



The Glad Tidings

A sermon preached by George Müller
at Bethesda Chapel, Great George Street, Bristol, on April 18th, 1897

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" - I Cor xv, 1-3

Among all the other things that were wrong already in the days of the Apostles in the church at Corinth was this also: there were some there of the synagogue of Satan. Some among them disbelieved the resurrection of the body, and on this point the Apostle Paul writes, throughout the 15th chapter, and gives unto us most precious instruction regarding the resurrection.

The great point in the whole chapter in particular is this - if there be no resurrection, then the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has not been raised; if there be no resurrection, and Jesus Christ Himself has not been raised, on this account we are yet in our sins, we have not forgiveness, for there would be no such thing as proof of forgiveness had the Lord Jesus Christ not been raised from the dead. Moreover, if the Lord Jesus Christ was not raised from the dead, then I (the Apostle Paul) and my fellow-labourers are false witnesses of God, for we have testified that there is a resurrection, and that Christ was raised from the dead, when, after all, He was not raised; wherefore, the whole Gospel is no longer a Gospel. Now for this was this 15th chapter written, in which there is most precious instruction found connected with the resurrection.

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you." Remark here the word "brethren," "believers in Him." Naturally looking at it, we might say, "this is just in an ordinary way; no stress is to be laid on it." My own judgment is the reverse. He calls them still "brethren," and he treats them still as brethren, though they had fallen into such errors as these, and failed as to their life and deportment in various ways. Yet he calls them still "Brethren," because he hoped that by the means he was going to employ, in writing another Epistle, they would be brought out of that state. And we find how greatly this letter was blessed when we read the second Epistle to the church at Corinth. Thus we have to imitate the Apostle, and on no account, because we see the manifestations of weakness, in one shape or another, on the part of the children of God, to at once put them aside and disown them as believers, as if there were no grace at all in them. For, like the Corinthians, they may come out of that state, and they may yet greatly glorify God.

"I declare unto you the Gospel," that is, the glad tidings, the most precious glad tidings. The sum and substance of this we find in the third and fourth verses, where he says: "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how 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." He died for our sins, to make an atonement for our sins, to bear the punishment in our room and stead; and that is the great point of what is called "The Gospel." "The Glad Tidings." The Gospel does not consist in this, that someone has left to us an exceedingly large amount of property, either in the way of money or in the way of estates; or that we shall now obtain a most lucrative position and employment; or that we shall

be elevated to exceeding high rank or power. That is not the Gospel. These are not the glad tidings we have to ponder. But that, wicked hell-deserving sinners though we are, God in the riches of His Grace will forgive all our numberless transgressions; God, on the ground of the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, will forgive every one of our numberless transgressions, and not one single sin shall remain standing against us and do us any harm hereafter, because the Lord Jesus Christ has not merely for a thousand of our sins died and made atonement, nor merely for ten thousand of our sins, but for every one of the sins of which we have been guilty, however many they were, however great they were; nay, in whatever variety of ways we sinned, every one of our sins has been atoned for. O what good news is this! For were there one single sin remaining standing against us, we should be shut out thereby from the presence of God, for nothing that is defiled can enter into the presence. We must be spotless, pure; perfectly spotless and perfectly pure, else we cannot be where God is; and into this state we are brought through the righteousness of Christ, which is imputed to us through the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ, which removes every one of our numberless transgressions.

This, if rightly understood, if rightly entered into and apprehended, is what is called in the New Testament "The Gospel"; and we have to ask ourselves, "Is this our Gospel?" Do we trust in the Gospel? Or do we think that we must do our part, and that the Lord Jesus Christ will do His part? That we must do our part, else we cannot be saved? Nay, we must come to this, that we ourselves can do nothing; that everything was DONE by the Lord Jesus; that before He expired on the cross He exclaimed, "It is finished" - that it, everything that had to be done in the way of atonement by Him, and then, after He had uttered these words, He expired. This is the Gospel! Not doing one half of it, or one-eighth part of it, on our part to help the Lord Jesus Christ, so to speak! Nothing of the kind. He did everything, and except He had done everything most assuredly we must have perished.

