

Gospel & Spirit

by Jim Cymbala

Jim Cymbala's sermon highlights the essential role of the true gospel and the Holy Spirit in the life of the church and individual believers.

Duration: 29:34

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 1:9

Topics: "Gospel"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of the gospel message and its power to transform lives. He highlights the need for individuals to put their faith in Jesus and make him the center of their lives. The preacher also discusses the concept of eternal life and the assurance that comes with having a relationship with Jesus. He warns against the existence of different interpretations of Jesus and emphasizes the need to believe in the true Lord Jesus Christ as presented in the Bible. Overall, the sermon emphasizes the love of God, the forgiveness of sins through Jesus' sacrifice, and the importance of sharing the gospel with others.

Transcript

My travels to South America and then the blizzard before, we've had a little delay in the study that I began on the Book of First Thessalonians. So to catch us up, Paul, the apostle, went to Thessalonica on his second missionary trip, went to Philippi first, ended up in prison, got a whooping, and then was delivered out of that, started a church, then went to a city called Thessalonica, and that's how we get Thessalonians. It's the letters, two letters.

Notice the New Testament is letters. It's not someone saying, there's no consciousness I see that they knew they were writing scripture. They were just writing something in reaction to problems in the church, need of teaching.

The Spirit anointed them, inspired them, because the Bible's not written by man, it's written by God. It's inspired. It has prophecies in it that came to pass that no man could ever make.

We're studying the letters to this church that he loves so much. What's the context? He's away from them, and he has sent Timothy to find out how they're doing, because he loves them so much. He loves them, and he sends Timothy to find out how they're doing.

Timothy comes back and gives them a report, and now he's writing to the church after Timothy's given him some info, and last thing, it's the first letter Paul ever wrote, chronologically, not in the Bible chronologically. Romans comes before that, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, all that. The first one he wrote is the earliest letter we have, and that means it's the first time the gospel was put down in writing, inspired by the Holy Spirit.

First time we find out how did they think, how did they work, how did they do this? Lord, help us to release all our prejudices or what we think we've learned so that we can be like little children and you could teach us. We pray it in Jesus' name, amen. So now here's the whole first chapter.

I've been going little time at a bit, but let's just get a little context here, first chapter. Paul, Silas, and Timothy, we covered that, to the church of the Thessalonians and God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, grace and peace to you. We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers.

We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor produced, prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. For we know, brothers, this is from two weeks ago, we know, brothers and sisters, loved by God, that he has chosen you because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake.

You became imitators of us and of the Lord. By the way, before there was any New Testament, it hadn't been written, one of the main ways of teaching was Paul, who followed Jesus, could say to the believers there, imitate the way I live, see how I react to things. Imagine the weight of that.

He couldn't leave them a New Testament, hadn't been written yet. So he said, you became imitators of me and of the Lord. For you welcome the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit.

And so you became a model. Ooh, this church was the bomb. It was a model church.

So you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia, that area of Greece, and Achaia. The Lord's message rang out from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia. Your faith in God has become known everywhere.

Notice, not how they did praise and worship, not what kind of building they had, not how much money they had, not how great the pastor was. Your faith, everyone talks about your faith. Oh, I want that for our church.

How many say amen? Your faith has become known everywhere. Therefore, we do not need to say anything about it, for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us when we first came. They tell how you turned to God from idols, this is their conversion, to serve the living and the true God, and to wait for his son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

Judgment. For we know, brothers and sisters, loved by God, that he has chosen you. Because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, Holy Spirit, deep conviction.

You know how we lived among you for your sake. And finally, you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering. You welcomed the gospel, the message, in the midst of severe suffering, this is odd, with the joy given by the Holy Spirit.

So now there's two words here in verses four through six, which have not been used yet, and since this is Paul's letter, I want to stop and examine them, because you have to know the meaning of these two words. He says, I know you've been chosen by God, I want to remind you how I have assurance you're really Christians, because of what happened when I came there, because I preached the gospel to you, and he calls it our gospel. Why would he call it our gospel? Because already then, there were other gospels.

Now Paul wasn't one of the original 12 disciples, but he says that Jesus appeared to him and gave him deep insight to the gospel, the good news, the glad tidings, that's what gospel means. It is not a musical genre, gospel music, black gospel music, southern gospel music, it is the message, the only message, that can give eternal life, so let's examine it. He said it's our gospel, in other words, it's the true one, because there's a lot of stuff out there already.

