

# The Glorious Gospel

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*"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ who is the image of God should shine unto them: (2 Corinthians 4:3,4).*

The condition of all you who are, in the sense of the text, unbelievers is sad beyond all expression. Your eyes are blinded, you are under the rule of the god of this world; the god of this world who in the Ephesians is spoken of by Paul when, addressing the saints, he says: "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Those evils which some of us here have to contend against, with which we are at times in conflict and struggling, you who are unbelievers obey fully. May the Holy Ghost make you think of this, convince you of sin and lead you to the fountain of the Saviour's blood. You don't know where you are. The unbelief that rules in you ruled in Adam when he fell, and he plunged you into the same pit of destruction and darkness into which he plunged himself. O if the Lord who plucked him from that condition, pulled him out of that pit, come and do the same for you, what a mercy it would be! This is a wide and terrible word, the god of this world: "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not." And he may blind you with religion. He blinds some with pleasure. He blinds others with lust; he blinds some with profanity; he blinds some with superstition. He may blind you with a belief in the Bible. You may be content with the Bible and never think of its power or of the God who inspired it; of Him with whom you will one day of necessity have to do; and what a terrible thing that will be! And his great end is destruction; he great end is to prevent, wherever permitted, the eyes of the mind from beholding Christ, the light of the gospel shining into their hearts; that is the devil's aim. He prevails where the Lord permits him. You are quite easy, some of you are not discontented with your state. Sin is not trouble to you, no grief of heart, no burden; it does not drive you to your knees; it does not take you from so-called pleasure into your rooms; it does not make you cry out, "God be merciful to me a sinner." You are just content, but your contentment is death, and terrible. O it is terrible! May the Lord look upon you and say in your very hearts, "Let there be light in thee;" and then you will see the state that you are in, the danger, the awful danger. Sometimes short's the warning given to men of death. It seizes them, and their hearts cease to beat; they are in eternity, and know not till they open their eyes in hell where they are. Dear friends, may the Holy Ghost quicken your souls, open your eyes, give you to perceive the fearful state into which you are plunged, and in which you are detained by sin and the god of this world.

Eternity, O eternity! about which some of us are exercised and have been for many years. Eternity, the God in eternity in whom we live and move and have our being, we must meet. Yes,

and what a meeting it will be if a Holy God and an impure creature meet! They cannot live together. What a meeting it will be if a guilty sinner and a just God meet! They will never live together. What a meeting it will be when you, if you die in your guilt and deformity, for a moment will see a holy God, and then the next moment hear that dreadful sentence: "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

There is a gospel, the gospel, the glorious gospel of Christ. This gospel teaches the way to heaven from hell; the way from sin to holiness; the way from self to Christ; the way from the world to the cross; the way for the guilty into justification, of the polluted into holiness, the way from danger to safety, from exposedness to God's anger to security in the Lord Jesus. May it please the eternal Spirit to lay with weight the reality of these great truths in your hearts, that you being born again may, with the publican cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

If enabled this morning, I shall tell you what this gospel is. It is a glorious gospel. Now the gospel is good news, and as there is no good news in this world, as the things of this world are not good except for the moment as they are to be used; as there is no good news to arise out of own nature, it being depraved; this good news of the glorious gospel must come from heaven. It is good news from a far country. It is brought before us in the Scripture. The Scripture is as a voice from heaven speaking good news, bringing glad tidings of good things. It is spoken into certain hearts, dropped with life, with light, with power, and with glory into the hearts of sinners, sinners of a certain character, sinners of a certain character described in Holy Scripture. Not every sinner, but the sinner who as a sinner is called to repentance. "I came not to call the righteous," and because there are no righteous men in this world, this must mean not to call the righteous who are sinners in their own judgment and feeling; and these Christ came to call, that He might show to them the riches of His grace. This gospel is good news, and can be only good news to those who have heard a broken law sounded in their hearts; it can only be good news to those who in themselves are entirely guilty and ruined and in their own feelings condemned.

Let us look then as enabled at this gospel, this glorious gospel of Christ, or the gospel of the glory of Christ. It is first, the gospel of love; it is the gospel of the atonement, it is the gospel of the Holy Ghost, it is the gospel of free promises, the gospel of divine operations on sinner's hearts, the gospel of the kingdom introducing sinners into the kingdom of heaven. It is the gospel of free forgiveness; the gospel of power, the power of God unto everyone that believeth; the gospel in which is revealed the righteousness of God without the law and from faith to faith. This is that blessed gospel which it is at times my delight to preach, because I have in some little measure, I hope, felt it. A feeling religion is that religion which the Spirit of God gives.

