

Discussion Guide

Week of January 5, 2014

The Gospel

Passage Overview: In Romans 1:16, Paul says the gospel is a “power.” He doesn’t say it brings power or has power, but that it actually is a power. The gospel message is the power of God in verbal form. When it is articulated or reflected upon, the power is released. Sinners are saved and God’s people are transformed. This is a complete reversal of both the natural tendency of the human heart and the universal thrust of all other religions. Everyone else thinks of salvation as providing a righteousness to God, while the gospel says salvation is receiving a righteousness from God. The gospel is the beginning and end of the Christian life. We never move beyond it. It is only when we understand it rightly that we can (rightly) understand who we are as a people (“community”) and how God has called us to live (“mission”).

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-4

- In vv1-2, discuss all the ways that Paul describes his or the Corinthians’ relationship to the gospel. What implications are there here for you/us?
 - Paul “preached” the gospel.
 - The gospel is “received.”
 - It is in the gospel that believers “stand.”
 - It is in the gospel that believers “are being saved.”
- How does Paul describe the gospel in vv3-4? What elements does he include? Why is each element so important (indeed, necessary)?
 - What does it mean that Jesus “died for our sins” (v3)?

Read Romans 1:1-17

- What is the passion and ultimate goal of Paul’s life (vv1-6)?
- What do we learn about the content of the gospel from the first six verses? (i.e., what do we learn about what the message is?)
- In verse 16, why does Paul refer to being not ashamed (i.e., offended) by the gospel? In what ways can the gospel offend or be despised?
- What does Paul mean when he calls the gospel “the power of God?” In what ways is it powerful?
- What releases the power of the gospel into our lives (v16)? (What is the qualification for it?)
- What is the righteousness spoken of in v17? How is this different from merely being forgiven?
- What does it mean to “live” by this righteousness of faith (v17)? In other words, what ways is the gospel the ongoing power in the Christian life?
- At the root of each and every sin is unbelief and rejection of the gospel. How do immoral, law-rejecting people reject the gospel? How do moralistic, law-abiding people reject the gospel?
 - To which are you more prone (immoral law-breaker or smug moralist)?
 - What implication does this have for how you view (and fight) sin?

Prayer: Thank God that it is only through Christ’s satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness that you are made right with God. Ask God to give you an increased awareness of your sin (so that your sin and his Son’s suffering and death do not seem trivial or small to you) AND an increased knowledge of Christ’s completely satisfying life and death in your place (so that you have great hope and joy, and are not given to despair).

Announcements

- ‘One Another’ Member Meeting (Jan 12; 6-7:30p)
- Missions Conference (Jan 24-26)
- Baptism Sunday (Feb 8)—email Wayne if you are a follower of Jesus and haven’t been baptized