In another letter, he says, if anyone preaches to you another gospel, it'll have Jesus in it, it'll mention Jesus, but it's not the gospel I'm giving you. Let them be accursed, nobody can change this message. That's a very frightening passage.

If anyone preaches another gospel, this is in Galatians, a later letter that he wrote, let that person be accursed. Even if an angel comes to you and gives you a different message, kick him out, let that angel be cursed. It behooves us to understand what is this gospel.

He's saying now, this is the only way to become a Christian. How do you become a Christian? By joining a church, no. How do you become a Mormon? No, you join there, you study, you study long enough, you become a Mormon.

How do you become a Jehovah Witness? You start going on Saturday to Kingdom Hall, you learn, you get their doctrine in your head, and then they say, you're a Jehovah Witness now. Not so Christianity. You don't study to become a Christian.

You hear the gospel, and you receive it and believe it, this message, which I'll tell you, and then a supernatural thing happens, you're born again. You get a new heart, you get a new spirit working inside of you, the Holy Spirit. Old things pass away, all things become new.

And it all starts with the gospel. Without hearing the gospel, nobody can become a Christian. You can't pray someone into Christianity.

You can pray that they'll open their heart to the gospel, but he who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved. Not comes to the Brooklyn Tabernacle. You have to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, which Lord Jesus Christ? Because there's a bunch of them out there. There's a white conservative Jesus Christ, there's black liberation Jesus Christ, there's a whole bunch of stuff out there. Paul is warning, this is our gospel came to you.

He said, not just in word only. Notice the way they got saved was they heard the gospel. This is the goal of the choir singing, and this church, and me preaching, and our missionary efforts.

It's to present the gospel to people. Not entertain them, not make them feel good, not lash at them and beat them down. Give them the good news about Jesus Christ.

Well, what is the good news? What is the gospel? The good news of the gospel is that God so loves this world that he offers eternal life and forgiveness of sin to everyone who will confess their sin and put their faith in Jesus Christ as the savior who died on the cross for their sins. Let me say it again. Nobody can become a Christian unless you hear this message, understand it, and receive it, trust in him.

It's the good news that God loves this world even though it curses him, sins, justifies its sin, turns their back on him, runs away from him. He loves them so much that he sent his son into the world, and that son died on a cross so that God could legally forgive sin. Sin is so nasty that God could not say, you know what, let's forget you ever did it.

No, no, no. Someone has to be punished for every sin. You and I are gonna be punished for our sins, or if we become Christians, we receive the fact that Jesus died for our sins.

Paul says in another place, he died for me. He gave his life for me. How many are happy today he died for you? Why? So that our sins could be washed away.

Salvation is salvation from sin, not poverty, not from difficult family situations, not from joblessness, that all will be found somewhere in further teaching, but the gospel is his name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sin. Well, what is sin? Sin are those things that you and I do and practice and justify and hide that God says is against his holy character. And if you continue in it, you not only will hurt yourself, but you'll lose your soul for all eternity.

Well, that sounds rather harsh. Listen, I only work here. I'm telling you what the Bible says.

I'm not making up my own religion here. I'm telling you clearly what the Bible indicates. But if you put your faith in Jesus, make him the center of your life, trust him as Lord and Savior, you get not only sins forgiven, you not only get his presence in your life and him leading you and guiding you, but when you die or whatever, you're gonna live with him for all eternity.

How many are looking forward to heaven and living with him for all eternity? And who knows how long we live? I learned about that guy that was walking in the city and the thing came down on him. The thing was 565 feet high, came down and killed this guy. You think he thought that was his last day when he woke up in the morning? No.

So life is a vapor. But when you have Jesus, you know I have him if I live. And if I die, I go to be with him.

Blessed be the name of the Lord. Let's put our hands together. Say amen.

Death, where is your sting? That's the gospel. This is why the last thing Jesus said is go into all the world and preach the gospel. Not build a big church.

In America now, we're building churches without conversion. Very, very dangerous. People are coming and we try to give them a meeting that they feel comfortable with, user-friendly, seeker-sensitive to the extreme, without the gospel in it.

Now there are other gospels that are being preached now. Let me just, I could give you 10. I just wanna mention two.

There's the prosperity gospel that if you believe in Jesus, you'll never have a problem. You'll always get a better job. You'll get rid of that Chevy.

