



Season 8 Podcasts

The Heart of the Gospel

By

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You are saved and learning how to study the Bible. You are learning the 'rules' God established for those who serve Him. Wonderful! What are you learning about what happens next? It's fairly simple –

- Love God
- Obey God
- Serve God

That's it in a nutshell. There are a lot of specifics in how we accomplish those three things, but those three things are basically what God wants us to do. He saved us. He redeemed us. He bought us. He owns us. Doing what He tells us to do is the least we can do. God is our Savior and Lord. He is the Master. He is our Heavenly Father. We are His servants. We are His children. We are His treasure and He is ours. That is the 'heart of the Gospel' of Jesus Christ.

Where the Heart Leads

Jesus Christ died on the Cross, rose from dead, promised eternal life to those who believe, and told His disciples where they would go next (from Matthew 28 and Acts 1):

- Make Disciples of All the Nations
- Baptize Them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit
- Teach Them to Observe All Things That I Have Commanded You
- Be Witnesses of Christ in Jerusalem, and in All Judea and Samaria, and to the End of the Earth

Paul's Service

Jesus chose Saul of Tarsus a few years later and told him through Ananias what would happen in his ministry (from Acts 9):

- He is a Chosen Vessel of Mine
- To Bear My Name Before the Gentiles, Kings, and the Children of Israel
- He Must Suffer for My Name's Sake

Jesus later prepared Paul (Saul) for his ministry (service) to God by doing the following (2 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 3):

- Paul was Caught Up Into Paradise
- Paul Saw Many Visions and Received Many Revelations from God
- Paul Heard Inexpressible Words

- Jesus Gave Paul the Dispensation of the Grace Of God
- Jesus Made Known to Paul the Mystery By Revelation
- Paul Received Knowledge in the Mystery of Christ
- God Gave Paul a Thorn in the Flesh So That He Would Not Be Exalted Beyond Measure
- Paul Asked God to Remove the Thorn, but God Told Paul, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.”

Our Loving Service

So, how do we lovingly ‘serve’ God as His children? Remember that God gave Paul knowledge in the ‘mystery of Christ.’ Read what Paul said in the Book of Acts and what he wrote in his letters to churches (e.g. Romans, Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians) and to church leaders (e.g. Timothy, Titus). What you will find in Paul’s writings about how we are to serve God is fairly simple. Here are several examples:

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:10

“How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!” Romans 10:14-15

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.” 2 Corinthians 5:17-19

“Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.” Romans 12:10-11

Our service to God includes:

1. Doing the good works which God prepared beforehand for us to do
2. Preaching the Gospel of Peace to the unsaved
3. That preaching will lead to men being reconciled to God
4. Loving those who are reconciled to God

While this is not difficult to understand, it is apparently difficult to do because less than a third of Christians do it:

“Only 3 in 10 unchurched Americans (29%) say a Christian has ever shared with them one-on-one how a person becomes a Christian.” [Lifeway Research](#)

“Ninety-five percent of all Christians have never won a soul to Christ. Eighty percent of all Christians do not consistently witness for Christ. Less than two percent are involved in the ministry of evangelism.” [Evangelism Statistics](#)

“In our study, we found that 85% of all believers ages 18-29 agree that they have a responsibility to share the gospel with unbelievers, and that 69% of those same people feel comfortable sharing their faith. However, only 25% of them look for ways to share the gospel and only 27% of them intentionally build friendships with unbelievers in order to do so.” [The State of Evangelism](#)

This lack of interest among Christians to obey and serve God should be cause for great alarm by church leaders. However, it seems that pastors are also unable to lead people to share Christ – either by words or their own example:

“Just 12% of Pastors Say They Are Very Effective in Encouraging Christians to Share Their Faith” [Barna](#)

I’ve spent a lot of time through the years working with pastors and evangelists from the United States and many other countries, so the statistics I’ve seen don’t surprise me. Unfortunately, it’s a very sad situation across the world. Here’s another sad fact:

“70% of pastors are untrained in evangelism.”

Evangelism Statistics

Think about that for a moment. 70% of Christian pastors across the world are untrained in evangelism. Does that shock you? It should, especially in light of what we read in the New Testament. Evangelism is not a ‘suggestion.’ It is a direct ‘command’ from God.

That terrible statistic takes me back to what Paul wrote the Christians in Rome:

“How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!” Romans 10:14-15

If more than two-thirds of pastors across the world are untrained in evangelism, is it any wonder that only a small percentage of Christians have any interest or training in sharing the Gospel of Christ with their friends, neighbors, co-workers, or even members of their own family?

This must change! Who says? Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church. If we love Jesus – I mean REALLY LOVE JESUS – we will do what He wants us to do. The fact that the vast majority of Christians and their leaders are not doing what our Lord wants us to do says much about the sad state of the ‘church’ in these last days. My prayer, and I hope your prayer, is that we will come to our senses and do God’s Will.

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In Christ's Love and Grace,

Mark McGee

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