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HOLD FAST THE GOSPEL





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Tom Ascol

Introduction

Hold Fast the Gospel

What is the gospel? That is a fundamental question that one would expect a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ to readily and rightly answer. The sad reality is that many Christians today cannot give a full and healthy response to **the question** “What is the gospel of Jesus Christ?” We engage in “gospel-talk” incorporating the *word* into our vocabularies but lack the biblical *content* and *understanding* of the significance of the gospel. The anemic state of churches in our land exposes that there is wide-spread gospel illiteracy in our churches making the question “What is the gospel?” vitally important in our day. Have we lost the gospel? To assume the gospel is to lose it. If we have lost it, what else matters?

In this issue of the *Founders Journal*, the contributors consider crucial realities of the gospel. Dr. Phil Newton asks the important question, “What are you Teaching?” and gives a clear apologetic for “The Gospel is About Words” showing the practical implications of that truth. Dr. Ken Puls stresses the importance of carving out time to lay hold of the truth of God’s Word, particularly in a day when we have so many sources bringing input into our lives through TV, radio, Facebook, Twitter, etc.

Though much more could be said, this issue of the journal attempts to sound the alarm while providing a concise practical treatment of the vital priority and centrality of Christ’s gospel in not only ministry but all of life, affirming Paul’s assertion of the gospel being “the power of God for salvation” and our need to be emphatically proclaiming it with accuracy and in its entirety (Romans 1:16).



Tom Ascol

Don't Assume the Gospel

For well over a decade I have expressed concerns that many conservative, Bible-believing churches have in important ways lost the gospel. This concern has been met with varying degrees of incredulity by certain sectors of the evangelical world, most notably, some of the very ones that provoked my evaluation.

Though things have improved from fifteen years ago to today, there is still ample evidence that my concerns remain well-founded.

For the sake of clarity let me reiterate the essence of my concern. The gospel is all about Jesus Christ—who He is, what He has done and why that matters. As Jesus Himself said, the Scriptures bear witness to Him (John 5:39) and that the Prophets and Moses wrote about Him (Luke 24:44; cf. v. 27). The whole Bible—not just the New Testament—is a Christian book and unless every part of it is read as revealing Jesus Christ then it has been misread.

Too often, Scripture is treated more along the lines of an inspired version of Aesop's Fables than the revelation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. When this happens the Bible becomes little more than a source for tips on success and happiness. Rather than recognizing it as the revelation of Christ it is treated as the basis of moralistic principles. When that happens, the gospel is lost.

This was demonstrated to me again in a recent article in a local newspaper written by an outspoken, conservative Baptist pastor who has no hesitations affirming the full inerrancy of Scripture and, who, I have no doubt genuinely believes and preaches the gospel. But his article, like too many sermons, betrays a deadly tendency that actually undermines the

Bible's message of salvation in Christ. His article assumes the gospel and then leaves the impression that Psalm 1 has nothing to say about Christ.

The article cites Psalm 1:1–2 as a formula for blessing that will result in a life of “peace and joy in spite of our circumstances.” In less than 400 words the author makes the following points:

- Because people are so impressed with the ungodly and quick to stand in the path of sinners people miss out on “real happiness.”
- “The truth is[,] looking to God for counsel pays great dividends.”
- “We all want to be happy...Without God's blessings in our lives, we are never going to be happy, happy, happy.”
- Most of us have tried everything else; perhaps it is time to give God a chance to show us what He can do for us.”

Again, I am sure the author believes the gospel and would never suggest that anyone can be right with God apart from trusting Christ but he never states that. What he does state is that one can know the blessings of God by learning to delight and meditate on God's law. Jesus is never mentioned or even referenced in the article. He is assumed. And to assume Christ is, ultimately, to forget Him.

Psalm 1 is actually a portrait of Christ, who alone has never walked in the counsel of the ungodly nor stood in the path of sinners nor sat in the seat of the scornful and who alone has perfectly delighted in the law of the Lord and meditated in it day and night. Those of us who cannot say that “will not stand in the judgment” (v. 4). Therefore, the only way that we can experience the blessings of Psalm 1 is to have the only true Blessed Man stand in our place—to have Jesus Christ as Lord through faith.

