

Gospel One Another

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[0 : 00] But following a theme this evening, and it's the last in the theme of the one another's, such an important part of biblical New Testament teaching, there's various counts about how many there are, there are at least 27, 28, one another's, and we haven't obviously gone and we've kind of grouped them together into a series of four.

And it's really this evening, what I want to do is I want to think about this for a short while, and then I would love you, I know it's not the theme of our Wednesday evening city groups, but I would love you to think more and more about this in your communities and all of us as a church. And it's so important to recognize these one another's.

You know, as I said in the pre-time is really short. And it's easy for us to get into the Word. It's easiest to hear it preached, to walk away untouched, to read the Bible, to be podcasted to death, and yet to let that stuff not permeate into our heart, to the deepest part of our hearts, so that we are being molded and remolded and changed all the time by the gospel. So, this evening we're going to look at four aspects to this gospeling one another, okay? That is, I don't know how best to explain it other than good newsing one another, talking to and being with and sharing our faith in Jesus Christ with one another. I think it's something we're not great at doing. I know I'm not great in many ways at doing that in a casual, relaxed, conversational way with my friends and others around me. And remember always, when we're looking at these one another's, it's a reciprocal pronoun. So, it's what is done to us and what we do with others. It's two way. It's how we live our lives as Christians. So, I just want, in gospeling one another, I want to say four things. The first is that we are teachers. We read that in Romans chapter 15 in the passage that we read together, verses 14 to 16. I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness filled with knowledge and able to instruct one another. And so, there's this great emphasis that as believers, we can instruct, we can teach one another. Now, we know that God has set apart some people with specific preaching and teaching gifts and are called to serve in that way. Just as we know, He's called some people to have specific gifts of generosity or hospitality or giving or administration. But it doesn't mean that the rest of us don't need to do any of these things. And the same is true with teaching. We all have a responsibility as one another's to teach one another, to instruct one another with the goodness and knowledge that we've received from Christ. It's an interesting verb here that is used to teach, to instruct. And it's used exclusively in the New Testament about the Scriptures. It's not teaching one another about sport or not teaching one another about business. It's about Scripture, and it's used in that context in the Bible all the time, that we are to point one another to the truth with that. Because we are full of goodness and we are filled with knowledge, we are able to instruct one another. That's not making a presumption there that saying that's what we can do, that we have this responsibility to point one another in our Christian lives, our friends, our neighbors, the people in city groups, the people around us, our husbands, our wives, our children, pointing each other to the truth of the gospel, highlighting the promises that may apply to someone in a very difficult situation, speaking the prayers of the gospel to one another, pointing people to the person of Christ. You're competent so to do as a Christian. You have the knowledge and you have the goodness that comes from the Holy Spirit who's living in you. And the challenges, they were to develop that and to grow in that knowledge and to grow in that ability to one another. It's not enough for us, I don't think, to simply rely on good books, good ministers or bad ministers, or just for you to stay ignorant as a Christian. It's not enough just to say, well, I became

a Christian a few years ago, but I'm not going to bother learning and growing and maturing in the faith. You have that responsibility to be a teacher and to receive teaching and instruction from others, young people instructing and discipling one another, older people doing it for younger people, younger people doing it with older people and recognizing that responsibility. We are teachers, gospeling, good newsing one another because we need that in our lives. I wonder if you've ever considered yourself an instructor, a teacher to others, and would you regard others as teachers to you? I think sometimes we'd get a bit prickly, wouldn't we? You know, why is he saying these things to me? Why is she saying these, but it's not in that kind of... The whole basis of it is in that context of a loving, trusting, open community of believers together who are in that relationship. So we are teachers, but can I say also that we are singers together? Ephesians 5, 15 to 21, you're going to read that for us at this point.

Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish but understand what the will of the Lord is, and do not get drunk with wine for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

[6 : 58] Okay, that's Ephesians 5 and it speaks about addressing one another, speaking to one another in hymns and psalms and spiritual songs, and then in Colossians chapter 3 and verse 16 and 17, it says, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching again and admonishing one another in all wisdom. It's kind of following, in all wisdom singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God, and whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

See, there's this whole sense of being soaked in the knowledge of the person of Jesus Christ and what that means for us, speaking in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs to God and to one another.

Now, it's quite interesting, isn't it? Because we always think of, for example, our gathering together and when we sing together, we think of that purely in terms of offering worship to God and praising Him and worshiping Him. But I do believe that the corporate nature of worship is more than just the worship vertically of God, however hugely significant that is. It is also an opportunity to recognize the encouragement and the blessing we gospel one another when we sing with one another.

Now, singing, singing praise to God as it's referred to in these verses is more than simply the sung praise, but it's certainly not less than that. It's speaking just really about the melody of our lives as well, isn't it? The way we live our lives, the theme of our songs that are important to us in our lives, singing is such a basic human, beautiful reality.