Now of this Gospel the Apostle Paul says, "which I preached unto you." He was labouring at Coring a year and six months (Acts xviii, 11), and therefore again and again and again he had proclaimed these very truths, and those also of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and the resurrection of the believer; because without the resurrection there is no such thing as "the glad tidings" connected with Christ. That is the first point we have to notice. Now the second point of the Gospel is this, "Which also ye have received." Now here occurs a deeply important question, whether we have verily received these glad tidings, whether we verily rest the salvation of our souls on these glad tidings? As assuredly as we think that we have to do something ourselves for the salvation of our souls, and that the Lord Jesus Christ has not done everything that was necessary for our salvation, so assuredly are we yet in a most fatal mistake on earth.

We must come to this: that in our inmost soul we believe that Jesus Christ did everything which was necessary to make an atonement for our numberless transgressions, and that we have to do nothing but to stand in the position of beggars to receive what God gives us in Christ. And whosoever will not receive, as a poor worthless worm and as a beggar, what God gives to him, in Christ, such a one has not yet come to the state of heart that he might come to, and to which he ought to come, to have the full blessing of the Gospel. We have just to stand before God, simply receiving what He freely, in the way of grace, gives to us in Christ Jesus. We have done nothing, we are unable to do anything now, and we shall never be able hereafter to do the smallest particle, towards our salvation. Jesus did it all. Jesus finished all that was necessary to be done for the salvation of our souls.

Now, then, to receive the Gospel means in other words that we have to own that we are sinners; we have to own in prayer before God that we deserve nothing but punishment for our sins, and that we

can do nothing whatever towards the salvation of our souls; but that the Lord Jesus Christ has accomplished everything that was needful to be accomplished, and that we gratefully accept what God gives us in Christ. This is to receive the Gospel. Now I affectionately ask my dear Christian friends, Have we thus received the Gospel? Is this that to which we look for the salvation of our souls? You know we must own before God that we are sinners; we must confess before God in prayer that we are sinners, and simply and entirely for our salvation put our trust in Jesus, and nothing else; and in doing this we receive the Gospel, but if otherwise we have not yet received the Word. This is the second point.

Then in the third place, the Apostle says, "Wherein ye stand." What does it mean to stand in the Gospel? It means that regarding ourselves and the Lord Jesus Christ we maintain still that we are just in such a state as we were before, and can do nothing concerning the salvation of our souls. In other words, that after ten years of conversion, or twenty years, or fifty years, and the seeking to hate sin more and more, and to love holiness more and more, we must own, "I am a sinner; I deserve nothing but punishment. If I am saved, it must be in the way of grace, through a Substitute, Who in my room and stead fulfilled the law which had broken times without number, and Who in my room, as Substitute, bore the punishment due to me."

If this is the state of our heart and mind, then we are standing in the Gospel; if it is otherwise, if in the least degree we take the smallest particle of credit to ourselves in the matter of salvation, we are not standing in the Gospel. A deeply important point! And it is particularly for another reason important that we have this in mind. Important not merely regarding the final salvation, but regarding the present peace and joy in God, for he or she taking the least particle of credit to himself or herself in the matter of salvation loses the peace of God and real, true spiritual enjoyment, for God is determined to give all the honour and glory to His Only-begotten Son - the choicest Gift He had to bestow on poor sinners. And He will not, therefore, with a sinful human creature divide the glory of what belongs to Christ, and to Christ alone.

Now the last point. "By which also" - that is, by the Gospel - "by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I have preached unto you, unless he have believed in vain." By the Gospel we are saved! Precious! O delightful news. Because it is such good news, therefore it is called the Gospel. The Gospel means "glad tidings," "good news"; and these are the glad tidings: that we are at last saved by the Gospel. In the first place, salvation consists in this - that we get a glorified body, completely free, and free for eternity from all weakness, weariness, pain, suffering, langour, sickness of any kind, and from death. Now how pleasant is the news of this!