The whole Bible is a Christian book. It reveals Christ to us in every part. We must never forget this, take it for granted or assume it.

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Tom Ascol

Have We Lost the Gospel?

For the last several years I have been expressing my growing concern that, in many ways and in many places, evangelicals in general and Southern Baptists in particular have lost the gospel. One of the first blog articles that I ever posted addressed this concern and I have repeatedly expressed it in lectures, sermons, interviews, private conversations and articles. Founders Ministries, of which I am the Executive Director, is committed to working for “the recovery of the gospel and the reformation of local churches.” I entitled a book I edited, *Reclaiming the Gospel and Reforming Churches*.

Anyone who has read this blog even intermittently over the last year and a half should have some awareness of my burden for this issue. Some take strong exception to having this question even raised. To them, it is tantamount to denominational insurrection. But they typically belong to the crowd that judges any criticism or questioning of the “post-conservative-resurgence” SBC to be an act of war, more likely to get you lumped and dumped into the CBF crowd than if you denied the virgin birth. Quite honestly, I don’t have much hope of persuading folks from that sector of the family of the legitimacy of my concern.

I am much more hopeful of those whose commitment to Scripture’s authority is not mixed with political ambition or misguided bureaucratic loyalties. Honest evangelicals know that something is horribly wrong in our corporate life. Too many evangelical churches are spiritually unhealthy due to the extended neglect of basic biblical teachings, principles and practices. At the top of this list is the gospel itself.

When we interview prospective church members, we always ask them to give us a brief explanation of the gospel. Some of the answers that we have received—even from long-time members of conservative evangelical churches—have only confirmed in my mind that the gospel has been significantly neglected in much of American evangelicalism over the last generation. If you want to liven up your next Sunday School party, ask people to take 2 minutes and write down a simple statement of what the gospel is. Then collect those papers and read them aloud. It will be better—and potentially more profitable—than pictionary! It will probably also be very sobering.

The gospel is all about Jesus Christ. I teach the people I serve to think of it simply like this: It is the message of who Christ is, what He has done, and why it matters. Answering these questions from the Scripture will provide an outline of the biblical gospel.

Here is a summary of my concerns about spheres in which we have lost or are losing the gospel in our day.

1. In preaching

I took several hours last spring to listen to a number of SBC seminary chapel sermons. I heard lots about leadership, commitment, courage, faithfulness, sheep, shepherds, prayer and devotion, I heard very little of Jesus Christ. Often Christ was mentioned almost as an afterthought. I realize that this is far from a scientific study (but if you are interested in one that corroborates my concerns about Southern Baptist preaching, see Marsha Whitten's *All is Forgiven*) but the sermons were preached by well-known and highly respected Southern Baptist pastors. It is not unreasonable to expect that their sermons to seminarians would be carefully prepared. Assuming that to be the case, I came away from my exercise rather discouraged.

Here is an experiment that I recommend. Get a simple outline of the gospel in your mind and listen to the sermons preached in your church (even if you are the preacher!) or other churches and try to determine to what degree the gospel is the basis of them. Too often only some facts related to the gospel are tacked on at the end of a message in order to justify some kind of altar call, but the gospel itself is not foundational to it. If a sermon would play just as well in a Kingdom Hall or Jewish Synagogue as it would in a Baptist church, you can be sure it is void of the gospel.

2. In Christian living

Very often the gospel is viewed only as the threshold into the Christian life by which one must enter the kingdom. Once in, however, the gospel loses its importance. Where this happens in conservative churches moralism tends to gain preeminence and Christianity tends to be conceived in terms of rules and requirements. In moderate and liberal churches sentimentalism tends to reign and attitudes and actions are evaluated in terms of how “loving” they feel. Do not misunderstand—the Christian life includes both rules and especially love (rightly understood, of course), but the Christian life is based on neither. It is based on Jesus Christ—who He is, what He has done and why it matters. That is why we are called to live by faith. Faith in what? Or whom? The person and work of Christ. This is also why Paul could write, “For to me, to live is Christ.” Christ was life for Paul because the gospel had come to him in power. Read the ethical portions of the New Testament to see how the Apostles exhorted the early church to holy living. It wasn’t by moralistic teaching. They teach the law on the basis of the gospel. I see very little concern for the relationship between law and gospel in Southern Baptist life today. The reason, I believe, is due to the removal of the gospel from the heart of Christian living.

