

Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

"...Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body." - Ephesians 5:23

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I Am Not Ashamed Of The Gospel Of Christ

by Ted J. Clarke

Introduction

When the beloved apostle Paul wrote to the church at Rome he affirmed three things about himself. **First**, he said, "I am a debtor," referring to his need to preach the gospel to all men. **Second**, Paul stated, "I am ready," meaning that he would do what his ability and circumstances would allow. **Third**, Paul plainly remarked, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ," clearly implying that he made no apologies for what he taught as the gospel (good news) about Christ (Romans 1:8-17). For Paul, this gospel was "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," regardless of their nationality, social status, or gender (Romans 1:16; Galatians 3:28).

It is sad and shameful that so many, who should feel an indebtedness and readiness to preach the gospel, evidently are ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Every Christian should have the same sense as Paul of debt to one's neighbor, the same attitude of readiness as Paul to teach others, and the same lack of shame regarding gospel teaching. Paul's sense of pride and confidence in the gospel came in large measure from his faith that his gospel came from God, not men (Galatians 1:11-12). He could also prove his message was from God by the miracles he performed to confirm his claim to be God's messenger (Acts 14:3; 2 Corinthians 12:12). While we do not have that miraculous power available to the Lord's church today, we do have the word of God to which we can turn to confirm the truth of the gospel we preach. I am not ashamed to contend that the Scriptures are the verbally inspired word of God and that they are sufficient direction for all our religious needs. Matthew 4:4; John 8:31-32; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Peter 3:15; 2 Peter 1:2-4; and Jude 3 should give us all that confidence, if we accept the Bible is a revelation from God. (There is proof available to show that the Bible is from

God, but that is not the purpose of this article.) If the gospel is revealed in the pages of the Bible, why do we have so many "different" gospels? For the same reasons they had competing gospels in the first century, namely, there are those that "pervert the gospel of Christ" (Galatians 1:6-9). They do so either by adding to the true gospel or taking away from it, something that God warned against in both Testaments (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Revelation 22:18-19). Men are not satisfied with God's gospel, so they seek or create another.

What is the Gospel?

The word "gospel" itself simply means "good news." In the Bible it refers to God's overall plan to save us in Christ. Most religious denominations and an increasing number in churches of Christ try to limit the "gospel" to the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. They claim that believing in their gospel makes one a Christian, no matter how much differently we believe on everything else. One is saved and becomes a brother or sister in Christ, we are told, based **solely** on that faith in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. Whatever else one believes and practices is merely a part of one's faith or doctrinal teaching, which is not supposed to matter as far as our being saved. Is this all that is involved in the "gospel of Christ"? Some may say so, but the Bible says, **not so**.

If all that mattered was belief in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, **why did God reveal so much in the Bible on other things**, like baptism, the organization of the church, worship, the way to live in holiness, how to treat others, the second coming of Christ and many other things??? Of course Christ's death, burial, and resurrection lie at the heart of the gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1-4), but **God connected other matters to our faith in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection as a part of His gospel plan**. True gospel preaching in-

cludes: [1] facts to be believed; [2] commands to be obeyed; and [3] promised blessings to be enjoyed. Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). The Lord also promised the apostles that the Holy Spirit would teach them "many things" and guide them into "all truth" (John 16:12-15). Their epistles are comprised of the "many things" Jesus revealed for us to know and do (1 Corinthians 14:37; Ephesians 3:3-5; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 3:15-16; Revelation 1:3).

What is Another Gospel?

Men create "another gospel" (not Christ's gospel) when they add to or take from the gospel for which Christ died. For example, men create another gospel when they take away baptism from its God-given role in His gospel plan of salvation. While Jesus died on the cross for our sins, no one is automatically saved by that fact alone. The apostle Peter taught about Christ's sacrifice in Acts 2:22-36, and then told those who were "pricked in their heart" and believed this good news to, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..." (Acts 2:38). Baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins is **part of the gospel message**. Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21; Mark 16:16 all affirm the part baptism has in saving men through the gospel of Christ.