And we, through that, we express our worship to God, but we also speak to one another and we encourage one another and we refresh one another. And you see the difference in that Ephesians verse between being filled with a spirit, where we refresh one another in Sam's hymns and spiritual songs and being drunk on wine. It's such a great parallel, isn't it? Filled with a spirit, but not drunk with wine, which leads to debauchery. It's the foundation of our lives, what's important to us and what matters to us. I really believe in the power of sung praise in our lives. I think it's very important. It's not just an add-on to the worship. It's a significant, important part of our offering, not only to God, but also as we share great gospel truth in song and in Sam's with one another.

[10 : 02] Singing is the most basic and palpable interpretation, but also that whole idea of the theme of God's praise being the theme of our lives, as we live our lives together, that we have this thankful praise-worthy characteristic that we share with others. And we allow the theme of God's truth inspiring us, but also even warning us. You know, Sam's are great, aren't they? For teaching us about the justice, the character, the holiness of God. And so we will even admonish one another in the reality and in the truth of these songs that we know and that we sing. But as we meet together, as we live our lives together, as we share houses together, as we share company with one another, what is the theme of our lives and the theme of our conversation? Is it a discordant song that we're often singing?

Is it spiritually off-tune so that we're not bringing thanksgiving and praise to God through our lives and through our interactions with one another, but we're actually pushing people further away? What's the lyric of your life and the lyric of mine? What is it that people hear when they hear this song that we sing? Is it reflective of lives that are lived in the light or in the darkness? You know, that whole concept, the whole idea of giving thanks for everything and teaching one another God's great truth as we praise and worship as we gather together and as we share the themes, the biblical true and significant themes of what we sing and what we know, Gospling one another. That's the second thing. The third thing is that as we gospel one another, I've taken, I've drawn these themes to, I'm sure there's a lot more that we could say always, but we're definitely teaching one another with the gospel. We're singing to one another with the gospel, but we're also spiritually, spiritual partners together as one another in the gospel. First Thessalonians 5, 8 to 11, and I think Catherine's going to read that for us.

But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love for a helmet, the hope of salvation. For God is not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we're awake or asleep, we might live with him. Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up just as you are doing.

So that last verse, encourage one another and build one another up just as you're doing. It's one of the great one another, isn't it? That we're called to do. We're called to be those who build each other up in our Christian lives. You're to look for others to build you up and you're to offer yourself as an encouragement in building another person up spiritually. And it's such a great... That whole passage in First Thessalonians, we could have just spent our time on that. Three times it speaks about encouragement. Now, I can't remember, maybe you'll tell me, maybe, or those who were at the conference yesterday, was it today that Scott talked about encouragement or was it yesterday? Okay. It was yesterday.

Yeah. He talked about encouragement and that whole significance of being, encouraging to one another in the Christian faith. And again, what it's mentioned in Thessalonians, it's often in the light of the second coming of Jesus. Keep on doing these things. Keep building one another up because Jesus is coming back. So build each other up. Now, that's the...

[14 : 19] The Holy Spirit is the one who matures and grows us and builds us up. We're to cooperate with Him in the lives of other people in that work. We're to cooperate with God in that work, in the lives of other people. It's too easy to be an island spiritually. It's too easy simply to depend on your theological knowledge or your understanding of things without recognizing that you have this reciprocal responsibility to receive building up from someone and to give it to someone in your Christian life, a reciprocal work. We find ourselves... What comes naturally to you? I know what comes naturally to me is knocking people down. That's an easy thing to do. Now, when it comes to DIY and the lads here who work in the church will know this, I'm great at knocking things down. Excellent. I'm a great destroyer of things. It's great if you've got an old shed to get rid of. I'm your man. I'll knock it down because that's great and it doesn't require a lot of skill. It just requires a bit of muscle.

Even then, not that much. Just knock over. Destruction. It's good. That's what DIY is all about. But building something up, building a wall, building something constructive, building an Ikea bed, impossible. Katrina can do that. I can't do that because that requires skill and patience and time. But the same is true spiritually, we're to be those who build one another up. Easy to knock people down. It's easy to deflect from our own failings by knocking down other people destructively. But you know the world we live in, and can I just say it to the young people especially, you know the world you live in. You know the social media world that you and I, I don't live in it so much because I can't work it. But you know the world you live in, it's a world of fear and insecurity and stress and bad news very often. And people's tweets from 10, 15, 20 years ago are cast up on them so that they are knocked down and they are rejected and they are isolated. And the Christian community must be different from that. As we've said that here before, this is to be a safe place.

This is to be a place where we build one another up. We share meaningful truth and we recognize the significance of the life we're living with the breastplate of faith and love belonging to the day. Interesting, isn't it again? Let us be sober. The same attitude of being in control of being filled with the Spirit, of being self-control with God's Spirit in our lives. We recognize that we are to be building characters. And that's very important in terms of the one another because I think part of the imagery of the one another is reciprocal, it's also I think face to face. I think that reciprocity is a good thing which you can do on tweets but it's much better face to face. Relationships are much better done face to face because if you're annoyed or angry with someone, it's important to do two things.

