

God's Glorious Good News, Part 1 (The Gospel)

Light on the Rock
by Philip Shields

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The Good News! The Gospel of Christ, the gospel of God, the gospel of the kingdom. Much time and ink has been spent by some who insist the “gospel” is only about Jesus Christ or only about the Kingdom of God, and is not *about* Christ or His life. This first message of 2 parts shows the gospel is far bigger, more glorious and greater than many are preaching.
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Do you get excited by “the gospel” of Jesus Christ? When you hear about the good news of the Kingdom of God, the gospel of God, is it what fills your mind and heart?

If you understood what “the gospel” really is, you’d be filled with outrageous joy every time you think of it, and you would think of it often. I hope today to help elaborate on the glorious good news of the gospel of God.

Jesus came preaching “the gospel of the kingdom of God” (**Matthew 4:23; 9:35**). He told his disciples, *and that includes us*, to “go into *all the world* and **preach the gospel** to every creature” (**Mark 16:15**). The result of that preaching could result in believers who would be baptized and would be saved, but those who would not believe would be condemned (verse 16).

The point is, the disciples were commanded to go preach “the gospel” and they obeyed that command. Forget any preconceived notions of what “the gospel” is. Let’s start a 2 part sermon today analyzing just what *the Bible* says the gospel really is - - when we accept all the verses about the gospel, and not just the ones that fit our preconceived agenda. Let’s take a look at *what* the disciples preached, and how glorious that good news was - - for after all, they had been commanded to preach the gospel.

WHAT is the gospel? **When** was God’s gospel first preached? How does the word “Gospel” impact you – truthfully? Are you excited beyond belief, or are you like most – where the word “gospel” has been so over-used and misused that its become just another word to you?

If you haven’t heard my sermon given in 2004 on this, my very first sermon on my web site, please be sure to hear it. I’m expanding beyond that one today.

Today I think its time to get excited about the good news again. I’ve prayed and prayed about this sermon, because God’s people have *lost* much of their excitement. God’s children seem to be in various camps right now – following this man or that one – and each group claiming to be preaching “the true gospel”. But their gospels are not the same. And their people seem to be following a human leader, and not Christ.

Today we’ll review the full meaning of the good news, the gospel – and set the stage for the next sermon about how the good news is woven from the very first pages of the Bible all the way to the end. I think clarification is needed on what the good news is, so we’ll see it defined, we’ll see what Jesus and the apostles actually preached, and what Paul clearly defines as the good news *he* was preaching.

You'll see "the good news" is a huge, all-encompassing topic. It's not as limited, is not as narrow, as some would have you believe. *In fact, the good news is all throughout the Bible, from Genesis through Revelation. It's all about God's plan to have a family, save that family from Satan's grasp, and bring us into the kingdom through the Way He has devised. The gospel is not just the good news that God has a kingdom, but the good news is how you get to be a part of it, or else how is it good news for you?*

Today we'll talk about God's *glorious* good news, because that's what we're commanded to be talking about, to be living for, to be sharing with one another, to be the hope that keeps us going. It's earth-shaking, mind boggling, thrilling – to understand *why* it's good news! What makes it so glorious? I hope you'll follow along with your Bible if at all possible and not just listen to this message while doing dishes or driving – but whatever you do, hear it.

The Greek Word for "gospel" just means good message, good news. The English word comes from the old Anglo-Saxon word "godspell" meaning "the story concerning God". Let's get excited about the good news. I'm going to use the phrase "good news" to really help it sink into our minds that God's message to us earthlings is great news, incredibly exciting news!

To get the most out of this message, I suggest you take the time to research what *your church teaches the gospel is.* Look up their published "statement of beliefs". Some say it's about Jesus. Some say it's not about Jesus. Some say it's only about a kingdom. Find out what your church officially teaches, and this message will mean more to you.

WHEN the GOOD NEWS WAS FIRST PREACHED

Some teach that the good news was first preached by Jesus, but the *Bible* says it was preached much earlier than the days of Jesus and John the Baptist. In fact it's woven through scripture from Genesis onward.

Hebrews 4:1-2, context is ancient Israel: "Therefore, a promise being left to enter into His rest, let us fear lest any of you should seem to come short of it. 2- **For also we have had the gospel preached, as well as them.** But the Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it."

Romans 1:1-3 says this: "Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, *separated to the gospel of God 2 which He promised before through His prophets* in the Holy Scriptures, 3 concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh.."

Galatians 3:8 "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the nations through faith, **preached the GOSPEL before to Abraham, saying "In you shall all nations be blessed."**

So I hope you see that the gospel was available from the very beginning. *In my next sermon, I will use much of the sermon time to show much more clearly how the good news, the gospel, was preached and taught from the Garden of Eden onwards.* Some of the examples may surprise you. Be sure you hear it. That message will help you appreciate the Old Testament much more.

WHAT "the good news" (gospel) INCLUDES

In my first sermon on the true gospel, I absolutely showed how the good news is so much bigger than most of us normally think about. In that sermon I showed how the complete true, Biblical gospel *has* to include *all* the descriptions used in God's word. I've seen websites that put down anyone preaching "the gospel of grace" or "the gospel of salvation" – but as we're about to see, those phrases come straight from scripture, so how can someone put them down, unless they don't realize it's scripture?

