

The Gospel and My Thinking:

Out of the Pit and into Grace

What is the Gospel?

Def: "Good News" of the revelation of Jesus Christ; The life of Christ; a thing that is absolutely true.

What is the Gospel to you? To me it is my ultimate salvation. It pulls me out of some deep pits. When I don't have truth flowing through my mind, my mind can get muddy. I start thinking untruthful thoughts and lies about the gospel. One lie is that, "I am not *that* bad", or "I am *TOO* sinful", and even "As long as I do this for God today, then He will love me."

Are these thoughts that you have?

With these kinds of thoughts, I can doubt my salvation. I can doubt God's love. I can be discontent with where God has put me in my race of faith and try to run it in my own strength. I can start to think evil of others and fear men instead of God. So, what the gospel does is that it corrects my thinking of **my salvation, my relationships, and my trials**.

First: The Gospel corrects my thinking of **my salvation**. It reveals that I am a sinner. It reminds me that my sin is not too big or too little for God, because all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). It also reminds me of the depth of even one sin; that all sin deserves death (Romans 5:12). Therefore, there is no good in me naturally (Romans 7:18-19). The Gospel also reveals that I cannot save myself. Maybe you are not aware that you believe you can save yourself, but have you ever thought that if you just did your devotions today you would be gaining God's approval? How about this thought, "As long as no ones hates me and nothing is going wrong in my life, God must love me." I know I have definitely had these thoughts. Do I really think I have the power to save my self? How can I when I have no power (Romans 5:6)? God saved us while we were deep in our sin. It is a fact that we are sinners, because we have a flesh. Well, **what is a flesh?** Our flesh is the natural sinful part that we are born with, that wants to be God in our lives. We actually want to be in control and make our own guidelines. This is the very sin that made man fall in the beginning. Adam and Eve were tempted to know good and evil and to become like God. This is the center of every sin. And because of this corruptible, sinful self, I need to be born again of an incorruptible body (1 Peter 1:23-25). I need to be saved. So, the Gospel reveals that in order to be saved, I need Jesus. Once saved, I now have a flesh and a Spirit warring in me. Thankfully, we do not have to fight it alone (Romans 7:25). And with the power of Christ in me, I do not have to sin (Romans 6:6), however, since I am a sinner I will still sin until I die, but I can

also live in the grace that Jesus has given through His death (Romans 6:14). I must preach this to myself every day, if I don't my brain gets muddled with sin, which affects my relationships. So, since I have a relationship with God, it doesn't mean that I can discard these simple truths.

Secondly: The Gospel corrects my thinking in **my relationships**. It puts into perspective my relationship with God. Who is God to you? How does He show himself to you? Maybe to you, He is the Good Shepherd, the Rock, the Provider, or the Protector, etc. The Gospel certainly reveals His love for me (John 3:16, 1 John 4:9-10). In these two verses it tells me that He took my sin so I could live righteously through Christ, but also that He took the wrath so I could embrace God with Christ. My relationship with God does have to do with His love for me, but also the purpose in the relationship that God has for me. In 1 Peter 1:13 it tells us to set our hope on the grace of the revelation of Jesus Christ. So God wants me to live in grace. In that grace He wants us to dwell in Him (1 John 4:13-16). To ENJOY GOD! How do we enjoy Him? We can enjoy Him because He gave us His Word (John 1:14). Not only does the Gospel correct my thinking in my relationship with God, but also with others.

Question: Do you have people in your life that are easy to love? How about those who are hard to love?

Probably both. No matter the situation we must love as Christ loved. Easier said than done. For those who are hard to love, we must realize that loving them is a command (Galatians 5:14). Secondly, for those that are most easy to love, it is not in fear (1 John 4:18). However, both of these coincide. We cannot love others in our own strength. Otherwise, it is out of selfishness. So, we need God's enablement. "But what about those people who have hurt me?" Then we must forgive as Christ forgave. First, it is a command (Mark 11:25). And Secondly, it is in love (1 John 4:19-21). Again, we cannot forgive others in our own strength. We need God! Have you ever thought that maybe God allows us to have difficult people in our lives so that we need Him? In *Relationships: A Mess Worth Making*, it states, "God keeps us in messy relationships for his redemptive purposes." I believe this is true since it is a constant reminder of what Christ had to do for us on the cross! Yes, we have crazy relationships, but we need community. You need those people in your life. You may think God does not understand our relationships, but he does because God is a community. He is a triune God. He sees the struggles in relationships. He sees that it takes work. Especially, when it gets painful. I mean He had to give up His Son for you and for me! It was not easy. It was a trial so He understands our trials.

"Our problems have everything to do with sin, and our potential has everything to do with Christ." – Relationships: A Mess Worth Making

Thirdly: The Gospel corrects my thinking in my trials. One trial that is common among us is in our struggle against sin. The Gospel takes my thinking that we are trapped in sin and crushes it in Romans 6:8-9. Even though we fall to it every day, sin has no dominion over us. We are free from it. Not only do we struggle with our own sin, but the sin of others as well. This is obvious. Our sin does not just affect us. It affects everyone. However, in 1 Peter 1:6-7 it gives us hope that this time is only for a season. One day there will be no more struggles against sin and we can rejoice in that fact!

Question: Are things in our lives that we struggle with that are not actually sinful?

Yes, but these burdens and weights that we have in our lives can become sinful if it becomes the dominant thing in our lives.

Question: What are some weights or burdens you have?

Did you know that these burdens and weights are inevitable (1 Peter 4:12-13)? Because of our fallen world, there will be hardships. But, there is hope as well. Our trials not only give glory to God, but we are blessed in it! Therefore it is worth it. In James 1:2-5 it describes our trials as somewhat of a refining factor to be coming more like Christ. It is worth it all!

Our thinking cannot be changed in our own doing. We are in a pit of despair and sin. We need God to correct our thinking because we are sinful. We need the Gospel. So, because of my sin I must DAILY be LIVING, thinking the GOSPEL so that I may experience the TRUTH of the grace of salvation through Christ.