

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PAUL
2 Timothy 1:8-12

Intro: Paul's last divinely inspired letter. And so:

- 1) It shows his most mature thought.
- 2) It shows his deepest concerns.

It actually begins with the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, in 1:10, and concludes with a look ahead to the time when the Lord will come again. See 4:8.

But all the way through his main concern is for the Gospel:

- the message which he himself has preached,
- how the message will fare in the ministry of his son in the faith,
- and how it will be preserved up until the time when the Lord returns!

There are many, many passages we could turn to to find out what it was that Paul preached, which is called "the gospel," but none could be better than the text before us now.

To help you remember the message of these 5 verses, I want to use 4 words:

- 1) The conflict -- surrounding the Gospel (v. 8).
- 2) The content of the Gospel -- what it is (vv. 9, 10).
We have seen from Isaiah 53, and last Sunday from Peter's message in Acts 2, that salvation is pre-eminently and exclusively a work of God. Does Paul agree? We shall see.
- 3) The calling of the Apostle himself (v. 11). "I" in this verse is emphatic.
- 4) The conviction of the Apostle, personally, with reference to the Gospel (v. 12).

I. THE CONFLICT (2 Tim. 1:8).

The Gospel never has been a popular message -- AND THE TRUE GOSPEL IS NOT POPULAR TODAY, NOR WILL IT EVER BE! Read ch. 4 if you have any doubts.

And because of this the words "fear" (v. 7) and "ashamed" (v. 8) represent the conflict that Paul had gone through, the conflict that Timothy was facing, and the conflict that has been faced by the people of God right down to the present time.

And because it is an unpopular, hated message, the one who preaches it, and the one who lives it (see 3:12) "shall suffer persecution." Here, "the afflictions of the Gospel."

To avoid this we do one of two things:

- 1) We say nothing, or

2) We try to change it to make it acceptable.

But the facts remain that:

- 1) Jesus Christ was not popular. Multitudes may have followed Him, but the crowds demanded His death.
- 2) The true servants of Christ have never been popular.

As one writer has said, " . . . expect afflictions for the gospel's sake, prepare for them, count upon them, be willing to take thy lot . . ." (M. Henry, VI, 834).

Paul was not promising Timothy an easy time. See ch 2. This is the reason for, the need for, Paul's words here in v. 8.

And if you want to know the main reason for all of the conflict which has always surrounded the preaching of the Gospel, you can see it in vv. 9, 10.

II. THE CONTENT OF THE GOSPEL (2 Tim. 1:9, 10).

Now we are ready to ask -- Did Paul agree with Peter and with Isaiah, that salvation is a work of God?

The answer is a most emphatic, YES! Look at these two verses. (Read.)

There is only one place where we are mentioned in these two verses, and that is to exclude us from any part in this marvelous work of salvation. Note how we are set aside: "not according to our works."

Always in Scripture what a person does is valued according to what he is. This was true of Christ; it is true of every man. So that when Paul says, "not according to our works," he is not only excluding what we can do, but he is excluding any and everything beneficial that we might be:

- not our desire to be saved,
- not our deeds,
- not our character,
- not our worship,
- not our prayers,
- not our Bible reading or knowledge,
- not our church attendance,
- not the family we have come from,
- not our money,

because everything about us is absolutely excluded, is even detrimental, where salvation is concerned.

And this is why the Gospel is not popular. People want to be told how great they are. They want to be applauded for all that they have done, or can do. They want to be told

how very, very important they are in this work. They do not want to see themselves helpless, hopeless, defiled and doomed -- utterly dependent upon the mercy and grace of a loving God!

Even as I say these things they strike a discordant note in the ears of some of you who are saved. We really hate to face the awful truth -- AND YET HERE IT IS!

BUT ON THE CONTRARY -- HOW WONDERFUL THESE WORDS WILL SOUND TO YOU WHEN THE LORD HAS OPENED YOUR EYES TO SEE THE TRUTH!

