

**TRIUMPHANT LIVING**  
**Taught by Bruce Bickel**  
*“An Evangelical Lifestyle” Part 3*  
**Session: October 18, 2013**

We thank You Lord that You are faithful because we are not. We confess our sin...our unfaithfulness to the gospel of Christ and we just pray, Lord, that You would be pleased once again to cleanse us of all unrighteousness and make us worthy vessels to sit at Your feet this morning, trusting that Your Holy Spirit will fulfill His job description and guide us into all truth. We pray that the end result might be that we see You more clearly for Jesus' sake. Amen.

We are continuing our study on the theme entitled Triumphant Living, found in 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians and I invite you to open your Bibles to the 4<sup>th</sup> Chapter and you have your outline. We are looking at what I am calling an Evangelical Lifestyle. In these verses of Chapter 4:1-6 we have seen some characteristics of an evangelical lifestyle.

First of all, there is a courageous life and you will see that in 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 4: 1. Courageous means without fear; it does not mean that your boisterous, loud, or flippant, but it means you are fearless. It means that when you proclaim and live the gospel life of Christ that you do it with courage because you do not fear because you know that God is in control.

We also saw a few weeks ago that an evangelical lifestyle is non-manipulative. You do not have to deal with people's wills; you proclaim the gospel of Christ and you do not need to manipulate; you do not need to water down the Word of God just to get the right response you want.

Thirdly, we have seen that it appeals to the conscience because it is a truthful life. So the characteristics of an evangelical lifestyle would be: courageous, non-manipulative, and truthful. There are certain reasons for our having confidence. We began this last week and you will see on your outline that the first one is that God is sovereign.

You'll see that in verses 3-4 of Chapter 4. “And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” Now there you begin to see the definition of the gospel. The gospel of Christ is really about the glory of God in the face of Christ. That is what the gospel is about. We have every confidence in knowing that God is sovereign and that means that you do not need to manipulate people into a response. You can be courageous, you can be fearless when you proclaim Christ, you can do it non-manipulatively, and you can do it truthfully because you know that God is sovereign. He is the one who controls.

If you recall, one of our theme verses is 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 2:12: “But thanks be to God who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ.” The sense of that verb in that Greek text is this: “That God always, always, always leads us in triumph.” So whatever God does it is a triumph. You and I have to have spiritual eyes to see that it is a triumph because often times what we see is not a triumph because we don't see it from God's point of view. The thing that we need to understand is that God is sovereign.

Several years ago, I was on a plane going to preach in California for a series on a weekend, and I was working on my sermon while flying and a very erudite, classic-looking gentleman beside me, very well dressed, very articulate, kept watching me as I was doing it, and finally he said: "What are you doing?" I said, "Well, I'm going to be preaching a weekend series at a men's conference in California." He asked: "Are you a minister?" And I answered: "Yes." He asked: "Are you a Christian minister?" And I said, "Yes, I am." He responded: "Well, I'm a Jewish psychiatrist. I have a lot of respect for the Christian ethic and the Christian philosophy of life, but I have a lot of problems with Jesus. It appears to me that most of you Christians are narrow-minded and not very intellectual." Well, I thanked him for the compliment... {LAUGHTER}...and said, "Thank you very much, I am very narrow-minded but not at both ends. {LAUGHTER}. He said, "Well, I have a lot of problems about Jesus." I answered; "May I ask you a question? You are a psychiatrist, you perceived yourself to be intellectual?" He said, "Yes" and then he listed his various degrees and the books that he had written. I said, "I'll make you a deal, if I can answer every question you have about the personal work of Jesus Christ, will you become a Christian?" He said, "No."

I answered, "Sir, your problem is not your intellect, it is your unbelief." Well, he just stopped and he didn't say anything for about the next hour. Then he said, just as the plane was on its descent to land, he said, "Where could I read something about Jesus because that is an interesting statement you said....It is not my intellect because I am probably one of the most intellectual people you have ever met; but you said the problem is my unbelief." And I said, "Your issue is unbelief, not your intellect." He said, "What should I do." So I gave him my Bible and said, "Here, you take this and read the Book of John. Read Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; for you as a Jew and your heritage read the book of Matthew first because first you will see that Jesus is King; then go to Matthew and then to Mark and you will see that Jesus is a servant. Then go to Luke and you will see that Jesus is man; then go to John and you will see that Jesus is God. But I would start at Matthew and see that Jesus is King. I have never seen him since. But you see, the great freedom we have in Christ is, I was an aggressive responder to what happened and you trust the sovereignty of God. I pray for the gentleman frequently when the Lord brings him to my mind. But God is in control.

