

**“THE GOSPEL CHANGES US”**  
**(The Message and Its Effects)**

**INTRODUCTION:** The theme for our Second Annual Christian Heritage Conference/weekend is this...

1. **“The Gospel Changes Everything”**

- a. The Gospel Changes Us (M. Ross)
- b. The Gospel Changes Worship & Music (M. Milton)
- c. The Gospel Changes the Church (D. Kelly)
- d. The Gospel Changes Tomorrow: New Reformation (D. Kelly)

2. **Martin Luther** is considered the *Father of the Reformation*, though the Holy Spirit was simultaneously working in the hearts of other Reformers...

- a. In 1517, Luther posted his famous *95 Theses* on the Wittenberg College church doors.
- b. Contesting the idea of *purchased indulgences* for the forgiveness of sins
- c. Luther was an Old Testament and Hebrew professor at the University of Wittenberg (Germany).
- d. For 2 years, Luther had disputed with the Pope and the Catholic Church over substantive issues of authority, indulgences, the Scripture, and other things.
- e. He was not alone. Hundreds of other clergymen and scholars across Europe were involved in the same discussions.
- f. But it was not until 1519, two years after the posting of the *95 Theses*, that Luther was truly converted.

3. Luther wrote about this in his *Preface to the Complete Edition of Luther’s Latin Writings; 1545*, one year before his death in 1546.

- a. His “personal” testimony
- b. In his studies, he had wrestled mightily with Romans 1:16-17.

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith." (Romans 1:16-17)*

- c. *Luther’s Works; vol. 34; pp. 336-337.*

*Meanwhile, I had already during that year (1519) returned to interpret the Psalter anew. I had confidence in the fact that I was more skilful, after I had lectured in the University on St. Paul’s epistles to the Romans, to the Galatians, and the one to the Hebrews. I had indeed been captivated with an extraordinary ardor for understanding Paul in the Epistle to the Romans. But up till then it was not the cold blood about the heart, but a single word in Chapter 1 [:17], “In it the righteousness of God is revealed,” that had stood in my way. For I hated the word “righteousness of God,” which, according to the use and custom of all the teachers, I had been*

*taught to understand philosophically regarding the formal or active righteousness, as they called it, with which God is righteous and punishes the unrighteous sinner. Though I lived as a monk without reproach, I felt that I was a sinner before God with an extremely disturbed conscience. I could not believe that he was placated by my satisfaction. I did not love, yes, I hated the righteous God who punishes sinners, and secretly, if not blasphemously, certainly murmuring greatly, I was angry with God, and said, "As if, indeed, it is not enough, that miserable sinners, eternally lost through original sin, are crushed by every kind of calamity by the law of the Decalogue, without having God add pain to pain by the Gospel and also by the Gospel threatening us with his righteousness and wrath!" Thus I raged with a fierce and troubled conscience. Nevertheless, I beat importunately upon Paul at that place, most ardently desiring to know what St. Paul wanted. At last, by the mercy of God, meditating day and night, I gave heed to the context of the words, namely, "in it the righteousness of God is revealed, as it is written, 'He who through faith is righteous shall live.'" There I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous lives by a gift of God, namely by faith. And this is the meaning: the righteousness of God is revealed by the Gospel, namely, the passive righteousness with which merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written, "He who through faith is righteous shall live." Here I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates. There a totally other face of the entire scripture showed itself to me. Thereupon I ran through the Scriptures from memory. I also found in other terms an analogy, as, the work of God, that is, what God does in us, the power of God, with which he makes us strong, the wisdom of God, with which he makes us wise, the strength of God, the salvation of God, the glory of God. And I extolled my sweetest word with a love as great as the hatred with which had before hated the word "righteousness of God." Thus that place in Paul was for me truly the gate to paradise.*

4. That Gospel of God changed Martin Luther. And it changed other men of his age: Ulrich Zwingli, Thomas Cranmer, Martin Bucer, Menno Simons, John Knox, John Calvin, Theodore Beza, Phillip Melancthon and hundreds of other Reformers.
5. Soon, that Gospel had changed how men worshipped.
  - a. The first "public" change the Gospel wrought
  - b. **John Calvin:** *"The Necessity of Reforming the Church"; Calvin's Selected Works: Tracts 1; vol. 1; pp. 126-127.*
  - c. Written to **Charles V**, the Holy Roman Emperor, in 1544.

