

PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path"
Psalm 119:104*

February 17, 2019

What Should You Do with the Gospel?

by Frank Himmel



The gospel is the good news of salvation in Jesus, who died for our sins and rose to be our Lord (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). What should you do with it?

Hear it. “Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe” (Acts 15:7). Take the time to learn all about Jesus’ offer.

Believe it. 2,000 years ago Jesus preached, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:15). The same timeless invitation to salvation that He preached then is still available today.

Obey it. The gospel is more than facts to be believed; it is also commands to be obeyed, beginning with repentance and baptism. Merciful Jesus will one day return as a judge “dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thessalonians 1:8).

Live it. “Only conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ...” (Philippians 1:27). Join Paul in living “so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel” (1 Corinthians 9:27). That is vital because we also must...

Preach it. Jesus parting instruction was, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation” (Mark 16:15). Everyone needs to hear the good news of salvation.

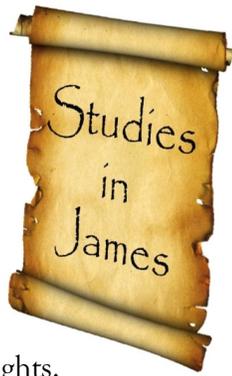
Don’t be ashamed of it. There always have been and always will be mockers. Don’t let them affect you. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:16).

Defend it. “...I am set for the defence of the gospel” (Philippians 1:17, NKJB). It is necessary to defend it, not only because some reject it altogether, but also because “there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ” (Galatians 1:7).

Hold it fast. “Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain” (1 Corinthians 15:1-2). The same devil who tries to blind people so they can’t see the light of the gospel (2 Corinthians 4:4) wants to persuade those who have embraced it to let go. Don’t do it! Hold fast until the end. ■

God Is So Good

by Frank Himmel



“Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variation or shifting shadow. In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures” (James 1:17-18).

In context, this section culminates James’s point that temptation must not be attributed to God (v. 13). God is the giver of good things, not evil. He has a favorable disposition toward us, one which will help us do right, not urge us to do wrong.

Consider four expressions James employed in making this point.

God is “the Father of lights.” Ancient peoples often worshiped the sun and stars. While they are sources of light, God is infinitely greater: He is the sources’ source, and He provides light both in the physical and spiritual senses. His light is more consistent, too. Due to ever changing angles the sun’s light is more or less direct, resulting in “shifting shadows.” God is always the same, in disposition and will. His light shines on us fully and precisely.

God “brought us forth.” He “gave us birth” (NIV). He did so in creation, of course, but the new birth is in view here. And it forms a vivid contrast. We gave birth to sin by our lust, resulting in spiritual death (v. 15). God gave birth to us through His word, resulting in new life. Could they be a greater evidence of God’s favorable disposition toward us?

God brought us forth by “the word of truth.” This expression occurs four other times in the New Testament. Colossians 1:5 unmistakably identifies it as the gospel. Ephesians 1:13 says it is the gospel of our salvation. 2 Timothy 2:15 emphasizes the importance of handling it accurately, as does 2 Corinthians 6:7 in its proclamation. Our passages identifies the gospel as God’s means of the new birth. The Holy Spirit authors the word, hence we are born Him (John 3:5), and the apostles preached the word, hence we are born of them (1 Corinthians 4:15). In every case, salvation is the result of hearing, believing, and obeying the gospel. This is why it is so vital that we preach it and do so accurately.

God brought us forth as a kind of “first fruits.” The first fruits is an Old Testament concept. When the Israelites harvested their crops they were to bring an offering of the first fruits to the Lord. It was an expression of gratitude, a way of honoring God (Proverbs 3:9), and a reminder that the Lord’s portion always comes first. It also stood as a foretaste of what was to come. This figure reminds us that the proper response to God’s goodness is living our new lives as people completely devoted to Him. ■

Service Leaders for the Week

	Sunday	Wednesday
GREETER	Greg Winget	Bruce Williams
SONG LEADER	Carlos Garcia	Clifton Lefort
OPENING PRAYER	Sam Walters	
LORD’S SUPPER		
BREAD	Howard Moore	
CUP	Chris Brooks	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	Steven Reeves	
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	Singing
CLOSING PRAYER	Brian Wilson	John Baucom