You do not have to manipulate something. I did not have to make something happen before we hit the ground. All I could do is just proclaim truth courageously, non-manipulatively, and truthfully. I basically said, "Sir, your problem is not your intellect. Your problem is your unbelief." It is rather illogical if I could answer every question you have to your satisfaction about the personal work of Christ, and you still won't believe? That is a matter of unbelief, not intellect. That is what we understand about the sovereignty of God.

The second thing about the great confidence that we have is that Jesus is Lord. The fact that Jesus is Lord talks about His position. He is Lord; the fact that He is Savior talks about His work. There are just a couple of instances that I want to give you some insights about this.

The New Testament uses the word "Savior" 24 times to describe Christ and His work, but uses the word "Lord" 749 times to describe His position. What do you think the emphasis is on? The Lordship of Christ.

The theologian John Stott says, "It is unbiblical as it is unrealistic to divorce the Lordship from Savior ship of Jesus Christ. How many times have you heard somebody say, "Well, she has accepted Him as her Savior but not made Him Lord yet." That is a case for weak evangelism because it is separating the personal work of Christ. We recognize that Christ is Lord. In fact, we are told that God has already done that and made Him Christ and Lord...He has beat us to the punch. We don't make Him Lord of anything; we accept Him on His terms.

The third thing we need to understand is God alone is adequate and you'll see that in verse 6. God alone is adequate to help us live that evangelical lifestyle. But what I want to do today is to give you a second hand-out and Sig passed this out. I want to show you why it is so important that we understand these three confidences we have in the gospel. That is, Christ is Lord, that God is sovereign, and God is adequate. Now what I have done for you is given a summary of my doctoral dissertation and I just printed this out for you. I want you to see the difference between what I'm calling modern evangelism on the left-hand side of this chart, compared to biblical or Puritan evangelism. My doctoral dissertation was on the Puritan View of the Pulpit, Light and Heat and the Puritan View of the Pulpit and the Focus of the Gospel on Puritan Preaching. What I've done is that I contrasted what I would say is Modern Finneyism, which began about 1850 up to modern today vs. the Puritan Evangelism and what I'm calling Biblical Evangelism; I want you to see as we go through these contrasts the significance of the fact that God is Sovereign, Christ is Lord, and God alone is adequate.

Notice which one of the two gospel comparisons communicate that more clearly. Let's just take a look.

One. Modern evangelism says, "The view of salvation process is determined by the needs of man." Man has a need, therefore, you create message called "The Gospel." Biblical evangelism says, "The view of the salvation process is determined by God." Where did the gospel start? With a needy man or a sovereign God? A sovereign God.

Two. Salvation emphasizes what man can receive from God. Would you like to have eternal life? Biblical evangelism emphasizes what God chose to accomplish for man. Is it my need or is it what He chose to accomplish for me? Remember this: what God ordained, the Son accomplished, the Holy Spirit applied.

Three. The theme of salvation is the reception of eternal life. How do we start off evangelism, generally speaking? Would you like to have eternal life? Biblical evangelism says, the theme of salvation is the glory of God. Take a look at our verse. Go to 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians, 4:6. I showed you the real definition of the gospel as found in Chapter 4:6. "... knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." That is what the gospel is about. It is about the knowledge of God in the face of Christ. That is why we preach Christ as Lord and Savior, we preach Him as sovereign, and we preach that He alone is adequate.

Four: Man is the subject of salvation in modern evangelism. Biblical evangelism said God is the subject of salvation.

Five. There are varying degrees of man's ability to choose God. Biblical evangelism says that man is totally unable to choose God, and why is that? Because he is dead in his trespasses and sins. Ephesians 2. Do you really believe that the word "dead" means dead? Or does it mean "sick?" How many times have you heard somebody say, "Salvation is like you are a drowning sinner in the ocean of the sea and in your last breath somebody throws you a life jacket and you reach up with your dying breath and you grab it and that is salvation. Now if you are sick, you can do that. But if you are dead, you are what? Dead...inability to respond. There is nothing you can do.

Salvation is, not only are you dead in your trespasses and sins but you have already sunk to the bottom of the ocean and somebody is going to have to dive in and you pull you out. That is what salvation is. So modern evangelism basically says, "The wages of sin is death but you are really sick." We are sick in our trespasses and sins. Another version you might have heard is that you are a sick person in the hospital and the doctor walks in and says you are going to die in ten seconds unless you take this last pill. So in your last breath, you drink this water and you take this pill and you are going to have salvation. A sick person could do that. What can a dead person do? Nothing.

