

# 1 John 2:18-27

## THE GOSPEL

3/11/19

One of the consistencies about Christianity is the constant opposition to the gospel. It is criticized and countered in every generation and in every culture. John addresses that attack in his letters to the churches.

The gospel is the good news of Jesus, the Christ. The one who denies that Jesus is the Christ is a liar. In fact, they are anti-christs. The gospel is the truth that Jesus, the Son of God, came and took on flesh in order to pay the necessary and non-negotiable payment for sin. He made atonement for the sin of the world. That is the substance of the gospel.

The significance of the gospel is what it means for those who by faith respond to the offered gift of salvation. It is new life. Jesus came to die so that we might have new life in Him (1 John 2:25). Paul says it also (Romans 5).

My concern is that we tend to polarize ourselves a bit when we discuss or think through salvation. In an effort to understand all of its ramifications, we divide up the whole into bite size chunks to try and “digest” them. Is salvation justification, sanctification, or glorification? Is it instantaneous or progressive? Does a proper response involve confession, repentance, belief, or faith? What role does God play and what role do we play in the process?

Let me say that salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. He and only He has made, and only He could make, the necessary sacrifice for our sin. It involves His grace, our faith, and Christ’s work.

I think that John addresses those issues. Jesus is the one and only Christ. To deny that is to deny Him, is to deny the Father as well.

So, what is the result of response to the gospel? Regeneration or life from above. The impartation of new life in the Spirit. It is the transformation from being dead in our trespasses and sin into an entirely new life. It is a life that is characterized by spiritual things because it is a spiritual life. We hunger for the Word of God, we respond to the Spirit, we desire fellowship with God and with His children. In our flesh, none of those things are true.

The question is, how do we know we have this life? John has said that it is possible to be deceived and to deceive ourselves. What he tells his readers and us is that we know we have this life by the outflow of His life in us, and our willingness to obey.

I think we sometimes get confused about the role of obedience in the gospel. In 2 Thessalonians 2:5-12 Paul talks about the coming judgement for those who are not obedient to the gospel. Obedience is taking God at His Word and obeying what He says. That is the essence of faith. Do we trust God enough to believe Him? We are saved by faith to a new life lived by faith. In the great chapter on faith, the writer of Hebrews says the same thing (Hebrews 11:6).

I think Dallas Willard said it well, “Faith does not eliminate effort, it eliminates earning.”

