

Warrington
10/11/64
"The Hidden Gospel"
7/21/60
Bible removed from the standards and
Satan has taken it away

Scripture Lesson: - 2 Corinthians 4: 1 - 5

Text: - 2 Corinthians 4: 3. "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost."

Introduction: - The gospel message is the most wonderful thing in all the world. At its center is Jesus Christ, crucified, dead, and risen, man's only hope. How important it is that the gospel be not hidden. It is sometimes hidden by its friends. It is hidden by those who are pagans at heart. But is the "good news" to men who are sinners and need a Savior. This good news, this gospel, is hidden from those who should receive it, by

Inconsistent lives. Why should pagans believe in or desire a Gospel that does not transform the life of a believer? Why should one become a Christian if amounts to no more than church attendance on Sunday while the rest of the week he may live like any man of the world?

Christians in early Rome were surrounded by a paganism hardly more blatant than that of twentieth century America. The apostle Paul pleaded with them "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould."

What if every Christian in America were to heed this warning today? One result would be a freeing of the Gospel from the handicap of those in matters of purity of life, honesty in business, truthfulness of word, and attitudes to-

ward others little removed from the standards that Satan has set for the world. The

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Scripture Lesson: II. I : 4

Nothing hides the gospel more than lovelessness. Christianity and Christian love should be synonymous, for they center in the One who is altogether lovely and loving. But how often the glory of the gospel hidden by malice, carping criticism, gossip, or even hatred on the part of Christians for other Christians. It is one of the scandals of the church today that many Christians lack even the elemental graces of courtesy and consideration for the feeling of others.

Nothing would do more to unmask the wonder of redemption and show forth the fruits of the Holy Spirit than a renewal of the spirit of love which characterized the early Christians and distinguished them from other men. *Christ said love one another. We cannot be His without love unity*

To many people the Gospel has been hidden because of the crippling presuppositions. They reject the stated truths in favor of the theologians who explain them away. They have misplaced the good news of man's redemption from the guilt and penalty of sin, with concepts of God which replace his holiness and justice, and admit only his love and his mercy. Then they have only a blurred image of God, a deformed caricature of him, who in all of his attributes is perfection and beauty. Further, we can hide the Gospel by depicting God in terms that we choose for him, and not as he

has revealed himself. There are some people who reject the idea of eternal punishment because it conflicts with their concepts of God. And in so doing they attack the validity of both the Old T. and the new.

god says people & nations who reject Him will be cast into Hell

IV. *cast into Hell*

The Gospel can also be hidden by the cleverness of man. The apostle Paul knew the danger, when he wrote this to the Corinthian people. "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God; and my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power! Why is there so much concern, so much repudiation of attempts to believe? Some would have their faith stand in the wisdom of men, and not in the power of God.

God says not by might or power but by my Spirit - that's what make our church go

Then too, the gospel is hidden by false interpretation. Paul knew this, and has it in mind when he wrote "that which darkeneth counsel by words of knowledge or by theological phrases such as "totally other" or "the existential moment" or the "Christ-myth" and so forth, which convey exactly nothing to a man seeking salvation. Paul gave these words of warning to his son, Timothy. "O Timothy, guard most carefully your divine commission. Avoid the godless mixture of contradictory terms, which are falsely known as "knowledge", some having followed it and lost their faith.

We can lose our faith we can grieve the Spirit

The Gospel can be hidden. The Gospel can be hidden when we degrade the person and the work of Christ; when the effect of universality of sin are minimized and the potential good-

ness of man are magnified. Our Lord's essential and unique deity is the foundation of the Gospel. He is the eternal son of God who became incarnate in the flesh, and there is no Gospel of redemption without firm belief of this.

Because of who He is, we cannot help but view with awe what he did. Paul declares the meaning of the Gospel, "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."

Woe to us, then, if we hide the Gospel or substitute for it something more palatable to the human ego or agreeable to our warped reason. It is not for man to question or alter that which God has ordained, and the way of salvation is so clearly stated in the Scriptures that a little child can understand and believe.

The need for the Gospel is hidden when the sinfulness of man is minimized. Sin is rarely the topic of some preaching today. It is more pleasant, for example, to regard drunkenness as a disease than as a sin; sex obsession as a psychological problem, rather than a spiritual problem; dishonesty as a "confusion of values" rather than stealing. When we fail to appreciate that sin is an offense to God, the Gospel becomes hidden in the midst of human expenses.

VI.

The Gospel can be hidden by a cold orthodoxy. A cold orthodoxy accepts the letter of the truth, but ignores the spirit of divine revelation. We need to accept the doctrines of the Christ and then

believe them with all of our hearts. The old time Pharisee was guilty of this, and the Lord scathed them for it. He said, "And when ye pray, do not as the Pharisees do, standing in the street corners to be seen of men. Verily that have their reward, but when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to the father who is in secret, and he shall reward thee openly."

Conclusion:- We need to believe the Gospel. We need to believe that the Gospel can be carried forth by nothing but by prayer and faith to believe that whatever we ask we shall receive. Have you faith in the gospel? Do you pray over it? You know that the work of the church and the Gospel can be carried on by prayer and faith. How is your faith? Is it rather weak, and needs strengthening? Let us, while we sing, have our closing around the altar, and ~~that~~ go forth to work with a will.

We need to pray for His Spirit in our midst we got our eyes off Christ & on each others faults. Lets get our eyes on Christ, He's our example I have faith enough in your Christianity & devotion to Christ to believe you'll stand by your church in spite of disappointments so lets gather around the altar for a season of prayer for His leadership & guidance Dont wait come on first verse this is your church & you want to see it now