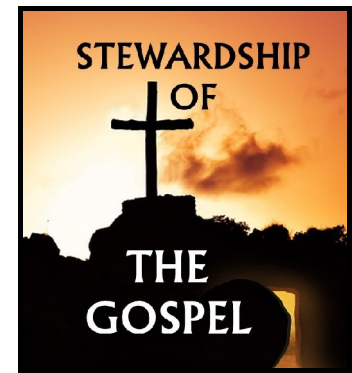


Church of God Sunday School

WHOLE-LIFE STEWARDSHIP #12 – THE GOSPEL



DAILY READINGS:

- ❑ **Monday:** The "bad news" is that sin's penalty is death (Romans 6:23; James 1:15).
- ❑ **Tuesday:** The "good news" is that Jesus paid sin's penalty (John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:20-21).
- ❑ **Wednesday:** We are entrusted with the Gospel (1 Thessalonians 2:4; 1 Timothy 1:11-12; 2 Timothy 1:12-14).
- ❑ **Thursday:** We must KNOW and BELIEVE the Gospel (2 Timothy 2:15; Mark 1:15; Ephesians 1:13).
- ❑ **Friday:** We must LOVE and LIVE the Gospel (Psalm 119:97; Romans 1:16; Titus 2:10).
- ❑ **Saturday:** We must SHARE the Gospel (Mark 16:15; Mark 5:19; John 4:29).

MEMORY VERSE: *"But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts."*
—1 Thessalonians 2:4

People Need to See the Gospel Lived

Imagine the reaction if you were to tell someone: "I have great news! Someone has done something wonderful and you really need it. I am not exactly sure what it is or what you have to do, but it's really great!" That would not be very convincing, would it? The Gospel has been entrusted into the careful management of every Christian. What is the Gospel? What is faithful stewardship of the Gospel? If the Gospel is so wonderful, why don't more people want it?

In the late 1800s, Amy Carmichael traveled as a missionary, first to Japan and later to India. It was her desire to preach the Gospel. While in Japan, she shared the Gospel with a Buddhist. His reply was that if the Gospel was true, he wanted to see it lived. Sometime later in India, as she was sharing the Gospel with an old Hindu, the man told her: "We have heard much preaching. Can you show us the life of your Lord Jesus?" Yet today, more than one hundred years later, people are still saying, "We have heard much preaching; we want to see it lived."



What Is the Gospel?

If you had some money that you wanted to invest, would you give it to someone who does not understand investing? Would you take piano lessons from someone who cannot play the piano? How would you feel about someone operating on you who was untrained? First Thessalonians 2:4 tells us that "we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel." The Gospel is not just for our benefit. We are to share it with others, but how can we share something if we know very little about it?

God created men and women because He wanted to have a relationship with them, but He wanted that relationship to be based on love. Thus, He created us with the power of choice. When Adam and Eve chose to disobey God, they sinned, and their relationship with God was broken. The penalty for sin is death (Romans 6:23). When Adam and Eve began to understand this, it must have been very "bad news." But God created a way of escape through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son. Jesus paid sin's penalty because He loves us. The word *Gospel* means "good news." Some have described it as "the best news ever!" Why? Once man understands his lost condition (the bad news), then he begins to understand his need for a Savior. The Gospel is good news of the availability of a relationship with God. Also, this is a gift. There is nothing we can do to earn this. It is ours when we ask forgiveness for our sins and accept Jesus as our Savior.



How Are We to Faithfully Steward the Gospel?

When we begin to understand that the Gospel is truly "the best news ever," we will want to share it with others. Faithful stewardship will require effort. Do you understand what the Gospel is? Second Timothy 2:15 tells of the importance of Bible study, and Hosea 4:6 warns what happens when there is a "lack of knowledge."

In addition to KNOWING the Gospel, you must BELIEVE it. If you believe it, you will live it. As you learn more about the Gospel and live it out in your own life, you will develop a LOVE for the Gospel. You will no longer be "ashamed of the gospel" as you understand that "it is the power of God" to bring "salvation" to the lost (Romans 1:16).

