



High Gospel Spirituality

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.

Romans 1:16

Gospel Centered

Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the GOSPEL by the power of God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the GOSPEL,

2 Tim 1:8-11

The Gospel Trajectory in R/H

- *Luke 24:27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself....*
44 *Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."*

A Redemptive Historical Covenantal Orientation

- The Legal- Declarative Paradigm
- The Objectifying Grace and
Basis For Assurance
- Never been a time in....

The Sacred Marriage Covenant

Fulfilled

- *Or do you not know... speaking to those who know the law... that a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage... Likewise, you have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may be married to another. Rom 7:1ff*

Gospel Confession

- Q. 33. *What is justification?*
- A. Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

The Gospel's Starting Point: Our Ultimate Calling in Life is to **“Glorify God?”**

*Because God alone is Worthy and He is our Maker such that to
Him is owed all honor glory and praise!*

After describing God as one who is infinite in being and perfection... immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute... most righteous, most loving, gracious, merciful... all-sufficient not standing in need of any creature which he hath made, not deriving any glory from them but only manifesting his own glory in, by, unto and upon them... as nothing is to him contingent or uncertain, etc. etc -- the confession is compelled to add, to Him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service or obedience he is pleased to require of them.

The Gospel's Honest Admission:

I am not morally able to glorify God

A ruler questioned Him, saying, “Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.

Luke 18:18-19

The Gospel's Exhilarating Discovery:

What is for us impossible, is not impossible for God!

But He said, "The things that are impossible with people are possible with God."

Luke 18:27

When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once.

John 13:31-32

The Gospel's Life Changing Response:

God is glorified by faith in Christ alone!

For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

Heb. 10:4

And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Heb. 11:6

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God.

Eph. 2:8

The Gospel as Our Ultimate Confidence

The **Gospel** is the Power of God

For I am not ashamed of the **gospel**; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. **Rom.1:16**

The **Gospel** ALONE Can Abolish Death

Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the **gospel** of Christ...
Phil.1:27

The **Gospel** is both Message *and* Life Transformation

Our message of the **gospel** came to you not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of persons we proved to be among you for your sake. **1Th.1:5**

Gospel Spirituality

The Gospel is not only the ABC's but the A to Z's of the Christian life in at least two ways.

- **First**, it is not only our ticket to heaven based on grace through faith, it is the way God sets us free to live the more transformed life now
- **Second**, the Gospel is not just about the “inward” person concerning our spiritual needs, but also the “outward” person concerned with our emotional, physical, vocational, etc. needs.

What is the effect of the Gospel?

- ✓ The **gospel** is not just a “theology,” but the way we do theology, the “telos” or ends” of theology.
- ✓ The **gospel** is not just a message to believe, but a transforming power we possess that changes our approach to everything!
 - ✓ Our approach to Suffering: after the logic of the Cross
 - ✓ Our approach to Marriage: as a conduit for grace (naked and not ashamed)
 - ✓ Our approach to Vocation: as a calling vs. self-realization/actualization
 - ✓ Our approach to Sanctification: in response to God’s gracious favor, vs. sanctification in order to have God’s favor (Gospel vs. Galatians problem)
 - ✓ Our approach to the World: common grace sees God working in all people of all faiths and none, special grace of the gospel enables us to see our own flaws as greater even that perhaps the flaws that are in unbelievers.
 - ✓ Our definition of hypocrisy: From a gospel point of view, the hypocrite is someone who could ever think that they could glorify God by their own morals and religious devotion. Church is for people who know they don’t have it all together, but who believe that Jesus does on their behalf!

What to Look For:

- The experience of Christian assurance of God's favor based on God's grace in Christ.
- People who are identity oriented as adopted sons/daughters vs. performance oriented as slaves/workers.
- Transparency in willingness to confess *real* sins.
- A different approach to suffering and trials as related to God's training vs. God's punishment.
- A new motivation for service that is internal and gratitude based vs. external and duty based.
- More and more set free from self-promotion, self-defending, self-justifying, blame-shifting approach to life.
- Law loving as it is the basis for personal and communal flourishing now that we are no longer law relying as the basis of being accepted by God.
- Sabbath enjoying in trustful contentment upon God's gracious provisions in Christ.

