

HOW TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO YOURSELF EVERYDAY

- Mark Mullery -

*"We need to continue to hear the gospel every day of our Christian lives."*¹
Jerry Bridges

Text: Hebrews 3:1

Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess.

I. The Gospel for the Hebrews

A. The situation: the readers were in trouble, undergoing trials

B. The real problem: unbelief

C. The remedy: *Fix your thoughts on Jesus*

1. His awesome superiority
2. His stunning similarities to us
3. His sacrificial death and saving power

D. Summary

"If I have observed anything by experience, it is this: a man may take the measure of his growth and decay in grace according to his thoughts and meditations upon the person of Christ, and the glory of Christ's Kingdom, and of His love."² - John Owen

II. Easily forgotten parts of the gospel

A. The greatness of God, especially his holiness

1. Problem: we live in an age that is comfortable with God

"We have turned to a God that we can use rather than to a God we must obey; we have turned to a God who will fulfill our needs rather than to a God before whom we must surrender our rights to ourselves.

¹ Jerry Bridges, *The Disciplines of Grace*, p. 21.

² John Owen in *A Puritan Golden Treasury* ed. by I. D. E. Thomas, p. 184.

He is God *for* us, for our satisfaction—not because we have learned to think of him this way through Christ but because we have learned to think of him this way through the marketplace. In the marketplace, everything is for us, for our pleasure, for our satisfaction, and we have come to assume that it must be so in the church as well. And so we transform the God of mercy into a God who is at our mercy.

“What has been lost in all of this, of course, is God's angularity, the sharp edges that truth so often has and that he has preeminently. It is our fallenness fleshed out in our modernity that makes God smooth, that imagines he will accommodate our instincts, shabby and self-centered as they so often are, because he is love.

“In a psychologized culture such as ours, there is a deep affinity for what is relational but a dis-ease with what is moral. This carries over into the church as an infatuation with the love of God and an embarrassment at his holiness.”³ - David Wells

2. Biblical view: God's love is a holy love because God is a holy God

Exodus 3:5 "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."

Isaiah 6:3 And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."

John 14:26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

Revelation 3:7 "To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open."

“We cannot grasp the true meaning of the divine holiness by thinking of someone or something very pure and then raising the concept to the highest degree we are capable of. God's holiness is not simply the best we know infinitely bettered. We know of nothing like the divine holiness. It stands apart, unique, unapproachable, incomprehensible and unattainable. The natural man is blind to it. He may fear God's power and admire His wisdom, but His holiness we cannot even imagine.”⁴ - A.W. Tozer

³ David Wells, *God in the Wasteland*, p. 114.

⁴ A.W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, p. 104.

“Today there is resistance to the tenet that has been most characteristic of Protestant thought since the earliest days of the Reformation—namely, that holiness fundamentally defines the character of God and that love is not an alternative to it but, rather, an expression of it...Holiness is what defines God's character most fundamentally, and a vision of this holiness should inspire his people and evoke their worship, sustain their character, fuel their passion for truth, and encourage persistence in efforts to do his will and call on his name in petitionary prayer.

“Modernity’s God is not nearly so morally angular as the God of the Bible. His sharp edges have all been ground down to make him less threatening, more comfortable, more tame. He is rarely perceived as a God of the outside who, in his awesome greatness, summons his people to worship, to hear that Word of truth that they cannot find within themselves or their world, to become agents of righteousness in a world that scorns this righteousness as alien and contrary. Robbed of such a God, worship loses its awe, the truth of his Word loses its ability to compel, obedience loses its virtue, and the church loses its moral authority. Why has this happened? Because it is the easiest route to take...God's love seems less burdensome than his holiness.”⁵
- David Wells

B. The sinfulness of sin

“The gospel is a message about *sin*. It tells us how we have fallen short of God's standard; how we have become guilty, filthy, and helpless in sin, and now stand under the wrath of God. It tells us that the reason why we sin continually is that we are sinners by nature, and that nothing we do, or try to do, for ourselves can put us right, or bring us back into God's favor.”⁶
- J.I. Packer

1. Definition: *Sin is any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature.*⁷
2. Characteristics of sin⁸
 - a) Sin is always related to God and His will.
 - b) Sin is falling short of God's glory (Romans 3:23) or missing the mark of His perfection.

⁵ Wells, p. 136.

⁶ J.I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, p. 59.

⁷ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, p. 490.

⁸ From Anthony Hoekema, *Created in God's Image*, pp. 168-175.

“Sin is therefore fundamentally opposition to God, rebellion against God, which roots in hatred of God.”⁹ – Anthony Hoekema

- c) Sin has its source in the heart.

Jeremiah 17:9 “The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?”

Matthew 15:19 “For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.”

- d) Sin includes thoughts, acts and nature.

“Even while asleep, an unbeliever, though not committing sinful actions or actively nurturing sinful attitudes, is still a ‘sinner’ in God’s sight; he or she still has a sinful nature that does not conform to God’s moral law.”¹⁰ – Wayne Grudem

- e) Sin is at root a form of pride.

- f) Sin is deceitful.

i. Most people are more effective at spotting sin in others than in themselves (Matthew 7:3-5).

ii. There is a tendency to want to cover up our sins, rather than expose them (Proverbs 28:13).

- g) Sin is an enslaving power

Romans 7:20-21 Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. 21 So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me.

John 8:34 Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin."

C. The amazing, redeeming, grace of God in Christ

1. Jesus’ death involves a sacrifice of his own life. He offered himself up to God to purify us from the defiling effect of sin.

⁹ Hoekema, p. 171.

¹⁰ Grudem, p. 491.

Hebrews 7:27 Unlike the other high priests, [Jesus] does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself.

2. Jesus' death redeems us from slavery to sin. He paid the ransom price for our freedom.

Mark 10:45 "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

3. Jesus' death reconciles us to God. He removed the twin barriers of our hostile enmity towards God and God's holy wrath towards us.

Colossians 1:21 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. 22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation--

4. Jesus' death propitiates (appeases) the wrath of God. He took the penalty we deserved.

Hebrews 2:17 Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. (NAS)

5. Jesus' death justifies us. He took our condemnation so we could be declared righteous.

Romans 5:9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!

6. Jesus' death defeats the powers that opposed us. He liberates us from the tyranny of sin, the devil and all his cohorts.

Colossians 2:13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, 14 having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. 15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

III. The Gospel for Christians

- A. Definition – *God pardons and accepts me, a believing sinner, because Christ took my place*
- B. *God*
- C. *Pardons*
- D. *Accepts*
- E. *Believing*
- F. *Sinner*
- G. *Christ took my place*

IV. Application

- A. In your own life – *how do you preach the gospel to yourself everyday?*
 - 1. Spiritual disciplines
 - 2. Scripture
 - 3. Biblical meditation
 - 4. Scripture memorization
 - 5. Reading
- B. In your small group – *how do you preach the gospel every time your small group meets?*
 - 1. Worship songs
 - 2. Testimonies
 - 3. The final remedy for every problem – do all roads lead to Christ?
 - 4. Discussions – how does this passage/article/chapter reveal Jesus to be a greater savior than I'd realized?

John 5:39 You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, 40 yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

C. Fruit

1. A life in perspective
2. Joy