

## 96. The Gospel of John—10:9

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### *“The Gospel—the Key to Salvation” Pt.5*

(1/26/20)

If you're new with us, we are currently working our way thru the Gospel of John here at Calvary on Sunday mornings.

However, we have put that on hold to do a series we've entitled—*“The Gospel—the Key to Salvation”*.

The last time we were actually in this series was 7 weeks ago (we had a special guest speaker, then a 2-part Christmas message, and then a 4-part New Year's series)—so I'm just going to start from the beginning again...just kidding!

But bear with me as I review briefly what we've covered so far so as to refresh your memories and bring the new people up to speed.

As I said, the way this series came about was—we were studying chapter 10 of John's gospel where Jesus was likening Himself to a shepherd who leads His sheep in search of pasture.

In Israel, as the summer months approached and the weather got hotter and hotter—the shepherd would have to lead his flock farther and farther from his village to find something his sheep could graze on.

This eventually took his flock so far away from the village that, at one point, he was too far to bring them home for the night (to the village communal sheepfold)—which meant he was forced to find a cave, or construct a make-shift sheepfold for them to stay in for the night. (Finish)

With regard to this make-shift sheepfold—there was only one way in, and no physical door—just an opening.

The shepherd would lead his sheep in and then lay across the opening—literally becoming the **‘door’** of the sheepfold. (Finish)

Jesus used that practice, as being analogous of Himself as the Good Shepherd who is the only way into the ‘sheepfold’ of heaven, when He said—**“I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved...” (v.9)**

And it was upon that statement that we launched this series—that Jesus (and only Jesus) is the “Door” that a person must go thru to be saved and enter into heaven.

Jesus said, *“I am the Way the Truth and the Life no one comes to the Father except through Me.”* (John 14:6)

There’s only one entrance into salvation and that is thru Jesus Christ—He is the Door!

But as we have said—any door that leads to something of great value is going to be locked!

And likewise, the door leading to salvation (priceless in value!) is locked and requires a ‘key’ to open it.

What is the key that unlocks the door and allows a person to enter into Christ and find salvation—it is the gospel!

And so, the gospel is to salvation what a key is to a lock.

However, we all know that a key won't unlock a door if it's somehow gotten bent or twisted.

The key must be straight and true if it's going to be used to open a door—and the same is true with the gospel!

If Satan can twist and pervert the gospel (Galatians 1:6-7), he can keep the door of salvation locked to people (even though they believe in a false gospel with all of their heart).

That's why the devil has been working very hard for 2000 years to pervert and twist the gospel in an effort to keep the door of salvation locked to seekers—and this is where we, as the people of God, come in!

The Lord has commissioned us to go into all the world preaching the gospel to the lost—which is why we must know the *true* gospel and share it accurately with those we come in contact with!

As we study the New Testament and the various gospel presentations—they all share the same core elements.

The first one, as we have already stated, isn't really part of the gospel itself—in other words, it isn't essential doctrine for salvation.

It is more the introduction—the *motivation* to get people moving in the direction of *salvation*.

## **A. There is a day of judgment coming**

Without any talk of coming judgment, the gospel is reduced from an emergency “warning siren” (like a tornado siren)—to ‘happy talk.’

This is how many Christians present the gospel today.

Not as a warning urging people to receive Jesus as a Savior Who will save them from the fires of hell—but as a sanctified ‘butler’ whose job it is to make their life more comfortable here on earth.

## **B. Repentance**

The Greek word for **repentance** is *metanoia* which literally means—“*to have a change of mind*”—but a change of mind that leads to a change of direction or action.

No one can be saved who isn’t willing and wanting to have the course of their life changed from rebellion against God to obedience toward God—“*I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish... I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.*” (Luke 13:3, 5)—also Paul in Acts 26:20.

## **C. Jesus Christ is Almighty God—Lord of all**

This is an absolutely essential, critically important element of the gospel presentation, that we present Jesus Christ as—Almighty God in human form—the Great I AM!