Do you really understand that? There is a difference in biblical evangelism because one says, there is varying degrees of man's ability to choose; where biblical evangelism says that man is totally unable to choose. That is why the doctrine of regeneration is so important. That is the new life...as He said to Nicodemus, "Nicodemus, you cannot even see the Kingdom unless you are born again." That is regeneration.

Number Six. The Holy Spirit's role is to persuade. If I just battle your will long enough, I'm going to manipulate you or convince you to believe. Biblical evangelism says, the Holy Spirit's job is to apply, not persuade. What the Father ordained, the Son accomplished, the Holy Spirit applies. If you are in Christ today, when did you become a Christian? You've got Trinitarian Salvation. You became a Christian before the foundation of the world when Christ chose you before the foundation of the world and wrote your name in the Lamb's Book of Life. The Father ordained that. Once you become a Christian, when Christ accomplished your salvation, He didn't make it possible, He accomplished it at the Cross. When He was on the Cross, you were on His mind because the Father ordained that. That is why Jesus says in John 10: "I will not lose any of the ones You gave me." Who gave you to Christ? God did. God ordained, the Holy Spirit applies with the Son accomplished.

So the role of the Holy Spirit is not to persuade, the role of the Holy Spirit is to apply what the Son accomplished and what the Father ordained.

Number Seven. The preacher's role is to preach for decisions, to battle the hearer's will. Biblical evangelism says, the preacher's role is to preach to the conscience, to reveal truth. There is a difference. Notice what Paul says here: "We preach to every man's conscience." You don't need to battle their will. You can have a dead person lying up here on the ground and sing for three or four hours, "Just as I am" and nothing is going to happen. But what will change is when the message of the gospel of Christ is preached and the conscience is pricked because of the work of the Holy Spirit. Remember the work of the Holy Spirit is five-fold: to convict of us our sin, convince us of our sin, convert us from our

sin, comfort us in the new way of life, and counsel us in the decisions we make as we walk **in** Christ. That is what the Holy Spirit's job is, it is not to persuade us.

Yes?

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT:** *The preacher's role is to battle the hearer's will, isn't the will in their nature to run away from God until salvation is brought?*

Well, that's why it is not biblical, to deal with their will. You don't deal with their will; you preach truth. What did I do to the Jewish psychiatrist? Gave him the truth. All I said was, "The problem with you, Sir, is not your intellect, it is your unbelief." That was truth. He acknowledged that by his response, but that was all I could do at that point. I wasn't going to sit their and battle his will. I had done what I could do and that was to proclaim the truth. So you are right. The preacher's role is not to battle somebody's will but it is to proclaim truth, the Holy Spirit applies what the Father has ordained and what the Son accomplishes.

How about number eight. The gospel is the offer of the possibility of salvation. Biblical evangelism says the gospel is the offer of the Savior. You are offering a person; not the possibility but you are offering a person.

Number nine. The gospel emphasis is to meet the needs of man. Biblical evangelism says the gospel's emphasis is to take people into the presence of God. It is not our role to bring God down to the level of people to make Him understandable. It is our role in the Church to take people up to the presence of God through the Scripture and to see all of His glory. That's why the gospel is described as the "The knowledge of God in the face of Christ." We take people into the presence of God, we do not bring God down to the presence of man.

Number 10. The central issue of the gospel is the author of eternal life. Biblical evangelism would say the central issue of the gospel is the offer of reconciliation of which eternal life is a consequence. You see, we are reconciled to a Holy God, and as a result of that, you have eternal life. But the issue is not eternal life. There can be no eternal life unless there reconciliation. What do we preach? We preach eternal life or do we preach be reconciled to a Holy God because you are sinful man. The Holiness of God, the sinfulness of man, the personal work of Christ, and repentance and faith. That is the content of the gospel.

Number 11. Man is the reason Christ died.

Don?

**DON:** *Yes, I was going to say that is probably the number 10 which you were talking about reconciliation and that is the problem with so much of the evangelism of the Four Spiritual Laws. What do they say at the beginning? God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life. Which totally blunts the whole idea of reconciliation.*

Absolutely it does. Absolutely. You see the issue of the gospel is not eternal life, but it is about reconciliation of which eternal life is a consequence. We lead with the consequence rather than the object, which is our reconciliation. Good point, Don, thank you.

Number 11. Man is the reason Christ died. Biblical evangelism says that God is the reason Christ died. God is the reason Christ died. Not man.