3. In our churches

The gospel is the power of God to save all who believe. Churches are to be comprised of those who testify to having experienced this saving power. Of all the sectors of evangelicalism, Baptists most certainly should stand firm on this point. Yet, simply take an honest look at our churches—even good, “Bible-believing,” “flagship” SBC churches. What do you find more often than not? Bloated church rolls with twice as many members as regular attenders. The overwhelming majority of our churches have neglected gospel order, taking cues more from the marketing world or corporate America or therapeutic professions than from Scripture. John Dagg, the first writing theologian among Southern Baptists put this in his *Treatise on Church Order*, “When discipline leaves a church, Christ goes with it.” If he is correct, then how many Christless churches might we have within our ranks? Read Revelation 2 and 3 to see that Jesus Himself warns of this possibility. If the candlestick has been removed from a local church then the gospel has been taken with it.

So, have we lost the gospel? I think we have, in many ways. I know this seems like a harsh judgment, but I do not make it with any joy or intent to harm or even embarrass. Neither am I suggesting that every church or evangelical (or denominational) entity has lost the gospel. Rather, I am suggesting that the gospel has been forgotten, misunderstood,

undervalued and marginalized by many churches and ministries that consider themselves evangelical. We can no longer assume that we know the gospel and prize it as the transforming power of God that saves all who believe. Such assumption, I fear, has contributed to the gospel's demise in many churches.

Why even raise this question, knowing that it will inevitably provoke the angst of some brothers and sisters whom I respect and tempt them to dismiss me as a crank or some kind of helpless malcontent? I do so because it is simply too important to leave unaddressed. Too much is at stake. The glory of God in the salvation of sinners is at stake. So is the eternal destiny of many who may think that they are right with God but who are merely religious (Matthew 7:21–23).

If I am right in my suspicions, then all of the many other issues that are clamoring for our attention right now in SBC life and beyond are minor in comparison to this. If we have lost the gospel, or are losing it, then nothing else matters.

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Ken Puls

Laying Hold of Truth

I love God's Word and delight in its truth. Yet too often I find that after reading my Bible or hearing a sermon, the truth, so necessary to the wellbeing of my soul, can too easily slip away. The truth that had for a moment captured my attention and my affections can quietly fade amid the clutter and noise of the day.

One of the best ways to remedy this is to practice the spiritual discipline of meditating on God's Word. It is a discipline that takes time and intention, but one that brings great benefit to the soul. We need to carve out time to lay hold of the truth of God's Word.

It is a bewildering paradox of our day that the Bible can be so accessible and yet so marginalized. On the one hand our technology has brought God's Word close at hand. It's on our phones and tablets and computers and iPods. We have almost immediate access to several versions of the Bible as well as a wealth of sermons and commentaries. But this same technology also threatens to distract us and drown out God's Word. We have become a culture obsessed with noise and comfortable with clutter. So many sources are bringing input into our lives: TV, radio, online news feeds, Facebook, Twitter... More than ever we need to make time to meditate, to dwell in God's Word.

Meditation is pondering the Word in our hearts, preaching it to our own souls, and personally applying it to our own lives and circumstances. It is how we sanctify our thinking and bring it into submission to Christ—taking every thought captive. Paul tells us in Romans “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:2). [All Scripture references are ESV unless otherwise indicated.]

In Psalm 77 Asaph uses **three verbs** that capture the essence of meditation. When he finds himself perplexed and troubled and cries out to God, he determines to steady his soul by looking to God and laying hold of truth. He says in verses 11 and 12:

I will remember the deeds of the LORD;
Yes, I will remember your wonders of old.
I will ponder all your work,
And meditate on your mighty deeds.

Asaph uses 3 verbs in Hebrew to describe what it means to lay hold of truth: He says, “I will remember ... I will ponder ...and meditate.”

Remembering

He begins with remembering (*zakar*)—calling to mind “the deeds of the Lord” and His “wonders of old.” He intentionally takes note of truth and draws it back into his thinking. Asaph reflects on what God has accomplished for His people in the past—events and epics like the Exodus and Passover, the giving of the law on Mount Sinai, the conquest of the Promised Land. He makes an effort not to forget all the Lord has done.

