



# *The Gospel Revived*

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# *Preface*

One of the things that concerns me the most these days is that I don't hear a clear presentation of the gospel from the pulpit anymore. For that very reason I believe many opportunities are being missed to see people saved in our churches today. Of course, my observation is based on hearing only one person preaching at the church I have been attending but I hear the same complaint from members of other local churches.

It appears to me that many of the younger preachers seem to be carefully presenting the gospel in such a way that leads one to believe that somehow the theology has changed from what I have known for many years. I think many church members (Christians?) these days do not have an understanding of what the real gospel is and therefore they don't know any difference. Any attempt to question what is being presented results in the questioner being labeled as a whiner and complainer.

Over the next few weeks I plan to discuss what I believe is the real Gospel and will back that up with God's Word. I will use what is commonly referred to as the Roman Road and we will see where it takes us. So, be ready next week for a discussion on man's inherited condition as described in Romans 3:23.

***“For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God”***

# *Sin, Man's Problem*

The Bible declares in Romans 3:23 "***For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God***" in which two things are made very obvious to the reader. One, the word ***all*** is used to mean all men with no exceptions from Adam forward. Two, that because of sin, man is in no position to have a relationship (***comes short of the glory of***) with the Creator of the universe and all things therein. Because God is holy He can't have any part of sin. In other words, a great gulf exists between God and man as a result of sin and man can't span that gulf.

One of the questions we can ask ourselves then is 'How did man get in this predicament'? Well, to answer that, we must understand and believe the Creation story in the book of Genesis and realize that God made Adam and breathed into him His own breath of life. Therefore Adam was innocent at the time he was created and Eve being made by God from Adam's rib was also innocent. What does it mean they were innocent? That means that in the beginning they had pure hearts and motives because that had a relationship with their creator and thus had not been exposed to anything contrary to God's nature. So, what happened? Let's see if we can answer that question.

God created Adam after he had created everything else and He said that what He had created was good but His creation of man was "very good". He then gave to Adam charge of a beautiful garden He had created and He instructed Adam to take care of all the trees in it. However, He had placed in the garden one tree that was hands off. God gave Adam clear instructions eat of the fruit from that tree which He called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. So far so good so what's the problem?

The bible says that the serpent was more crafty than any beast in the field and he approached Eve with a simple question. A paraphrased version of the question goes something like this; "Did God really say that you couldn't eat of every tree in the garden?" Eve answered him exactly like he knew she would; "God said we cannot eat of the tree in the middle of the garden because we will surely die if we do." The statement that the serpent makes next was the clincher. "You will not die. God knows that when you eat of that tree you will like Him, knowing the difference between good and evil. The stage is now set for man to make a choice between believing God or the lie of Satan himself and the rest history.

The bible says that Eve took and ate of the fruit and then gave some to Adam and he followed suit. It also says that their eyes were then opened and they knew that they were naked. The shame of their nakedness made them aware that they need to cover themselves. Their innocence had disappeared and they knew that the relationship they once had with the Creator was gone. Thus sin entered the human race through one man Adam and every person born since that time has inherited the sin nature that resulted from their actions. Since that time the gulf has existed between God and man.

# *Sin's Result*

As we have already seen in Romans 3:23, all men (everyone) have sinned (born with a sin nature) and therefore cannot measure up to God's holy standards. That being said, then the natural question that should follow is "What is the result of man's sin?". To find the answer to that question let's again look at what God's Word has to say about it. Again, in his letter to the Romans, Paul perfectly describes what man can expect as a result of his sin condition. The first half of verse 23 in chapter 6 of Romans makes the assertion "***For the wages of sin is death,***" and from that we discover a number of important truths. Let's break it down into two simple observations.

First, he uses the word '**wages**' to infer that whatever the result of our sin, it is something we actually earn. In other words, man gets what he deserves because of his sin and is responsible and accountable for what he receives. Neither God nor any other man is responsible for our sin and therefore we must settle for what we have earned. The word picture is used to make this very clear.