One is to look at them face to face and be in their company. And the second thing is to pray for them. Both these things, be face to face with God with them and face to face with them and recognize that they are people and know their story and know their back story because easy when we're out of people's company to tear down reputations, characters and personalities in our fellowship sometimes by the way we speak about them, not to them but speak about them and the way we can judge them without knowing their situation. Now that doesn't mean that we're all just bland and shallow. It will mean that sometimes your friends in the church or your people in the church that you know and love your community, you will see that they have dodgy foundations, that there's things that are not right in their lives, flimsy behavior and you will point that out gently and in love in order to rebuild.

Sometimes isn't it true, we need to knock something down and rebuild it and that can be true in our lives. So that's the third thing we're spiritual partners. The last thing I want to say is from Hebrews chapter 10 verses 23 to 25 and James is going to read that.

[19:51] Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering for he who promised is faithful and let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together as is the habit of some but encouraging one another and all the more as you see the day drawing near. These are all from the writings, generally speaking from the writings of Paul and there's a similarity as he teaches these truths to different churches. And the last thing I want to say is we're teachers, we're singers, we're spiritual partners building one another up. And the last thing I want to say is we are different, hopefully we'll be a little bit provocative, we are irritants. In a good way, can I say that we're irritants? It says, let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works and then it goes on and say not neglecting meeting together, especially as a day approaches or spur on one another to love and good deeds. And the word there is just a word for provoking, stimulating, it could actually be jabbing, okay? So it's quite an aggressive word that we're being given here about the way we treat one another were to be good irritants of one another. You know how the oyster is formed, don't you?

It's formed, sorry, the pearl is formed in an oyster shell, it's when an irritant gets in there, a piece of grit and the protective pearl is built around it and something beautiful comes from it, it provokes a reaction. We've got a defibrillator at the front door, I hope we never have to use it, but what does it do? It shocks a heart that has stopped into action, it provokes a reaction. And I think it's right that we recognize that in our Christian lives we should be lovingly provocative sometimes of one another, provoking, competing, maybe that's not the right word, but pushing one another on. As you know, as you would with a friend, the kind of thing you would do with your best friend, there's a kind of edge, a loving edge to one another where you're spurring them on, where you say, you know, you can do better than that. You can move forward, you need to pull out of this, not in any kind of arrogant or judgmental way, but because you have this great relationship of honesty and truth with one another in friendship. And that's the kind of picture here, we're provoking one another to love and to good deeds with one another, help one another overcome sometimes that spirit of apathy or a lack of belief in ourselves that sometimes we have or a denial of our gifts, oh, you know, God, God, God doesn't give me any gifts, I can't do anything. No, you do. He has given you. Serve Him with what you are and with who you are. Provoke lovingly the people around you to serve. Don't let those closest to you in

Christ hide behind their insecurities or be content with being in the spiritual shadows as if they've got nothing to give and nothing to offer. We're all to be those who provoke and encourage and instruct and teach and sing and build one another up. We've all got these gifts, we've all got these abilities in Christ. And so there's that sense of being good irritants together. So you're looking to the Christian beside you and you're saying, don't give up, keep on going. Don't retreat from the front line. Don't give up meeting together. Why have you stopped coming to church or why have you stopped praying? Be that loving irritant in the life of those that we are called to be beside and accept it from others in the spirit of love. Isn't that the hardest thing, the reciprocal nature of living that Christian life where someone who takes us and puts his arm on our shoulder and says, come on. We don't recoil and we don't turn away and we don't become defensive and we don't walk.

But we see the eyes of love and we see the eyes of Christ and we hear the voice of Christ. Sometimes you're going to have to say to someone, where else are you going to go? Jesus is the words of eternal life. And that's what we're provoking. That's why that's the days approaching, isn't it? I'm glad that day's approaching. Things are looking not so great in the world in which we live. But the day is approaching. And so we encourage one another.

So in conclusion, remind ourselves, these are challenging one another's, the gospeling of one another. That is, is the keeping of Christ central to all that we are and all we do. And I guess the question coming from it in conclusion is, how well do we know one another to enable us to do this? There's a level of love and trust needed, isn't there, to live like this? I don't think it's easy for any of us to be as honest and committed and vulnerable as these biblical one another's encourages us to be, to intentionally change our lives so that we are reliant on others and allow others to be reliant on us in our Christian walk. It can only come as we stand at the foot of the cross in wonder. And was

[26 : 10] He opened our heart, our hearts to the life that He created us to know through His crucifixion and resurrection and ascension, as we crucify our sinful natures and link arms together on the way to the house of feasting, where joy will know no bounds and where death and darkness are banished forever. One another, gospeling one another. I mean, let's pray.

Father God, help us to be good gospelers of one another. We have good news. We've received good news as Christians. We are to live that good news with one another and all its aspects and all its challenges for us, but not in our own strength, Lord, we come and cry out to you for forgiveness when we haven't for strength in order to do this. And just for that great perspective that helps us to see that in so doing, we're going to enjoy life to the full. I pray particularly this evening for any who are either watching online or who are here who don't know Jesus, who have not come to the foot of the cross and seen a Savior who has died for them. And I pray that you would open their eyes and touch their hearts this evening to see that. Lord, help us into this week that we've entered. Help us to be encouraged, may we go from here built up in the most holy faith. Amen.