*If it be inquired, then, by what things chiefly the Christian religion has a standing existence amongst us, and maintains its truth, it will be found that the following two not only occupy the principal place, but comprehend under them all the other parts, and consequently the whole substance of Christianity, viz., a knowledge, first, of the mode in which God is duly worshipped; and, secondly, of the source from which salvation is to be obtained. When these are kept out of view, though we may glory in the name of Christians, our profession is empty and vain. After these come the Sacraments and the Government of the Church, which, as they were instituted for the preservation of these branches of doctrine, ought not to be employed for any other purpose.*

- d. **Regulative Principle of Worship: Biblical Worship**
  - i. Hymns and not Gregorian Chant

- ii. The worship service in the *vernacular*, not Latin
  - iii. The Primacy of *Preaching* (Word), not the Eucharist
  - iv. Simplified *liturgy*, not the sacrifice of the mass
  - v. *Word-centered* and not sacerdotal (sacramental)
  - vi. *Expository preaching* and not the lectionary
6. Soon after this, the Gospel changed the *church* –
- a. It became *evangelical*: Justification by Faith
  - b. New Creeds, Confessions and Catechisms (*Reformed Faith*)
  - c. Proper Sacraments: two and not seven; signs and seals of the Covenant of Grace but not salvific
  - d. Rejection of Papal Authority, Bishop rule, and the return to *representative church polity*
  - e. Reformation of the *clergy*: “an army of godly preachers”

7. Next: the Gospel changed *Western Society*

- a. Europe, England, Colonial America, colonial missions...
- b. Reformation (*societal*) and Renaissance (*cultural*)
- c. Historians say: *John Calvin is the father of Western democracy*
- d. *Calvinism* became one of the six major worldviews, according to **Abraham Kuyper**: “a life-system”...
  - i. Paganism
  - ii. Islam
  - iii. Roman Catholicism
  - iv. Lutheranism
  - v. Calvinism
  - vi. Modernism
- e. *Lectures on Calvinism*; pp. 11, 12, 25.
- f. Six lectures delivered at Princeton Seminary in: *The Stone Lecture series of 1898*...

*There is no doubt then that Christianity is imperiled by great and serious dangers. Two life systems are wrestling with one another, in mortal combat. Modernism is bound to build a world of its own from the data of the natural man, and to construct man himself from the data of nature; while, on the other hand, all those who reverently bend the knee to Christ and worship Him as the Son of the living God, and God himself, are bent upon saving the “Christian Heritage.” This is the struggle in Europe, this is the struggle in America, and this also, is the struggle for principles in which my own country is engaged, and in which I myself have been spending all my energy for nearly forty years.*

*And this powerful life-system is not to be invented nor formulated by ourselves, but is to be taken and applied as it presents itself in history. When thus taken, I found and confessed, and I still hold, that this manifestation of the Christian principle is given us in Calvinism. Calvinism, as the only decisive, lawful, and consistent defense for Protestant nations against encroaching, and overwhelming Modernism. Allow me, therefore, in six lectures, to speak to you on Calvinism.*

1. *On Calvinism as a Life-system;*
2. *On Calvinism and Religion;*
3. *On Calvinism and Politics;*
4. *On Calvinism and Science;*
5. *On Calvinism and Art;*
- and 6. *On Calvinism and the Future.*