The most common phrases used in the Bible to describe "the gospel of..." include these:

#1 – 11 times, "the gospel of Christ" or "the gospel of Jesus Christ"

Also "the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ!" – 2 Thess. 1:8

Add to that "the gospel (good news) of the *glory* of Christ" 2 Cor. 4:4

"the gospel of His Son" – Rom. 1:9

A TOTAL OF 14 references to "the gospel of Christ" in one form or another.

#2 – 8 times, "the gospel of God" or "the gospel of the blessed God."

The good news of God. God's good news.

#3 – used 4 times, "the gospel of the kingdom". The awesome good news of the kingdom.

Now add other phrases to get the whole picture – and all the following come straight from scripture!

"The gospel of the grace of God" -- Acts 20:24; Galatians 1:6. God's grace for us is good news and God's grace *must* be a focal point of any complete and true gospel message because it shows the way into the kingdom of God. Paul says in Acts 20:24 that he must testify of "the gospel of the grace of God". He says that is *also* what he was preaching.

There are many more: **Ephesians 1:13 mentions "the good news (gospel) of your salvation"**. Do you refer to the gospel that way? Again, I've seen some sites which somehow claim "the gospel of salvation" is a false gospel! Unbelievable. Do they not know it is scripture?

Brethren, the good news is ultimately about the good news of *how* God is bringing people into His kingdom, through His grace and salvation in and through Christ. The good news message has to include the message of how each one can be saved! Being saved from the penalty of our sins – eternal death to eternal life – is incredibly good news. Part of that good news story is how God is preparing a Bride for His Son. The whole universe was created to be inherited by Jesus and His Bride. The gospel is about God's family grown large into a kingdom that will fill the whole earth, and the whole universe! It's about how Jesus and that family of God restore all things to the glory of God the Father.

Part of the glorious gospel is also "**the gospel (good news) of peace**" – Eph. 6:15

I hope I'm making the point the Bible makes: the true, complete good news that is talked about in the Bible has to include all those components – not just one or two of them. The good news is not just about Jesus, and is not *just* about the kingdom, and is not just about anything – but it is about all the verses that describe the good news put together. The good news is frankly the whole Bible's message, from Genesis through Revelation. It's God's plan of salvation for all mankind – and this is the story of the kingdom, and it is the story of Jesus making the kingdom possible. This is what makes the kingdom relevant to me and you! The glorious good news is about God's kingdom, and is also –

as we will see – *about* Jesus, who makes God's kingdom possible, and it's about salvation, it's about grace, it's about peace, it's about God. Many church denominations deny what I've just said, so you need to deeply understand why I'm going into this topic this way.

John 1:6-17, in talking about Jesus, the Word, who was God, and is God, and was with God the Father (John 1:1-3), John goes on to say this in verses 6-17:

“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. 8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. 9 That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

10 *He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.* 11 He came to His own, *and His own did not receive Him.* 12 *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

You are here because God wants you in His family. GOD wanted you to exist.

14 And the **Word became flesh and dwelt among us**, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, **full of grace and truth.**

15 John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for *He was before me.*'"

Don't fall for the heresy and lie that tells us that Jesus did not exist before His birth. That's a lie. John was born 6 months before Jesus, but still says of Jesus: "He was before me"

16 And of His fullness we have all received, and **grace for grace. 17 For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.**"

So John begins his "gospel" account of the life of Jesus talking about Jesus' purpose. John ends his book with the same theme, and says this was the purpose of writing his gospel account:

John 20:30-31 "And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but *these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.*"

That's what John says was the *purpose* of His preaching through the written word, about the life and sayings of Jesus the anointed: that we might have life in Jesus' name. This is good news! That is *why* John says he wrote his gospel account *about* Jesus, His sayings, His deeds and His life.

Mark says this with the very first verse of his gospel account:

Mark 1:1 "The beginning of the *good news (gospel) of Jesus Christ*, the Son of God." And then Mark gets right into the story of Jesus' ministry, life and deeds. He begins that story by his pointed statement, "the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God."

Some are teaching that the "true gospel" is *not* about, and should *not* include, the life and purpose of Jesus. I can't disagree more. This is so wrong and I'll *prove* it as we go along. The good news is very

much about *the way* into God's kingdom; it's about Jesus' purpose and life – along with the good news of the Kingdom itself.

Even when the angel announced Jesus' birth to the poor shepherds, what did he say he came to announce? Remember?

Luke 2:10-14 "Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. **11 For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.** 12 And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:
14 "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

Luke 2 says the good news has to start with and include the fact that God sent His only begotten son to be born in Bethlehem as our Savior! Either that, or cut Luke 2 out of your Bible!

The gospel accounts, especially of Matthew and Luke, are full of the details of Jesus' life, even His early life – because we *need* to know this, in order to have a *complete* gospel. But neither is the gospel *just* about Jesus, but it *must* include the complete story of Jesus' purpose.

IN PREACHING "the gospel", what did JESUS AND THE DISCIPLES PREACH?

