

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

“EXALTING CHRIST THROUGH THE GOSPEL”

Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Ben Bailey.

“Give unto the Lord the glory due to His name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness” (Ps. 29:2). Welcome to our study of exalting Christ through the Gospel. The child of God has the privilege and the responsibility of glorifying the name of God in all that he says and does. In fact, that is why I am here. And there is why you are here on this Earth. God said in Isaiah 43:7, “Everyone who is called by My name, whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him.” God created us to laud and magnify His holy name by our lives and actions. As the apostle Paul thought about the need for Christians to live lives worthy of God and the Gospel, he said, “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31). In whatever actions we take or words we say, we must make sure that we honor God. Ecclesiastes 12:13 says, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all.” Jesus taught in Mark 12:30 that we are to love the Lord our God “with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.” That is the first and greatest commandment.

To encourage and remind us to exalt Christ, I want to remind us today of three truths that each of us should keep fresh in our minds. First, to be mindful of exalting Christ in everything we do, we need to be reminded of who we were. Who were you before you came to Christ? Romans 3:23 tells us, “All have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God.” We were all lost outside of Christ. Romans 6:23 says that “the wages of sin is death.” All sin is unrighteous. Thus, we were unrighteous. We were lost in sin. And we were separate from God outside of Christ. According to Isaiah 59:1-2 and Habakkuk 1:13, sin separates us from a holy God. Think of your own life in the words that Paul used in Ephesians 2:1—“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” How should we view our lives? What can motivate us to exalt Christ? We have been made spiritually alive, when previously we were dead in Christ.

Second, we must remember what God has done to bring us to our current place in life. God sent His Son to die for our sins. “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (Jn. 3:16). The Scriptures tell us of the love of Christ.

“When we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:6-8).

We are told in 2 Corinthians 8:9, “You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.” Hebrews 2:9 tells us that Christ “tasted death for every man.” He is the “propitiation for our sin” (1 Jn. 2:2). He made the once-for-all sacrifice (Heb. 10:12). In Hebrews 9:22 we are told that “without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.” Jesus gave up His life and died on the cross so that we could have the hope of Heaven.

What else has God done? If we are Christians (people who have obeyed the Gospel), God has forgiven us of all of our sins. In Romans 6:17 Paul wrote, "But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered." Once we obeyed the doctrine of Christ, we were set free from the slavery of sin. In Psalm 103:10 we are informed that we do not receive what we deserve for having lived in sin: "God has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities." So what has God done? He has cast all of our sins into the depths of the sea (Mic. 7:18-19). He has given us redemption in Christ (Col. 1:14). He has made Christ (the spotless Lamb of God) to be our sacrifice for sin. As Jesus instituted the Lord Supper, He said, "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Mt. 26:28). When John the Immerser saw Jesus approaching, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn. 1:29). We need to remember who we were, and we also need to be mindful of what God has done for us. He sent His Son to die for us. And He has forgiven us of all our past sins.

Third, we need to realize who we are. We are children of the King and heirs of Heaven itself. Galatians 4:4-6 teaches us that God has adopted us as sons and daughters. "When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons." We are adoptive children of God. We have received the love of God, which makes us children of God. "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him" (1 Jn. 3:1). We have given God's love. Thus, we are children of the God Who created everything. In 1 Corinthians 12:27 we are told that we are members of the body of Christ. We are "members individually, one of another." We are privileged to be Christians and to be a part of the church for which Jesus died. In Acts 11:26 the Bible says, "They were called Christians first in Antioch." We wear the name of Christ; thus, we must glorify Him.

