



Northside Proclaimer

Proclaiming The Word Of The Lord

1 Thessalonians 1.8

Northside Church Of Christ Welcomes You!

Jan. 18, 2015

“How To Respond To The Gospel”

Bryan Garlock

God revealed in His Word every possible way for man to respond to Him. How we approach God and His Word will be detrimental or invaluable to the makeup of our salvation. Therefore, let's examine ways to and ways not to respond to the gospel.

For example, John recorded, “[a]fter this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him” (John 6.66). It was here that many turned their back on the Son of God. What Christ had to offer them wasn't what they were looking for. Quite often, many today turn their backs on Jesus because He can't offer them what they “believe” they really need. Unbeknownst to them, Christ is all they'll ever need!

What's interesting about this passage is that the disciples who did turn away were the same disciples who witnessed extraordinary miracles and even heard the voice of God in the flesh. We wonder how anyone could reject the written gospel today; now consider those who rejected Jesus to his face. Absolutely jaw-dropping!

Paul told the young evangelist, “...preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching” (2 Tim. 4.2). There will always be an “in season and out of season” when it comes to the preaching of the gospel.

When Peter preached the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ on the day of Pentecost, about 3,000 “received his word [and] were baptized” (Acts 2.41). The gospel was “in season.”

While Steven was going about preaching the gospel, we find that his sermon fell on deaf ears. Luke records, “[n]ow when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him” (Acts 7.54). The mob was so angry at his words, “...they cast him out of the city and stoned him” (Acts 7.58). As instructed by Paul, Steven was “ready,” but it cost him his life. Here, the gospel was “out of season.”

While Paul was preaching to the men of Athens, Luke records, “some mocked” (Acts 17.32). Fortunately, others said, “We will hear you again about this” and “some men joined him and believed” (vv33-34).

We also find the waiting game concerning salvation. When Paul discussed, “...faith in Christ Jesus. And as he reasoned about righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment, Felix was alarmed and said, ‘Go away for the present. When I get an opportunity I will summon you’” (Acts 24.24-25). *Continued on back...*

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Many times today people want to wait. Quite often they'll say things like, "I need to get my life right before I commit." When they get their ducks in a row, then they can respond to the gospel. This is the wrong way to approach God. Let's put Christ in our life first, and then everything else will take care of itself. Sadly, some wait so long it's eternally too late!

There are other ways men responded to the gospel. Paul's discourse with king Agrippa leaves us an example we often face today. Paul asked, "...do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe" (Acts 26.27). It's interesting to note that Paul asks and answers his question before allowing the king to respond. There are times today we deal with folks who we know believe just as Paul knew Agrippa believed. Unfortunately, many respond the same way, "[y]ou almost persuade me to become a Christian" (Acts 26.28). As the famous song goes, "'Almost,' but lost!"

The ideal way to respond to the gospel is seen in the account of Cornelius. He was a good and moral man. Luke records, "a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God" (Acts 10.2). It is here we learn that no matter how good a person is, morality will not save him. He needs Jesus Christ!

However, Cornelius was a man who was seeking the truth. He had the kind of heart Jesus spoke about in Luke's gospel (8.11-15). His heart was honest and good. We know this by how he responded to the gospel call. He spoke, "we are all here in the presence of God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord" (Acts 10.33). When Peter commanded baptism for the remission of his sins (10.48, cf. Acts 2.38), he humbly submitted himself to the operation of God, that is, baptism (cf. Col. 2.12).

These are just a few examples of ways men have responded to the Gospel call (2 Thess. 2.14). It's obvious each example lends itself to consequences. Will we have the heart like Cornelius and be eager to hear and obey? Will we wait? Mock? Turn our backs? Get mad?

We ought to have the attitude of "I will hear you again about this" or better yet, gladly receive the Words of Christ today and be baptized in His name for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2.38)! BG

Chronological Bible Reading Plan

Jan 18 Gen 19-21
Jan 19 Gen 22-24
Jan 20 Gen 25-26
Jan 21 Gen 27-29
Jan 22 Gen 30-31
Jan 23 Gen 32-34
Jan 24 Gen 35-37

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