Why are you driving a Chevy? Sister, you would look good in a Mercedes. Come on, give me a high five. Don't be afraid, I've just given you a Mercedes.

So there's that nonsense which is not found. But why is it preached? Very appealing and you can get people's money. Now give to me so that you'll get that blessing.

It's a scam. Notice they never say give the money to Elsie Larrison in Haiti or give the money to your local church. No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no.

Give the money to me. So I just heard one, my wife and I, she's a witness. There's a guy on one of these stations.

He's selling prophecies. I have a word from the Lord for you. If you will call this 800 number, have your MasterCard or Visa with you there available.

I have a word for you today. How would he have a word for you if he didn't know who you are? So it's money making and it was happened back there. Paul said we're not like most who peddle the word of God for money.

It was already happening back there. So always be alert to that where people always talking money and give me your money. The other gospel that we have now is no repentance of sin gospel.

Jesus is your Savior from what? Well, just he loves me. He just loves me. He loves me just the way I am and don't be judgmental.

That's very legalistic of you to be judgmental. I know, but you've held up five banks in two weeks. No one's perfect, Pastor Jim, and why should you be judging me? Are you perfect? You get the role of that, okay? But notice, you can't have a Savior unless it's a Savior from sin.

You can't know Jesus unless you first confess your sin and you acknowledge that he defines sin. The sexual thing you're involved in, he says is wrong outside of marriage or with a person of the same sex. The thing that he says lying is wrong, stealing, cheating the government, whatever.

He says those things are wrong. Well, I don't see it that way. Then you'll never know Jesus as your Savior.

It's not by your rules, it's by his rules. How many say amen? The whole thing is predicated that sin is so horrible that he had to die on the cross. It cost God his son to get us saved.

Cost God his son. That's how much he loves us. So he's not being harsh.

He doesn't want to rain on your parade. He wants to drag you out before you're sucked down forever. Now, some will not receive that.

They will justify and say like there's a new way, a new Christianity. Always be aware of that. There is no new gospel.

You can have your opinion, but you can't have your own truth. There's only one truth. How many say amen? Yeah, but I think, I'm really, I'm happy you think and I think and everyone thinks, but what's the

truth? That's why we dig in the scripture so that we don't go by what a minister says.

We go by what God says. Now, this is how the church started in Thessalonica. Paul was brave enough after being in prison to go and preach that message, to courage.

Why? The Roman government said if you believe in Jesus, the Roman Empire, you're against Caesar. You're a bad citizen and you should be beat up or killed or lose your job, disloyalty. The Jewish religious establishment in every city where Paul went hated the message that the Messiah had come and they missed him.

They did not like that at all. They led a lot of the persecution against the early Christians. So it took great courage for Paul to give this message that Jesus is the Messiah, but he's both for Jew and Gentile.

There's no two ways of getting saved. There's not one way if you're Jewish and another way if you're Gentile. Gentile is anyone who's not Jewish.

Paul says this, so I can bring this to a close. He said, but you remember and I remember that our gospel came to you not in word only. It definitely came in word because you can't hear unless someone speaks.

There's another passage in the Bible that says how can they believe unless they first hear? How can they hear unless someone speaks it to them? How can someone speak it to them unless God sends them out? So it came in word, but he said it didn't come in word only. Now here's a place where Christendom is really divided today and I think we've lost this truth for the most part. I just spoke to a huge group of pastors down in Jacksonville and I was mentioning this truth.

Paul says when I preach, it wasn't in word only. I'm not some clever stand-up comic. I'm not some clever communicator.

I'm not some orator with a silver tongue. No, no, no, no, no, no. When I preached to you and I gave you the gospel, it didn't come in word only.

It came in power through the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. That's how you got converted. That's how I know you're saved because the thing revolutionized your life.

It changed you from the inside out. So now what is the implication of this? It's that if the word comes only in word only, if the gospel comes in word only, it dissipates its power a little bit even though it's the message of God. The plan that God had was that he would send the Holy Spirit so that when the choir sang, the man preached, the people worshiped or shared on their jobs about Jesus, it would not only be a message, but it would be a message with power.

And where would this power come from? The Holy Spirit. First time he mentions this, so let's stop. Who's the Holy Spirit? We talked about the gospel.