A different gospel than Christ's is also created when men tamper with the worship which God's word authorizes. The Lord's Supper was a weekly observance in the New Testament church of Christ. Acts 20:7 notes the church at Troas meeting for that purpose on the first day of the week; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 speaks of the church in Corinth coming together to eat the Lord's Supper, and 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 tells the church to also take a collection on the first day of every week (cf. RSV, NASB, NIV). Most denominations have taken away from their worship this weekly memorial feast in honor of Christ and replaced it with quarterly or yearly observances. This memorial is a part of the gospel

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Ted J. Clarke EDITOR

Phone (501) 625-3217

JUST A MINUTE

*I have just a minute with
sixty seconds in it,
Forced upon me, can't refuse it.
Didn't seek it, didn't choose it.
But, it's up to me to use it.
I must suffer if I lose it
Give account if I abuse it.
Just a tiny, little minute...
But, eternity is in it.*

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A WORD ABOUT THE COLOR
BROCHURE INSERT

For 30 years the **Memphis School of Preaching (MSOP)** has been preparing men to preach the gospel of Christ. Under the oversight of some of the most godly and dedicated elders I know, the Knight Arnold church in Memphis, Tennessee, along with the aid of numerous individuals and congregations, has sent out over 450 men who are not ashamed to preach Jesus and Him crucified. From its first director, Roy J. Hearn, to his successor, Curtis A. Cates, **MSOP** has distinguished itself for producing men of a high caliber, dedicated to staying in the "old paths" of God's word.

These men are taught by a faculty of studious instructors who are seasoned and balanced in their presentations. **MSOP** teachers know God's word and refuse to compromise the Scriptures. Under the present director, Curtis Cates, the school has expanded its influence while continuing to stand for the truth and opposing innovations and digression which threaten to destroy the body of Christ. Brother Cates has distinguished himself as being among the leaders in the Lord's church in encouraging the church to remain sound in the faith and evangelistic in its purpose.

Brethren, as a 1972 graduate of **MSOP** and one who keeps in touch with its work and goals, I know that it stands solidly in the strait and narrow way which the Lord mentioned in Matthew 7:13-14. As the current president of the school's Alumni Association, I continue to work closely with the administration and faculty of the school as they march onward in this great work. The old fashioned Jerusalem gospel, by which so many of our readers were converted to Christ, and that same gospel which you have heard preached over your years as a Christian, will ring out for years to come through the efforts of the Knight Arnold church and its supporters in the work of the **Memphis School of Preaching**.

As the enclosed brochure explains, there is an urgent need to relocate the school in the Memphis area. A number of factors threaten to hinder the fine work that is being done; some could possibly stop the work altogether. God forbid! While there are other schools of preaching doing a good work in training men to preach and remain faithful to

God's word, there are none who are better situated or better staffed than **MSOP**. In my opinion, it is the best!

The elders of the Third and Bethel Church of Christ in Mammoth Spring, Arkansas, who also oversee the publication of the **Fulton County Gospel News**, stand hand in hand with the work, goals, and purposes of the **MSOP**. For several years we have helped support two students in the school and intend to carry on that effort. Our elders, the congregation, and myself place great confidence in the elders at Knight Arnold and in brother Curtis Cates and his fine faculty at the school. We commend this work as worthy of your confidence and support as they plan for the future.

Will you please read the inserted brochure stating the reasons which necessitate the relocation, notice what the Knight Arnold congregation has already done, look at the plans for the new school facilities, and consider the tremendous need which exists to continue to produce men who will stay true to the Book in their preaching. Then, will you make as large of a gift as you can to secure the future of the **Memphis School of Preaching**? If you are limited in your ability to give, remember also that no gift is too small. The apostle Paul noted that if we have a willing mind regarding our giving, "it is acceptable according to what a man has, not according to what he has not" (2 Corinthians 8:12). Whatever you are able to send, mark on your check or on an enclosed note that it is for the **relocation of MSOP**. Brethren and friends, your gifts are an investment in eternity, for yourselves, for those who are trained at **MSOP**, and for those who hear the gospel preached by such men. The benefits will continue long after we are gone and will bless generations to come. I urge you to pray about this matter and for the school, call the toll free number listed in the brochure and talk with brother Cates or one of the other faculty members about any questions you have. Let us all do our best to help secure the future of **MSOP** and the work they are doing in preparing sound gospel preachers. Please give as generously as you can.

[Ted J. Clarke, evangelist for the Third and Bethel congregation and editor of the "Fulton County Gospel News."]

