**Useless Gospel** 11/6/21 10:22 AM **Useless Gospel** Rom 1:16 - For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. NIV <u>Introduction</u> - This coming Thursday we will celebrate Veteran's Day. A day when we celebrate the sacrifice our veterans have made to secure our freedoms. A day when we celebrate the fact that these folks actually did something instead of just sitting back to wait for it to happen. They recognized that actions and sacrifice were required on their part if the hope of freedom was to be protected and secured for everyone. THANK GOD FOR ALL WHO HAVE SERVED! But as I think of the actions of these people I was led to think about the Gospel in which we believe. We are hopefully as passionate about the Gospel as we are about the idea of political freedom. [Hopefully we spend more time investing in and declaring the gospel than we do watching Political pundits and the re-spewing their ideology] In Our opening text Paul says He's not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. He's passionate about it. He believes in it. And He believes in it because "it is the power of God unto salvation" <u>Salvation</u> = welfare, prosperity, deliverance, preservation, salvation, safety. God's rescue which delivers believers out of destruction and into His safety Wholesale salvation is the message of the Gospel of Christ. This is the good news is that Jesus preached. **Luke 4:16-17** - 16 So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. 17 And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: 18 "The Spirit of the Lord [is] upon Me, because He has anointed Me [the Anointed One, the Messiah] to preach the good news (the Gospel) to the poor; He has sent Me to announce release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to send forth as delivered those who are oppressed [who are downtrodden, bruised, crushed, and broken down by calamity], 19 To proclaim the accepted and acceptable year of the Lord [the day when salvation and the free favors of God profusely abound]. NKJV, AMPC This is the Gospel of Christ! And Paul was not ashamed of this Gospel because IN HIS EXPERIENCE it produced power to save from any area of captivity. The Gospel he preached produced the results it said it should. To make an individual completely whole!! Paul was not ashamed because it worked! What did he mean by "ashamed"? Ashamed = [Epaischunomai] (ep-ahee-skhoo'-nom-ahee) - disgraced, like someone "singled out" because they misplaced their confidence or support ("believed the big lie"); to be ashamed, personally humiliated; refers to being disgraced, bringing on "fitting" shame that matches the error of wrongly identifying (aligning) with something. The kind of shame Paul spoke of was the kind of shame that comes from standing for something that actually doesn't work. Those that stand for freedom unashamedly, as our veterans did, did so because they knew it worked. They have seen that freedom produces tremendous liberties when it is applied properly to life. There is no cause to be ashamed of it because it works. And Paul had no cause for shame when it came to the Gospel because He saw it produced tremendous liberty when properly applied to a person's life. Because it worked!! But what if the Gospel did not produce power? What if it did not work in certain occasions? Does that change Paul's position? Is there cause to be ashamed of the Gospel if it doesn't produce what it says it should? Is there cause to abandon the Gospel of Christ if it doesn't produce results in someone's life? To answer that let me first say that the Gospel of Christ will always work when applied properly. Jesus didn't lie and His Gospel always delivers. If the Gospel doesn't produce results it's never because the Gospel of Christ didn't work as it should, it's because the Gospel of Christ wasn't worked as it should. What do I mean by that? Freedom only works when a person actively participates in it. And when freedom is applied properly. If our veterans had not stood up and done something, we very well could experience fewer freedoms. And if someone abuses freedom then it doesn't work properly. So for freedom to work, we must work it. The same applies to the Gospel For the Gospel to work, we must work it. And yet many say they believe the Gospel but are not working the gospel AND THEY ARE NOT GETTING THE RESULTS JESUS SAID THEY SHOULD. They are willing to continue to say they believe while what they say they believe has produced little of the results that Jesus gospel says we should be experiencing. They are believing a "Useless Gospel" They are not of the same mindset Paul was when He said "I am not ashamed" Paul was not ashamed because what he believed worked!! The implied conversion is "I would be ashamed if it didn't work". And yet some people say they believe the full gospel but show little results. They are just keep believing something that is not working. These are good people that refuse to deny the full gospel because it's in black & white. But they are just not getting results. STUPID - Doing the same thing over and over expecting different results. Paul was not ashamed because it delivered results This tells me that If our application and declaration of the gospel of Christ is not working, we should be ashamed. We should be so upset over it that we take time to evaluate. That you take time to understand why it isn't working. And