Number 12. Man has the power to accept the gospel. Biblical evangelism says that man must be prepared by God to accept the gospel. It is called regeneration. It's called convicting of our sin, convincing us of our sin, converting us from our sin, comforting us in a new way of life, and counseling us in the decisions of life. That is the role of the Holy Spirit. Where do you do that? Through the proclamation of truth. See, it is truth that sets man free. Look at 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 3:12-17.

"Therefore having such a hope, we use great boldness in our speech..." The word boldness there means courage, without fear. "...and are not like Moses, who use to put a veil over his face so that the sons of Israel would not look intently at the end of what was fading away. But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ." Now notice this: "But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart; but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away." Now get verse 17. "Now the

Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” You see, man must be prepared by God to accept the gospel; that is what proclaiming the gospel of Christ does.

Number 13. Evangelists fixed the time for decision. “Won’t you come...the doors of the church are open. We have a chair here waiting for you...won’t you come?” We are fixing something. Notice in Biblical evangelism God determines the time for response, not for decision but for response, because of the working of the Holy Spirit into the conscience of the person; He convicts them of their sin, convinces them of their sin, converts them from their sin. God determines the time for response.

Number 14. Man can chose God at anytime. Biblical evangelism would say God causes man to choose at His time and that is because God is sovereign. But thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph procession in Christ. God is sovereign. That means that He has a right to rule.

Number 15. Assurance is a ministry assigned to man. Biblical evangelism would say that assurance is the ministry assigned to the Holy Spirit. In modern evangelism, what are we told to do after somebody says the sinner’s prayer? You ask some question such as, “Where does Jesus Live.” The answer is, “In my heart.” Would Jesus lie? You’re a Christian.” So basically you are saying that what you did is the reason that I now can affirm in you that you are a believer. When you look at the description of the assurance of salvation in the Scripture, you’ll notice that all the verses are in present tense. It is not “what did you do?” it is who you are. And those verbs describe three things. They give us the assurance of our salvation.

First of all Biblical promises. The Scripture gives us promises in Scripture: repent and believe. Notice what we just read: but when the veil is lifted and you turn to the Lord there is freedom. Have you turned to the Lord? Then you are free. The understanding is Biblical promises.

The second thing is the work of the Holy Spirit in your spirit. Sometimes you know you are a believer just because you know. The only defense you have is, “I know, because I know, because I know, because I know.” The Holy Spirit convinces us of our sin, having converted us from our sin, and now comforts us in a new way of life. And sometimes your defense is, “I just know that I am.” There are times in my sinfulness that I say, “Lord, how can I ever be a believer? The thoughts I just had are tainted; how can I be saved?” Then the Holy Spirit just says, “Bruce you are saved, because you are saved. You just have to believe Me, you are. You know that you are.”

The third evidence is this: increased righteousness. There is a change in your life. You, look back on your life and say, “I was like this but I’m not any more; I’m not as much as I once was.” There is increased righteousness.

The work of the Holy Spirit, Scripture promises, and increased righteousness in your own life. That is why the Puritans, when they would do their preaching in the villages back in the 1500 and 1600’s, somebody would say, “Did you have a revival?” They would say, “We’ll go back within three to five years and we will look for three things: increased church attendance, new churches starting, and decrease in crime...increase in righteousness.” Then they would say, “If we see those things, we will say we had a revival.” You just cannot schedule a time for revival. You just don’t know what a sovereign God is going to do.

So man can choose God at anytime. God causes man to choose at His time.

Number 15. Assurance is a ministry assigned to man; as we just said assurance is a ministry assigned of the Holy Spirit.

Number 16. Assurance is pronounced by man...You are a Christian. Biblical evangelism would say, “Assurance is affirmed by God in His Word.” If you want to know, read the Book of First John. The seven tests and seven traits of a true believer. Take a person to the Scripture and say, “What does this Scripture say about your conversion? Basically, First John is summarized by this: “If you say you do and you do, you are. If you say you do and you don’t, you are not.” Because seven times he said, “If you profess” or “if you say and do, you are.” The Book of First John. If somebody really wants to know if they are **in** Christ, take them to the seven tests of a true and false believer. Every one of those will say, “If you say” then there is a conduct associated with it. In summary of First John is this: If you say you do trust Christ and you do, then you are. If you say you do and you don’t, then you are not. You have to say that assurance is ascribed by and affirmed by God and His Word, not by man and our verbs and our words.

Number 17. The focus of assurance is Scriptural promises. Biblical evangelism would say, as we just discussed, the basis of assurance is Scriptural promises, the inner work of the Holy Spirit and the character and conduct of the converted. In other words, increased righteousness. That is how you know, and all the verbs dealing with assurance of salvation are not past tense they are present tense.