*There are times in history when the pulse of religious life beats faintly; but there are times when its beat is pounding, and the latter was the case in the 16th century among the nations of Western Europe. The question of faith at that time dominated every activity in public life. New history starts out from this faith, even as the history of our times starts from the unbelief of the French Revolution. What law this pulse-like movement of religious life obeys, we cannot tell, but it is evident that there is such a law, and that in times of high religious tension the in-working of the Holy Spirit upon the heart is irresistible; and this mighty in-working of God was the experience of our Calvinists, Puritans and Pilgrim Fathers.*

8. We are looking at **Abraham Kuyper's**, and **John Calvin's** and **Martin Luther's** Gospel and the changes they experienced as *The Gospel Changed Everything!*
9. And tonight, it is my privilege to begin with **change #1** – *How the Gospel changes us...me...you!*
10. I could choose from 135 verses (texts) in the Scripture to illustrate this truth, because...
  - a. The “Gospel words” in the New Testament occur 135 times
  - b. *euangelion*: “Gospel,” “good news” (77 times)
    - i. *eu* (good, happy) *angelos* (angel, messenger)
    - ii. Hence: the good news (*evangel*)
    - iii. Literally: the good pronouncement of the King
    - iv. “Hear, ye! Hear, ye! The Word of the King!”
  - c. *euangelizo*: evangelize; preach the Gospel; proclaim the good news
  - d. *eungelistēs*: evangelist; “gospeller”
  - e. “Gospel” from the OE/Old German: *Gotts Spiel* (God’s story)
11. I chose **Colossians 1:1-14** because it, most comprehensively, explains to us how the Gospel changes a person.
  - a. *Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,  
To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae:  
Grace to you and peace from God our Father.*

*We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and growing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.*

*And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Col. 1:1-14)*

- b. What I want to focus on tonight is the two verses of Colossians 1:13 and 14
- c. **What the Gospel does to/for us**
- d. **Or...How the Gospel changes us**
  - i. *The Message...*
  - ii. *Its Effects...*

## I. THE GOSPEL DELIVERS US FROM SIN

1. The first effect of the Gospel: *“He has delivered us from the domain of darkness...”*
2. Who has? Who is *“He”* in verse 13? Answer: *“God the Father”*
  - a. Look back at verse 12 for the *antecedent* to v. 13.
  - b. *...giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. (Colossians 1:12)*
  - c. God the Father delivers us
    - i. *ruomai*: rescue, save, deliver
    - ii. *And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, “The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob”; “and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins.” (Romans 11:26-27)*
    - iii. The Deliverer (Savior): *ho ruomenos*
    - iv. i.e., **Jesus Christ the Savior (Deliverer)**

- d. *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. (John 3:16-17)*
3. And what does God and His Son save us from? Answer: *“The domain of darkness”*
- Literally: *“The exousia of darkness” (skotia)*
  - exousia*: authority, right to rule, supernatural power, official jurisdiction, ruling or governmental power
  - i.e.*, the **reign of sin** in our lives
  - For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. (Romans 6:14)*
4. Before you came under the sway of the Gospel, under the power of God’s grace, under the authority of Jesus Christ, sin **“owned”** you...
- Sin controlled you as a master owns a slave...  
*Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? (Romans 6:16)*
  - Sin ruled you as a governing power or disposition...  
*Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. (Romans 6:12-14)*
  - Sin officially killed you and condemned you to hell...  
*For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)*  
*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:1)*
  - While in the grasp and power of sin, you lived in *“the domain of darkness.”*
5. According to Jesus, *“darkness”* is the realm in which all men live who have not yet been rescued by Christ and His Gospel:
- And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. (John 3:19-20)*
- Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” (John 8:12)*
- So Jesus said to them, “The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.” When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them. (John 12:35-36)*

6. Jesus came to save us from one great enemy, one great power and one great danger.
  - a. The enemy known as *Satan*
  - b. The power known as *sin*
  - c. The danger known as *the darkness of death*
  - d. *For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit...* (1 Peter 3:18)
7. Until a person is willing to come to the Light of Jesus and call for God to deliver him (her) from darkness, that person cannot be rescued...delivered...saved from sin:
 

*Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.* (2 Corinthians 3:15-18)