First, it is the gospel of love, eternal love, expressed beautifully in the Gospel according to John: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." O what a gospel! And the same apostle expresses it in his First Epistle where he says, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, in that He sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." The Love of God gave out of His own bosom His only begotten Son, and when you see this love in the gift of it you will love it, you will cleave to it, you will follow it. Every revelation of the love of God to a sinner breaks that sinner's heart into contrition, and gathers it up into happiness. This blessed gospel of the love of God is wonderful to all to whom it comes. The Apostle speaks to the

Thessalonians of the gospel coming to them. We may go to the gospel. In going to the Scripture we may go to it, in going to hear; but when it comes it is another matter; when it comes with power, sweetness, and unction into a sinner's soul; when he feels that it comes as the voice of God to him; when if his name were called distinctly and audibly, it would not be more clear than it is when the gospel comes to him and he perceives the power of it in his own soul, that he and it are not strangers each to the other, but they understand one another, I mean that the gospel understands this sinner's emptiness and brings fullness; it understands his guiltiness and brings pardon; his weakness and brings strength; his distance from God and brings him near; and he understands it in those very particulars. "Why," he says, "I was lost and am found, I was dead and am alive, I was dark and I am enlightened, I was far from God and I am made nigh, I was polluted and I am cleansed, I was guilty and I am justified;" and all this is done in the eternal love of God to a poor sinner. And in Him it is a free gospel, a living gospel, a blessed gospel, spreading out itself over the whole of the sinner's misery and guilt and bondage and fear and trouble, spreading itself like wings of light, healing the soul of its sickness, its sin-sickness.

It is a wonderful gospel is the gospel of God's love, and this love we find in the Scriptures in its liberality, its eternal liberality. He gave all He could give. God had nothing more to give than what He gave, when He gave His only begotten Son. He could not give anything better or greater. Nothing equals this gift, nothing could equal it in the whole of creation. And He gave His Son for a very particular reason; He gave His Son to be incarnate, to become Man.

"His real state aside He laid,  
Came down to earth, a Man was made;  
To make poor men the sons of God,  
And pay the debt His brethren owed."

Here God and men can meet and never sunder. Here a sinner can see the well pleased face of God and the infinite hatred of God to sin at the same time. Here the sinner can behold a new and living way to God, and when He beholds these things his very heart and mind become changed as it were, and enamoured of the Lord Jesus, taken up with Him, swallowed up as it were. O the eternal love of God to poor sinners in this His great gift! And the apostle gathers all up into this; he speaks of the Gospel of Christ, the glorious gospel of Christ, and he speaks of it as being light: "Lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

So let us look at the gospel of Christ in respect of His Person and work. The gospel of Christ in respect of His Person is the gospel that declares and reveals all that God requires, all that God can give, all that He can do. Now the image of God is to shine in a sinner's heart in the Lord Jesus in the gospel. The image of God is Jesus Christ: "The express image of His Person, the brightness of His Father's glory;" and I think here is included the infinite hatred, the necessary hatred of God to sin. This shines; if it shines in the law on us it terrifies us and makes us tremble. I have trebled at it there, and some of you have also. It is solemn, O terrible to us, the infinite, the necessary hatred of God to sin! He can but hate it; it is His nature. It is His nature to hate everything that is impure, that is unholy. And when this is seen in the law, the law becomes a ministration of death, a ministration of condemnation, a ministration which some understand experimentally. We shall never forget the pains of death, of hell. The sorrows of death

compassed us about when we were under that ministration. The law expressing God in His infinite claims on man; the law doing this, reveals God as a terror, and the heart to whom the revelation is made meditates terror.

Now that same perfection of God, these very perfections which the law reveals, and that particular one I am naming, His infinite hatred to sin, shine in Jesus Christ. Yes, and this makes it so wonderful to those to whom it is revealed, that God's hatred to sin found a way into the very heart of the dear Redeemer when it condemned, when it cursed Him. Yes, the liberty of the souls of God's people from condemnation cost the Lord Jesus His life; He had to lay it down. All who see Christ, see in Him as He is crucified, God's eternal enmity to sin; see how impossible it is for Him to behold sin and look on iniquity and not punish it; and venting it on Christ, He punished Him. So sinner, if you see the image of God in Christ, you see this; and you see how therein are harmonized the perfections of God, all of them. In the law you did not see this. In the law you see the perfection of holiness, of justice; you see the perfection of God's hatred, it is perfect there in its intensity and its punishing power, you see it there. But you do not see that perfect image of God which is described and exhibited in the gospel, for therein these perfections unite, harmonized, and are glorified.