David also speaks of remembering God:

When I remember you upon my bed,
And meditate on you in the watches of the night (Psalm 63:6).

In Psalm 143, when David is overwhelmed with trouble, he uses the same three verbs as Asaph, beginning with “remember.”

I remember the days of old;
I meditate on all that you have done;
I ponder the work of your hands (Psalm 143:5).

We are a forgetful people and God would have us to remember. Meditation begins with remembering, bringing back into our minds the truths and praises and promises of God.

Pondering

But, second Asaph also uses a word that is translated in Psalm 77:12 “I ponder.”

I will ponder all your work,
And meditate on your mighty deeds (Psalm 77:12).

This is the verb *hagah* in the Hebrew. It is found in numerous places in the Old Testament and is translated as “ponder” or “meditate”:

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success (Joshua 1:8).

But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
And on his law he meditates day and night (Psalm 1:2).

When I remember you upon my bed,
and meditate on you in the watches of the night (Psalm 63:6).

In Psalm 2 it is used of the nations “plotting” against God:

Why do the nations rage
and the peoples plot in vain? (Psalm 2:1)

The word literally means “to let resound.” It is used in Psalm 92:3 of the sound or tones of a musical instrument as it resonates.

On an instrument of ten strings,
On the lute, And on the harp,
With harmonious [or resounding] sound (Psalm 92:3, NKJV).

It is used also in Psalm 9:16.

The LORD is known by the judgment He executes;
The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands.
Meditation. Selah (Psalm 9:16).

It is not entirely clear if the use of the word here is a musical instruction for the musicians to play an interlude—letting the instruments resound—or if it is an instruction to the congregation—let this truth resound within yourselves. We find the term also at the end of Psalm 19:

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable in your sight,
O LORD, my rock and my redeemer (Psalm 19:14).

In other words, let the inward tones of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord... This is how we want the truth of Scripture to fill us and impact us—as we hear it and sing it and pray it—as Paul tells us in Colossians 3:16, let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly! Let it dwell in us in a way that resounds and reverberates in and through our lives.

We see another use of the word in Isaiah 31:4 that helps us understand its intent. Isaiah uses the word in reference to a lion:

For thus the LORD said to me,
“As a lion or a young lion growls over his prey” (Isaiah 31:4)

The word for growl or roar is this word for meditation. Have you ever heard a lion when he roars? He does not just use his voice. His entire being reverberates. This is meditation. Letting God’s Word resound from within the very center of our being.

Meditating

Meditation involves remembering, and resounding, but finally Asaph speaks of meditating.

I will ponder all your work,
and meditate on your mighty deeds (Psalm 77:12).

This word *siyach* means to muse and wonder and dwell on—to think deeply about something. Used literally it means to murmur, mumble or talk to yourself. In a negative sense it can mean “to complain.” It is the idea that something has so taken hold of your thinking that you can’t stop thinking about it. So on the negative side—it troubles you and disturbs you and draws out complaint; but on the positive side—it captivates you and enraptures your thinking so that you “dwell on” it. This is the way we want God’s truth to lay hold of us—so that we can’t but dwell on it, so that it captures our thinking and finds its way into our choices and decisions.

The Puritans thought of meditation this way as they described it as “preaching to yourself.” We take the Word of God that we hear and read, and we mull it over in our minds and then bring it to bear upon our lives in personal exhortations. It is a word that is found often in the Old Testament, especially in the psalms.

May my meditation be pleasing to him,
for I rejoice in the LORD (Psalm 104:34).

I will meditate on your precepts
and fix my eyes on your ways (Psalm 119:15).

Oh how I love your law!
It is my meditation all the day (Psalm 119:97).

When we meditate we think about God's Word. We dwell on it and then as opportunities arise, we preach it to ourselves. We inject it into our thoughts as we make decisions, as we admonish and instruct our souls to choose right things and walk down right paths. This is the essence of meditation. It is evoking the truth, embracing it and embedding it in our lives. It is intentionally focusing on recalling God's truth that it might resound in our hearts and become that grid through which we sift and measure our thoughts and actions.