*For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.* (2 Cor. 4:6)
8. When a person admits they are slaves to sin, condemned to eternal death, ruled by pet sins and encased in spiritual darkness, they have taken the **first step** toward salvation, and have experienced the *dawning light* of the Gospel.
9. It is no surprise that the **slogan** of the Reformation was this: *post tenebris lux...*
  - a. "after darkness, light"
  - b. The darkness of sin, the light of salvation
  - c. The darkness of the "*dark ages*," the light of the Reformation

## II. THE GOSPEL BRINGS US UNDER THE RULE OF CHRIST

1. The second effect of the Gospel: "...and (He) transferred us to the Kingdom of His beloved Son." (i.e., the Kingdom of Christ...Kingdom of heaven...Kingdom of God)
2. **This is Jesus' way of describing the Gospel:** the reign of Jesus Christ over all things in the Kingdom of God
  - a. This *Kingdom of God* was Christ's main message...
  - b. *...and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."* (Mark 1:15)
  - c. *basilia*: a word used 162 times in the New Testament
  - d. And on the lips of Jesus over 120 times!
  - e. *And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people.* (Matthew 4:23)

- f. *But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (Matthew 6:33)*
  - g. *And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. (Matthew 9:35)*
  - h. *"I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose." (Luke 4:43)*
  - i. *Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. (Mt. 18:4)*
  - j. *But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." (Mark 10:14-15)*
  - k. *Heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.' (Luke 10:9-11)*
  - l. *And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (Matthew 24:14)*
  - m. *Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. (John 3:3, 5)*
  - n. Every one of Jesus' parables was about "*the Kingdom of God.*"
  - o. After His resurrection, Jesus taught His Apostles, for 40 days, about "*the Kingdom of God*"  
*In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. (Acts 1:1-3)*
  - p. This *Kingdom Gospel* became the message of the Apostles and the New Testament church  
*When they had appointed a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance. (Acts 28:23, 30-31)*
3. The Gospel is the message of *the Kingdom of God*
- a. *In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 3:1-2)*
  - b. *Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." (Mark 1:14-15)*

- c. *From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 4:17)*
4. The *Kingdom of God* has existed from eternity past, but men (and some angels) rebelled against God the King, and built a rival kingdom – *the world* – under a rebel king (*Satan*).
  - a. *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world— the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. (1 John 2:15-16)*
  - b. *We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. (1 John 5:19)*
  - c. *Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." (Revelation 11:15)*
  - d. *Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. And he said with a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water." (Rev. 14:6-7)*
5. The **Good News** is this: "*the Kingdom of God is **at hand***"...
  - a. ...in the world, near us, in our time...
  - b. ...manifested in *the earthly presence of Jesus Christ*  
*Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed... (Luke 17:20)*
  - c. The *invisible Kingdom of God* made *visible* to all by Jesus Christ and His Kingdom people – *the church*.
  - d. **John Calvin's motto:** "*Making Visible the Invisible Kingdom of God*"
  - e. **Chuck Colson**, in his book, *The Faith*, said...  
*"...the Church's mission is to make visible God's Invisible Kingdom in the world. Since God lives in the midst of His people, we in turn are called to share in and reveal His loving character to our neighbors. We are to bring God's holiness to bear in every area of life. This understanding of holiness has moved Christians throughout history to some of the greatest advances in human dignity and freedom."*
6. Jesus is **really not** interested that you...
  - a. "Ask Him into your heart" in order to have an esoteric, privatized, evangelical mush faith...
  - b. Have a "personal relationship" with Christ that allows you to ignore the Church or historic Christianity...
  - c. "Trust Christ" in order to get out of hell...
  - d. "Believe about Jesus" what the Bible says, as if some intellectual grasp of theology and Bible would save you!

