

06.09.2019 LIVING THE GOSPEL

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:8-10

The basis of the good news of the gospel is the unchanging, unconditional self-giving love of God. This agape' love is manifested to mankind as grace; grace that offers salvation from the penalty, the power and the presence of sin.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. John 3:16, 17

As children of Adam we are totally incapable of producing 'works' that are acceptable to God for our works are always tainted by self-centredness. So God, in His great mercy, undertook not only to redeem us, but to give us His very life through His Son, Christ Jesus. It is only the life of God that can produce God's righteousness (the only righteousness acceptable to God). At conversion, a Christian must recognise that his new converted mind must be submitted continually to the indwelling Holy Spirit, so that He can produce in us the good works that God has prepared for each of us to do. This is what it means to 'live the gospel'.

In the context of our current lessons, to 'live the gospel' is to live as Christ lived and to carry out His mission of bringing spiritual, mental and physical healing to those in need of it.

Unfortunately, many Christians do not experience this 'living the gospel'. The reason is that once they are converted, they make the mistake of thinking that because they want to follow God's will, they can now do all that God wants them to do. And soon they realise that though they want to do God's will, they are unable to do so. Like the man of Romans 7, they cry out:

'The trouble is not that the Law's demands are unjust, but that I am unable to meet them.'

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Romans 7:18, 19

Such Christians, though sincere, are still trying to keep the Law, or live the gospel, in their own strength. They have not realised that God has prepared their works for them and will make them His workmanship through the power of the Spirit... ***For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:10)***

Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness. Rom 4:4, 5

But when the kindness and the love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Titus 3:5, 6

*Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty (emancipation from bondage, freedom). And all of us, as with unveiled face, [because we] continued to behold [in the Word of God] as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, **are constantly being transfigured into His very own image** in ever increasing splendour and from one degree of glory to another; [for this comes] from the Lord [Who is] the Spirit. 2 Cor 3:17,18 Amplified*

Blessed is the Christian who realises that he is not under law but under grace. He is no longer under the Law, but is led by the Spirit. Such a Christian is living the gospel.

Below is a timeline of Salvation in an individual's life:

The Sons of Adam (sinners)

Before Christ



Get to know Jesus is the Friend of Sinners (*work of the Holy Spirit bringing conviction to the heart*)



Accept Jesus as personal Saviour and receive 2 gifts -

Forgiveness and the in-dwelling Holy Spirit - *Acts 2:38*



Translated into the Kingdom of God

In Christ



Because they are now 'In Christ',

'In Christ':

1. they are chosen by the Godhead for redemption and re-creation Eph 1:1-14
2. they are created in Christ for good works; they are His workmanship. Eph 2:10
3. redeemed in Christ Eph 1:7
4. they have passed from death to life. John 5:24
5. they are adopted as sons and daughters of God 1 John 3:1
6. they are in heavenly places with Christ Eph 2:6
7. their citizenship is in heaven Phil 3:20
8. they have an inheritance Eph 1:11
9. they are sealed Eph 1:13
10. brought near to God by his blood Eph 2:13,18
11. partakers of the promises in the gospel, through Christ Eph 3:6
12. have access into the most Holy place; the very presence of God Heb 6:19; 10:19-23.
13. There is no condemnation in the judgement John 5:24, Rom 8:1
14. have boldness in the judgement. 1 John 4:17
15. they are kings and priests Rev 1:6
16. they are complete in Him Col 2:9

These blessings are all received the moment we accept Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord and are declared righteous (justified) by God.

These blessings are worked out in the life of a Christian, by the in-dwelling Spirit. The Bible calls this process Sanctification or 'Christ in You'. This is a life-long process.

So as '**In Christ**' we receive the blessings of justification, likewise, **by Christ working in us** (through the Holy Spirit) we receive the blessings of sanctification, a Christ-like character that loves as God loves. As Paul says in Rom 6:1 'It is unthinkable that a Christian should continue to keep sinning...'. But it is equally true that we cannot produce the

righteousness of God, which is the only righteousness that pleases Him. Therefore, we surrender daily to the Spirit that He may work out God's will in our lives.



'Christ in You'

The blessings of allowing God to live out His life in you:

- a. You can be confident that God will completely sanctify you because He has promised to do so 1 Thess 5:23, 24. 2 Pet 1:3, 4.
- b. God will produce the fruit of righteousness in your life Gal 5:22, 23.
- c. You will love as God loves John 13:34.
- d. You will have the same ministry of reconciling men to God as Christ did 2 Cor 5:18, 19.
- e. You will be given gifts for ministry in the church Eph 4:12.
- f. As Christ came to reveal the character of God to the world, we are ambassadors and witnesses to the world as He was. 2 Cor 5:20, Matt 24:14, 1 Pet 2:9.

It is important to note that both justification and sanctification are the work of God. We are all familiar with Rom 3:24, which says we are justified freely by the God's grace through the redemption that is in Christ. We are less familiar with Acts 26:18 which clearly states that sanctification is also by faith.

Our part in salvation is to 'obey the gospel' or have 'the obedience of faith'. Romans 1:5; 16:26. This means, that after we accept Christ, we must daily surrender our lives to the truths of the gospel; that we are now redeemed children of God, and that we must live lives of confidence in God. We also accept that we are to reveal His character and witness to the world. As this is impossible of ourselves, we daily surrender our lives to God, so that His Spirit may work His perfect will in our lives.

Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people. Revelation 14:6

In these last times of earth's history, God's people are called to proclaim the eternal gospel to all the world – to proclaim it by preaching and by the living witness of lives that are God's workmanship.

Do we have a burden to live the gospel so that men may be drawn to Christ the Saviour of the world?

Then the prayer of the apostle Paul must become the daily prayer of our hearts:

For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. Ephesians 3:14-21.