you do what is necessary to correct it. That we don't just keep on blindly doing the same thing with no results, all the while saying that it should. To do otherwise is misleading and shameless. To tout what you believe, when what you believe never produces results, is actually irresponsible. You should be so ashamed of the lack of results that you determine to put yourself in the place Paul was that created his unashamed attitude. To put yourself in a position where what you believe and declare actually works. And so what I want to do today is to just hit a couple of points that could be the reason you may not be seeing the results that the Gospel of Christ says you should be seeing. **Elements of a useless gospel** What do I mean by a useless Gospel? A Gospel message of promises and rainbows that never requires responsibility on the part of the hearer and puts 100% of the onus on God. It is void of power. It's a false panacea of empty promises that lack the power of personal responsibility. And I want to share these today so you are not in the position of embracing a useless Gospel. One that will produce no results when you need it. One that never gets you out of the cycle of 1 step forward and 1 step back. What are some elements of a useless Gospel? As a Pastor I owe these truths to you to faithfully discharge my service to God. Why? So you don't abandon the full Gospel of Christ when results are not seen. And so you don't believe a half baked gospel. Top Line: A Useless Gospel is a gospel void of the responsibility of personal sacrifice. Not the false sacrifices of putting up with lack, hardship or suffering. For that is the very thing the Gospel of Christ proclaims freedom from!! We're not talking about you doing some heroic thing either. We're talking about you just taking care of the basics. **1 Samuel 15:22 - ...** Does the Lord really want sacrifices and offerings? No! He doesn't want your sacrifices. He wants you to obey him. CEV Saul had no conjured up some man made act of devotion to God but was holding onto disobedience in a very basic area. And what Samuel said was God doesn't want your grand gestures to cover your embraced disobedience. He just asks you to obey Him as He provides the miracles. **Psalms 51:16-17** - 16 For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart— These, O God, You will not despise. NKJV God just wants a humble obedient heart. We are talking about some very basic sacrificial acts of obedience. And a useless Gospel lacks these actions. Js 2:17 - ... faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. NKJV You can believe that God wants to bless you, help you and bring you out but if you don't embrace some of the basics areas of sacrificial obedience your faith is dead. So what's are the elements of a useless Gospel. 1. A Useless gospel is a gospel void of the sacrifice of obedience & holiness Isaiah 1:18-20 - 18 "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the Lord, "Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.19 If you are willing and obedient, You shall eat the good of the land; 20 But if you refuse and rebel, You shall be devoured by the sword"; For the mouth of the Lord has spoken."NKJV Notice that willingness and obedience are required to enjoy the good. Simply put, when you don't obey, you don't wind up in the place where the blessings are. You've failed to follow the treasure map to the fields of abundant blessing! God says, v18 "I'll forgive you" V19 "and if you'll do what I say, I'll lead your into the great things I've prepared for you" V19 "but if you don't you won't". He doesn't say, "I'll devour you" He say's "you'll be devoured". If God's not doing the devouring then who is and why? I Peter 5:8-9 - "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world." NKJV Notice who the devourer is. And he is devouring when we don't resist "In the faith". When we don't obey, not only do we wind up in the wrong places, but we erode our faith in God. And it opens the door for the enemy to attack. How does disobedience erode our faith in God? I John 3:18-20 - 18 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. 19 And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. 20 For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. Notice our hearts are assured before Him when we walk in the truth. This says nothing of His approval of us for that is already satisfied by the blood of Jesus! V20 - When we don't do the truth our hearts condemn us, God doesn't. God's forgiveness is greater. Because of the blood of Jesus God is good with us. But we still have to contend with the knowing on the inside of us that we are not fully lined up. THIS CONDEMNATION OF OUR OWN HEART EATS AWAY AT A STRONG STAND OF FAITH! So, One of the qualities that brings faith and assurance to our hearts is obedience and holiness. And when we get our hearts right it emboldens our faith to receive! I John 3:21-22 - 21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. 22 And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. NKJV When we walk in obedience it encourages our faith to believe! **<u>Trans</u>**: And so one of the areas that can make the Gospel useless is a lack of basic sacrificial obedience. Rom 12:1-2 - 1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Basic obedience is required for a Gospel that delivers results 2. A useless Gospel is void of the sacrifice of prayer and fasting. Matthew 17:14-21 - 14 And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying, 15 "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. 