- e. You'll not find *asking Jesus into your heart, a personal relationship with Jesus, trusting Christ or believing about Jesus* in the Bible.
7. **Jesus wants you to believe into Him, surrender to His Lordship and rule, enter His Gospel Kingdom, and serve Him in His visible domain, the Church.**
8. **James I. Packer: *I Want to be a Christian* (pp. 19-20)**
- a. Now titled *Growing in Christ*
  - b. *The word "faith," which is English for a Greek noun (pistis) formed from the verb in the phrase "believe into" (pisteuo), gets the idea of trustful commitment and reliance better than "belief" does. Whereas "belief" suggests bare opinion, "faith," whether in a car, a patent medicine, a protégé, a doctor, a marriage partner or what have you, is a matter of treating the person or thing as trustworthy and committing yourself accordingly. The same is true of faith in God and in a more far-reaching way. It is the offer and demand of the object that determines in each case what a faith-commitment involves. Thus, I show faith in my car by relying on it to get me places, and in my doctor by submitting to his treatment. And I show faith in God by bowing to his claim to rule and manage me; by receiving Jesus Christ, his Son, as my own Lord and Savior; and by relying on his promise to bless me here and hereafter. This is the meaning of response to the offer and demand of the God of the Creed.*
  - c. *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'" (Mt. 7:21-23)*
  - d. *"Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you? Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great." (Luke 6:46-49)*
9. In the Gospel, God the Father *transfers us to the Kingdom of His beloved Son, Jesus Christ, and He intends for us to...*
- a. Believe in Jesus, Trust in Jesus, move "into" Jesus, and enter the Kingdom of Christ.
  - b. A surrender to Jesus as Lord and an obedience to Christ as King
  - c. This is **not legalism**: Paul says "the obedience of faith" is the mark of Gospel salvation.
  - d. Jesus says: "*You must enter the Kingdom of God*" to be saved.
  - e. i.e., **unconditional surrender to Christ as King and unconditional obedience to Jesus as Master.**

1. The third effect of the Gospel: “...*in whom (Christ) we have redemption...*”
  - a. *apolutrosis*: release, deliverance, setting free, liberating or redemption
  - b. *apo* (from) *lutroomai* (redeem, buy back, set free, release or liberate)
  - c. The Greek verb used for purchasing a slave’s freedom
  
2. The gist is this: *We were once enslaved to sin and under the mastery of Satan, Jesus died to pay for our sins – a ransom – and thus He set us free from sin’s slavery and released us from Satan’s power, and made us God’s servants and slaves.*
  - a. *This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. (1 Timothy 2:3-6)*
  - b. *For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. (Mark 10:45)*
  - c. Jesus died to set us free to serve God.
  - d. *Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you— unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed. (1 Corinthians 15:1-5, 11)*
  
3. The result of being **ransomed by Christ** is that you are **ransomed for God**. God owns you!
  - a. *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)*
  - b. *And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one’s deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. (1 Peter 1:17-19)*
  - c. **William Cowper:** “*There is a Fountain Filled with Blood*”  
*Dearly dying Lamb, Thy precious blood shall never lose its pow’r, Till all the ransomed Church of God be saved to sin no more.*
  
4. The Gospel’s most sober message is this: The next time you think (or say), “Hey! It’s my life, and I can do with it what I like!”; the Gospel will answer, “*Oh no, it is not. Your life is not your own...never has been, never will be. You were ransomed for God by Jesus 2,000 years before you were born. You belong to God and your life is intended to glorify God and honor Christ. You are not your own.*”

*But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.*  
(Acts 20:24)

*This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.* (1 Corinthians 4:1-2)

#### IV. THE GOSPEL GRANTS TO YOU FORGIVENESS OF SINS

1. The fourth effect of the Gospel: “...*the forgiveness of sins.*”
  - a. A parallelism here
  - b. “*in whom we have redemption*” (which is) “*the forgiveness of sins*”
  - c. We are forgiven by God because of what Christ has done for us.
  - d. *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.* (Romans 8:1-4)
2. When Jesus died for your sins, He did the following –
  - a. He removed the *penalty* of sin by paying it Himself.
  - b. He broke the *power* of sin (death) by His resurrection.
  - c. He washed away the *pollution* of sin by means of His blood.
  - d. He counteracted the *practices* of sin by giving us the Spirit.
  - e. He will someday eliminate the *presence* of sin in heaven.
  - f. *When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:*  
*"Death is swallowed up in victory." "O death, where is your victory?*  
*O death, where is your sting?"*  
  