Jesus' preaching *is* summarized by describing it as "preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God" (**Matt. 4:23; 9:35; Mark 1:14**). He also sent out his disciples to preach "the kingdom of God" – Luke 9:2, 60. Jesus said *He* had been sent to preach the kingdom of God (**Luke 4:43**). Jesus also prophesied that the gospel of the kingdom would be preached to all nations as a witness and then the end would come (**Matt. 24:14**). Certainly, the "kingdom of God" and "kingdom of heaven" is often discussed in the gospels. God already has a kingdom and right now its in heaven.

I've read various booklets that make the claim, because of the verses I've just cited, that the gospel is *only* about the coming kingdom of God and nothing else. They say those verses I just cited prove Jesus did not come talking about Himself but about His father and the coming kingdom of God. But the Millennium is not the kingdom of God. It is the kingdom ruling on earth, but the kingdom is God's spirit family, born again into that kingdom. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom (1 Cor. 15:50).

Some groups are teaching that the gospel message is not about Christ at all, but is only about a coming kingdom to be established here on earth.

*Is the good news only about God's coming kingdom? Is it not also about the **Savior King** of that kingdom? **Is the good news not also about how you and I get to be a part of that kingdom?** How is it good news to *me*, if I'm excluded somehow or not told how I can be *part* of God's family, and *part* of the bride of the Son of God, and how I can live in the heavenly Jerusalem? How is it good news for someone rotting in some jail cell and who is sorry for what he or she has done – unless the good news of Jesus includes the message that they can be forgiven, freed, and given a part in God's glorious kingdom? If people are excluded somehow, how is it good news for them?*

When we realize the gospel - the good news – is about the Kingdom of God *and* is also described as the good news of Christ, the good news of our salvation, the good news of grace, good news of peace

and so on--- we should take pause. **The underlying theme of the Bible is the *kingdom of God*.** God is supreme Sovereign over the universe, and He has a kingdom into which we may enter if we've been invited, called – and respond – and become part of the chosen. The good news is about our Father's plan from Genesis through Revelation for people to be invited and be part of His kingdom --- and the way into that kingdom, which has to be Christ!

The Bible begins with the story of God in the **Garden of Eden**, a *type* of the kingdom of God on earth, with mankind communing freely with God. The kingdom of God is not flesh and blood, so I say it was only *a type*.

Early on, we read how man had to be evicted from God's presence and Satan became the god of this world. Much has to be restored! The Bible *ends* with God having restored His kingdom on earth. In the opening chapters, sin enters the world -- and in the last chapters of the Bible, sin is forever eliminated. In between is the story of "the good news of our salvation" – and being saved is what makes it good news. God has a plan to save us and bring us into His kingdom. That's good news. **The kingdom itself is not good news for you or me unless there's a plan that shows how you and I can become a part of God's kingdom. That plan heavily centers on the kingdom's KING – Jesus – and what He did so that we *can* be part of the family and kingdom of God. It has to include our Savior and what He did. The good news centers on the way we can be freed from our sins so we can be part of God's kingdom.**

"**The good news (gospel) of God**". That phrase is used at least 8 times. We have an awesome father in heaven after all, who loves you and me dearly and sent His only Son that we might be forgiven and have everlasting life through Him.

Indeed Jesus came to reveal God our father as part of His good news message. Jesus taught us that our Father has a dream for you and me. His dream for you and me will knock your socks off. It will give you goose bumps for eternity when you see it. The good news is the most exciting thing that could ever happen to you – so open your eyes and see it. This is the good news too.

God's dream for you, the good news, entails you being made right with God, becoming His child, and then inheriting everything God has, and that is why we are called "heirs of God" in several scriptures. It entails us being in an absolutely perfect universe, forever. We need to be talking more about this and getting more excited about it. The good news is about the Father's dream for you – and how He is going to bring that dream for you to come about. What a great God we have! What a great plan of salvation. The good news!

Father has devised a plan of salvation that will eventually give us more than we could have ever imagined in our wildest dreams. That is the good news too. And that is about the kingdom, and is about the way – Jesus. **Jesus came to show the way to a relationship with God.** He taught us to pray to our Father, and to pray for His kingdom to come. He often said, especially in the book of John, that His father was greater than He, that he was sent to do the will of His father, that he came to speak the words of his father, that He could do nothing without His father, and that His father would send a Comforter, and on and on about Father.

Now some preachers say all I just said in the last paragraph, but then go on to say that Jesus did not come talking about Himself at all: just the kingdom, and just about the Father. Hmmm. I have to wonder what Bible they're reading!

Jesus also *did* talk about himself, quite often in fact. Read the book of John, for example. We will read parts of it in a moment. True enough, in Matthew Jesus speaks often of the “kingdom of heaven”. But what I’m about to demonstrate in John can also be demonstrated in Matthew, Mark and Luke.

He talked about the way of the Father’s kingdom; that if we love one another and forgive those who have hurt us, if we bless those who curse us, if we do good to those who hate us – that we *show* by these actions that we belong to the family of God; that God is our father. ***Yes, the gospel of the kingdom is also the news of the laws of that kingdom, the way of that kingdom.***

All of that has to be included in the summary of “preaching the kingdom of God”. In fact, perhaps more precisely, all of what I’ve just said fits more into the “gospel – or good news – of God”, which is used at least 8 times.

