


The Whole Gospel (or Conkers & Shoe Laces)

Sunday 8th October 2023

Some things are inseparable – Batman & Robin, Michael Knight and Kitt, pancakes & maple syrup, fish & chips, conkers and shoe laces.

 Paul opens the letter to the Galatians as follows:

Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead),² and all the brethren who are with me,

To the churches of Galatia:


*³Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ,
⁴who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, ⁵to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*

Three times Paul in these opening five verses Paul asserts the relationship between Jesus Christ and God the Father. So strong are his opening words that you could quickly forget who was writing this letter. Quite the opposite to so much of the way we introduce ourselves. Paul clearly marks out the following truths.

1. (v1) God the Father resurrected Jesus
2. (v3) God the Father and Jesus Christ are united in grace and peace
3. (v4) Jesus Christ fully submitted to the Father's will to save us from sin.

 What is immediately noticeable is **every truth confirms the inseparable nature of God the Father and Jesus Christ His Son**, and vice versa.

If you separate Jesus from God; if Jesus is not God then, (1) Jesus is not risen, (2) we have no basis for unity, and, (3) we cannot be delivered from this present evil age.

 **The gospel becomes separated from its power as we separate Jesus Christ from God the Father** because the divine nature of Jesus gives the gospel its power.

You can tell the things people attribute power to in their own lives, the things they think give them status or others will admire and be impressed by. It's what we mention when we first meet people – where we live, who we work for, where we shop, what we drive, who we know, what we know, where we have been, what we have seen, what phone we have, where we holiday, our employment status. Equally we often avoid mentioning these to avoid feeling like others will think less of us.

Paul's identity was not just vaguely moulded to look something like Jesus but was so deeply rooted in the person, the peace, and the power of Jesus that without Him Paul recognised himself and his accomplishments as nothing in

 **Philippians 3:8,**

Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.

 Look at these powerful words from Peter's sermon in Acts 2:23-24

Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; ²⁴whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.

Romans 4:24 also reassure us of the resurrection of Jesus as Paul writes, 'to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead'. What would have happened if God had not raised Jesus from the dead? 1 Corinthians

 15:14-17 reminds us of the implications of a Jesus who is not risen,

And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. ¹⁵Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have


testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. ¹⁶For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. ¹⁷And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!

 **If God did not raise Jesus from the dead then we are dead, desperate, and have a dead-end faith.**


 Let's look at verse 3 from our text in Galatians 1,

Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ

Where else are we going to get the grace and peace we so desperately need. How will Israel ever find herself in a place of peace? Jesus prayed for unity in

 John 17:20-23,

“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; ²¹that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. ²²And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: ²³I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

 **Unity is not achieved by the silencing of other opinions** – that's the cancel culture and the wokeness in which you live where you either agree with me or you must hate me. The only person who can bring unity and peace is Jesus Christ, but He doesn't do that by deciding who is right or wrong and by appeasing the offended ones. He does it by inviting us to humble ourselves under His kingship and to recognise Him as the Saviour of all mankind. but with a very specific thought in mind. In other words until Jesus enters in there cannot and will not be any true unity. There will be division strife arguments and even wars when Christ is not in us.

This then flows into verse 4 where Paul highlights the real reason we have such division and disunity in this world – sin. As he wrote in Romans 3:22-23,

For there is no difference; ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

You see the reason why others are such a problem is because of this – you are a sinner. Until you have been forgiven and cleansed this will remain. And this is only available through Jesus sacrifice which was according to the will of God the Father as Paul write in verse 4,

who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father

Until sin is dealt with there is no deliverance from this evil age. But **once sin IS dealt with then comes, the peace, the grace, the unity**, the rebirth of dead souls, the redemption we long for, the willingness to live under His power.

If you need this gospel, if you want to see the power of this gospel in your life and the world around you then you must live in it daily. The gospel of Jesus Christ is only found in the connectedness of Jesus to God the Father, and your connectedness to Jesus Christ.

1. Bring yourself to the gospel every day – in the word, through prayer.
2. Keep the gospel whole - Jesus is God, the resurrection is real, unity comes after the forgiveness of sin.
3. Do not fear what others may say of you.
4. Seek God's glory not your own – keep contentment and gratitude.
5. Share the gospel – through your good deeds and words.