Does God hate sin? Yes. Then that hatred finds a vent into the very heart of Christ. Is God love? Yes. Then that love is expressed in the coming and the obedience and the death of Christ. Is God a justifier of the ungodly? Yes, and that He does show Himself to be in the Lord Jesus; for He freely justifies all who believe in Him through the atoning work of Christ. Is God familiar with sinners? Yes, He is familiar with them as He is seen and known and approached and heard in the Lord Jesus. So there is the image of God shining in the hearts of poor sinners.

My dear friends, this holy religion is the religion we must have if we are going to heaven. Nothing short will do. The god of this world will blind our minds and eyes to this and set them on many things that please us, but the Holy Spirit's teaching will bring us off from all these things to this glorious gospel. Why, how can some of us forget when we first saw God. I cannot forget when I first saw Him and trembled; when I said to myself, "Where that God is I shall never be." His perfection in some measure shined upon my heart. How different when the other perfections shine in Jesus Christ! The perfections of Deity which are not seen in the law as it is a commanding law and is itself a covenant of works, are His love, His patience, His power, His compassion, His forgiveness; these do not shine in the law. The law has no sound of them, gives no hint of them, knows nothing about them. It knows this, a holy God, and it approves of a pure creature, a pure creature being a man who perfectly obeys the law; that is all the law knows with respect to its approval. It knows a sinner and it condemns him, and that is all it can do in itself. Disapproval. It condemns sin wherever it finds it, and curses for it. You must stand before God, and if you are under the law you must be measured and judged by it. If you enter into eternity under the law there is no word for you out of the gospel. All you will hear is the law in its sentence, because you have not obeyed it. What a terrible thing it will be to die under the law! What a fearful thing! Who can measure the fearfulness of it? Who can measure the condemnation of it? Who can fully imagine what it will be to be before God's eye and before His majesty, justly condemned out of the mouth of God to die? Now if those blessed perfections, with the added ones I have named, shine into our hearts, we die in quite another state, and stand before God in quite another state, happy, accepted, holy, forgiven, justified, sanctified; therefore

eternally happy, filled with bliss. Nothing will do this but the glorious gospel of the blessed God, the glorious gospel of Christ as He is the image of God.

The glorious gospel of Christ with respect to the work of Christ. The work of Christ was this, to satisfy God and thereby save His people. It won't seem much to you when I say this if you are not dissatisfied with yourself, if you are not convinced of who and what God is; but if you know yourself, if you know who God is, if you know what you are, then it will be wonderful that there should be a Man, the Man Christ Jesus who is true almighty God, who undertook, being able to die, to satisfy God, please Him and so save you.

Look at this word, satisfy and please God. What does it mean? Is He dissatisfied? Is He displeased? Yes. With whom? With me, with you, as we are in our first head, Adam. Displeased with our lives, with our hearts, with our thoughts. Displeased with us, just as we are fallen creatures. O Christ had to please God, to satisfy Him, to satisfy His law! What did He do to satisfy the law of God? Go to the very extreme of it in all its precepts, in all its demands. Shirking no duty; taking on Himself the infirmities of His people and all their duties. All it was their duty to do; all it was their duty to render to God, He took on Himself and rendered, absolutely rendered. That satisfied God, nothing else. "Here," let me say again, "God and man can meet and never sunder." Some of us know what that means a little. He has met with us and smiled on us; He has met with us and blessed us; He has dropped a word of kindness into our hearts. He has dropped forgiveness into our consciences; he has sealed His mercy home upon our spirits; He has met with us. Being in the way of prayer and supplication, He met with us and gave us righteousness to justify us, and love to dissolve us and forgiveness to make us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

Now this is the God that you must meet, if you are to go to heaven. This is the God you must meet, and this is the God some of us love to meet. What is your grief, O people of God? Is it not that you do not see Him as often as you would; that you do not get the communion with Him that you desire; that you do not love Him as you would and should; that you do not trust in Him as He deserves to be trusted. Is not this your grief? O what a wonder that ever the glorious gospel of Christ should have shined into any of our hearts, and God meeting with us in that! He does meet with His people. They rejoice in Him as they see Him; they rejoice in Him as they hear Him, when they feel His mercy coming into their hearts.