In sum...

*The **gospel** is not just the “A-B-C” but the “A-to-Z” of the Christian life. The gospel is not just the way to enter the kingdom, but is the way to address every problem and is the way to grow at every step. If we believe we can find our own worth and meaning through performance, then we will become either proud and disdainful of others (if we reach our goals), or else discouraged and self-loathing (if we fail our goals). But the **gospel** creates an entirely new self-image... , it tells us that we are more wicked than we ever dared believe, but more loved and accepted in Christ than we ever dared to hope—at the same time.*

Tim Keller

Challenges to the Gospel

- Issues in “Law and Gospel”
- Issues in Ministry Philosophy

The Gospel Relation of “Law and Grace”

High Law /Low Grace

Moralistic

Low Law /Low Grace

Phariseistic

High Grace /Low Law

Hedenistic

High Grace /High Law

Gospelistic

Vs. Moralism

High Law /Low Grace

Law obeying and law relying

- *Works Righteousness*
- *Feelings of guilt all the time*
- *People are too big God is too small*
- *Afraid of Religion and Religious Topics*
- *Tends to stay away from church. ("When I get my life altogether I will go back to church)*
- *If in church, will stay in the margins. Won't get too close to center because will make them feel guilty if they do.*
- *Within Christendom but not a happy Christian*

Vs. Phariseeism

Low Law/Low Grace

“reduced law obeying and law relying”

- Works righteousness centered*
- Externally project confidence of being right all of the time*
- On the surface law obeying but in reality law disobeying*
- Emphasis on personal ethics vs. communal ethics as per the needs of others*
- Internal insecurity, reacts aggressively to criticism*
- Judgmental to others in order to lves feel more secure*
- Seems to be law-keeping but really law-reducing after own image*
- Self-righteous and a “them vs. us” orientation*
- Christendom without Christ*

Vs. Hedonism

Low Law / High Grace

“law disobeying and not law relying”

- *Grace centered without righteousness*
- *Post-Christendom*
- *Monistic spiritualism – Christian Buddhism, Hinduism*
- *God is in all of us – own standard for religion*
- *Own moral standards is God’s standard*
- *The ultimate goal is personal freedom*
- *Usually happy and more of a joy to be with*
- *Highly individualistic*
- *Lack of a practical common good ethic.*

The Gospel

High Law / High Grace

“law seeking not law restoring”

- Faith-righteousness and gracious
- High view of the law without fear of condemnation
- Performance for the sake of love vs. identity
- Safe to be morally flawed and broken such that we make it safe for others to be flawed and broken.
- Sonship vs. Slave (gospel vs. idolatry)

First Things First

Philosophy of Ministry

- An Important “order of salvation” – Justification leading to sanctification (not vice-versa)

Jesus said... Has no one condemned you?” She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more. (John 8:11)

Perfect love cast out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. We love because he first loved us. (1 Jn 4:18-19).

The Gospel “In Christ”

Summary

- We see that our whole salvation and all its parts are comprehended in Christ. We should therefore take care not to derive the least portion of it from anywhere else. If we seek salvation, we are taught by the very name of Jesus that it is “of him.” If we seek any other gifts of the Spirit, they will be found in his anointing. If we seek strength, it lies in his dominion; if purity, in his conception; if gentleness, it appears in his birth. For by his birth he was made like us in all respects that he might learn to feel our pain. If we seek redemption, it lies in his passion; if acquittal, in his condemnation; if remission of the curse, in his cross; if satisfaction, in his sacrifice; if purification, in his blood; if reconciliation, in his descent into hell; if mortification of the flesh, in his tomb; if newness of life, in his resurrection; if immortality, in the same; if inheritance of all blessings, in his Kingdom; if untroubled expectation of judgment, in the power given to him to judge. In short, since rich store of every kind of good abounds in him, let us drink our fill from this fountain, and from no other.
- (John Calvin , *Institutes* 2.16.19. c.f. 2nd article of Apostles Creed)