Secondly, the word '**death**' is used to describe the ultimate result of our sin. When one thinks or speaks of death, most of the time it is in the physical sense that it is being considered. This is certainly true because of the sin nature we have inherited as result of Adam and Eve's sin in the garden. Remember, God had said they would surely die if they ate of the fruit from the forbidden tree. If you read the rest of the story in Genesis you will see that eventually they indeed died a physical death and no longer had a presence on the earth. But is that all there is to the death that Paul talks about in his letter? I think not.

There is another result of man's sin that is worse than physical death. We know this as spiritual death and that simply means the eternal separation from God. God desires to have an intimate relationship with every person that has ever been born or to be born but man's sinful condition doesn't allow that to happen. We must remember that God is holy and cannot have any association with sin. Therefore man has what appears to be a hopeless situation because his sin nature can only do what is natural and that is to sin. So eternal separation from God is our ultimate destiny after physical death and it is what we have earned as sinners. The sad thing about this situation is that there is nothing any of us can do to bring an end to this dilemma. Unless a miracle takes place in our lives we are doomed because 'the wages of sin is death.'"

We now see that we all our sinners and cannot have a relationship with God in that condition. We also see that the ultimate result of our condition is physical death and with that comes spiritual death, eternal separation from God with no hope. The question then becomes "How can God be a God of love and leave us in that condition?" Well take heart. Next week we will take a look at the rest of verse 23 and see what Paul has to say about a possible solution to our problem. Remember, God still desires a relationship with each of us.

# *The Great Contrast*

Earlier we recognized in the first part of Romans 6:23 that states ***"For the wages of sin is death,"*** that all of us have earned the wages we deserve because of our sinful condition in the sight of Almighty God. This paycheck of death belongs to every man, woman, boy and girl who has ever been born since the fall of man in the garden. And as we saw in the previous session, the death in this context is not only physical death but spiritual death which is eternal separation from God. This appears to be a totally hopeless and helpless situation for humanity but again I remind you that God desires a relationship with all of us. So let's take a look at the rest of the verse and see what remarkable love God has for us as evidenced by the offer he makes.

The second part of Romans 6:23 states ***"but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*** and my, what a statement that makes! This is powerful and most certainly worth taking a very close look at. As a matter of fact, we should look at several of the words in this part of the verse to understand the real impact of the statement that Paul makes by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. So here goes.

The first word we will look at is ***gift***. The reason this word carries such a great weight of importance is that it is a word that is in total contrast to the concept of "wages" in the first part of the verse. This is exactly why I chose the title for the session to be **The Great Contrast**. The word gift always has the indication that something is being offered that is unearned, undeserved and many times unexpected. The idea of a gift involves an unselfish attitude of the giver in which nothing in return is expected. If a return is expected then it is no longer a gift but a barter item. It is not offered out of obligation but out of love. Another thing to consider is that the gift must be accepted if the receiver is to benefit from the gift. If it is accepted then the giver is delighted but if it is refused the giver is disappointed. In other words, refusal of the gift is a way of saying no to the motive behind the gift which, in this case, is God's love for us and His desire to have that intimate relationship with us.

The contrast between the concept of wage earning and accepting a gift should be quite obvious to us by now and we should have a good understanding of the difference between the two. In the next session we will continue to dissect the verse by looking at some additional words that have great significance to the meaning of the verse. Before we are done, I hope all of us really do realize how God's unconditional love for us is so remarkable!

***"For the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6:23***

# *The Gift and the Giver*

In the last session we looked at the contrast between wages earned and gift offered that Paul so perfectly paints a picture of in Romans 6:23. As we see in the second part of the verse there is a gift offered that has the opposite effect of the wages earned described in the first part. Let's take a look then and see what that gift is and who offers it. As we again read ***"but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*** in the second part of the verse, we realize that the gift and the giver are identified for us.