This shines. We know what it is for the light to shine naturally upon our eyes and upon objects about us. We see objects in the light of the sun, we see them clearly. We now, that is just so spiritually when the Lord Jesus shines in His gospel into our hearts. It enlightens us into many things, it enlightens us into how God is satisfied: "A foe received a favourite, an alien made a child." How a sinner has his name and character and standing changed. He is no longer a child of wrath but a child of God; no longer under the wrath and dominion of the father of lies, but is subject unto Christ and is espoused unto Christ as a chaste virgin. No longer is he now to please himself, but to please the Lord who has chosen him. He is a child of God. The light shows him this, and it is a wonderful thing to have this revealed. One of the greatest of all the mercies that ever can come to a poor sinner is the shining into his heart of the glorious gospel of Christ in the death of Christ. It reconciles, it brings the sinner to God; not an enemy but a friend; not an alien but a child; not a polluted creature, but one who is sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus and

by the Spirit of our God. What good news this is! Did you ever hear it? Yes, some must say they have heard it thus, and they want to hear it again. Some may say, "We wish we could hear it," and if that wish in you is a living wish it takes you to your knees. It makes you earnest in your cries at times. It makes you feel none can satisfy, nothing can do you good, but this gospel; and the day will come when you won't say, "I wish I could hear." You will say: "My soul was in my ears on a day, and I heard a voice from heaven. I heard it in my heart, and the Lord came, and I came to Him in the power that His coming to me imparted, and I saw His well-pleased face. O how it did shine unto me and in me!" And then you will say, "Now I know." The Lord's people often wonder. They think, they fear, they pray, but they say they do not know. But when this gospel shines unto them in their hearts they say, "Now we know," and in their manner and in their measure they can say with Paul: "Have not I seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" O the dark region of guessing! No child of God can ever be comfortable there. He wants to come into the light of God's countenance; reconciled unto God in the body of the flesh of Jesus through death.

It is the glorious gospel of Christ in respect to the resurrection: "Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first-fruits of them that slept." We died in a dead head. We lived in a dead head as long as we lived in unregeneracy. There is no longer a dead head for the Lord's people: "He died unto sin once. In that He rose, He rose to live unto God and to live unto Him for ever." O what a mercy we have a living head in the Lord Jesus! "Rooted," says the Spirit by Paul, "Rooted and grounded in love," and brought up into Him, to grow up into Him as into our living Head in all things. Sinner, what a blessed truth it is! God is a living God, and He is the God of the living and not of the dead. O what a Christ is Christ to some of us! A living Christ raised from the dead by the glory of the Father; and what does He live for? "He ever liveth to make intercession for us," as the Spirit says by Paul.

And also it is the glorious gospel, the gospel of Christ, inasmuch as it is the gospel of the power of God. "I am not ashamed," says Paul, "of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth." When you feel this gospel you are lifted up, lifted out of gloom and doubt and fear and bondage, brought nigh unto God by the blood of Christ. You understand a little then of what Paul means when He says: "Through Him (that is Christ) we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." This power is Christ's power to forgive sins. This power is Christ's power to hold up the weak, though they are often falling in their feelings. This power is Christ's power to make a weak creature stand. God is able to make him stand. "He shall be holden up, for God is able to make him stand." It is the power of God to still every guilty fear; the power of God to enable a sinner to cast himself on the Lord for time and for eternity; the power of Christ to enable a sinner to triumph and to be a saviour unto God. What a wonderful power is the power of the gospel, and what a gospel it is to have it in your own soul, to feel it within your very heart, that Christ is in you, "Christ the power of God." Christ the power of God to new create and to give you His own image and form; Christ the power of God to carry you forward and to carry you through your difficulties and bring you honourably to your graves. Christ the power of God to impress upon your heart the truth as the truth is in Him. The glorious gospel of Christ is the power of God, and it is in the hearts of all who receive this power. So as Paul says to the Thessalonians: "Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance." And what did it do for them? It, "turned them from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven, even Jesus which delivered them from the wrath to come.