Meditation is a crucial Christian discipline and a vital means of grace that we must treasure and practice. But it is a discipline that takes time and effort. Accessibility can never beat intentionality. Don't assume that having God's Word close at hand means you have it close at heart. Carve out time in your day to remember, time to ponder, time to preach to yourself. The world around us can too easily choke out what is needful and good for our souls. Don't allow God's truth to slip away from you. Be intentional and diligent and your meditation.

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Phil Newton

What Are You Teaching?

“I’ve been a Southern Baptist all of my life but I’ve never heard these things. Why didn’t they teach this to me?”

The question struck a nerve. I had just finished an hour-long discussion with several people, including the lady who asked that question. We had talked about basic things concerning the Old Testament and New Testament. Our talk focused on what Jesus declared to the religious elite who hid behind their religious façade, “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me” (John 5:39). Jesus also set the example for what He meant when He met the two disciples on the road to Emmaus after His resurrection, and “beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures” (Luke 24:27). All of Scripture points to Jesus Christ, God’s work of redemption through Him, and how He has accomplished the work necessary to bring sinners and rebels into relationship as sons and daughters of the living God.

Yet this lady had not heard of this basic kind of teaching. So how would that affect the way that she reads the Bible? Would she grasp the continuity between the Testaments? Would she understand the first gospel statement in Genesis 3:15, and the way that God’s redemptive message continued through Malachi? Would the statement of John the Baptist, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29), make sense to her? Would she grasp what redemption, atonement, propitiation, and reconciliation meant through how both Testaments develop these doctrines?

I could understand if she had not been taught some intricacies in historical theology or the various interpretations of Hebrews 6 or even the different theories of the atonement. But what we considered should be basic in every congregation.

Questions to Consider

To help us think through this subject, let me offer a few questions to consider as we reflect upon our local congregations.

1. **Do we take seriously teaching “the whole counsel of God”?** Paul told the Ephesian elders that he did not shrink back from this kind of full-orbed teaching of God’s Word with them (Acts 20:27). What does that include? It certainly goes far beyond the so-called “Roman Road!” Would it not be useful to consider how our confessions of faith offer a compendium of what we must teach over a period of years with our churches? Should not these doctrinal standards work out in our regular preaching?
2. **Do we preach through books of the Bible in order to show the continuity of God’s Word?** Here’s what I mean: Preaching through a book, if done properly, can never be done in isolation from the rest of Scripture. Each biblical book has been informed by and/or connected with other portions of Scripture. Faithful exposition does biblical theology as the sermon unfolds. Plus, preaching/teaching consecutively through a book also teaches good hermeneutics, so that those listening learn through that process how to properly interpret God’s Word. Expositions should model how to study the Word.
3. **Do we organize opportunities to help our members grasp biblical theology, church history (and historical theology with it), biblical discipleship, ecclesiology, and missions?** Obviously, I can add more fields of study, but surely, the ones that I’ve mentioned are essential for church members to understand their relationship to the body of Christ, their part in God’s mission, the practice of spiritual disciplines, and their growing understanding of God’s Word. These might take place in small groups, Sunday Bible classes, discipleship groups, men’s and ladies’ studies, student studies, Wednesday night classes, etc. Shouldn’t we be embarrassed when cult groups understand their “faith” better than evangelicals? Let’s take away the excuses that our people make for not knowing the Christian faith well enough to explain it with passion!

4. **Do we prepare our congregations to face trials, adversity, and even death by having saturated them in the Word?** Several years ago, it hit me that a major part of my pastoral role is to help people face trials, adversity, and death. Rarely do we have warning that these ever-present realities of living in a fallen world are about to meet our people with shocking force. But if they are prepared by having steeped in the richness of the Word, then when we come to the moments of bringing comfort and encouragement, we're not scrambling to make up for lost years when we should have made them ready for most everything that providence lays at their feet.

Over a two or three-year period, we walked through great trials with three of our families, each of whom lost a child. We wept with them as we sought to encourage them through the weightiness of a child's death. Yet as we journeyed, each made some comment to the effect that the Lord had been preparing them through His grace to bear up under their loss. Scripture they had stored up came to the forefront of their need.

What are you teaching your congregation? Let it never be said of us, "They didn't teach me these things." Instead, proclaim Jesus Christ, admonish and teach every person under your charge with all wisdom, in order that you might present him and her complete in Christ. Labor and strive to do so in Christ's power that works mightily within you (Colossians 1:28–29).