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(good news) of salvation in Christ (1 Corinthians 11:23-26). What man or group of men have the right to change this gospel command? Worship is sacred and God has revealed how He wishes to be praised in specific acts. That worship is to be conducted "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24). One is not only to have the right attitude in spirit, but **truth, God's truth regarding how He desires to be worshipped, is also essential.** Worship of God through Christ makes that worship a part of God's gospel plan. Those who try to worship God according to their man-made ideas, adding to what God has said or taking from His commands, end up worshipping Him "in vain" (Matthew 15:9). The addition of instrumental music in worship to accompany or replace the congregational "singing" which God commanded is also a violation of part of His gospel plan (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Romans 15:8-11). There is no authority for instrumental music in worship to God in the New Testament. There is no command for its use; there is no example of its use in New Testament worship; and there is no implication of its presence in any command for such worship. The history of the early church outside the Bible gives support to the Scriptures we have cited, testifying that the early church observed the Lord's Supper on the first day of every week and that the singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs in their assemblies for worship was a **cappella (without accompaniment of mechanical instruments of music)**. The so-called worship in most denominations and some congregations of the Lord's church has replaced edification with entertainment; performing has become more important than praising God in truth; and what is new and popular is demanded over the time-proven precepts of God. These changes are no part of the gospel for which Jesus died. Those who hold to them and promote such should be taught the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). Those who insist on these matters being part of Christ's gospel should be made to prove their contentions **by God's word, not their own desires or thoughts** (1 Thessalonians 5:21; 1 Peter 3:15; 1 John 4:1).

Why Be Ashamed?

Brethren and friends, why should we ever be ashamed of any part of the gospel for which we can find book, chapter, and verse from the Scriptures, assuming we have handled it properly? I am

not ashamed to preach the same gospel that I learned and obeyed 35 years ago, the same gospel that was preached for generations before that, in fact, the same gospel that is revealed on the pages of the New Testament. I am not ashamed because it is "the gospel of Christ" and not "another gospel" concocted by men. It may not be a popular gospel with most people, because it tells us we cannot have our own way in religion. However, Jesus warned that many will take the popular road that is wide and broad, rather than the more narrow and restricted way (Matthew 7:13-14). The same apostle who was not ashamed of Christ's gospel noted that the way of the cross and God's wisdom in the gospel plan would be rejected as foolish and weak by much of the world (1 Corinthians 1:18-31).

Conclusion

Jesus said that whoever is ashamed of Him and His word will hear Him say that He is ashamed of them when He comes again (Mark 8:38). Beloved, if you are not a member of the Lord's church you are not following **the gospel of Christ**. Please contact someone from the Church of Christ nearest you or write or call us and we will help you obey the gospel (Romans 10:16; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; 1 Peter 4:17). If you are a brother or sister in Christ, do not surrender a single part of the revealed gospel of Christ for the doctrines and commandments of men. Do not follow elders or a preacher who tells you that the manner or purpose of baptism is not important, or that people can be saved in Christ without immersion in water in the name of Christ for the purpose of having one's sins washed away. Christ's gospel teaches otherwise, although men may despise that teaching and reject you and the Lord's church for teaching so. Do not let men tamper with the worship of God where you attend. Preaching of God's word (not popular culture nor perverted gospels), prayers to God, giving of our means, the Lord's Supper on the first day of every week, singing and making melody in our hearts (not on mechanical instruments of music) are all authorized avenues of worship to God. No one, no matter how popular or eloquent can authorize additions to or subtractions from these acts of worship. To do so indicates that one is ashamed of the gospel of Christ. Do not be a part of such rebellion against God. Remember Cain (Genesis 4:3-8); Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1-3); King Saul (1 Samuel 15); King David (2 Samuel 6:1-

10; 1 Chronicles 15:11-15); and the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 11:17-34). **The time to be ashamed is when we change God's gospel plan of salvation, work, and worship in Christ Jesus, or when we follow others who pervert Christ's gospel.**

GOING BEYOND THAT WHICH IS WRITTEN

by Dennis Gullede

While doing some study recently on the possibility of apostasy I was checking the statement in the *Westminster Confession Of Faith (1647)*, which says, "They whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace: but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved." *The Book of Confessions* which contains this creed was given to me a couple of years ago by a local Presbyterian minister. I noticed in the endnotes section of the *Westminster Confession*, this very interesting statement:

GENERAL NOTE: At several points the Confession of Faith is more specific in its statements than the Scriptures. These statements are inferences drawn from the Scriptures or from statements based on the Scriptures, or from the experience and observation of the Church.