16 So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him." 17 Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me." 18 And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour. 19 Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" 20 So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. 21 However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting." NKJV Jesus said that the kind of faith that moves mountains requires time in prayer and fasting. Many people want to overcome problems when problems arise but have never invested the time to develop faith to move mountains. Amen or "oh me". When we don't see results in a time of crisis, it's never because the Gospel lacks power. It's never because God changed His mind. It's never because He meant something different that what he clearly stated. How many have abandoned the powerful potency of the pure unadulterated Gospel because they've failed to put in the sacrifice of prayer and fasting? They've settled for a quick devotional and a Facebook post as their daily spiritual sustenance while investing hours of time on frivolous things that produce no spiritual value. They've settled for the revelation of years gone by instead of fresh baked bread from current fires of the hearth of the altar of prayer. And when what they say they believe doesn't appear to work, they point the finger at God and say he lied or he didn't mean what he clearly said. Failing to realize most often it's because of a lack of preparation and sacrifice in prayer. . When to Gospel appears to be void of power it's often because we have not prepared prior to the crisis. We haven't put in the hours in prayer and fasting. [we're like the lazy squirrel that gathers no nuts in summer and fall] "Crisis prevention begins before the crisis begins" Prayer and fasting is the equivalent to exercise and diet in the natural. An athlete can't have good results without regular practice and proper diet. Champions are champions because they put in the extra work when no one else will. Why was Jesus able to deliver this boy when others weren't. He went away and prayed often when others were distracts or too tired. He sacrificed. He didn't allow His weak flesh to distract His willing spirit. Always remember that a willing heart or a strong desire to receive will not produce results alone. Desire mixed with consistent prayer and fasting are required. **Trans**: and so a useless gospel is one that is void of the sacrifice of prayer and fasting. 3. A useless Gospel is void of sacrifices for the sake of the Gospel Paul's Gospel was a gospel that produced power because he was willing to sacrifice to bring it's power to others. Acts 20:22-24 - 22 I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: 23 SAVE THAT THE HOLY GHOST WITNESSETH in every city, saying that BONDS AND AFFLICTIONS ABIDE ME. 24 But none of these things MOVE ME, neither COUNT I MY LIFE DEAR unto myself, so that I might -- testify the gospel of the grace of God. Paul made willful choices to put others before His personal comfort so they could be reached. For the Gospel to have power it will require personal sacrifice at times. Jesus said this of His own ministry Mark 10:45 - The Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. Jesus Gospel had power because He poured out His life for others. If our gospel is not going to be a useless gospel we must be willing to serve others. Sacrifice our time at times. Sacrifice our comfort for the comfort of others. Sacrifice our finances for the provision of others and the kingdom. For our Gospel to have power we must become the blessings the Lord intends us to be! Isaiah 58:5-9 - 5 "Is it a fast that I have chosen, A day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head like a bulrush, And to spread out sackcloth and ashes? Would you call this a fast, And an acceptable day to the Lord? 6 Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, To undo the heavy burdens, To let the oppressed go free, And that you break every yoke? 7 Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, And not hide yourself from your own flesh? 8 Then your light shall break forth like the morning, Your healing shall spring forth speedily, And your righteousness shall go before you; The glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.

9 Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; You shall cry, and He will say, 'Here

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that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the

Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel because it produced results.

And it produced results because it was not just a belief or ideal.

Much like the actions of the veterans we'll celebrate in a few short days.

Let's embrace those sacrifices today and watch our Gospel produce results.

I was a belief backed by corresponding actions.

The sacrifice of obedience and holiness

The sacrifice of prayer and fasting

The gospel that produces power is a gospel backed by:

3. The sacrificial life of serving and blessing others.

I am.' ...NKJV

**Conclusion** -

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A useless gospel is void of this.

But a powerful gospel is full of it!