall come to pass afterward, *that* I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: ²⁹ And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. ³⁰ And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. ³¹ The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. ³² And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call. ... When Paul was writing to the church in Rome he quoted from the same passage, Rom. 10:13 whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be saved.

We're not altogether sure as to the exact dates of Joel's prophecy. Many commentators suggest he probably was ministering in Judah during the reign of King Joash (835-796 BC). So here we have a servant of God preaching this message so far back in antiquity, then we have Peter preaching it on the Day of Pentecost, then we have Paul writing about it ... and this same message has been preached by God's faithful servants for almost three thousand years.

Joel's main theme is "the day of the Lord" (1:15; 2:1,11,31; 3:14,18), and the need for God's people to be prepared. He refers to three important events, each of which he calls a "day of the Lord":

1. He sees the plague of locusts as an immediate day of the Lord (1:1-20)
2. The invasion of Judah by Assyria (present-day northern Iraq) as an imminent day of the Lord (2:1-27)
3. The final judgment of the world as the ultimate day of the Lord (2:28-3:21)

In the immediate text behind Paul's preaching, Joel prophesies about an event that has yet to be fulfilled, 2:32 I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. ³¹The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. He follows this up with, Joel 3:12 Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. 13 Put you in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. 14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD *is* near in the valley of decision. 15 The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. Therefore, the urgency behind their preaching was this ... II Cor. 5:11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.

Of course, the "terror of the Lord" is greatly downplayed ... in favour of the *love* of God. To win souls we must avoid any talk of the unattractive and unappealing, for fear of turning them away? But surely, to warn them properly we must tell them what lies ahead if they do not receive Christ as Saviour! In other words, it would be a lop-sided Gospel if we omitted to mention the "terror of the Lord" awaiting the sinner who will not repent! So we must speak honestly ... for it is the same old message we continue to present today.

So let's simply and honestly present the Gospel ...

It's GOOD NEWS because of WHY

The word 'Gospel' means 'Good News' ... but why do we believe it is *so* 'good news'? When we speak to people about our faith, they don't recognise how good news it is ... Sadly it doesn't register with them as news of any importance. In fact, to the majority it's irrelevant and even ... dubious. How can it possibly be good news? Why do we *need* such news?

It's something that took place two thousand years ago so how does it affect anyone today? What has it to say to the person who works hard all day and arrives home and finds bills he has to pay? What has it to say to the person who has been diagnosed with a life-threatening illness? What about the person whose wife or husband has left them ... or whose children have gotten their lives into a real mess? ... How can this good news touch the lives of people who are at breaking-point?

But now come at it from another direction ... Why do I need to even spend time considering the Gospel when my life has never been better? I live in a beautiful house, with a wonderful family ... my job is secure, and we enjoy all the pleasures anyone can wish for ... Why do I need to attend to the Gospel?

Very simply, it doesn't matter where you are in life ... life is so brittle. You deserve the best when you work hard ... but the sad fact is that even those who can afford almost anything they desire has no power over the day-to-day issues of life. A ninety-two year old man is lying in a beautiful hospital in London. He started off life in splendour, and then it was taken from him. Both he and his mother had to flee in virtual poverty from their home country, and they came to England. There he met and married a young girl who one day became Queen. Now he is privileged with so much splendour we couldn't even imagine the half of it! And yet that ninety-two year old Prince Philip has fallen foul of a condition that a vagrant in the street could also fall foul of. ...

It doesn't matter who we are, what we are, how much we have, or we haven't ... the simple truth of life is this ... [Heb. 9:27 it is appointed unto men once to die](#). No amount of money or influence can change that one simple fact. It's an awful event that every one of us must face. I'm conducting a funeral for a man on Tuesday ... and initially they didn't want any religious involvement. But you see, non-religious people die, semi-religious people die ... and Christians die also.

This is very simple ... we all know [it is appointed unto men once to die](#) ... No-one would argue. But then, death is not the end. There are, of course, those who would argue with that!. We met and spoke with someone recently on the doors and, initially, she said she didn't believe there was anything after this life. Then, when we suggested to her if this life is as good as it gets it has been a fairly futile exercise. She agreed, and then she said she hoped there would be a heaven, a pleasant after-life.

You know, no matter how hard people try to deny it there is something inside every person that knows there is something after this life. And yes, the verse not only says, *it is appointed unto men once to die ...* but it also tells us *but after this the judgment.*

Death is not the end. There is something that comes after it. God's Word explains it is either eternity in Heaven or eternity in Hell. The body is laid in a coffin, but the soul does not remain in the dead body. The soul of the believer enters into the presence of God with the anticipation of the incorruptible body. The soul of the unbeliever awaits the declaration before the judgment throne that eternity in Hell awaits. ... These are events every person who has ever lived will not be able to avoid.