*The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* (1 Corinthians 15:54-57)
3. **Charles Wesley:** “*He breaks the power of cancelled sin and sets the prisoners free; His blood can make the foulest clean; His blood availed for me!*”
4. There are **two words** that are always the most beautiful words in any language
  - a. The word for “*God*”
  - b. And the word “*forgiven*”
  - c. **Aiden W. Tozer:** *The Knowledge of the Holy; pp. 9-12.*

*What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us. The history of mankind will probably show that no people has ever risen above its religion, and man's spiritual history will positively demonstrate that no religion has ever been greater than its idea of God. Worship is pure or base as the worshiper entertains high or low thoughts of God. For this reason the gravest question before the Church is always God Himself, and the most portentous fact about any man is not what he at a given time may say or do, but what he in his deep heart conceives God to be like. A right conception of God is basic not only to systematic theology but to practical Christian living as well. It is to worship what the foundation is to the temple where it is inadequate or out of plumb the hole structure must sooner or later collapse. I believe there is scarcely an error in doctrine or a failure in applying Christian ethics that cannot be traced finally to imperfect and ignoble thoughts about God. The essence of idolatry is the entertainment of thoughts about God that are unworthy of Him. The first step down for any church is taken when it surrenders its high opinion of God. The heaviest obligation lying upon the Christian Church today is to purify and elevate her concept of God until it is once more worthy of Him – and of her. In all her prayers and labors this should have first place. We do the greatest service to the next generation of Christians by passing on to them undimmed and undiminished that noble concept of God which we received from our Hebrew and Christian fathers of generations past. This will prove of greater value to them than anything that art or science can devise.*

5. And this is *our* God, the God of *the Bible*, the God and Father of Jesus Christ...
  - a. *The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."* (Exodus 34:6-7)
  - b. A Holy God who takes sin very seriously – *deadly seriously*.
  - c. A God who must and will punish *each and every* sin.
  - d. A God who is also "*merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.*"
  - e. A God who sacrifices His own Son to pay every sin, punish all sin, and provide forgiveness for anyone.
  - f. A God who offers this Gospel forgiveness to a thousand generations: "*keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.*"
  - g. A God who visits the sin, iniquity and unbelief upon our descendants to a third and fourth generation, who **do not believe the Gospel, surrender to Christ, love Jesus and obey Him.**
6. **This is the Good News:** *The Nature of God, the work of Christ, and the Spirit's offer of the Gospel Kingdom to all who would repent, believe and surrender.*
  - a. This is the Gospel of God
 

*Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son*

*of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ... (Romans 1:1-6)*

*The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. (Mark 1:1)*

b. Rooted in the character of God

*The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation." (Exodus 34:6-7)*

c. Set forth in the Word of God

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith." (Romans 1:16-17)*

**CONCLUSION:** And this is how the Gospel changes you...

1. It calls you out of darkness into God's marvelous light: Truth.
2. It commands you to surrender to Jesus Christ and enter the Kingdom of God: Lordship.
3. It conducts for you the "divine exchange" – your sin for Christ's righteousness, and purchased you for God: Redemption.
4. It cancels out your guilt, your debt and your penalty, and grants you the Favor of God: Forgiveness.
5. *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.* (1 Peter 2:9-10)
6. The Gospel promises to **change you forever** because it brings the power of God's salvation into your life and your very own being – *Jesus Christ*.
7. This is the Gospel...the Good News...the Glad Message of the King.  
*He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.* (Col. 1:13-14)
8. Believe it. Receive it. Surrender to it. Obey it. *And you will be changed.*  
*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.* (2 Corinthians 5:17)

