

Repeat, Repeat, Repeat!

Scripture Reading: Romans 1:1-17

Seven months ago we began a series called, “The Long-term Effect of the Gospel.” The purpose of this series was to promote a deeper appreciation and desire for gospel truth. Some see the gospel as a message that is merely designed to cause people to ask God for forgiveness and for access into heaven through the merits of Christ and His blood that was shed on the cross. This is certainly the right starting point. But a more complete thought is that, through the gospel, we need to understand the holy nature of God, our sinful nature, and the nature of God’s grace and salvation. From justification and forgiveness the gospel should further show us how to walk in love, to be sanctified, mature, and serving God. The gospel produces transformation (new birth) and leads us on to conformity to the image of Jesus Christ – joyfully and submissively serving in our Lord’s kingdom. In other words, the gospel is not just giving us a ticket to heaven. It is giving us a working relationship with God that starts now and lasts forever!

Note this excerpt from previous comments on Romans 1:14-16:

Gospel-Centered Preaching – All Scripture must be explained in the context of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the only way to truly interpret the Bible. *“The truth as it is in Jesus”* protects us from false teaching (Ephesians 4:21). This method of interpretation keeps us from the errors of legalism, lawlessness, formalism, ritualism, mysticism, and basically from all other “isms.”

Therefore, Paul preached the gospel to Christians – to people who already believed, who were justified and forgiven. The gospel message gives the believer understanding, discernment, and motivation. It empowers the believer, in this life, to continually trust the Lord, to spiritually grow, to become more like Christ, to faithfully follow and serve the Lord. Through the gospel, Christ personally ministers ‘*grace and truth*’ (John 1:14-17; 6:63; 14:15-20 cp. Matthew 28:18-20).

To achieve this goal, our series started by helping us to take inventory of what effect we were having from the truth of the gospel.

- What Effect Does Jesus Have on You?
- What Effect Does God’s Love Have on You?
- What Effect Does the Gospel Have on You?

We are looking for transformation – a long-term effect that comes from regular, steady exposure to gospel truth. Our series offered a gospel-focused outline of Romans 1:14 – 3:31. From there, we observed many warnings from the book of Hebrews – warnings that showed us dangers and pitfalls that come through the weakness of the flesh and through false teaching.

We now wrap this series up with an exhortation to “Repeat, Repeat, Repeat” gospel truth. It is easy to get side-tracked by important issues, or by reacting to situations, or by simply getting entrenched in favorite areas of doctrine, and not staying focused on the gospel-centeredness of good Bible teaching. Whatever part of the Bible we are considering, we are to preach Christ and our constant need of Him. All truth should lead us to the cross of Christ. See Romans 1:1-9,14-17; 16:25-27; I Corinthians 1:17-24; 2:1-5; II Corinthians 4:3-6; Galatians 2:20; 3:24; 6:14; Ephesians 3:1-9; Philippians 1:21; 3:8-10; II Timothy 1:7-12; I Peter 1:25; I John 5:10-13,19-21.

This series was conceived as I (Pastor Alex) was travelling across a large portion of our country over a period of almost 3 weeks. I noticed many places of worship and attended several churches during that time. Many churches are teaching the same things that have been taught for about two thousand years. Many others, of course, are not teaching the faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints (Jude 1:3-4). Some of them resemble Mars Hill – always teaching something new (Acts 17:21) – following the trends of society (I John 4:5). But the question came to me, “Why do good churches keep repeating the same truths over and over?” It became clear to me that mankind has a perpetual need of God’s gospel truths. People must be presented these truths over and over and have them applied in many ways. Every generation has this need. The gospel meets that need. Nothing else will replace it.

George Whitefield, an eighteenth-century evangelist, was asked by an angry minister, “You must be born again! You must be born again! Why do you continually preach that You must be born again?” Whitfield humbly replied, “Because you **must** be born again!”