If you understand what the Gospel is, believe that it is true, and develop a love for it, it will become a part of you. You will begin to LIVE the Gospel. Titus 2:10 describes it as ones who "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." When you live the Gospel, you are making it attractive to others (SHARE). In Mark 16:15 Jesus told His disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

Many people believe that sharing the Gospel is the responsibility of preachers or missionaries. There is a song that says: "What about my neighbor, what about my friend, what about my family? Who will tell them?" Are you waiting for a preacher or missionary to share the Gospel with those who are in your circle of influence? Consider the devil-possessed man called Legion. After Jesus cast out the evil spirits, He told the man, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee" (Mark 5:19). The woman at the well was so excited when she heard the good news of the Gospel that she ran into her town, saying, "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" (John 4:29). After the Gospel was explained to the Ethiopian eunuch and he was baptized, "he went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:39). Eusebius (a church historian) wrote that the Ethiopian went home and shared the Gospel with his people. Likewise, we cannot wait for others to share the Gospel with our friends and family. God has entrusted the Gospel into our care. He needs us to share the "good news."



Another Gospel

Can you imagine if you hired a builder to build your house, and he changed the plans without asking you? If he were to move the kitchen upstairs or put the garage on the other end of the house, you would certainly have a problem with that builder! Sadly, too many people look at the Gospel and think it needs to be rearranged. They do not like certain passages in the Bible; so they explain them away. Or they do not believe some parts of the standard are important. So, they ignore them. Some would like to "cut out" certain parts of the Bible. Paul wrote of the danger of "another gospel" (Galatians 1:6). Good stewardship of the Gospel includes sharing "the gospel of Jesus Christ" (Mark 1:1) with others, not changing it to fit our opinions and ideas.

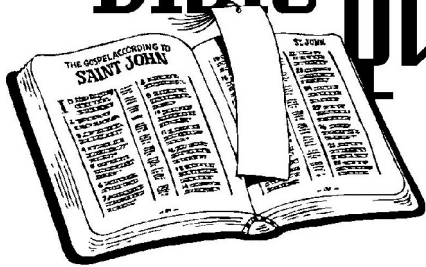
Some people might find the Gospel hard to believe or understand, and you might be tempted to change it to make it more appealing to them. However, you have been "put in trust with the gospel" to please God, not people (1 Thessalonians 2:4). The true Gospel is the most valuable resource you will ever possess. Guard it carefully! Do not let anyone take it from you or substitute it with a counterfeit (another Gospel; Galatians 1:6-9 and Jude 3-4).

Some Have Never Heard



It has been estimated that as many as two billion people in the world today have never heard the Gospel. While we cannot know exactly how many have not heard, we do not have to look very far in our neighborhoods to find people who have never heard it or do not understand it. Begin looking for ways to use the time, talents, gifts, and other resources God has entrusted to you to share the Gospel. Using these resources wisely is one way to witness of the great importance you place on the Gospel. Keep in mind that it takes time and wisdom to win souls to Christ (Proverbs 11:30). Often, sharing the Gospel will first require building healthy relationships with friends, loved ones, classmates, coworkers, and neighbors. By getting to know them, caring for them, praying for them, helping them, and being there for them in times of trouble, you are living out the Gospel.

Bible Quiz



1. Why did Amy Carmichael travel to Japan and then to India?

2. Why did God create men and women?

3. What does God want our relationship based on?

4. What was the "bad news" Adam and Eve learned about (Romans 6:23)?

5. Why is the Gospel "good news"?

6. What five words in the lesson tell the steps to being faithful stewards of the Gospel? (Words are capitalized.)

7. What does "adorn the doctrine of God" (Titus 2:10) mean?

8. What did the man called Legion, the woman at the well, and the Ethiopian eunuch all have in common?

9. What is "another gospel"?

10. Why should you guard the Gospel carefully?

11. What might you need to do first before sharing the Gospel with others?

Good News!



Your life is the only Bible that some people read.



Share the Good News



"HERE AM I;
SEND ME."

ISAIAH 6:8

The best Bible translation on the market today is a Bible that has been translated into the lives of its readers!

Live your life in such a way that you are making people "thirsty" for the Gospel.

SHARE JESUS WITH A FRIEND

"Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me" (Isaiah 6:8).