It is the gospel of promises; the gospel full of promises, "Our word unto you was not yea and nay," says Paul; "It was yea, yea. For the gospel which was brought unto you by me and by Silvanus was not yea and nay, but yea, yea; for all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him amen, unto the glory of God by us." And if you have received one promise into your heart, one manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ, one sweet sentence of pardon, that abides. Your feeling of it may have been very transient, you may have been, and may often still be ready to give it all up. You may think you were deceived because the power did not remain long with you. But O, when the Lord renews the spirit of your mind, when He gives you perhaps some fresh word of promise, the old will come back and you will, "eat the old corn because of the new." You will say: "Why, I was not deceived; I know now I was not deceived. It was God's word in my soul, God's promise, and the promises cannot be broken." That is a very beautiful character which the Apostle Paul gives of the Lord in his Epistle to Titus, where he says, "God that cannot lie," and He gave a promise of eternal life before the world began. "God that cannot lie."

It is the glorious gospel of Christ's intercession. A gospel that reveals One who, "opens His mouth for the dumb, in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction," That is the gospel, the Lord Jesus, open, revealed to faith in heaven at the Father's right hand, ever living to intercede for the guiltiest and the poorest and the vilest of sinners out of hell. If you have a groan wrought in you by the Holy Spirit, that will go out of your heart to heaven; and though you may feel it such a poor prayer, you could not think of it as a real prayer, Christ will receive it, perfume it with His infinite merit, and present it to His Father; and you will get an answer. O returns to prayer are certain, coming down from heaven as a gift of God into the heart! A living cry goes back to heaven and comes down again in an answer. Can you not speak for yourself? You may have to speak about yourself when on your knees; when your spirit is engaged in prayer you speak about yourself, and what do you say about yourself? Why, "Lord, I am a guilty creature, I am ignorant, I am weak, I fail, I fail, I do not know what I want to know. I wish to be in the way to heaven but I am afraid I am not. I wish to know the Lord Jesus but I am so blind and ignorant I am afraid I may make a mistake and receive a false Christ." You have to say all these things about yourself: "Lord, I am vile." Then what do you do? Cry for mercy. Then you cannot speak for yourself, you have no excuses? "No, these have gone. The law has killed me." The teachings of God in your heart have killed excuses, you have got none to make. You cannot say, "So-and-so troubled and tempted me, and I fell." You have to say, "Lord, I am lost; I am really a lost person." But then, though you cannot speak for yourself, though you have no excuses to make, this is the mercy, this is the infinite mercy, that the Lord Jesus can speak for you. "Open Thy mouth for the dumb." That is what He does. "Open Thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction." Open Thy mouth; plead the cause of the poor and the needy. That is the gospel, poor sinner.

You have got plenty of law when you condemn yourself, but Christ has plenty of the gospel to give you, and that will take away the law. He takes away the first, that He may establish the second. You have plenty of trouble under the law. Christ has plenty of grace and pardon, all for sinners; and this shining into the heart says to a sinner: "Fear not, I have redeemed thee." Says a sinner: "Look to the Lord with steadfast eye, and fight with hell by faith." O what a gospel! Can you join with Toplady and say this:

"The gospel I love it, 'tis perfectly free.  
The gospel I love it, 'tis full as 'tis free?"

Blessed gospel! Do not be offended with me for preaching about it. God give you to see it as it is in the face of Jesus Christ, the image of God; the blessed image of God shining through our poor nature without any sin. This gospel is a great gospel and it meets great sinners. It is for great sinners; it is for dumb, it is for guilty, it is for lost sinners. It shines into their hearts. It becomes a sweet experience; it is not a speculation. It is a sweet power, a power which touching the heart, entering the conscience, becomes new life and makes that word good: "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

Just one word more in closing. It is the glorious gospel of Christ inasmuch as it is an everlasting gospel. There is no end to it, no end to it. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love. I have justified thee with an everlasting righteousness. I have saved thee by an everlasting gospel, embraced thee in an everlasting embrace." Feelings change. We go in and enjoy, we go and we are troubled; but the gospel is the same.

"What thou find'st Him at thy best,  
"He's at thy worst the same."

No change. Hence the apostle's word to the Hebrews: "Remember them that have the rule over you, who watch for your souls." Why? "Considering the end of their conversation," which is, "Christ Jesus, the same yesterday and today and for ever."

May the Lord make out to our very hearts and consciences this gospel so that the power of it may be felt by us and enjoyed. Amen