### **John 8:24 (NKJV)**

<sup>24</sup> Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins."

It’s important for the people we are witnessing to, that they understand that to be saved they have to believe in Jesus Christ as Almighty God—that’s vital.

But what we must also make sure they understand is that—not all faith is saving faith!

I was raised in the Roman Catholic Church, and I believed everything back then that I believe about Jesus now—and yet, back then I wasn't saved.

Why wasn't I saved back then, if simply believing the facts about Jesus Christ was all that was necessary to be saved and get into heaven (as some teach)?

In his epistle, James tells us that even the devil and his demons believe that Jesus Christ is God Almighty, the Great I AM in human form—but that's not going to keep them from hell.

Saving faith is not just believing the facts about Jesus Christ (Who He is and what He did)—to be saved a person must believe to the point of commitment.

When you were dating your future spouse and decided to get married—you didn't enter into marriage until you made the commitment to each other (your wedding vows).

It was the commitment that put you into the marriage covenant and allowed you to become 'one flesh' with them in the eyes of God.

And the same was true with your relationship with Jesus *before* you were saved.

Many of you (like me) believed that Jesus Christ was (is) the Son of God, and maybe you even loved Him having grown up in church (like I did)—but until you made a commitment to Him (received Him into your heart as your Savior) you didn't enter into the 'Everlasting Covenant' (salvation).

It was the commitment (saving faith) you made to Jesus that allowed you to become one with Him and brought you into salvation (which the N.T. calls a marriage with Jesus as your Bridegroom and you as His Bride)...Or as the apostle John put it in opening verses of his gospel—saving faith is believing in *and* receiving (the commitment part) Jesus as your Savior. (John 1:12)

## D. Jesus Christ Died for Their Sins

When you present the gospel to people, you need to make sure that they understand (from God's Word) that—being “good” (whatever that means) won't get them into heaven.

### Proverbs 20:6a (NKJV)

<sup>6</sup> Most men will proclaim each his own goodness...

Jesus said that there is only one Person who is “good” (morally perfect) and that is God! (Matt. 19:17)

And that is why Jesus *had* to die on the cross for our sins—because we *weren't* good!

We were fallen sinners, condemned to spend eternity in hell—and the only way we could escape that judgment was if God *redeemed* us (to buy out of slavery by paying a price)—

### 1 Peter 1:18-19 (NKJV)

<sup>18</sup> knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers, <sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

Under the old sacrificial system, God mandated that He would only accept the innocent dying for the guilty (an animal without spot or blemish).

The blood of the animal would *atone* for their sin.

The word ‘**atonement**’ in the Hebrew is *kaper* and means ‘*a covering*’.

For the Jewish people to have fellowship with God their sins would have to be atoned for (covered)—and God made it clear that being ‘good’, keeping commandments, and offering God religious rituals and ceremonies wasn't going to do it—it would take a blood sacrifice:

**Leviticus 17:11 (NKJV)**

<sup>11</sup> For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it *is* the blood *that* makes atonement for the soul.'

But even then, the blood of animals would only *temporarily* cover their sin—until the next time they sinned and had to bring another animal to atone for their sin once again.

Of course, this looked forward to the sinless, perfect, Lamb of God (the Lord Jesus Christ) Who would die in our place, and Whose death would—forever take all our sins away!

When we share the gospel with people today, since everyone thinks they're a 'good' person ("*not perfect, but certainly good enough to get into heaven!*")—we must communicate to them, that if we *could* be good enough to get into heaven by doing good deeds and keeping religious ceremonies, rituals, feast days etc.

If our good deeds and religious works could atone for our sins—then Jesus would not have had to die (or died in vain—Gal.2:21b)!

Of course, this goes hand in hand with the last piece of the gospel message (and presentation)—

**E. Jesus Christ Rose from the Dead**

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the single greatest event in the history of the world—and the cornerstone of the Christian faith.