But is it correct to say Jesus didn’t preach about himself or his mission and purpose? Some booklets about the gospel make that claim! Remember that whatever Jesus is preaching, is summarized by: “He came preaching the kingdom of God”, because that is what we’re told He came preaching.

It’s important to realize that Jesus *did* preach the kingdom *and* about His Father *but* He also frequently spoke about *Himself*, as you can see easily if you study all of His recorded words. *All* of that is part of preaching “the kingdom of God”.

Pick up a Bible that prints all Jesus’ words in red. Skim through the 4 gospels and see for yourself what Jesus is *quoted* as actually *saying* as he preached. Keep in mind his preaching is summarized by the description of “preaching the kingdom of God”. Did Jesus not preach that we must confess Him (Jesus) before men, follow Him, not be ashamed of Him, to come to Him if we are heavy laden and so on. If we pick up the gospel of John, we find Jesus *often* speaking about Himself, and rightly so – for he is the *Way* into that great kingdom of God.

Jesus taught openly that HE is the door to the sheepfold, He is the good shepherd, HE is the Way, the Truth, the Life, HE is the resurrection and the life, He is Lord and Master, He is the Lion, He is the Lamb, He is the apostle of our high calling, He is our Beloved, He is Judge of all the earth, He is the bread from heaven, He has the living waters, He is the chief shepherd and servant, He is all that and so much more!! So how could anyone say Jesus did not come preaching about himself, *as well as* the kingdom of God?

How could I, and you – the Bride of the Son of God – possibly not dream about, talk about, rave out, glorify and preach, our Beloved Fiancé? He is our way into the kingdom and we must preach Him, as we preach the kingdom of God. How could we even dream of not doing it, since we are betrothed to Him and look forward to the wedding?

Now let’s go through the book of John quickly to see if it’s true that he didn’t talk about himself:

John 1 – all about Jesus and how He came to earth and that grace is by Him

John 2 – He turns water to wine, picturing his blood, his mission (as it was just before Passover – v.13); cleanses the temple, and prophesies of His resurrection after 3 days

John 3:13-21 – Jesus speaks of believing in Him, having eternal life in Him. Is that not preaching Himself, as well as His father?

John 4 – at the well, He teaches the Samaritan woman how He has living water that springs to eternal life and that He is the promised Messiah. Is that not preaching about Himself? My point is: as He does preach about himself, he certainly is also preaching about the kingdom of God by doing so!

John 5:19-41 Jesus glorifies Father, but He also definitely speaks a lot about Himself in saying how the Father has granted Jesus to be judge of the world, to be the resurrection and the life. Jesus ends in v 46-47, that if they believed Moses, they would have believed in Him, **for Moses wrote of Jesus.**

How can anyone say Jesus did not preach about Himself? But indeed I've read those very words in some booklets. Some of you are wondering why I'm spending time on this. I am, because there are thousands who are being taught that the "true" gospel is not about Jesus, and they teach that Jesus did not come preaching about Himself, but just about "the kingdom of God." These same people claim to believe in Jesus, but they don't like to talk much about Him in terms of their official definition of the gospel. Check out your own church's definition of "gospel" to find out.

John 6, just before the Passover (v.4), is *all* about Him being the bread from heaven that if we eat of Him, we have everlasting life.

John 7 – Jesus explains that He speaks what His father wants Him to speak, but its also obvious that Father *wanted* Jesus to tell people about His mission and purpose.

John 8 – v.1-11 –about forgiving the woman caught in the very act of adultery.
v.12 "**I am** the light of the world".

Now to those who say Jesus did not come preaching about Himself, how about this? And keep in mind, *what* He preached is described as "preaching the kingdom". Right after v. 12, it says:

John 8:13-18 "The Pharisees therefore said to Him, "You bear witness *of Yourself*; Your witness is not true."

14 Jesus answered and said to them, "***Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true***, for **I** know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where **I** come from and where **I** am going. 15 You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. 16 And yet if **I** do judge, **My** judgment is true; for **I** am not alone, but **I** am with the Father who sent Me. 17 It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. 18 **I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me.**"

How much clearer can He be, that His preaching—which is what He was doing – was also very much about Himself, His purpose and mission and how in Him we have forgiveness, new life, redemption and salvation? So obviously, *all* of that *has* to be part of the glorious gospel!

He goes on to say how if God were our father, we would love Jesus.

In John 9 He says early on that He came to do the works of His Father. True, there He's magnifying the Father, but also outlining the *reason* He was sent! He heals the blind, showing that Jesus came to give us spiritual eyesight. In verse 35, He asks the blind man if he believes Jesus is the son of God.... And on and on it goes. Jesus indeed preached the kingdom of God, but included *mightily* in that message was the good news of *who* Jesus was, *why* He came, and what He came to do.

You can continue examining the rest of the book of John to see how Jesus in fact – as he preached the kingdom of God – preached about Himself, His father, His own role, over and over.