So how can we exalt Christ through the Gospel and by living the Christian life? What can we do to bring glory and honor to God? We can exalt Christ by knowing God's Word. Nothing honors God more than the person who knows His Word and who tries to live by it. Hasn't God always expected people to know His will? In 1 Peter 3:15 Christians are told, "Always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." We are told, "Do not be ignorant, but understand the will of the Lord" (Eph. 5:17). "If the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation" (Heb. 2:2-3)? We are taught to "study to show ourselves approved unto God" (2 Tim. 2:15). We are taught to search the Scriptures daily (Acts 17:11). Notice the importance of doing that—from the words of Jesus in John 8:31-32—"If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." We glorify God by knowing His Word. If the Lord were to come back today and take an evaluation of our lives and ask, "How much do you study My Word?," would you be glad to answer, or would you be ashamed? We can't trick the Lord or lie to Him like we can other humans. If we had to give an account of how much we really study our Bibles, would you be happy, or would you be sorrowful because you had not spent enough time in the Scriptures? We must study the Scriptures because our spiritual strength depends upon us knowing God's Word and living by it. The Bible says in Psalm 119:10-12 that we are to hide God's Word in our hearts so that we will not sin against Him. Later the psalmist said, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light unto my path" (Ps. 119:105). No one wants to walk in the darkness because he might step on something, trip, fall, or get off the path. God's Word is the lamp or light that gives us spiritual direction. How can we

overcome Satan? “They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death” (Rev. 12:11). God’s Word helps us defeat our archenemy. In Jeremiah 10:23 the prophet said concerning the power of God’s Word, “O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.” We cannot direct our steps, spiritually speaking. We cannot choose our own correct path. Thus, for strength and spiritual vitality we must study God’s Word. It is God’s “power unto salvation” (Rom. 1:16). It is everything we need to live the best lives and to go to Heaven (2 Pet. 1:3). It is the living, powerful Word that divides spirit and joints and marrow. It is a “discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12). We should glorify God by being a people of The Book. If you want to please God today, get busy studying the Bible. It will honor God when you heed His Word.

We can honor God and exalt Christ through the Gospel by living our lives according to it every day. If we want to live lives that glorify God, then daily we need to live God’s Word in our lives. Jesus taught that Christianity is a daily venture. In Luke 9:23 the Lord said, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.” What does it mean to live daily for Jesus? It means that we must deny ourselves. To exalt Christ, we have to dethrone ourselves. In Romans 12:1-2 the Bible says,

“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. 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.”

What our lives supposed to be? They are supposed to be “living sacrifices” because they have been transformed by the power of the Gospel, which causes us to try to prove God’s will. In Galatians 2:20 the apostle Paul said, “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.” We need to have the same mindset that Paul had in Philippians 1:21 when he said, “To me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” We should be motivated to deny ourselves by the great love of God. In 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 we are told,

“The love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.”

We are to live for Jesus, and deny self every day. But we also must follow Jesus, Who said, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me” (Lk. 9:23). What does it mean for us to “take up our cross and follow Christ”? It means that we must have the mindset of Christ. We must walk in Christ’s steps. And we must try to be like Christ in this life. In 1 Peter 2:21 we read, “To this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps.” In 1 Corinthians 11:1 Paul said, “Imitate me as I also imitate Christ.” In Revelation 7:11-14 and in Revelation 14 we see pictures of the redeemed. The question is asked, “Who are these people?” The answer was, “These are they who followed the Lamb where-soever He went.” We need to do whatever Jesus says (Jn. 10:25). We need to realize that He is the Good Shepherd. He is the door to the kingdom, and we must follow Him and try to be like Him.

What does it mean to really live for Christ every day? If we were to list some things that the Bible says we are to do daily, what would those things be? First, we should pray daily. In Psalm 86:3 the psalmist said, “I cry unto You daily!” Do we pray every day? In 1 Thessalonians 5:17 we are told that we are to “pray without ceasing.” If we want to exalt God, we need to exalt Him through our prayers.

Second, we also need to evangelize daily. Think about the powerful example of Acts 5: 40-42. The Scripture tells us that Peter and John had just been beaten, yet they counted themselves worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus. Then we read that “daily in the temple and in every house they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.” We can glorify God every day by telling someone about the Gospel.