It is so foundational to Christianity that anyone who denies the physical, bodily resurrection of Christ cannot be a genuine Christian—it is an essential doctrine of the Christian faith for salvation.

You see, without the resurrection there is no Christian faith, no salvation—and no hope for man.

As Paul the Apostle said,

*“If Christ is not risen, then our preaching is useless, your faith is meaningless, we are still in our sins, those who have died believing in Christ are lost and we are of all men the most pathetic. We might as well eat, drink, and be merry for there is nothing more to life than this.”*

However, Paul went on to say,

*“But now Christ is risen from the dead and is the first fruits from the grave of those who have died believing in Jesus.”*

The truth of the resurrection was first proclaimed to the women who came to the tomb that Sunday morning to finish preparing Jesus’ body for burial.

Jesus died on the cross at three in the afternoon (on Thursday) and by the time the four Roman executioners (required by Roman law) had certified He was officially dead, and His body was removed from the cross—the sun was starting to set.

Jewish law mandated that a dead body had to be buried by sundown—so they quickly wrapped Jesus’ body in burial cloths and put it into the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

The women purposed that they would come back early Sunday morning (after the Sabbath) to finish properly preparing Jesus’ body with the spices in the windings of the grave clothes.

The gospels tell us that the women were worried about the stone that had been rolled over the opening of the tomb (weighing between three and four thousand pounds).

You see, they had no idea how they would ever be able to roll it out of the way so they could get to the body of Jesus.

And yet when they got there, they saw the stone had already been moved from the opening and looking inside they saw an angel who said to them, *“Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.”* (Matt. 28:5-6)



We'll deal with the resurrection in greater detail when we come to it in John 20.

But let me just say—all but 4 of the major world religions are based on philosophical and ethical principles.

Of the 4 that are based on personalities only Christianity claims an empty tomb due to the resurrection of its founder.

1. Abraham, the father of Judaism died about 1900 BC, but the Jews never claimed he rose from the dead.

2. The original accounts of Buddha's life and death never claimed any resurrection from the dead for him.

3. Mohammed died on June 8, 632 AD at the age of 61 in Medina where his tomb is visited each year by thousands of devout Muslims—but neither the Koran nor the Hadith ever claimed that Mohammed rose from the dead.

Their bodies (bones) are still in their graves because, only the tomb of Jesus is empty—only Jesus is risen!

## **F. The Invitation**

After you've given the gospel *presentation*—it's time for the invitation—ask the person you're witnessing to if they would like to receive Jesus as the Savior.

*"I like to let them go home and think about it."*

Well, that's what D.L. Moody used to like to do also—and that's what he did after preaching the gospel to a large crowd one night.

The date was October 8, 1871—the night of the great Chicago fire. (Finish)

When the Bible says, **“Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation”** (2Cor.6:2)—that’s as much for the person giving the gospel as it is for the one hearing the gospel. (Explain)

Author and commentator, William Barclay relates the following story to illustrate the danger of spiritual procrastination:

*“There is a fable which tells of three apprentice demons who were coming to this earth to finish their apprenticeship. They were talking to Satan, the chief of the demons, about their plans to tempt and to ruin men. The first said, “I will tell them that there is no God.” Satan said, “That will not delude many, for they know that there is a God.” The second said, “I will tell men that there is no hell.” Satan answered, “You will deceive no one that way; men know even now that there is a hell for sin.” The third said, “I will tell men that there is no hurry.” “Go,” said Satan, “and you will ruin men by the thousands.”*

The most dangerous of all delusions is that there is plenty of time to get serious about God so there's no need to hurry—however, that isn't what the Bible teaches.

God's Word admonishes unbelievers not to put off receiving Jesus when the gospel is presented to them—

*“Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts...” (Heb.3:7-8); “...behold, now is the day of salvation.” (2Cor.6:2)*

May God give us a burden for the lost, and a great sense of urgency to reach them with the gospel!