Salvation is much more wonderful than you and I could ever have imagined, or planned for ourselves. Note:

- "Who" has done the saving,
- the present, finished work,
- the effectual call,
- the basis of the work,
- the beginning of the work,
- the One who has actually provided salvation for us,
- what He had to do -- in v. 10, on the one hand, taking away; on the other hand, bringing to light!

Read those 2 verses until they are written indelibly upon your heart by the Holy Spirit. This is the only Gospel that there is, or ever will be!

III. THE CALLING -- OF THE APOSTLE HIMSELF (2 Timothy 1:11).

In addition to his being called into salvation, Paul had been called to special service. "I" is emphatic. His service was threefold:

- A. "A preacher" -- an official messenger appointed to proclaim the message of his Lord -- AND NOTHING ELSE!

What a solemn thing it is to be a preacher! It is not something we are to choose; we are chosen for it!

- B. "And an apostle" -- even more than "a preacher" -- a very special kind of a messenger. There were only 13 of them -- and Paul had a very unique place among these men whose lives and ministries formed the foundation upon which the Church came into being (see Eph. 2:20). See 2 Tim. 1:1; Gal. 1:11, 12. Paul had the Gospel revealed directly to him by the Lord Jesus Christ so that its purity would be preserved and so Paul would know its power!

- C. "And a teacher" -- one who explains and applies the truth, one who instructs, one who instills doctrine into the hearts of men. Cf. 2:7, 24-26; 4:1-5.

And note Paul's faithfulness to his calling. See 2 Tim. 4: 7, 8.

When the Gospel gets man-centered like it is today, we become more inclined to give men what they want to hear. We are men pleasers, not pleasers of God. And the Gospel always gets corrupted when this happens.

There is nothing more important in the world than that the Gospel be preserved and be preached in its simplicity, its purity, and its power!

But, finally . . .

IV. THE CONVICTION OF THE APOSTLE PAUL -- as he speaks very personally for himself (2 Tim. 1:12).

Now we see that he practised what he preached to Timothy in v. 8. Paul suffered, but Paul was not ashamed! WHY?

For two reasons:

- A. Paul had a deep, personal acquaintance with the Lord Jesus Christ: "I know WHOM I have believed."

Have you "believed"? And if you have, do you know Him well?

There are many who have believed in Him who have not gone on to get well acquainted with Him through His Word in a life of personal fellowship.

Assurance is based upon our knowledge of the Lord and our fellowship with Him.

When this is true of us, then we will be able to say the second thing which Paul says here:

- B. "And am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

The truth applies to every believer, but not all have entered into it.

See our assurance: "He is able"!!!

"To keep" means to keep safely,
to guard,
to protect,
to preserve,
to keep from being lost!

And how long? "Against that day," or to state it another

way, until the Lord Jesus returns!

What had Paul deposited, placed over, into the Lord's care? Everything -- but here, especially everything that had to do with his salvation. Paul knew that, because of the sufficiency of his Saviour, and because of the eternal character of this salvation -- both in its beginning and its fulfillment -- nothing could possibly cause him to lose what he had in Christ!

Concl: Do you agree with Paul?

I DO, and I hope that you do.

If we do, do we have the same fervent desire to endure anything that we have to endure for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ and for the preservation of the Gospel?

This is what is needed today -- men and women, young people, even boys and girls who will count no cost too great to be faithful to the Lord. Times are not going to get better; they are getting worse. See 2 Tim. 3:1-5, 13. And then go on to read 2 Tim. 3 14-17.

If you do not agree with Paul, where do you disagree -- and why? Is it over that little phrase, "not according to our works"?

Let me ask you:

- 1) Are you satisfied with the way you are going? Has it brought you peace? Do you feel like you have done enough?
- 2) Do you have the conviction and assurance that Paul had?

Your answer has to be "NO" to both questions because there is only peace and assurance when you come to God in His way.

Let me plead with you to come to Christ, to commit yourself to Him, right now! I have no hesitation at all in asking you to come because I can say with the Apostle Paul as he wrote in Rom. 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."