Third, we also can glorify God on a daily level by being benevolent. In Acts 6:1 we read of certain Grecian widows who were being neglected in the daily distribution. There were people who were in need every day. There were things they lacked on a daily basis. Thus, the church daily provided for their needs.

Fourth, we can exhort and encourage others daily. Hebrews 3:12-13 says, “Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily.” We need to strengthen ourselves daily, and we need to uplift and encourage each other on a daily basis.

Fifth, we need to study our Bibles daily. In Acts 17:11 we read about the Bereans, of whom it is said, “These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.”

There are some very practical things that each of us can do on a daily basis to glorify God. But let’s think about other things that we can do to help us exalt Christ through the Gospel. For example, if we want to exalt Christ, we need to teach “the whole counsel” of God. There are undoubtedly people in this world who teach bits, pieces, and portions of what Christ said. But that does not glorify God. The man who speaks “as the oracles of God” is the person who glorifies God (1 Pet. 4:11). The man who is willing to preach all of the Word of God (2 Tim. 4:2) is the person who glorifies God. Paul told Titus to “speak the things that are proper for sound doctrine” (Tit. 2:1). The person who speaks all that God has said is the one who glorifies God. Look at what Paul told the Ephesians elders to do in Acts 20:27—“I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.” We are to preach God’s Word both in season and out of season (meaning when people like it, and when they don’t like it—or when it’s comfortable or when it’s uncomfortable). Look at the life of Jonah, who had to learn this lesson the hard way. God told Jonah to go preach to the city of Nineveh. Jonah despised the Assyrians so much that he got on a boat and went the opposite direction. Finally he ended up in the belly of the great fish, and was vomited up on the seashore. Then God told him, “Preach the preaching that I bid you” (Jon. 3:2). We must take God’s message in its entirety to the whole world so that people can know how to live faithfully.

Also, if we want to glorify God, we must get serious about evangelism. Sometimes we talk about evangelism, preach about it, or pray about it. But do we take it seriously every day? If we want to live lives that glorify God, we must realize that the last, dying request of Jesus was for us to share the Gospel with others. In Matthew 28:19-10 Jesus told us to take the Gospel to “all nations.” Paul said in Colossians 1:28, “Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” Look at Jesus’ command in Mark 16:15—“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” There is our responsibility! We are to proclaim the praises of Him who “called us out of darkness” (1 Pet. 2:9). The disciples who were scattered were to go everywhere preaching the Word (Acts 8:4). The Bible tells us in 2 Corinthians 4:13 that if we really believe, we cannot help but speak. Paul said, “We have believed; therefore we speak.” Do we really believe Jesus? Do we really believe that He is the only way of salvation? If we do, then the logical end is for us to tell others about the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

How else can we glorify God in our lives? When a person obeys the Gospel, he exalts Christ more than you can ever begin to imagine. Obedience is a “must.” It is not an option. It is absolutely essential if we want to please God. Do you remember what Jesus said when He was preaching to the Jews in the Sermon on the Mount? In Matthew 7:21, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.” To exalt Christ, we must obey Him. In Luke 6:46 Jesus asked, “Why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do the things which I say?” In essence Jesus was saying, “If you’re not going to obey Me, don’t even dare call me ‘Lord!’” In Hebrews 5:8-9 the writer said concerning Christ’s own obedience, “Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.” James 1:22 tells us that we are not to be only hearers of the Word, but doers. That is what pleases God. We are to “obey from the heart that form of doctrine” Rom. 6:17). So let me ask the question, “If a person wants to glorify God with his life, what must he do to obey the Gospel?”