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Phil Newton

The Gospel Is About Words

Paul did not pantomime the gospel to the Corinthians. He declared it in words. “Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you” (1 Corinthians 15:1). The word for “preached” is literally, “to announce the good news.” So he reiterates the gospel and how it consists in a body of truth communicated verbally about the person and work of Jesus Christ: “the good news which I announced to you.”

Paul’s statement implies that the gospel must be proclaimed in some fashion. It’s not about how we live or what we do that proclaims the gospel although, no doubt, our faithfulness in living out the gospel gives credibility to what we say about it. That’s why Paul spent so much time throughout this epistle correcting the selfish, prideful behavior of those professing to be followers of Christ! Yet the adage wrongly attributed to Francis of Assisi (13th C.), “Preach the gospel at all times. Use words if necessary” fails to square with Paul’s assertion. We cannot preach the gospel without words. We can demonstrate it, beautify it, give credibility to its power, and illustrate it through faithful, holy lives. And indeed, we must! But we cannot preach it, proclaim it, announce it, testify of it, or explain it without words.

Duane Litfin, president emeritus of Wheaton College, clarifies. “There is both a carelessness of thought and sloppiness of language inherent in the claim that we can preach the gospel without words.” He makes this important distinction concerning deeds versus words. If we think that it is our deeds that proclaim the gospel without words, then

we might think that the power to save lies in us. “If the gospel is powerful—which the Bible assures us it is—its power resides not in us but in the gospel itself.”¹

Let me illustrate it in this way. If I happened to travel to a remote tribal area in Kenya, where they knew virtually nothing of American sports’ traditions, do you suppose that I could explain without using words the football rivalry between Alabama and Auburn or Mississippi State and Ole Miss? To begin with, how would I explain the game of football to them? I suppose that I could take a football with me, motion for a tribesman to hold out his hands, and then loft the ball to him, hoping that he would catch it rather than allow it to smack him in the nose. Supposing he actually caught the ball, I could then run toward him, lower my shoulder, and drive it into his chest, tackling him to the ground. Of course, I could give him a “high five” upon helping him from the ground.

Would he think this to be an act of aggression? Would he think it some strange gesture of friendship that would throw an oddly shaped object at him and then knock him to the ground? Or would he immediately have an “aha” moment, understanding, “Oh, you’re trying to declare to me the game of football”? I think not.

Additionally, how could I communicate the intense, passionate rivalry that I grew up with in Alabama in this sport that he does not understand? Would I start doing fist pumps, and imitating the stadium wave? I could spend hours and days attempting to explain without words the game of football and the rivalry between those teams, yet it would never work. Without words and the long, patient process of explanation and example, that tribal member would never understand about football rivalry. He would only know that I had some kind of odd belief and behavior that seemed to influence the way that I acted toward him.

Far, far more importantly, verbal communication is necessary to understand the gospel. Dr. Litfin explains, “The biblical gospel is inherently a verbal thing, and communicating it by definition requires verbal behavior.”² That’s why we have one example after another throughout the Gospels and Acts of Jesus and His followers declaring the good news to sinners. We have no indication that they simply relied upon their behavior as sufficient to communicate the gospel. The gospel is about words.

If we skip words and just focus on behavior as the means to communicate the gospel, then we’ve communicated, as well, that one can become a Christian by following our example. In such a case, we’ve boiled the gospel down to works righteousness. As Ray

Ortlund Jr. notes, “The gospel is not law, demanding that we pay our own way. The gospel is a welcome announcement, declaring that Jesus paid it all”³

Paul gave that welcome announcement to the Corinthians and others in his missionary journeys. Along the way, for all who are believers, someone offered the welcome announcement that Jesus paid it all. They believed and were changed forever.

Words matter. Words explaining and declaring the gospel matter most. Let’s be clear with our gospel words so that all may hear the good news that Jesus paid it all.

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NOTES:

¹ Duane. Litfin, *Word Versus Deed: Resetting the Scales to a Biblical Balance* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 41, 50.

² Ibid., 36.

³ Ray Ortlund, Jr., *The Gospel: How the Church Portrays the Beauty of Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 15.