Who's the Holy Spirit? In short form, the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead. Father, Son, Holy Spirit, all equal, co-equal of the same essence and substance in a mystery that we don't understand, three yet one, one yet three. And the teaching of the Bible is that the Father sent the Son, why? So that he would die and pay the price for our sins as I outlined.

When Jesus rose from the dead and resurrected and then 40 days later went back to be with his Father in heaven, he said, when I leave, I will send the Holy Spirit. The Father sent me. Now I'm gonna send the

Holy Spirit.

I'm gonna send another comforter. That word is hard to define. It could mean helper.

It could mean comforter. It could mean encourager. I'm gonna send another one.

But then in the same passage in John, he says, I will not leave you alone. I will come to you. So he's saying the Holy Spirit's coming, but in the same way that the Spirit comes, it's Jesus in invisible form.

So the Holy Spirit is different than Jesus because Jesus came born of a virgin, physical, and that's the one who is our Savior and all glory goes to him. But he didn't wanna leave the apostles and the early church alone, so he said, I'm gonna send the Holy Spirit. I've been with you.

He's gonna be in you. I've been just setting you an example and it didn't work too well with you, Peter, because you denied me three times and you all fled. But when he comes, he's gonna revolutionize you because I've been outside of you.

He will be in you, giving you power to live, to preach, to witness, to endure, name anything, and it's only the Holy Spirit who can take you through it. Only the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit, Christianity is hopeless.

It's a story about a man who did something 2,000 years ago, but there's no juice now, there's no power. But he said, I'm gonna send this invisible person to you. I could only be in one place at one time.

The Spirit can be everywhere at the same time. He's right now in China. He's with these beautiful people in Buenos Aires that I was just with.

That missionary who was here, Rocco DiTrollio, who out of nowhere lost his wife in the late 40s, has two beautiful sons, 24 and 28, and now she just went in for a checkup, was fine, then went back to have some minor surgery. They spotted cancer, three months, she's gone. It's a mystery.

God chose not to heal her, now he's all alone. He needed encouragement. I try to spend time, and with the son, and the only one who can give them comfort is not this pastor or some counseling approach.

It's the Holy Spirit. He's the God of all comfort, the spirit of comfort, encouragement, whatever. So Paul says, and let's make this our goal now, as a church, as deacons, as pastors, as a choir, prayer band, whatever we do for the Lord, we have to pray, God, the Holy Spirit, come and make it effective, make it powerful.

Otherwise, it's just words. Think of all the churches in America today. So few conversions.

They're not all in false doctrines. Some of them are preaching Jesus and the Bible, but why isn't there more fruit? Why isn't there a breakthrough? Because you not only need the word, you need the spirit. When the choir sings, if they're all on their note, how will they help you? So it's music, they're on their note, how will that help you? But if they sing about Jesus and the spirit anoints them, oh my goodness, it's like a sermon.

How many know what I'm talking about? Just lift your hand, say amen. So without the spirit, it's boring church, predictable church. But when the spirit comes and he's moving and the words have this ability to go like arrows in people's hearts, and there's fruit.

It's not the skill of the speaker. It's the gift of the Holy Spirit. His power.

Notice, for our gospel came to you not in word only. We weren't just flapping our mouths, but it came, and by the way, this power has nothing to do with the modulation of your voice. Because you scream doesn't mean it's powerful.

I grew up in a church like that. Whenever the meeting went a little slow, people just started screaming. Just get the microphone, wah! And everybody, oh yeah, I feel that.

But nothing comes of it. Nothing comes of it. And it's not being quiet and making believe you're emotional, it's the Holy Spirit.

Holy Spirit. How many want more of the Holy Spirit like I do? Would you please join with me? I made a fresh consecration to God of my life while I was away, and I want God to do something new in me. You ever get sick and tired of who you are? I'm sorry to say it like that, but I get so many times, I get so often sick and tired of Jim Simba.

I want, like God, can't you come? Make me more effective for you. It not only came in word only, but it came with power. What kind of power? Not atomic power, not electrical power.

This is an invisible spiritual power that has only effects on people's hearts. And the Spirit came to glorify Jesus and to show people how great he is. Came with power and with deep conviction.

See, when the Gospels preach and the Holy Spirit is helping, not only is the speaker convicted of the truths and it makes it powerful, you just know when the guy is preaching or the woman is speaking, you just know she believes that. No, that thing is alive in her. It's not some ideas and let me give you what I've been thinking and researched from the Greek or the Hebrew.