The Scriptures are clear on this. First a person must hear God’s Word. Romans 10:17 says, “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” A person must hear what God says regarding salvation. Second, a person must believe in that message. In Acts 8:36-38 Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch were riding down the road in a chariot. They came to a certain water. Philip had been teaching the eunuch about Jesus, and no doubt about the plan of salvation. Thus, the eunuch asked, “Here’s water; what hinders me from being baptized?” Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” A person must believe with all his heart that Jesus is the Son of God. Third, then he must confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (Rom. 10:10; Acts 8:37). Fourth, a person must repent of sin in his life. In Joel 2:13 we are told to “rend our hearts, not just our garments.” What does that mean? In Acts 3:19 we are told to “repent and turn again.” Repentance is a turning from sin to God. Fifth, then a person must be immersed in water. Bible baptism is immersion. John 3:23 tells us that John was baptizing where there was “much water.” What mode of baptism requires “much water”? Full-body immersion does. Jesus was immersed (Mk. 1:9-11). As He “came up out of the water” the Holy Spirit descended upon Him “like a dove.” To come up out of the water, what must a person first do? A person first must go down into the water. Baptism is immersion. Baptism is a “must.” In Acts 2:38, in the very first Gospel sermon ever preached, said, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Saul was told by Jesus to go into Damascus, where he would be told what he “must do” (Acts 9:4-6). What “essential thing” did Paul have to do? In Acts 22:16 we see Ananias asking Saul, “Why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” In 1 Peter 3:21 Peter said that “baptism does now also save us.” Did you know that baptism is what puts a person into Christ? In 2 Timothy 2:10 we are told that salvation is found only “in Christ.” In Ephesians 1:3 we are told that “all spiritual blessings” are found only “in Christ.” In the circle that represents a person’s being “in Christ” are found all spiritual blessings and salvation. If a person is outside of that circle, how does he get into the circle (that is, into Christ)? Galatians 3:27 says, “As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” We get “into Christ” (where salvation is) through baptism.

Have you submitted to the will of God? Are you thinking about possibly wanting to change your life and exalt Christ? There is no greater time to do that than right now. Or if you as a child of God know that you’re not living your life correctly, then you can exalt Christ by confessing sin, repenting of it, and living a life that is true to God. If we confess our sins, the Bible says that God is “faithful and just to forgive us” (1 Jn. 1:7). May each of us take to heart the words of Psalm 29:1-2, “Give unto the Lord, O you mighty ones, Give unto the

Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due to His name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." We hope that you will do that in your life as you strive to live for Christ.

Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

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STUDY QUESTIONS FOR “EXALTING CHRIST THROUGH THE GOSPEL”

1. What does Psalm 29:2 urge us to do?
2. According to Isaiah 43:7, why did God create humankind?
3. What does 1 Corinthians 10:31 urge all Christians to do?
4. According to Ecclesiastes 12:13, what is our purpose while living on Earth?
5. What important point is found in Romans 3:23?
6. What important point is found in Romans 6:23?
7. What important point is found in Romans 5:6-8?
8. According to Hebrews 2:9, what did Christ do for every person on Earth?
9. According to John 1:29, what did Christ do for every person on Earth?
10. According to Galatians 4:4-6, what are Christians?
11. What is one way, according to 2 Timothy 2:15, that we can exalt Christ?
12. According to Psalm 119:105, what is God’s Word?
13. In Luke 9:23 Christ told us how to exalt Him daily. What did He say in that text?
14. Romans 12:1-2 gives us a way to exalt Christ. What is it?
15. What, according to 1 Thessalonians 5:17, is one way that we can exalt Christ daily?
16. According to Mark 16:15, what is one way that we can exalt Christ daily?
17. According to Hebrews 3:13, what is one way that we can exalt Christ daily?
18. According to Acts 17:11, what is one way that we can exalt Christ daily?
19. According to 1 Peter 4:11, what can we do to exalt Christ?
20. According to Titus 2:1, what can we do to exalt Christ?
21. According to Paul’s example in Acts 20:27, what is something that we can do to exalt Christ?
22. According to Pau’s statement in Colossians 1:28, what is something that we can do to exalt Christ?
23. One way of exalting Christ is by obeying the Gospel. How, according to the New Testament, does a person do that?