First, what is the gift? The answer is simple. Eternal life. This is the second contrast we see in the verse. The wages earned result in eternal death but the gift offered is eternal life. As we discussed earlier, the eternal death described in the first part of the verse is physical and spiritual death. This spiritual death is eternal separation from our very Creator and the Holy and Almighty God of the universe. This also results in a death that will ultimately include eternal torment in a place prepared for the devil and his angels. But the gift offered is the exact opposite of eternal death. The eternal life offered here is an everlasting intimate relationship with Jesus that begins the very moment one accepts the offer and will last for all eternity. It also results in eternal joy in a place that He has prepared for those of us who have received this gift. No separation, no pain, no suffering, no sin, nothing but joy as we live forever in His presence. I can't think of anything better than that and by just saying "I accept" to the offer that has been extended to all men.

Now that we know what 'the gift' is, let's take a look at the giver of this wonderful gift. In the verse the giver is identified as God Himself. The very One who created man but has pronounced judgment on his sinful condition, is that very same One who has offered us a gift that will nullify that judgment and allow us to again have a relationship with Him. What an amazing thought! That God would create man and everything he needs to live life abundantly, would allow him to be the master of all He had created, place trust in him to manage it properly, have an intimate relationship with Him and yet still love him even after he allows pride to cause him to sin. That He would provide a means for man to regain that relationship by offering him a gift instead of requiring him to be satisfied with what he has earned. Only God in His mercy and grace could do such a thing! Thanks be to God for His loving kindness towards us.

Now that we have identified the ***gift*** that ***God*** has offered to us, we will take a look at what has really made this gift possible. In our next session we will consider the last few words of the verse and see if we can understand what makes all of this so remarkable. So stay tuned.

***"For the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6:23***

# *Jesus, the Answer*

Romans 6:23 has revealed to us that God has a gift to offer us in place of the wages we have earned. We understand that gift to be eternal life instead of eternal death and separation from God forever. So, as we think about what we have read, a question arises in our minds. That question is this: "How is all of this possible?" The answer to that question is found in the last five words of the verse, "***through Jesus Christ our Lord.***" Notice that the answer is a person and that person is Jesus. The writer uses three words to fully describe Him. **Jesus**, God with us, to describe the incarnate God. **Christ**, the Messiah, to describe Him as the Savior of the world. And then **Lord**, the coming king, to describe His absolute authority over all creation. Therefore, the gift is made possible because of the **Lord Jesus Christ**. What a lovely name! What A Savior! King of kings!

Now that we have completed our detailed inspection of Romans 6:23 let's review what we have discovered up to this point. First of all, in Romans 3:23 we saw that every man has sinned and continues to be in rebellion against God. Nothing we can do ourselves can change that. Second we have seen in Romans 6:23 that because of our sin we have earned a paycheck of eternal death. That is, eternal separation from God in a place of eternal torment and suffering. Thirdly, however, we see the word but in the last part of that verse which tells us there is a possible solution to our predicament. We have been offered a gift from God Himself of eternal life which has been made possible by Jesus Christ our Lord. God's love for us has resulted in a hope that we would otherwise not have. Thanks be to God forever and ever! Amen.

In our next session we will continue to look at additional verses in Romans that will explain how Jesus has made this hope possible by what He did in obedience to God the Father. Our next verse to look at will be Romans 5:8 which states "***But God demonstrates His own love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.***" As we move ahead I hope that we are all being reminded of how much God loves each and every one of us and proved it by giving His only Son to pay our sin debt.

# *Jesus, the Sacrifice*

Before we continue with the next verse let's review what we have covered so far. In Romans 3:23 we learned that every man is born with a sin nature because of Adam and Eve's disobedience in the Garden of Eden. This sin nature stands in the way of us having a relationship with God although He desires one. There is no way we can measure up to God's standards. ***“For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God”.***

Then we saw in Romans 6:23 that we have earned the wages of death because of our sin and that this death is eternal separation from God in a place of torment and eternal suffering. But God has a gift for us that results in eternal life with Him in a place of eternal peace and joy. All we have to do is accept His gift. ***“For the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”***

So now we want to see how this gift of eternal life has been made possible. To do that let's consider the words found in Romans 5:8. ***“But God demonstrates His own love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.”*** What a wonderful verse this is! It so vividly describes two very important facts. First, God wanted to prove how much He loves us and desires a relationship with us. Secondly, He gave His very own Son to be the ultimate sacrifice needed to pay our sin debt. When Christ died for us He paid a debt He didn't owe to take care of a debt we couldn't pay. When all we deserved was death, He gave His life that we might live. This is what we call amazing grace!

