

Theological Equipping Class – Receiving the Gospel of Christ

I. Receiving the Gospel Overview

- **Simple, experience-based understanding**

- Acts 16:25-34 – *About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened. When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.*

- **Behind-the-curtain understanding**

II. Six Aspects of Our Response to the Gospel

(1) Hearing the gospel; (2) Effectual calling; (3) Regeneration; (4) Conviction of sin; (5) Repentance; (6) Faith

A. Hearing the Gospel of Christ

- Romans 10:9-17 – *[I]f you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.*

B. Effectual Calling / Irresistible Grace

- Acts 17:30-31 – *The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.*
- Romans 8:28-30 – *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among*

many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

- Acts 2:38-39 – And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”
- John 11:17, 38-44 – Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. . . . Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days.” Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?” So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.” When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out.” The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

C. Regeneration/Born Again

- Ephesians 2:1-9 – And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.
- John 3:4-6 – “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?” Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.
- Ezekiel 36:26-27 – And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.
- Romans 1:16 – For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

D. Conversion

1. Conviction of Sin

- Acts 2:36-39 – Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.” Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” And Peter said to

them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”

- John 16:4-11 – “I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.”
- Charles Spurgeon: *The Holy Spirit “goes with the preaching of the gospel . . . to convince men of sin, and so to lead them to repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; and . . . the ultimate result of the Holy Spirit’s work will be to convict men before all intelligent beings of having been guilty of the grossest sin, of having opposed the most perfect righteousness, and of having defied the most glorious judgment.”*
- 2 Corinthians 7:10 – *For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.*

2. True Repentance

- Mark 1:14-15 – *Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”*
 - a. Repentance as a change of mind
 - b. Repentance as involving actions
- 2 Corinthians 12:21 – *I fear that when I come again my God may humble me before you, and I may have to mourn over many of those who sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and sensuality that they have practiced.*
- Acts 3:14-15, 19 – *But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead . . . Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out.*
 - c. Repentance as a gift
- 2 Timothy 2:24-26 – *And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.*

3. Faith in Christ

- a. Faith as belief
- Jesus: “repent and *believe in the gospel.*” (Mark 1:14-15)
- Peter: “*Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.*” (Acts 16:31)
- Paul: “when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and *believed in him,*” you were sealed with the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 1:13)

b. Faith as a matter of the heart

- James 3:14-19 – *What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!*

c. Faith as trust

- Hebrews 11:1, 6 – *Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. . . . [W]hoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.*
- Matthew 18:3 – *Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.*

d. Faith as love

- Matthew 22:36-38 – *“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment.”*
- Psalms 37:3-4 – *Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness. Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.*
- Matthew 10:37 – *Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.*

e. Faith as a gift

- Ephesians 2:8-9 – *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

f. Faith as a public matter

- Romans 10:9-10 – *[I]f you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.*

III. Connection to the person and work of Jesus

Jesus at the center of our response:

- Hearing the gospel = hearing about Jesus
- Gospel proclamation => God’s effectual call
- Gospel proclamation => Regeneration by the Spirit
- Gospel message => Conviction of sin
- Gospel message => Repentance
- Saving faith = faith in Jesus