

Who is the real Jesus?

“THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL”

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- Many people know Jesus, but don't really KNOW Jesus. Their knowledge is more religious than biblical.
- Many have grown up asking, "Why do we have to do this?" The answer usually was, "Because that is just how we have always done it!"
- We were told what 'not to do', but not 'how not to do it'!
- You weren't taught, 'Here is how you walk with Jesus, how you resist temptation, how you pray, etc.'!
- You won't have to be taught 'how to deal with problems/depression' when you fall in love with Jesus in a greater way.
- **Romans 1:16 (NKJV)** For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes . . .
- Salvation: (Sozo – Greek word) means deliverance, freedom, wholeness, completion, healing, victory; not just forgiveness of sins. Salvation is so much more than forgiveness.
- Jesus wants to bring completeness, wholeness, deliverance from what binds you, victory to your lives, love and acceptance . . . whatever you need to make you whole and beautiful!
- It's not good enough to someday make heaven your home, but to give you a life of freedom.
- In Romans 1:16, the word 'it' refers to the Gospel of Christ, Good News. 'It' **IS** the power of God!
- It doesn't say the Gospel of Christ 'has' the power of God, 'shows' the power of God, 'teaches' the power of God, or 'contains' the power of God, but it says the Gospel IS THE POWER OF GOD! The Bible doesn't confuse words or terms. It means what it says!
- The Gospel is the 'Good News' of Christ!
- **Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV)** For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.
- **Proverbs 4:20-22 (NKJV)** My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings. ²¹ Do not let them depart from your eyes; Keep them in the midst of your heart; ²² For they *are* life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh.
- These scriptures don't say the Word 'teaches' or 'shows' you life, but **IS ALIVE!**
- **John 6:63 (NKJV)** . . . The words that I speak to you are spirit, and *they* are life.
- In the Gospel, there are 'active ingredients'. There is 'stuff' in the Word that makes something happen!
- The Word of God has active properties; it's a book where God talks to you. It's ALIVE!
- Pastor's favorite verse: **Galatians 2:20 (NKJV)** I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.
- I was a chubby kid, with a poor self-image. I got beat up several times a week. A teacher told my parents I wasn't that smart. In my twenties, I was a Twinkie salesman, and happy to be that the rest of my life, but then I read Galatians 2:20, and all of the sudden . . . I GOT IT! I realized I wasn't limited by my own inabilities and lack of talents. The old me died with Christ, and I got His talents/abilities, and wisdom in return. The Gospel (the Good News of Christ) became alive in me!
- The Gospel **IS** the power of God in you. He wants to live through you!
- Read Paul's writings in I Corinthians, chapter 2. He speaks of wanting to not mess up the simple message of the Gospel, and make it not powerful.
- Last week I told of T. L. Osborn and meeting with him years ago. He told me the Gospel is simple. Don't explain it; Proclaim it! When you explain it, it loses its power! It's not about what you think; it's about what Jesus did!
- **Romans 3:21-25 (NKJV)** But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²² even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God set

forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,

- In the first eight chapters of Romans, Paul explains why the Gospel is so powerful.
- Righteousness, justification, redemption, propitiation, reconciliation. If you don't know and understand these five words, you won't know the power of God to change who you are into who you want to be.
- Righteousness: Right standing with God. ('Religion' never gives you that assurance.) We can't be good enough so God gives us Jesus' righteousness. It's not based on my performance, or how good I am.
- Justification: 'just as if' I had never sinned. The 'good news' is that even when I am born again, but still a jerk, He still loves me and forgives me each time, so that it is just as if I had never done it.
- Paul (as Saul) killed Christians and later said, "I didn't do that!" He said that because he had a revelation that was the 'old man' who had died with Christ. He knew he was forgiven, and he didn't identify with that lifestyle anymore; that was another person. He now had the righteousness of Christ on the inside of him.
- Redemption: This word came from Roman slave markets, a person shackled, standing in the market square, and someone purchases them, sets them free, gives them money, restores their dignity. 'Deem': means to value, or esteem. Jesus deemed you valuable!
- Propitiation: In the Old Testament, in the Holy of Holies, the blood was sprinkled over the broken law for the sins of the people on the mercy/judgment seat. The blood covered and cleansed!
- Colossians 2:13-14 (NKJV) And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, ¹⁴ having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.
- Roman 5:10-11 (NKJV) For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. ¹¹ And not only *that*, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.
- Reconciliation: The Gospel is a message that cancels all judgment and guilt.
- Why am I teaching this message? Because there is so much confusion about salvation today! Our power is in our message.
- John Newton was a slave trader, and the son of a slave trader. He was captain of two different slave ships. In a terrible storm he called on God, like his mama had taught him, and a 'light' came on! He started reading his Bible. His life was changed and he treated slaves differently. Yet, he still sold slaves. Later, with another slave ship, he almost died, but truly became born again. Yet, he continued to slave trade until he had a stroke. He went into the ministry, but lived with guilt, and could not forgive himself until he realized one day how merciful God is, that the price was paid on the cross for the awful things he had done. He then wrote the famous song, "*Amazing Grace*." Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me . . .
- His poem: *What Think Ye of Christ?*

What think you of Christ? Is the test
To try both your state and your scheme;
You cannot be right in the rest,
Unless you think rightly of Him.
As Jesus appears in your view,
As He is beloved or not;
So God is disposed to you,
And mercy or wrath are your lot.

Some take Him a creature to be,
A man or an angel at most:
Sure these have not feelings like me,
Nor know themselves wretched and lost.
So guilty, so helpless am I,
I durst not confide in his blood,
Nor on his protection rely,
Unless I were sure He is God.

Some call Him a Saviour, in word,
But mix their own works with his plan;
And hope He his help will afford,
When they have done all that they can:

If doings prove rather too light,
 (A little, they own, they may fail),
They purpose to make up full weight,
 By casting his name in the scale.

Some style Him the pearl of great price,
 And say He's the fountain of joys;
Yet feed upon folly and vice,
 And cleave to the world and its toys;
Like Judas, the Saviour they kiss,
 And while they salute Him, betray;
Ah! what will profession like this
 Avail in this terrible day?

If ask'd what of Jesus I think?
 Though still my best thoughts are but poor,
I say, He's my meat and my drink,
 My life, and my strength, and my store;
My Shepherd, my Husband, my Friend,
 My Saviour from sin and from thrall;
My hope from beginning to end,
 My portion, my Lord, and my All.

John Newton 1725-1807

- This is the Gospel I am talking about. There is nothing Jesus won't forgive!