

“A Gospel that Can’t Fail, but a Faith that Can”

INTRODUCTION:

There is a saying, “read the fine print.” It refers to revealed yet often overlooked information that is critical to both the provider and the consumer. Within the fine print is often critical disclaimers which, in the event that something goes wrong the provider is able to say, “the failure is not in us; it’s on you.” Feels like a scam to me because why would such chital information be written so small that it could be easily missed. God does not put thing we need to know in fine print. He makes sure you know, and can't miss it.

One such matter is the truth that *the gospel* can't fail but there is a *faith* can.

PREACHING THE UNFAILING GOSPEL (4-8)

Because we have an unfailing gospel we should not fail to preach it.

Our Text reads:

⁴Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word.

All Christians have been called to preach and empowered to do it. Christians preach this unfailing gospel; that’s what Christians have historically done and do.

- “*Those*” according to v. 1 are “all except the apostles”
These are Christians on the move who instinctively preach the gospel as they go wherever they go.
- “who were scattered” - Luke’s word for “scattering” “*Diaspeiro*” is related to the word for “seed.” Seeds are not just thrown, but they are sown. God’s people are sent out with the gospel and it is pregnant with life and power. Christians don’t just “go,” but they grow, and that is what is happening here.
- God is the sower, and He providentially scatters His seeds everywhere according to his purposes.

Implication: That means our comings and our goings may not always be planned, preferred, expected, desired, convenient, “up our alley,” but the Master Sower will have a witness to the uttermost parts of the earth.

In the text neither *persecution* nor *relocation* can stop the word from spreading. Christians are led by God to preach where they are and wherever they go. Chapter 8 begins to show us how God created momentum from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and beyond. How he shifted the task of ministry from primarily the apostles to including the “ordinary Christian.” Every Christian is not vocationally full-time preacher, but “preaching” the gospel is what ordinary Christians ordinarily do. They began to preach the word as they “went about.”

PREACH “THE WORD”

“preached the word” – “as they went about”.

- *Euangelizo – bring good news (5x in this chpt)*
- *kerryso – herald; proclaim – shout it out. Just say it.*

Christ is the content of the word preached.

⁵ Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ.

- All true gospel preaching is about Christ.
- All true Christian preaching conveys Christ
- Certainly all evangelism proclaims Christ.

Preaching Christ is preaching some facet of

- His person
- His work
- His reign
- His relevance
- His power

The Christian’s purposes in preaching conforms to Christ and His purposes for preaching.

⁶ And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip when they heard him and saw the signs that he did. ⁷ For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who had them, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. ⁸ So there was much joy in that city.

Philip preach for God’s glory

- As the power of the proclaimed gospel was displayed and not Philip’s personality, God received glory.

Philip Preached for man's good and man's joy.

- As they were delivered and healed, they were filled with joy because of what the power of God had done.

Biblically preaching is for God's glory and man's good.

God wants a "full house" –a people from every nation.

Lk 14:23 - ³And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled.

- Samaritans were not popular among the Jews. They historically clashed, were separated, and had friction. God determined to win them through the gospel. God providential solved the issue of distance, the issues of difference, and Issues of stigmas and tension.

God wants to save and enrich people.

(Rm 10:12-15)

¹²For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. ¹³For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." ¹⁴How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? ¹⁵And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"

The Christian's Prize in Preaching

The prize is the joy of seeing people find joy and satisfaction in Christ.

THE PROBLEM OF FAULTY BELIEF (9-24)

A Tale of Two . . .

Two Kinds of Practices, Persuasion, and Power

*⁹But there was a man named Simon, who had **previously practiced** magic in the city and amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great. ¹⁰They all paid attention to him, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the power of God that is called Great." ¹¹And they paid attention to*

him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic. ¹² But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. ¹³ Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed.

Contrast between practices of Philip and Simon

- Philip the missionary vs. Simon the magician
- The ministry vs. magic
- The word vs. “the wow”
- Simplicity of devotion to Christ vs. Sensationalism of Simon

Contrast between the Persuasiveness of Philip and Simon

- Philip just came and **proclaimed Christ**...Simon **proclaimed “Self”** and his greatness.
- Philip won their attention with “the Word factor”
- Simon won their attention with the “wow factor”

Biblically preaching should aim to persuade people of Christ’s glory not one’s own. Jesus even said, “I do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it...” Philip 2 – He emptied himself making himself of no reputation.

