

THE GOSPEL CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE!

John Edwards

Paul wrote, “*Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ*” (Eph. 3:8). The unsearchable riches of Christ preached by Paul was the gospel of Christ. To the churches of Galatia Paul penned, “*And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles...*” (Gal. 2:2). The gospel of Christ has the power to change lives and save souls! Paul declared, “*So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek*” (Rom. 1:15-16).

THE GOSPEL CHANGED THE CORINTHIANS. 1

Corinthians 6:9-11 records, “*Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor*

extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” These had a past that was grossly immoral. Yet, the present time of Paul’s writing finds them not as they used to be. They had been cleansed from the filth of their sins, freed from the guilt of sin, and declared to be such as they ought to be; therefore acceptable unto God. What a change had taken place! How was this accomplished? Through the gospel! Paul stated, “*...in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel*” (1 Cor. 4:15). This occurred when “*...many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized*” (Acts 18:8).

THE GOSPEL CHANGED THE EPHESIANS. A reading of the Ephesian letter will show that a great change had taken place in the lives of people at Ephesus. At one time they were “*dead in trespasses and sins*” (2:1, 5). The letter says, “*...in time past ye walked according to the course of this world...*” (2:2). Their “*conversation in times past*” was “*in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind...*” (2:3). “*...in time past Gentiles in the flesh... at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the*

commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world” (2:11-12). They “*...were far off...*” (2:13); “*...strangers and foreigners...*” (2:19). “*But...*” look at them “*...now in Christ Jesus...*” (2:13): “*...quickened...*” or made alive (2:1, 5); “*...saved...*” (2:5, 8); “*...raised up...*” (2:6); “*...his workmanship...*” (2:10); walking in “*...good works...*” (2:10); “*...made nigh...*” (2:13); “*...reconciled...*” (2:16); and “*...fellowcitizens...*” (2:19)! What happened? These “*...heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation...*” (1:13)! The gospel changed their lives!

THE GOSPEL CHANGED THE COLOSSIANS. Look at their past: “*...were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works...*” (Col. 1:21); “*...being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh...*” (Col. 2:13). But now “*...reconciled...to present you holy and unblameable and unreprieveable in his sight*” (Col. 1:22); “*...quickened...*” and “*...having forgiven you all trespasses*” (Col. 2:13). These had “*...put of the old man with his deeds*” and “*...put on the new man...*” (Col. 3:8-14). All this was made possible when the gospel came unto them! Colossians 1 reports, “*For the*

hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth” (vv. 5-6).

THE GOSPEL CHANGED THOSE SCATTERED FAR AND WIDE. The recipients of Peter’s epistles were a changed people! The letters mention “...former lusts in your ignorance” (1 Pet. 1:14); “...vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers” (1 Pet. 1:18); “...in time past were not a people...” (1 Pet. 2:10); “...were as sheep going astray...” (1 Pet. 2:25); “...the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries” (1 Pet. 4:3); and “...old sins” (2 Pet. 1:9). Now read Peter’s epistles and take note of their present condition: “Elect” (1 Pet. 1:2); “...begotten...again...” (1 Pet. 1:3) or “...born again...” (1 Pet. 1:23); “...redeemed...” (1 Pet. 1:18-19); “...purified...” (1 Pet.

1:22); “...a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people... called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Pet. 2:9); “...now the people of God...now have obtained mercy” (1 Pet. 2:10); “...dead to sins, should live unto righteousness...healed” (1 Pet. 2:24); “...now returned...” (1 Pet. 2:25); “...in Christ Jesus...” (1 Pet. 5:14); “... escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pet. 1:4); “...purged...” (2 Pet. 1:9); “...clean escaped from them who live in error” (2 Pet. 2:18); “...have escaped the pollutions of the world...” (2 Pet. 2:10). AMAZING! All these changes were brought about by the gospel of Christ! 1 Peter 1:25 reveals, “But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”

As the gospel had the power to change the lives of people in the first century, it is just as powerful to change our lives for the better today! No matter what sins you have committed, you can be cleansed, set free and start anew. That’s what the grace of

God through the gospel of Christ affords! “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor. 5:17). “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27). If God can grant fresh starts to us, how can we not extend new beginnings to others? All of us have to let go of the past so as to embrace the present and “... lay hold on eternal life...” (1 Tim. 6:12).

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people ; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.”

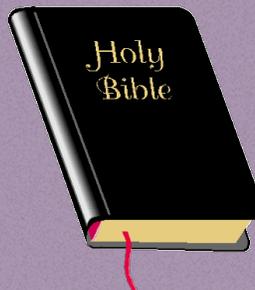
—1 Peter 2:9-10

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