It is a very interesting admission that many of the statements in the creed are "more specific... than the Scriptures." That is tantamount to saying that what is contained herein goes beyond the Scriptures, contrary to Paul's dictate, "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other" (1 Corinthians 4:6, ASV). It is the same as saying this creed teaches more than God teaches in his inspired and all sufficient word. It is equal to saying that what is believed herein is outside the realm of that which is inspired of the Holy Spirit (2 Timothy 3:16-17). A fascinating admission indeed!

Anyone who ever felt the need for creedal statements of any kind must have felt the Bible to be deficient in truth. As L. W. Wilkes wrote in *Lard's Quarterly*

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(January 1866), "He that makes or accepts a creed - a human thing, a monument of impudent folly, thus rejecting the Bible, virtually and actually, as the creed of the party to which he belongs, must assume one of the following positions, one horn of a four-horned monster:

1. The Bible, as a creed, *is too short*; or does not contain enough.

2. The Bible, as a creed, *is too long*; or it contains more than should be found in a creed.

3. The Bible, as a creed, though it contains, as to quantity and quality of matter, neither more nor less than should be found in a creed, is not the *very best form*.

4. His party is, in some way or by some means, authorized to make the addition, subtraction, or emendation demanded (p. 155).

Therefore, if a creed contains more than the Bible it contains too much; if it contains less than the Bible it contains too little; if what it contains is equal to the Bible, it is irrelevant, because we already have the Bible!

10822 Mabelvale West Road
Mabelvale, AR 72103

Beatitudes for Friends of the Aged

Blessed are they who understand

My faltering step and palsied hand.

Blessed are they who know my ears today

Must strain to catch the things they say.

Blessed are they who seem to know

That my eyes are dim and my wits are slow.

Blessed are they who looked away

When coffee was spilled at the table today.

Blessed are they with a cheery smile

Who stop to chat for a little while.

Blessed are they who never say

"You've told that story twice today."

Blessed are they who make it known

I'm love, respected and not alone.

Blessed are they who know I'm at a loss

To find the strength to carry the cross.

Blessed are they who ease the days

On my journey home in loving ways.

—Author unknown to the editor.

Attitude is the mind's paint brush; it can color a situation gloomy or gray or cheerful or gay.

LONGSUFFERING

by David Macy

The definition of longsuffering is "long and patient endurance of trouble, pain, or injury." Emerson wrote, "A man is a hero, not because he is braver than anyone else, but because he is brave ten minutes longer." There is a lot of truth in that old saying which we often hear, "Just keep on keeping on." This is what God's Word teaches us to do. No matter how much trouble, pain, or even injury we encounter in life, we must keep on keeping on, and all the time trust God completely to eventually make things turn out right. God himself is a fantastic example of longsuffering. "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was appearing, wherein few, that is eight souls, were saved by water" (1 Peter 3:20). Noah was a preacher of righteousness and a construction man at the same time. He worked on the ark and preached for around one hundred and twenty years, but he had a completely unreceptive audience. While Noah was building and preaching, his listeners were drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage until the very day Noah and his family entered the ark, and water started pouring from heaven. While Noah was laboring hard to do God's will, the folks who should have been tuning their ears in were having a grand old high-heeled time, and it is evident they were not one bit worried about the predictions of that old fanatic who was saying the earth would soon be flooded with water when it had never even rained.

I have always marveled at the longsuffering of God in His early dealings with man, and I am sure many of you have too. He allowed Noah to preach 120 years to those rebellious people, and if many of us had been in control, they would have been real fortunate to have heard this marvelous preacher a year before the floods came down.

Power thought for your week: God could wait 120 years while viewing such rebellion because "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Peter 3:8), but also because longsuffering is a part of God's very nature, and as His true children partake of His nature more and more each day, they naturally become more longsuffering, and what a beautiful and beneficial virtue it is.

P. O. Box 126
Blue Ridge, GA 30513

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (1 Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; 1 Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2,3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; 1 Corinthians 12:13).

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