But here is the good news. It is possible the experience of death opens up the very door of Heaven. It is possible to look forward to that event with great anticipation. for **it is good news because of why**. It's good news because if the Gospel has penetrated your soul and changed your life death is no threat to you, *I Cor. 15:55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? ...* The victory over death has been won for us through the means of our Saviour, *I Cor. 15:57 thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* And there, we go from **It's GOOD NEWS because of WHY** to ...

It's GOOD NEWS because of WHO

Again, when you speak to people they tell you how they used to go to Sunday School, or someone in their family used to go to church. They quite often tell you they believe they will get to Heaven because they have never done anything or anybody any wrong. And that is all very well and commendable ... but it is of no lasting and eternal benefit. The problem is too massive for you, me or anyone else to contend with.

It is a problem that goes away back in time. As long as we can remember, people have been murdering people, they have always been involved with various types of permissive behaviour, they have always been trying to outdo their neighbours ... sin isn't anything new! It has infected and affected every generation from the very beginning.

Sin ruins lives, it breaks hearts, it wrecks relationships, it damages society, it starts wars, it initiates greed ... and a whole host of activities far too many to mention! Sin is not a Protestant thing, or a Roman Catholic thing. Neither is it only Muslim or Buddhist ...

Sin is worldwide and it permeates every individual who has lived. Sin is endemic and cannot be stopped. It is at the core of the human condition. ... Well, David, you said you were going to tell us good news? ... Well, yes, and here it is ... it is good news because of Jesus.

You see, we shall all appear before the judgment throne of God, and each of us will answer the very direct question as to what we did with His Son. Many people would tell you they have never done anything with Him ... but that is the problem! Yes, I know there are many who would crucify Him all over again, if they could ... but there are many lovely people who simply have never gotten round to doing anything with Him, - they have been far too busy! Yes, but ... Jesus took time out of Heaven to come to this world to die on a cross for you, Phil. 2:6 *Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. ...* Had He not loved you, He wouldn't have bothered!

But He did love you, and He proved He loved you by taking your sins upon His body and dying on the cross the most painful and cruel death. All the wrong you did against His Father, He took it upon Himself. He didn't leave anything out, so that you would have to deal with it at a later date ... No, He took all your sin upon Himself ... and why did He do that? He did that in order to open the way into Heaven ... And who did He do it for? Here is the answer, *whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be saved.*

Some people say He did it for the 'whosoever' ... but take a closer look and you will see He did it for the *whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD* ... That is who will be saved ... and this is the Good News because of Who it all depends upon, - the Lord Jesus. ... **It's GOOD NEWS because of WHY and it's GOOD NEWS because of WHO.** Let's bring our study to a conclusion ...

It's GOOD NEWS because of WHERE

As Peter preached from the passage in Joel he assured the people, *whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be saved.* ... Saved from what? This is a message that has been preached in every generation. Indeed, God saved our first parents from the defilement of Eden. He has been saving His people since.

Stretching before us is an eternity infinitely more vast than all the universes. No scientist could ever measure the length, breadth, height ... the dimensions of eternity. And in eternity there are two destinations, - Heaven and Hell.

The catechism asks, “What benefits do believers receive from Christ at their death?” ... “The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness and do immediately pass into glory”. They become absent from this physical body and they pass into the glorious presence of God ... to be with Him eternally. ... And the moment the Christian dies, they will be with God in Glory. Why? Because in life they came to Him in repentance, acknowledging their sin and need of cleansing, and they asked Him to come into their life and take control.

The same catechism addresses the issue of the person who chose not to accept Christ as Saviour, - it says they will be cast into the torments of Hell forever. Hell is a real place. John the Baptist preached for his hearers to flee from the wrath to come (Mt. 3:7; Lk. 3:7). Jesus preached more about it than He preached about Heaven. It is a real place, and it is ahead of those who refuse to accept Christ as Saviour.

But, you see, the verse says, [whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be saved](#). That means if you are not already saved, - if you are not already believing in Christ as your Saviour, - you can believe in Him now ... and you will be saved. You will not be facing out into a lost eternity. Hell will not be your destiny.

When Spurgeon was preaching on this subject, he told his congregation, “The salvation which we have to preach to you at this time is salvation from sin in all senses of that term. ... We preach salvation from the unutterable woe ... Whatever may be the terrors of that tremendous day, for which all other days were made, we proclaim, in God’s name, salvation from them all!”

CONCLUSION

The truth of our text from the old sermons is as true today as in any other time throughout history. There is only one means of salvation, - He Himself made it clear, [John 14:6 I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me](#). ... It is the same old message, [whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be saved](#). ... It covers a vast multitude of people from every corner of the globe for **it’s good news because of why**, - we could not have managed our own salvation. And **it’s good news because of Who**, - Christ is its Source.

And **it's good news because of where** the one who believes will spend eternity ... in Heaven with the Saviour. It is the good news of the Gospel ...

Tell me the story of Jesus,
Write on my heart every word.
Tell me the story most precious,
Sweetest that ever was heard.

... Love in that story so tender,
Clearer than ever I see.
Stay, let me weep while you whisper,
Love paid the ransom for me.