

Preaching the Gospel—A Mark that Matters

Jesus said: “ Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation (Mk. 16:15).” Someone has said hypothetically that the Master was asked what would happen if we Christians did not follow this command. The Lord’s answer was brief: “There is no other plan.” The one and only plan is that the church works to save the lost. How Christians conduct the work of the church is a mark of New Testament Christianity that matters.

The New Testament gives the church in its congregational sense three missions to accomplish. It is to preach the gospel, edify and teach its members, and serve the needs of certain elderly and destitute folk. The church must follow the specific plan of the New Testament. Rom. 6:17 calls the teaching a form or pattern: “Though you used to be slaves of sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching.” Paul told Timothy: “ Hold the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me (II Tim. 1:13).” We can only be saved if our work conforms to the will of the Father: “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter into the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my father who is in heaven (Mt. 7:21).” We are to do the work God commands and re-create the form of New Testament teaching.

The only way to save the world is for the church to preach the Gospel. Paul described the gospel as “ the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes (Rom 1:16).” In I Cor. 1:18, 21 he added: “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” And further: “God was pleased through the foolishness of preaching to save those who believe.” Without the preaching, there is no gospel; without the gospel, nothing to believe; without belief, no salvation.

Preaching the Gospel is clearly the work of the church. The command to disciples to preach the gospel is central to the great commission (Mt. 28:19, Mk. 16:15, Lk. 24:47). The church’s preaching of the gospel was a part of God’s eternal purpose: “His [God’s] intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished through Christ Jesus our Lord (Eph. 3:10).” In the strongest language possible, the church is described as “the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of truth (I Tim. 3:15).”

The congregations in the New Testament advanced the gospel. Antioch sent Barnabas and Saul on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:3). When Paul was at Corinth, he took support from other churches (II Cor. 11:8). And when Paul left Macedonia, the church at Philippi sent support once and again to Paul (Phil. 4:15-16). Preaching the gospel to the whole creation and to every creature is no small task. It takes support.

“How can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, how beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news (Rom. 10:14-15).”

Preaching the Gospel

Christ's Plan:

- Go into all the world
- Preach the gospel
- Baptizing them
- Teaching them

The Church's Mission:

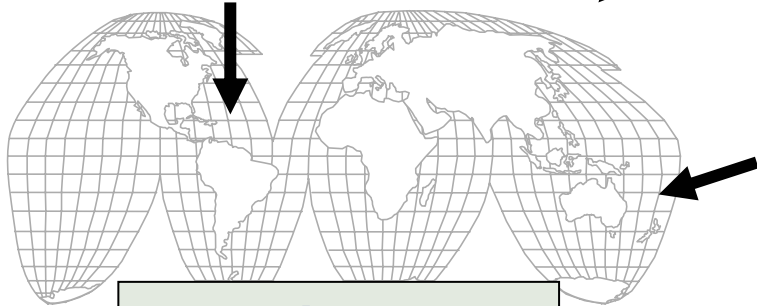
- Follow the form of teaching (Rom. 6:17)
- Hold the pattern of sound words (II Tim 1:13)
- Do the will of the Father in heaven (Mt.7:21)

God's Power:

- The gospel is the power of God (Rom. 1:16)
- The word of the cross is the power of God (I Cor. 1:18,21)

The Work of the Church:

- Preach the gospel--central to the great commission (Mt. 28:19, Mk. 16:15-16, Lk. 24:47)
- Make known the manifold wisdom of God (Eph 3:10)
- The pillar and ground of truth



There is no other plan!

New Testament Churches Advanced the Gospel

- Asia Minor
- Macedonia
- Greece

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Questions and Answers

1. Where did Jesus tell his followers to go Mk. 16:15? _____
 2. What were they to do? _____ To whom? _____
 3. What alternate plan did the Lord have should the disciples fail? _____
 4. What three specific missions are given to the church? _____
 5. How specifically must the church follow God's plan (Rom. 6:17)? _____
 6. Paul told Timothy to hold what pattern (II Tim. 1:13)? _____
 7. Upon what does Christ condition our entrance into the kingdom of heaven (Mt. 7:21)? _____
 8. What is God's power to salvation (Rom. 1:16)? _____
 9. To whom is the message of the cross foolishness (I Cor. 1:18)? _____
 10. To whom is the message of the cross the power of God? _____
 11. In this passage, what pleased God? _____
 12. Find the similarities among Mt. 28:19, Mk. 16:15-16, and Lk. 24:47. _____
 13. How does the church fit into God's eternal purpose (Eph. 3:10)? _____
 14. To whom is the church to make known the manifold wisdom of God _____
 15. How does Paul describe the church in I Tim. 3:15? _____
 16. How did the church organize the first missionary journey of Paul (Acts 13:3)? _____
 17. What metaphor did Paul use to describe his support from other churches while at Corinth (II Cor. 11:8)? _____
 18. Write out Rom. 10:14-15. _____
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