There is so much more that could be said about this verse that it would take a lifetime. Just an attempt to describe God's love for us would result in volumes upon volumes and adequate description would still not be achieved. To fully understand what Christ did for us on the cross would also be beyond our ability to comprehend much less put in words. The fact is, however, that it is not necessary. All we need to realize is that we need a Savior and God provided one with His Son. What a Savior!

In our next session we want to take a look at how each of us needs to respond to what we have learned. We will look at another verse in Romans that will help us understand what we must do to be saved. The real question is 'How do we accept this gift that God offers? and then are we willing to do so. I pray that the answer for each of us is an emphatic 'Yes!'

# *Man's Necessary Response*

At this point we need to understand what kind of response is required on our part to receive this gift of eternal life that God has promised in the previous verses we have studied. To get a clear picture of what our response needs to be let's consider another verse in Romans that continues to describe the true gospel of Jesus Christ. **Romans 10:9** gives us this insight as it states ***“that if 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.”*** This appears to me to be quite clear. It also lines up with many other verses throughout God's word that obviously tells us that we must respond to God's offer. One of the most well know and quoted scriptures is found in . As a matter of fact, **John 3:16** declares the complete gospel. That is why it is so often used to share a witness with an unbeliever. The very words of this verse ***“for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.”*** makes it clear that God offers this gift to all men, not just some select few.

Notice that two actions are spelled out in **Romans 10:9**. Both are required on our part. First, we must believe in our hearts and not just with our minds. This means that there is no question that what God has said is true and we put our confidence in His word. Second, we also must openly confess our belief that Jesus is Lord.

Paul continues to describe this in **Romans 10:10** as it reads ***“for with the heart one believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.”*** Again, how much clearer can it be. It is not complicated, it is very simple. All it takes is just what Paul has outlined in these verses, nothing more, nothing less. God has done everything necessary to provide the way for man to be saved from the power and penalty of sin and to have an intimate relationship with Him. The price was paid at the cross! An old song I remember from my childhood goes something like this:

You ask me why I'm happy, so I'll just tell you why. Because, my sins are gone.

And when I meet the scoffers, who ask me where they are. I say, "My sins are gone."

They're underneath the blood of the cross of Calvary.

As far removed as darkness is from dawn.

In the sea of God's forgetfulness. that's good enough for me.

**Praise God, my sins are gone!**

# *The Gospel Shared*

In the previous eight sessions we have attempted to share the true gospel in the simplest way we know how. We have used a number of scriptures in Romans to show how God has revealed His plan to us for why and how man is to be saved from eternal death and restored to a right relationship with Himself. The intent was not to just share the gospel but does so in such a way that the reader could take the Word of God and do the same with someone else. Therefore, I think it would be prudent to review what we have seen and thus be prepared to share it when the opportunity arises. So let's start

- **Romans 3:23** - *"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God"* Every man is a sinner and therefore cannot measure up to God's holy standards.
- **Romans 6:23** - *"For the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."* Man has earned eternal death and separation from God as a result of his sin nature. However, God offers a gift that results in eternal life because of Jesus Christ.
- **Romans 5:8** - *"But God demonstrates His own love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."* God proved how much He loves us by giving His only Son as a sacrifice and fully paying the sin debt we owed.
- **Romans 10:9** - *"that if 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."* When we decide to accept the gift He offers and confess Jesus as Lord and believe He is alive we will then be saved.

For the record, these are not my words but the very words of God Himself revealed to the writer being inspired by the Holy Spirit. This is the simple gospel. This is the gospel revived. This is the gospel that saves. I hope these words have made the impression that they were intended to do and that the reader will ultimately share them with someone else. May God bless you and His word!