1 Cor. 3:5 “Some say they are of Paul; some say they are of Apollos.” What is Apollos? What is Paul?” but servants through whom you believed. “So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.”

1 Cor 4:1—this is how you should regard us things of us as servants of Christ and stewards of the mystery of God.

We are not to minister as celebrities . . . but servants. This must be insisted on because people want glorious, superstars, and celebrities to follow. Deflect the glory, embrace God’s humbling methods, and preach Christ for sake and his glory.

Contrast between the power of Philip and Simon

¹² But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. ¹³ Even Simon himself believed, and after

being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed.

- Power given by Christ vs. Power given by Satan
- Power to change realities vs. the power of illusion
- Power to deliver vs. the power to enslave

SIMON LOOSES...SATAN LOOSES.

Simon lost the showdown, and lost the crowd.

PHILIP WINS...JESUS WINS

Just like the showdown between the Egyptian gods and Yahweh, and the prophet of Elijah and the prophets of Baal, The Canaanites the people of God---God wins, Satan loses, Light prevails over darkness.

Jesus always wins. On earth he proved it, in death he proved it, in resurrection he proved it, post resurrection he proves it.

- He won against sickness
- He won against wind and solar
- He won against demons
- He won against death
- He even wins in ministry

Contrast in "Belief"

Samaritans believed and were baptized and Simon "believed" and was baptized. But something was different in what follows.

The Necessity of "Belief"

You must believe!!!

Mk 1:15 - Jesus preached "the kingdom is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

Jn 3:18 - "18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

Jn 3:36 - Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the son Shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

Jn 6:28-29 – Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” Jesus answered them, “This is the world of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.”

John 8:24 [Pharisees] I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe I am He you will die in your sins.

Don't tell me what you believed tell me what you believe; tell me what are believing!!! ----Dr. Bingham

Are you a believer today? *Are you believing today?*

FINE PRINT ALERT! The Necessity of *Right* Belief

Jn 2:23-25

²³ Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. ²⁴ But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people ²⁵ and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.

Jn 6:63b - 66

The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. ⁶⁴ But there are some of you who do not believe.” (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.) ⁶⁵ And he said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.”

⁶⁶ After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.

Baptism is... fully immersion. Full commitment.

FAULTY FAITH IS FOCUSED ON...

- SENSATIONALISM
- THE COMMERCIAL

- THE PERSONAL GAIN

14 Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, 15 who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, 16 for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.

18 Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, 19 saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

Something Wrong with Simon's Faith.

From tradition – Simon is said to have become a cult leader and enemy of the faith.

From the text—everything about Simon seems to be apart of a contrast from what is right and good.

- v. 9 "But a man named Simon
- v. 12 "But the Samaritans stopped following Simon and started following Philip
- v.19 "But Peter said, "Perish"

Peter rebukes him

20 But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! 21 You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. 22 Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. 23 For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity."

HELLO!!! God nor, the gospel is about "us!"

The Spirit will not be used or manipulated.

The Spirit comes to highlight the word not distract from it.

The laying on of hands by the apostles was an act of confirmation that Philip had been used of God to do actual spiritual work; and that the Samaritans had experience actual Spirit-produced conversion.

PROCEEDING WITH GOD'S PLAN OF FAITHFUL PROCLAMATION

25 Now when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.

Implication

- Believe the gospel
- As you go, preach the good news—proclaim of his excellencies.
- Declare CHRIST and make His appeal.
- Do life and ministry God's way and not man's way.
- Be impressed with the right things

CONCLUSION:

It's been said that God gave us the First Great Awakening and man gave us the Second. The key difference between them was the centrality of the role of the preaching vs. the centrality of the use of human techniques. In the words of John MacArthur—"sow the seed and go to sleep!" Proclaim the gospel and let the power of God produce the right belief."