It's from mi corazon, muy fuerte. And with conviction on the people. You know how you become a Christian? You get convicted that you're lost.

You get convicted you're a sinner. I hope that's happened to all of us. Although conviction is not pleasant, it leads to something beautiful, salvation.

How in the world can you call on a savior if you don't know you're lost? If you're justifying everything you do. So that's what it was. The word with power, with deep conviction.

Both the speaker and the hearers. And then Paul says another thing about the Holy Spirit that I'll leave you with. And you became imitators of us and of the Lord.

And this is what helped make them a model. What made them a model? Their concept of church was so different from us. I'm not even sure we can untangle the cobwebs in our mind to get down to this without the help of the Holy Spirit.

Because we've created our own American culture Christianity. But let's hear the word today. For you became examples of us and of the Lord.

For you receive the word in deep affliction accompanied by the joy of the Holy Spirit. You know why everyone talks about you? Because you're filled with joy. Even though when you receive the word, the word there for affliction is a word, no light thing, heavy pressure.

From who? Doesn't say. Society, their family. You know what it'd be like of a Hindu somewhere in the midst of India, a Hindu getting saved, becoming a follower of Jesus.

You think that's gonna be easy path? No, no. They'll come after you. And he said you receive the word, you put your faith in Jesus, you turn from idols to serve the living God.

And even though you were under great affliction, you had the joy of the Holy Spirit. Now this was incomprehensible. Listen as I close.

First of all, joy was something that no one in the Roman Empire could ever understand. Because life is empty without Jesus. Now everybody has pleasures and things they enjoy, your family, food, and all of that.

But you can go to bed at night so depressed with a family, with the food, with the job, with the roti, with whatever, right? There's an emptiness, there's no joy. Just read about the Roman Empire and read about Nazi Germany. Read about any civilization including materialistic America.

People are filled with things but no joy. They need drugs, they need a comedian, they need to be doing something, texting the universe, whatever, tweeting, why? Just don't leave me alone with the emptiness that my life is. But when you have Jesus, you have joy.

You have joy, you have joy that the Holy Spirit gives. Can we say amen to that? Lastly, not just they had joy, they had joy and affliction. That makes no sense to either the Jewish or the Roman mind.

The Roman and Jewish mind is this. You go through difficulty, you lose a loved one, you lost your job, something bad, something went sideways, then you're going through affliction, then you're sad. But Paul says no.

You were going through all kinds of affliction and you were praising the Lord and had joy. That's a miracle. That's the sign of a deep Christian, a real Christian.

No matter what goes on, they're not depressed, they're not negative. They just say, praise God, I have Jesus. Nobody can take Jesus from me.

Take my job, take this, take that. But you can't take Jesus. Notice, it's the joy that the Holy Spirit gives.

You can't teach joy. None of us are good enough to teach joy. The Bible never says you can teach joy.

Joy comes from the Holy Spirit. And you could be in the midst of a mess and still be able to smile when you go to work. And then people will say, man, what are you smoking? No, I ain't smoking nothing.

I am not on weed. I am on Jesus. The Holy Spirit has given me his joy.

Come on, let's clap our hands. Close your eyes with me. Father, I want to thank you for the congregation.

Thank you for the blessing you've given me of working among the sweetest people in the world. Thank you for the choir. Thank you for your word today.

That no matter what we face, we can have the joy of the Holy Spirit. Help us not to settle for second best. Help us not to live human, help us to live supernatural.

Help us to live spirit-led, spirit-filled, spirit-contaminated, the spirit of God just working in every area of our life. We thank you for the gospel, the good news, that we have eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Savior, that our sins, which we confess, have been washed away. We thank you for the blessed Savior and the fact that he sent the blessed Holy Spirit to be in us, to help us.

Oh God, encourage, we prayed before, but Lord, please, encourage every person. Even if she can't hear everything I'm saying right now so clearly, encourage my mom, Lord. Give her the joy the Holy Spirit gives.

You know the aches and the pains, you know what she must be going through, but God, God, the Holy Spirit, give her days and hours and nights of joy unspeakable and full of glory. We thank you that you can lift us above circumstances so that we can be a people that represent your grace and your love. We pray for all these things in Jesus' name.

And everyone said. Amen. Everybody stand up and hug the five best-looking people you can find, okay? Come on.

I love you.

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