Then, again, as to weariness, irrespective of suffering. Children of God delight to labour for the Lord; it is an exceeding great joy to them to work six, or eight hours, in the course of the day, and some by reason of health and strength are delighted to spend ten and twelve hours in working for the Lord, and some surpass even this; but yet, however long we may be able work while in the body here on earth, though it be sixteen or even eighteen hours, at last most assuredly there will come the weariness, the weakness, the inability to go on working any longer. But when we obtain our glorified body, when salvation comes to the full, no more of this weariness.

Yea, there will be the working four and twenty hours, day by day, throughout the whole week, seven times four and twenty hours (speaking after the manner of men) without the least weariness; and thus it will go on throughout the whole months, and throughout the whole years (speaking after the manner

of men), and not a particle of weakness or weariness experienced while thus engaged for the Lord. And so it will be year after year, and one ten years after the other ten years, and one hundred years after the other hundred years, and one thousand years after the other thousand years, and never a particle of weakness or weariness experienced, when once salvation is completed and we obtain our glorious body. O how delightful is this! What glad tidings are these! And if they were held on to be faith, the heart would be full, brimful of joy!

O how delightful we should be if really and truly entering into all this; but there is something even more precious still - all this service will be joyfully rendered to the Lord, and be perfectly free from failure and shortcomings. There will not be a single particle of sin mixed up with our work and labour for the Lord. At present, while we are in the body, in this state of weakness and imperfection, with all our holy longing, with all our prayerful desire, yea, with our earnest prayers, still now and then is mingled a word which is not quite according to the mind of God; a thought which was not found in the blessed Jesus, and therefore not perfectly according to the mind of God.

But when brought to see Jesus as He is, and made like Him in body and soul, everything that we do will be perfectly Christ-like, everything that we say will be perfectly Christ-like; all that we think, that we desire, that we wish, for which we have inclination, all will be perfectly according to the mind of Christ. O what a blessed prospect is this for weak ones as we are, for erring ones as we are, for such who have their spiritual infirmities, great and many and varied, though hating sin and loving holiness. O what bright and glorious prospects are these! And all this is not merely a fancy of ours, but a reality.

We shall, verily, the weakest spiritually among us, be brought to this state of things when once salvation is complete! And this will never be altered, this will never be lost; we shall be throughout eternity in perfect, full, complete communion with the Lord Jesus Christ, and in fellowship habitually with Him - what commonly is called partnership; in complete, holy, godly partnership with Christ in every way! O how precious! Yea, in partnership with God the Father, not merely with the Lord Jesus Christ, our elder Brother. O how precious! How bright! How glorious are our prospects! And were all this known and entered into, everybody in the whole world would care about Christ; but because it is not known, and, if known, not believed, therefore the number of those who really and truly surrender the heart to Christ is yet so small.

Now let us lay all these things to heart. Let us, if we have never yet treated them as realities, do so from this evening; from henceforth for the rest of our lives. There is one word more. "By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain." We must hold fast what was declared unto us by the Apostle; we have not to listen to false teachers, we have not to listen to those who pervert the Gospel, we have not to receive the statements of such teachers whereby the churches in the Roman province of Galatia were deluded in thinking that they must be circumcised and keep the law of God, like the Israelites did, in order to be saved. Nothing of the kind. Salvation is given to us in a way of grace, and through faith in Christ, through trusting in that which the Lord Jesus Christ has done and suffered. This what the Apostle refers to. "If ye keep in memory what I preached unto you." Ye must hold fast the statements of the Apostles, "unless ye have believed in vain." The blessing will be lost, if we do not keep in memory the teaching of the Apostles.

Therefore, in the days in which we live, when good works are mixed up with the work of Christ, we have to be warned by all this; and, in childlike simplicity, enquire and go on enquiring what did Paul preach, what did Peter preach, what did John preach, and what did the other Apostles say? We have

to find out this in the New Testament, and to hold fast to what they say. This is the way of continuing in the ways of God, and enjoying the truth of the Gospel; and therefore to be blessed with peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

God grant this to all here present; and should there be one individual who is as yet looking to her or her doings for salvation, let him or her remember - I say it once more - we can alone be saved through Christ, and not any one of us by our own doings.

The logo for Müllers is written in a large, black, cursive script. The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent 'M' at the beginning and a 's' at the end.

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