

III. Walking Worthy of Our Gospel Call

A. Paul urges us to walk worthy of God.

A gospel which declares that God reigns, has a place for walking worthy of God who calls us into that kingdom and glory... calls us to be image-bearers of the King, to be worthy ambassadors of reconciliation.

B. What is God really asking from us?



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LIVE THE STORY

The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.

- What is the “truncated Gospel”? What does it call us to? How does the Gospel that Jesus reigns as King call us? Why do we need it?
- Why are the creeds not a good substitute for the Gospel?
- In the quote from *Becoming a Missionary Church*, what do you think they mean by “The church is... the new humanity”?
- Do you agree with the statement that “We don’t have a gospel without atonement, but neither do we have a gospel with atonement alone”?
- What do 1 Thess. 2:11-12, Eph. 4:1, and Phil. 1:27 all have in common? What does this tell us about the nature of the Gospel?
- in 1 Thess. 2:11-12, it says we are called to two things. What are they, and can you explain what they mean for us?
- How might this understanding of the Gospel’s call have adjusted your thinking? How might it call you to live differently? Why?

Gospel Clarity: What is the Gospel? Why Do We Need It?

Jerry Cisar — February 4, 2024

Text: 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12

Introduction

I. The Gospel That Calls

A. The Gospel in 1 Thessalonians

We must assume then, that if we accurately identify what the Gospel is, it will be calling us to something.

B. What is the Gospel?

i. The difference between the creeds and the Gospel

The Nicene Creed re: Jesus: “I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. *For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.*”

- ii. Don't confuse *succinct* with *minimalistic*.

Dallas Willard: Such "gospels... do not naturally produce disciples, but only *consumers of religious goods and services*."

C. A Full, Biblical Gospel

Michael Goheen and Tim Sheridan: "The gospel, if it is to be biblical, cannot be reduced to a message of individual salvation but announces the restoration of God's rule over the whole creation and entire spectrum of human life. The church is not a private religious community but the new humanity...." (*Becoming a Missionary Church*)

N.T. Wright: "For many people, 'the gospel' has shrunk right down to a statement about Jesus' death and its meaning, and a prayer with which people accept it. That matters, the way the rotor blades of a helicopter matter. You won't get off the ground without them. But rotor blades alone don't make a helicopter. And a microcosmic theory of atonement and faith don't, *by themselves*, make up 'the gospel.'"

II. The Gospel Call

- A. The truncated Gospel, or irreducible minimum Gospel, calls us to heaven but not much else. *These verses* about our calling seem to include much more.
 - i. 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12

➤ 1 Thess. 3:12

- ii. Ephesians 4:1

- iii. Philippians 1:27

Our call to the kingdom, to our citizenship in the kingdom, is not to wait for our escort to heaven, but to bring the culture of heaven to earth. *On earth as it is in heaven*.

- iv. The truncated Gospel calls us to a *decision*. The Gospel that Jesus reigns over everything in heaven and earth calls us to *a kingdom and glory*.

B. A Kingdom

- i. "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place." (lit. "*My kingdom is not from here!*")

- ii. Acts 1: 6-8

- iii. It is for the rule and reign of Jesus as King on earth as it is in heaven that is central to all our praying.

C. Glory

- i. What does it mean that we are called to glory?
- ii. *Glory was an aspect of being in God's image and likeness*.
- iii. "*Christ in you, the hope of glory*." (Col. 1:27-29)