So our wrap-up for this series is about repetition. It is a vital characteristic of faithful ministries. Making the timeless truth of the gospel relevant to our generation is a challenge, but the greater challenge is getting people in this world to become relevant to God: who He is, what He is doing, and what He wants! See Galatians 1:3-4; 6:14; Romans 12:1-2; I John 2:15-17; 4:1-6. Teachers of the New Testament mentioned the importance of repetition. Let us study their perspectives.

Notice Paul in I Corinthians 15:2; Philippians 3:1-3; 4:4; II Thessalonians 2:5; II Timothy 2:8,14. **Notice Peter** in II Peter 1:12-15; 3:1-2. **Notice Jude** in Jude 1:17. **Also notice Jesus Christ** in John 14:26; Revelation 3:3. Here is a composite of these Scriptures (KJV & NKJV):

“... Keep in memory what I preached unto you ... To write the same things to you ...is not grievous...it is safe ... And again I say ... Remember [that] I told you these things? ... Remember that... Remind them ... I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know [them] ... I think it is right...to stir you up by reminding you ... Have these things always in remembrance ... I now write unto you [to] stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance that you be mindful of the words which were spoken before ... Remember the words which were spoken before ... The Comforter / Helper / Holy Spirit... He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I have said to you ... Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent...”

Does the previous paragraph seem tedious? Reading it all at once, it certainly is tedious, but the desired effect is to demonstrate how much we need to repeat and apply gospel truth to ourselves and to one another. We are taught from the book of Hebrews that we are prone...

- To drifting / letting things slip / to neglecting our salvation (Hebrews 2:1,3)
- To being inconsiderate / not thoughtful (Hebrews 3:1)
- To being unsteadfast and hard-hearted (Hebrews 3:6-15)
- To being tempted by infirmities / weaknesses (Hebrews 4:15-16 cp. 2:17-18)
- To handling God's word in an unbelieving / unfaithful way – not profiting from the word (Hebrews 3:19 – 4:2,11-14)
- To being lethargic, lazy, and fruitless (Hebrews 5:8 – 6:12)
- To being careless, calloused, and trifling with the precious blood of Christ (Hebrews 10:26-39)
- To getting our eyes off of Christ and becoming weary of running the race that is set before us (Hebrews 12:1-3)

As the gospel is repeatedly applied to the believer, what should we be doing?

Romans 1:14-16 – Understand our debt (Romans 13:8); **Be eager / ready to share the gospel** (Ephesians 6:15; I Corinthians 9:19-22; 10:31-33); **Don't be intimidated – don't be ashamed of the gospel** (II Timothy 1:7-8).

II Peter 1:12-15 – Life is short. Make long-lasting impressions on your mind so that you can **be continually stirred (rekindled) about those things that are of eternal worth.** Keep your minds pure by being **stirred by the words of the prophets and apostles** (II Peter 3:1-2; Romans 16:25-27; I Timothy 4:13-16; Philippians 1:12-25; 4:8-9; II Corinthians 4:14-18). **Stir up the spiritual gift / gifts that God has given you** (II Timothy 1:6). They were given to you to benefit others, not just yourself (Ephesians 3:2; 4:7-8,11-13; I Peter 4:10) – though rewards are promised to faithful stewards (Hebrews 6:10-12; Matthew 6:19-20).

Hebrews 10:19-25 – Having Christ as our faithful high priest (Hebrews 2:17-18; 4:14-16), we are to be active in ministry to one another. We may serve with a pure heart, clean conscience, and complete confidence through faith in Christ (Hebrews 10:22-23). We may **focus our minds on blessing and encouraging our brothers and sisters in Christ** (Hebrews 10:24-25 cp. Romans 14:17-19; I Corinthians 10:23-24; Galatians 5:13-14) – **not useless strife about words** (II Timothy 2:14). We are reminded to **serve for the prosperity of others** (Philippians 1:3-8; 2:1-4,14-17; 3:1; Galatians 4:19; 6:1-2,9-10; I John 3:11-18).