

Timeless Classic #9 – The Gospel (Part Two)

Today we will continue our discussion on the timeless classic doctrine: “The Gospel.” The word “Gospel” itself is secular in origin dating back to the 1300’s A.D. It literally means “good spell” or “good story” and over the years it got condensed into the word “Gospel.” The word “Gospel” is used in reference to news or an announcement (secular or religious) that is considered authoritative and important. Over the years it became more spiritual in usage than secular. The apostle Paul said in Romans 1:16, **“I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.”** The Greek word for Gospel is “euangelion” which means good news. It was natural then, when translating the Greek New Testament of the Bible into English, that the translators would use the word “Gospel” as the suitable English word to convey the meaning of the Greek word “euangelion.” What news is more authoritative or important than the good news that forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation in Heaven are free gifts for those who have been led by the Holy Spirit to believe that Jesus is their Savior? Let’s dig in again to Jesus short stories where he encourages us to think and to act like the timeless classic doctrine of “The Gospel” is the greatest news we have ever heard and the greatest possession that we will ever own and enjoy. Matthew 13:44-52.

⁴⁴ “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

⁴⁵ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. ⁴⁶ When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

⁴⁷ “Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. ⁴⁸ When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. ⁴⁹ This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous ⁵⁰ and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁵¹ “Have you understood all these things?” Jesus asked. “Yes,” they replied.

⁵² He said to them, “Therefore every teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.”

Last week we focused on the first two short stories of Jesus. Today let’s focus on the last two short stories of Jesus in this section.

“Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (vs. 47-50). Jesus is the master at using earthly illustrations to teach spiritual/eternal truths. Fishing is not a personal hobby of mine, but I know many of you love to fish so Jesus illustration probably resonates more with you than me. However, Jesus

short story is easy to understand even for those of us who aren't avid fisherman. In this short story Jesus reminds us that there are plenty of fish in the sea. The fish represent human beings. Like fish humans come in many different shapes and sizes and skin colors, but on Judgment Day every human being will be put into one of two groups – those that believed and treasured the Gospel and get to spend eternity in Heaven because of that faith and those that ignored and rejected the Gospel and have earned spending eternity in Hell. And to encourage everyone to take this seriously Jesus asks his disciples, **“Have you understood all these things?”** (vs.51). The Gospel teaches that it's only through the gift of faith in Jesus that we are perfect and “good” in the sight of God as Jesus perfection counts as our own. Sinners, don't reject the Gospel and stand in God's judgment courtroom one day relying on the way you lived your life on earth. That will only end one way, with you in Hell for eternity. **“Have you understood all these things?”** (vs.51). Let us respond to Jesus just like the apostles - **“Yes.”**

“He said to them, ‘Therefore every teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old’ (vs. 52). Have you had this happen to you? You go into your storage room and pull out the seasonal decorations and it brings joy to your heart to see these old treasures on display again. Or you go into your storage room and find some of your old treasures, memories from the past, and you pull them out to reminisce and the memories come flooding back as if they just happened yesterday. Or you go into your storage closet and find something new you bought years ago, but forgot you did. You pull it out and enjoy it for the first time. Or perhaps in your storage closet are items you inherited from someone else, old items that are new to you. You pull them out and enjoy them for the first time. In this short story Jesus is speaking about the Bible in general. As a person embraces lifelong study of the Word you will pull out old familiar things, but you will also pull out things you never realized before in your study of Scripture. That could be doctrines of Scripture, or Bible events, or passages that touch your heart. Or it could be a familiar section of Scripture that has taken on added meaning in your life because you have more life experience now or you are going through something in your life that has made that familiar passage have greater impact. This short story of Jesus has great meaning to me as a pastor, because this sums up nicely the majority of my professional life. Sometimes the timeless classic message of Scripture that I share with you are “new treasures” that you have never heard before. Many times what I share with you from Scripture is not new news. So the challenge as a pastor is to share the same timeless classic message of Scripture “old treasures” every week, but to do it in a way that feels fresh and helpful to you, the listener, that week. And the challenge for you, the listener, is to receive that message with open ears and receptive hearts. More specifically Jesus is speaking about the timeless classic doctrine of “The Gospel.” For many Christians they are very familiar with the Gospel message, and the Devil is constantly working on us to think and to act like the Gospel is old, tired news. Let us never consider the Gospel to be old news. Let's treasure it as the life changing good news that it is. And while the Gospel message is so familiar to us God gives us 5 Gospel word pictures to help us ponder and apply to our sin tainted lives. Righteousness (perfection in God's sight because of Jesus), redemption (freedom from sins consequences because of Jesus), reconciliation (peace with God because of Jesus), justification (declared not guilty in God's courtroom because of Jesus), and atonement (access to God without fear because of Jesus). As we apply these different Gospel word pictures to the various situations of our lives, then we can feel like the Gospel is new to us each day, each week. And I can speak from personal experience that the way I feel about the Gospel today at the age of 45 is different than the way I felt about it when I was a child, a teenager, and a

young adult. Life experience, study of Scripture, and my continuing struggle with my own sinful nature has lead me to treasure this old Gospel as if it was new and I was hearing it for the first time when I apply it to my daily life. Jesus main point in this short story is that the Gospel is a timeless classic. This good news familiar message will never grow old for the repentant.

Covid-19 has made 2020 a challenging year. And one of the most frustrating things about it is knowing which news source to believe. One good news source that we can have total confidence in is "The Gospel." And as we apply the good news of the Gospel to Covid-19 this thought comes to my mind - Who better to deal with this then Christians like us? Whether we get sick and die and go to Heaven or whether we get sick and recover or don't get sick at all we get to continue to live on this earth enjoying and sharing the Gospel - it's really win win for us either way! That doesn't mean we go looking for Covid-19. **"Do not put the Lord your God to the test"** (Matthew 4:1-11). We should put into place common sense safety protocols and follow them. At the same time, we don't need to live in fear. We have the Gospel. It's really is win win either way. Treasure that. Take that old treasure out and think about it every day. All your sins really are forgiven through Christ. Your eternal home really is Heaven because of Christ. Study it fresh every day and grow in your understanding of it as you apply it to the world and to your own life. Amen.