John 10 – I am the good shepherd; we enter the fold through Him, I am the door to the sheepfold. It's about Jesus. And it's about the kingdom. And it's about the role of Jesus in that kingdom. ALL of that is the gospel, the good news.

John 11 – Is all about how Jesus is the resurrection, as shown through the story of the resurrection of Lazarus.

Was Jesus not preaching Himself when He says to Martha:

John 11:25-26 “Jesus said to her, ‘**I am** the resurrection and the life. He who believes in **Me**, though he may die, he shall live. 26 And whoever lives and believes in **Me** shall never die. Do you believe this?’ And He asks *you* – do you believe this?”

Or does *your* gospel that your church teaches, claim it's not *about* Jesus? Without Jesus, how is the coming kingdom good news for you, if you don't know the Way into that Kingdom?

You continue on your own in John – where He speaks of being the Way, the Truth, of being the Vine in the Father's vineyard, and we are the branches. See how many *dozens* of places – as he Preaches – He is preaching about Himself, His Mission, His purpose.

If any of you feel the good news is not at all about Jesus or His life, go hear my other sermon on the gospel given in 2004. Those same people claim to believe in Christ, but somehow don't believe the “gospel of the kingdom” includes the message of Jesus' life and death. I urge you to just use a concordance and your Bible and look up the scores of verses that mention the gospel. Then you decide what the Bible actually teaches. Sometimes these people will use only the verses that show the apostles and others preached the kingdom of God, but then they ignore the many, many verses that say they “preached Christ”.

In fact, look up the words “preach, preaching, preached” in a concordance and see for yourself what they preached. Yes, they preached “the kingdom of God”, but there are dozens of verses about also preaching Christ. Jesus in fact told them in **Luke 24:46-47** that when they preached, they needed to be sure to teach that “repentance and remission of sins *should be preached in his name* to all nations, beginning with Jerusalem.” In fact, that was Paul's first sermon after he was converted!

Acts 9:20 “Immediately **he preached the Christ** in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.”

I see booklets which use the verse about Philip preaching “the kingdom of God” (**Acts 8:12**), *but leave off the **complete** verse* that actually says, “But when they believed Philip as he preached the things **concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ**, both men and women were baptized.”

More than one booklet I've read omit the phrase “and the name of Jesus Christ”. That's not being intellectually honest!

For that matter, it says first about Philip in Acts 8:5, “Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria **and preached Christ** to them”. The booklets I refer to don't use that verse, of course. Again in **verses**

37-38. My point is that when you study the words “preach, preached, preaching” from a concordance to what the apostles *actually preached* as they fulfilled the command to go preach the kingdom, you will see *many* places where **they preached Christ, preached the Kingdom, preached the kingdom AND Christ, preached about our common salvation**, and so on.

If you still have any doubt that Peter, Paul, Philip, Stephen, Apollos, etc. **“preached Christ”** as they went about fulfilling the command to “preach the gospel” or to preach the kingdom, then please read all these verses, and it’s not an exhaustive list. Of course they also preached the word, preached the gospel, preached the kingdom, and all that. I’m just addressing the notion some have that we are not to “preach Christ”. Once you’re done reading the following verses, I hope you will believe the Bible!!!

See what Peter preached on Pentecost in Acts 2

**Acts 3:20; 4:2; 8:5, 12, 35; Acts 9:20; 10:42-43; 13:38; Acts 17:3, 18; Rom 15:19-20
1 Cor. 1:17, 23; 1 Cor. 15:12; 2 Cor. 4:5; Gal. 1:16; Eph. 3:8; Philippians 1:18;
Col. 1:27-28**

The good news is about God’s kingdom, but any message about *any* kingdom must include the message of its *rulers*, its king, it’s system of law, it’s territory – or you don’t have much of a kingdom! How could you know anything about the Roman Empire, if you don’t know anything about the Caesars? How can we know anything about the kingdom of God, if we don’t know anything about God Jesus? Or God our Father? Or how God uses the Holy Spirit to promote the kingdom?

How can anything about the kingdom of God be good news for you or me, unless we know how the wretches that we are can also – by grace - be *part* of that kingdom!? And yes, I’m a wretch. And yes, so are *you*! If Jesus told the Laodecians they are “wretched” (**Rev. 3:17**), and if Paul could say of *himself*, “Oh wretched man that I am” (**Rom. 7:24**), then of course all of us are “wretched” when *compared* to the holiness of our holy, holy, holy God!

But there’s good news! There’s *awesome* news! Holy God has called me and you to receive His pardon *because of what Jesus did*, to receive His *amazing* grace – and it *is* amazing – so *we* can be - not *just* a part of His kingdom -- but be **married to** the very Creator who spoke the words, “Let there be light”. Married to the Lord of Lords, Son of God, King of Kings. Can you grasp it? There is only One who can cancel the severe penalty of eternal death each of us incurred when we sinned our first sin! There is only one Redeemer. Only one Savior! And He is our coming husband! We’re not just going to be in the wedding as guests – no! We’ll be the Bride of the Son of God. That’s great news. We can be the Bride of the Son of God, because of what He is doing for us. That’s good news!

