

LESSON FOUR

The Barriers to the Gospel— How Can You Bear to See Someone Perish?

Hymn: 921

I. The barriers in the self:

- A. Self-conscious, shameful feeling: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel”—Rom. 1:16a.
- B. So-called “paying more attention to what we are than what we do”—2 Cor. 6:1; 1 Cor. 15:10; Rom. 12:3; 1 Cor. 3:10; Matt. 25:14-30:
 - 1. “And working together with Him, we also entreat you not to receive the grace of God in vain”—2 Cor. 6:1.
 - 2. “But by the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace unto me did not turn out to be in vain, but, on the contrary, I labored more abundantly than all of them, yet not I but the grace of God which is with me”—1 Cor. 15:10.
 - 3. Grace coming to us enables us to labor for the Lord, and laboring for the Lord enables us to enjoy more grace.
- C. Stop preaching the gospel as soon as frustration comes—Luke 15:3-7.
- D. Afraid of losing “freedom” after preaching the gospel—Matt. 5:16; 1 Pet. 2:12; Phil. 2:14-16a
 - 1. “In the same way, let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in the heavens”—Matt. 5:16.
 - 2. “Having your manner of life excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the matter concerning which they speak against you as evildoers they may, by your good works, as they see them with their own eyes, glorify God in the day of His visitation”—1 Pet. 2:12.
 - 3. “That you may be blameless and guileless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine as luminaries in the world, holding forth the word of life, so that I may have a boast in the day of Christ that I did not run in vain nor labor in vain”—Phil. 2:15-16.
- E. Afraid of losing worldly friends and futures—Mark 8:35-36; 10:29-30.
 - 1. “For whoever wants to save his soul-life shall lose it; but whoever will lose his soul-life for My sake and the gospel’s shall save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul-life?”—Mark 8:35-36.
 - 2. “Jesus said, Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for My sake and for the gospel’s sake, but that he shall receive a hundred times as much now at this time, houses

and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and fields, with persecutions, and in the coming age, eternal life”—10:29-30.

II. The barriers in concept:

- A. Thinking that gospel preaching is only certain ones' business and not ours—Exo. 19:6; John 15:2, 5, 8, 16; 1 Cor. 9:16-17; Gal. 2:7:
1. This is the concept of clergy-laity from the fallen Christianity, but God's desire is for all His children to be priests of the gospel of God; everyone should be a fruit-bearing branch of the vine, and everyone should be a functioning member of the Body of Christ.
 2. “And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation”—Exo. 19:6.
 3. “You yourselves also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house into a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ...But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people acquired for a possession, so that you may tell out the virtues of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light”—1 Pet. 2:5, 9.
 4. “That I might be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, a laboring priest of the gospel of God, in order that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, having been sanctified in the Holy Spirit”—Rom. 15:16.
 5. “You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and I set you that you should go forth and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give you”—John 15:16.
- B. Wanting to wait until we are fully equipped before preaching the gospel—John 1:43-46; 4:39; Gal. 1:15b-17; Acts 9:19b-20:
1. “The next day He wanted to go forth into Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, Follow Me. Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, wrote, Jesus, the son of Joseph, from Nazareth”—John 1:43-45.
 2. “And many of the Samaritans from that city believed into Him because of the word of the woman who testified, He told me all that I have done”—4:39.
 3. “But when it pleased God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me that I might announce Him as the gospel among the Gentiles, immediately I did not confer with flesh and blood, neither did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away to Arabia and again returned to Damascus / And once he had taken food, he was strengthened. And he was with the disciples in Damascus for some days. And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, that this One is the Son of God”—Gal. 1:15-17 / Acts 9:19-20.
- C. Not knowing the danger of not being saved—Heb. 9:27; 2 Thes. 1:9-10

1. “And inasmuch as it is reserved for men to die once, and after this comes judgment”—Heb. 9:27.
 2. “They will pay the penalty of eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His strength when He comes to be glorified in His saints and to be marveled at in all those who have believed (because our testimony to you was believed) in that day”—2 Thes. 1:9-10.
- D. Not knowing the power of the gospel: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes, both to Jew first and to Greek”—Rom. 1:16.
- E. Lacking in the knowledge of the Lord’s preciousness—Phil. 3:7-8; John 17:3; 2 Pet. 1:2; Gal. 1:15-16:
1. “But what things were gains to me, these I have counted as loss on account of Christ”—Phil. 3:7.
 2. “But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ”—v. 8.
- F. Not knowing that gospel preaching is a battle—Eph. 6:12; Matt. 12:29; Isa. 49:24-25:
1. “For our wrestling is not against blood and flesh but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenlies”—Eph. 6:12.
 2. “Or how can anyone enter into the house of the strong man and plunder his goods unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will thoroughly plunder his house”—Matt. 12:29.
- G. Thinking that it is not the right time for gospel preaching: “Proclaim the word; be ready in season and out of season; convict, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and teaching”—2 Tim 4:2.

III. The barriers in experience:

- A. Lacking in the experience of the joy of salvation—Isa. 12:3; John 4:10, 14; 7:37-38; Hymn 309.
- B. Lacking in the testimony in daily life:
1. The example of Lot—Gen. 19.
 2. “We need a real testimony by experiencing the death and resurrection of Christ in our daily life. If we do not have a real testimony in life, then the more we preach, the more we will hinder the gospel. Many dear Christians simply cannot preach the gospel to their relatives because they have no testimony.” (*Preaching the Gospel in the Way of Life*, ch. 11)

IV. The barriers in environment:

- A. The church lacking in the practice of gospel preaching:
1. The practice of the big gospel preaching meeting (thinking that it’s sufficient to invite people to hear the gospel): “On the one hand, the big gospel preaching meeting saves sinners, but on the other hand, it annuls the function of the believers in preaching the gospel. This is the subtlety of the enemy. We have been saved by the Lord, and we have the divine life. This divine life has organic functions, and the preaching of the gospel is one of these functions, but we have

to ask where this function of preaching the gospel is among us today. This function in many of us has been annulled by the improper practice of preaching the gospel. This improper practice has cheated us.” (*The Advance of the Lord’s Recovery Today*, ch. 2)

2. The church lacking in the leading and atmosphere of gospel—1 Tim. 2:4; Mark 16:15; Matt. 28:18-20.
 3. The church lacking in the patterns of gospel preaching—1 Tim. 4:12; Titus 2:7; 1 Pet. 5:3.
 4. The church lacking in exhorting and reminding the saints of gospel preaching and having no consistency in gospel preaching—1 Tim. 4:11, 13; 2 Tim. 2:14.
- B. External interruptions—Eph. 6:12; 2:2; John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Col. 2:15; Acts 26:18; Col. 1:13.