Only the saving actions of Jesus, the Christ, sent by God the **Father**, allows each of us to *participate* in the good news of the kingdom of God by what He did for you and for me. That *has* to be a huge part of any true, complete, glorious gospel or good news message. **The “gospel of the Kingdom” is not possible without the good news of the life and purpose of Jesus Christ, or the good news of His grace as we’ll see again in a minute.**

A FRESH AND HONEST LOOK AT PAUL’S WARNING

Paul warns about preaching a false or different gospel. Many booklets refer to this in Galatians 1. However, I don’t think they refer to it intellectually in an honest way. Let’s look at how it starts off.

Gal 1:3-5, right off the bat: “*Grace* to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord *Jesus Christ*, 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, 5 to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”

Paul is preaching the gospel, his gospel, the true gospel, right off the bat. Now he continues:

Galatians 1:6 “I marvel that you are turning away so soon from **Him who called you in the grace of Christ**, to a *different* gospel...”

The *context* he speaks of, in terms of the gospel he preached, is the grace of God (v. 3-4, 6). And then he goes on to say in verses 7-9 to pronounce a curse on anyone who would preach a gospel different than what he preached. He said some wanted to pervert the “Good news of Christ” – verse 7. Let’s pick up in verses 11 and 12.

Galatians 1:11-12 “But I make known to you, brethren, that the *gospel which was preached by me* is not according to man. 12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ”.

So the gospel is still very much on his mind. God’s good news has to be revealed to those God is calling. It is not easily seen unless God opens our eyes. Then Paul talks about being raised in Judaism...and then He is going to talk about what He preached. Remember in verse 11 he has just mentioned “**the gospel which was preached by me**”.

Galatians 1:15-17 “But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me *through His grace*, 16 to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach HIM among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.”

Paul makes it clear here and other places, the good news cannot *exclude* Christ, brethren! In fact, he makes it clear he is preaching Christ (v. 16) because Jesus is the WAY into the kingdom; Jesus *is* the good news of the kingdom.

THE GOSPEL PAUL PREACHED, CLEARLY DEFINED

I received an email from someone who said there’s not a single verse in the Bible which says the gospel is about Jesus crucified! I just couldn’t believe someone would say that! Let’s read where it says it *is* about Jesus crucified. The good news of the kingdom *has* to include the message of Christ crucified! Again, makes me wonder if they read all the verses in the Bible!

Paul -- in **I Corinthians 15:1-6** – *defines* so clearly what he calls the gospel he preached.

If you’re hearing this while doing the dishes or driving a car, please take the time to look these passages up in person, in your own Bible. Brothers and sisters in Christ, we’ve *got* to get the good news right! Let’s read it. In fact, the entire chapter 15 of 1 Corinthians is really about the true good news, the true gospel of God, of the kingdom, and of Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:1-6

“Moreover, brethren, **I declare to you the gospel which I preached** to you, which also you received and in which you stand, **2 by which also you are saved**, if you hold fast that word which I **preached** to you -- unless you believed in vain.

3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, **5 and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve.”**

Did you get that? He says in verse 1 he's going to tell them the gospel he preached. In verse 2 he says it's a gospel by which we are saved! Then in verse 3 onwards, he declares his gospel as being about Jesus dying for our sins. That's the way to reconciliation with Father in heaven. Jesus pays the penalty and as we have faith in him, we're told in Romans that His righteousness is imputed to us. And some say “there's not a single verse that teaches the gospel is about the cross” – or words to that effect? No wonder Paul says he determined to know nothing but “Jesus and Him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2).

There in **1 Cor. 15:1-5** you have the clearest definition of what Paul said was his gospel. And if anyone preaches a gospel different from this, he says in Gal. 1:6-9, God would curse that person. Paul goes on in verses 12-13:

1 Cor 15:12-13 “***Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead***, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?”

Remember the context is his definition of what the gospel is (verse 1-2). He is still talking about the gospel he preached, and yes it is the Kingdom of God, but that HAS to include Christ. He goes on to preach this gospel of Christ, and this good news of the kingdom, by talking about the resurrection, about *our* resurrection, and how flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God (verse 50).

One more clear defining passage of what is the true gospel of the Kingdom of God and of its Shepherd-King-Savior who makes it good news for us, so we can be part of it!

THE “GOSPEL OF GOD” clearly DEFINED

Turn now to Romans 1. Here it is called “the gospel of GOD”. It's God's good news. It's also good news about God. I need you to be reading these passages yourself, in your own Bible.

Romans 1:1-6: “Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, ***separated to the gospel of God 2 which He promised before through His prophets*** in the Holy Scriptures, **3 concerning His Son Jesus** Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, **4 and declared to be the Son of God with power** according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. **5 Through Him we have received grace** and apostleship ***for obedience to the faith*** among all nations ***for His name***, **6 among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ;”**

Okay, so here again he's telling the story of Jesus Christ, and he's calling that story the gospel of God. The “gospel of God” (v.1) is “concerning His Son Jesus” – verse 3. Can it be any clearer? It's pretty clear now, isn't it? **In fact, if we go into the book of Acts and analyze other's preaching,**

starting with Peter on Pentecost in Acts 2, we'll see that they preached the very same message. What was Peter's message? What did the disciples go preaching, non-stop? Sure they talked about the Kingdom, but they also spoke often of Jesus, and in HIS name we have salvation, over and over and over. I made that very clear in my previous sermon, but here are a few verses you can look up on your own if you wish, to see what they preached: Acts 2:36-39, Acts 4:7-12; 5:29-32; 5:42; Acts 8:5; Acts 8:12, 35-36; 28:30-31.

If you take the time to read those verses, you'll see many where they preach Jesus, and many where they are preaching the kingdom of God and the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ.

SO, the good news is about God's plan of salvation (Ephesians 1:13) through Jesus Christ, to bring us into the kingdom of God.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The Good news is very much also about Jesus revealing His Father, God our Father. Jesus came to reveal Father – and the plan of salvation FATHER has to get us all back into His holy presence as His family, in His kingdom. It's about God's plan to have a family. A kingdom is really a family grown large.

The "kingdom of God" is God's kingdom. The word "God", however, includes Jesus, remember. Jesus is also God (John 1:1-3) and so the kingdom is referred to as "the kingdom of Christ and of God" (Ephesians 5:5).

Ephesians 5:5 "For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any **inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.**"

So the kingdom of God is also about Jesus' kingdom.

Jesus is seen as being *heir* of the kingdom of God, and He is to rule over that kingdom until all enemies of the kingdom of God have been deposed. At that time Jesus passes the reins back to His God, His father – who is also our God, and our father (1 Corinthians 15:25-28).

Revelation 11:15 "Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"

Since we are being called and groomed to become the wife of the Son of God, we will be co-heirs with Christ, who has redeemed us from the penalties we incurred and is allowing us to be called children of God. If we are children, we are *heirs of God*, and that's mind-boggling good news.

Some of you know that Bill Gates and Warren Buffet and others have over 30-40 billion dollars in assets and worth. How would you like to inherit all that wealth? Well, you *are heirs of GOD*, who owns all things, who owns the entire universe. In Galatians, where Paul is re-identifying the power of the gospel HE preached, he says this:

Galatians 4:4-7 "But when the fullness of the time had come, *God sent forth His Son*, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that *we* might receive the adoption as sons.

6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth **the Spirit of His Son into your hearts**, crying out, "Abba, Father!" 7 Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, **then an HEIR OF GOD** through Christ."

Paul says in 2 Corinthians that God considers us His "sons and daughters" (2 Cor. 6:18).

"**Heir of God**", as sons and daughters of the Highest! Not Bill Gates, or Buffet. No way. We're heirs of Someone much more loving, more powerful, more wealthy, more important. What wonderful, glorious, *outrageously* good news! And *because of Jesus*, we are called co-heirs with Christ (Romans 8:14-17) and in the book of Hebrews we are told He is not ashamed to call us his brothers.

Romans 8:14-17 "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are **sons** of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that **we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs -- heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ**, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together"

Hebrews 2:11 "For both He who sanctifies (Jesus) and those who are being sanctified (we) **are all of one**, for which reason **He is not ashamed to call them brethren,**"

God is not ashamed of you, if you have accepted Jesus, put on Christ and are redeemed from your sins. We are being called to inherit a real kingdom, not just an ethereal concept. This kingdom has laws, territory, has a ruler, and has subjects. At the headquarters of that kingdom is a real city with real foundations – the heavenly Mt. Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem above.

Hebrews 11:16 "But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, *for He has prepared a city for them.*"

God has prepared a *city* for you in heaven. **That will be your city** and you are a citizen of it now. That is *your kingdom* – as a joint-heir with Christ of the kingdom of God. That city will be coming to earth after the millennium, after the heavens and earth have been dissolved and re-created brand new (**Revelation 21:1-2**).

I have come to believe the heavenly Jerusalem is being prepared as *the residence of the bride of Christ* – and *only* of the bride of Christ. During the Millennium, we will reign on earth, we will rule here, we will work with people here, but I really believe we will *reside* in the city being prepared for us: in heaven. Probably, I could be wrong here, others who are converted during and after the millennium will live in other cities which will be on earth – but not in heavenly Mt. Zion, adorned as a bride.

It is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom (**Luke 12:32**). Jesus invites us into the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world, for that is the father's good pleasure to do so (**Matthew 25:34**). So our citizenship is in heaven, from which we await our Savior who will change our lowly bodies to be conformed to His glorious body (**Philippians 3:20-21**). Here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come (**Heb. 13:14**) – a real city which has real foundations, whose builder and maker is God Himself (**Hebrews 11:10**). No wonder Jesus told His disciples – and that includes us – that He was going to His Father to prepare a place for us, among Father's many

mansions, which comes from the Greek word for “abodes”. He is going to prepare a place for us to live in, to abide in. Some minimize this word into “offices” or positions of authority. No, the Greek is truly “abode”. In my father’s house are many abodes, or many homes – and I’m going to prepare one for each of you. It’s not just offices. The Greek word for “mansion” means “abode” or place of residence. These mansions being prepared are way beyond your wildest dreams.

Brethren, are you listening?!? Your wildest dreams haven’t come close to what Father and Jesus are preparing for you. Your mind and your eyes and hearts and thoughts have never conceived, and are unable to conceive, of what is being prepared for you by Father and by our Beloved, Jesus the Master (**1 Cor. 2:9**). God is preparing something way beyond our wildest dreams, “exceedingly abundantly above all which we ask or think” – **Ephesians 3:20**.

THE KINGDOM IS NOT THE MILLENNIUM

Now a word of reminder here: too many still make the mistake of equating “the kingdom of God” with the Millennial rule of Christ on earth. In one sense, sure, *that is* part of the kingdom, because it is ruled by Jesus and His Bride, but in another sense it is not the kingdom per se. The kingdom of God is not flesh and blood, and flesh and blood cannot inherit it (**1 Cor. 15:50**).

So often the emblem of **the lion and the lamb (Isaiah 11)** is used to depict the kingdom of God – but all that is flesh and blood. The kingdom of God is the spirit family of God ruling the universe, way – way-way past lions and lambs and flesh and blood. The lion and lamb motif is the physical millennium over which the family of God will rule – but that’s not officially the kingdom until they are all changed into spirit beings in a resurrection.

The kingdom of God is the *family* of God, into which we must be *born again* as literal *spirit* sons and daughters in the resurrection, when our lowly bodies will be changed and transformed to be like Jesus’ glorious body. I gave a 2 part sermon a while back about “The Lives of Spirit Beings” which you might find interesting.

When we are born again *fully* as spirit sons and daughters in full and awesome glory – and not just conceived of His Seed at this time – it will be a different life all together. Those who are wise, and resurrected to glory, will shine like the sun and the stars in their full brilliance (**Daniel 12:3**). We will be *full* sons and daughters of God. We will be of One and we will be one with God our father and Jesus our Beloved Husband and Master. All of this is part of the kingdom of God message too.

We will be just like Jesus (1 John 3:2), because Jesus can only marry a wife who is of “the same kind” as HE is. Wasn’t that the lesson of Adam and Eve? Adam was not an animal – and could not find a mate in any of the animal kind. God had to build a wife from his bones and flesh; a being who was the same kind of being as Adam was. God’s own laws stipulate “kind reproduces after its own kind” (Genesis 1).

So the kingdom of God starts with God the Father who sent His son into the world that whoever believes on Him may be forgiven, and would not perish but given everlasting life – AND given the right to become children of God and **have a part in** God’s kingdom. What glorious news!

If you know you’re a wretch – and I hope you do know that – you know what awesome, glorious news this is. If you’re in jail, if you’ve done horrible things, if you have *been* a horrible sinner – **if you’re hearing this word, you’re hearing God’s invitation to become a part of His glorious kingdom –**

as long as you accept Jesus as your Savior in heart-felt repentance and follow Him as your leader and master. No matter what you've been, no matter what you've done, the good news is that there is good news for YOU too, where it counts: for all eternity!

Pass the good news on! Everyone called by God is being invited into the family of God. No matter *what* they've been, no matter what sins and mistakes they've made, no matter what they've done. It's good news.

I know. I'm a living witness of what God will do, can do, and is *doing* with terrible wretches of sinners like me. I'm one of them. I *WAS* one of them – but now I'm washed, now I'm free, now JESUS accepts me – even if some *people* won't – and now I'm a *new creation* in Christ preparing for the Kingdom, and *you* can be too. What great news that is, for me, for you, for all who recognize what an awesome calling we have. Praise him you saints.

That's the glorious good news of God's SON (2 Cor. 4:4). That's the good news of Christ. That's the gospel of God. That's the good news of salvation. That's the gospel of grace. That's the gospel of the kingdom of God! Put it all together. The true gospel is much, much bigger than we've realized.

The gospel, ultimately I believe, is everything from Genesis 1:1 to the last verse in Revelation. It's the word of God, it's God's plan of salvation, it's about the coming Kingdom, and it's very much about the Way into that Kingdom – Jesus – or else there's no good news for ME.

John 1:10-17

10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. 11 He came to His own, ***and His own did not receive Him.*** 12 **But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but [born] of God.**

14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

15 John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, **for He was before me.**'"

16 And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. 17 For the law was given through Moses, **but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.**"

Praise God! *Praise our beloved Master and Beloved Husband-to-be! Praise Him you saints!* Lift up your hands and raise your voices in worship and praise to our God, and to our Redeemer, Amen and Amen!

God's entire word is really part of the GOOD NEWS. From A-Z. And since Jesus *is* the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the A and the Z, it's also VERY much about Him.

I need more time, but we'll continue in the next sermon. Next time we'll finish this topic. I want to get into the teeth of the gospel as well. We'll talk about it being a way of life, and a gospel we have to obey. Then next time I want to talk a lot also about how the good news was woven throughout the pages of the Old Testament. Let's get excited about this. Pray "thy kingdom come". And because Father has a dream for YOU, your name is written in His book. You're not here by chance. You are here by design. You have a future with and through Jesus Christ and our Father that will boggle your mind. That's great news!

So til next time – be sure to hear part 2 -- God be with you. Love God, for He sure loves you. This is your brother Philip saying spread the word, dear brothers and sisters in the Lord. Tell people about this website and this message. But more importantly, *you* tell people about the good news as well.