Let me just give you an example. Go to First John. Let me give you in First John the five tests of true and saving faith. Here are the tests in First John of a true or false believer. First John, Chapter 1:6, 1:8, 1:10. First John, Chapter 2:4, 2:6, 2:9. First John, Chapter 4:20. The tests of true saving faith: First John 1:6, 8, 10. Chapter 2:4, 6, 9. Chapter 4:20.

Now take a look at First John 5:1. “Whoever believes...” What verb tense is that? Present tense. “Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God,” What verb tense is that? Present tense: is, right now, you are, you is... {LAUGHTER}. “...is born of God, and whoever loves...” What is the verb tense? Present tense reality, in other words, are you doing that right now? Are you loving the Father? Do you also love the child born of Him? “... the Father loves the child born of Him.” That means do you love Christ...the child born of Him?” See that is all present tense.

Notice, we lose a little bit of the translation in this Chapter 5:1 because we are basically saying that belief comes before being born again; but really in the Greek text [UNCLEAR, but sounds like exile tao beganatine??] And it means this: there is a past tense event in your lives that now causes present tense reality. It would be translated: having been born of God, one believes. That is how it should be translated: having been born of God, one believes. Which comes first? Born of God, belief never saves anybody. Belief is the first evidence that you have been born of God. It is the first evidence because the dead man cannot believe. So what does a dead person need, belief or life? Life. That is the difference in the gospels. The modern gospel will say you just need to believe. The Biblical gospel says you need life because a dead person needs life so that can believe.

Number 18. There is a relationship between faith and assurance. Biblical evangelism would say, there is a relationship between faith, assurance, and obedience. It is just not my faith and my assurance; my faith gives me the assurance, which leads me to be obedient because obedience is a love response to God. Biblical evangelism is going to put you in a position of not only having a faith that saves because God granted that, it is a gift to you from His grace; you are going to have the assurance (present tense reality) of your salvation and that combination of your faith and your assurance is going to lead to wanting to have a love response to be obedient to God. That is how you develop a love response.

That’s why Jesus says in John 14, “If you love Me, you will obey.” Modern evangelism does not include obedience because they are all worried about giving you fire insurance. Let’s get you saved, then we will worry about making Him Lord later. But Biblical evangelism says there is a time between your faith, your assurance, and your obedience. Your obedience is a consequence of your faith and your assurance because it is a love response.

Number 19. According to modern evangelism the gospel assures justification. Justification is God declaring you righteous before Him; it has to do with your standard. Biblical gospel secures not only your justification but your sanctification because you are now sanctified because you have been set apart. So it secures both your justification and your sanctification; and therefore, you have a desire to be obedient because you know that you have been sanctified and set apart by the personal work of Christ.

Number 20. Modern evangelism says the gospel is something that one gets. What do you get from the gospel? Biblical evangelism says the gospel is something that God chooses to do. It is not what I **get**, but what God

chooses to **do**. That is what produces responsive love obedience from us because you realize what God chose to do for you; that is what grace is. Do you understand the difference between mercy, justice, and grace? Justice is getting what you deserve; mercy is not getting all that you deserve, and grace is getting what you do not deserve. Really, the gospel is something that God chose to do for you and you do that through the personal work of Christ. Do you understand the difference?

That is why the issue of modern evangelism is so weak today because all we are saying is the gospel is something that you get...you get eternal life. You diminish the glory of God.

Go back to 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 3:17-18 we just read “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.” Now there is the ultimate objective of your and my redemption in salvation...it is the restoration of the glory of man to reflect the glory of God. It is to restore the glory of man, in original creation, to reflect the glory of God. The gospel is about the glory of God, not about the needs of man. You see that right there.

The problem with our evangelism today is we have lost sight of the ultimate objective of our redemption. We have lost sight of that. The objective of our redemption is to restore the glory of man to reflect the glory of God. That is why you see in the next Chapter 4:6. We have this definition of the gospel. The gospel is “...the glory of God in the face of Christ.” That is what the gospel is about.

Number 21. The gospel is simple. Biblical evangelism says yes, the gospel is simple but it is not shallow. There is a difference between being simple and shallow. Biblical gospel is not shallow; it is about the holiness of God, it is about the sinfulness of man, it is about the person and work of Christ, it is about repentance and faith. That is not shallow. It is simple. That’s why the Jewish psychiatrist said, “You guys are not very intellectual...you are narrow-minded.” He was looking at this as something that is just simple but he made it very, very shallow. The gospel is not shallow. Yes, it is simple: Christ died for our sins. You could spend weeks talking on that one thing and that is why Paul says, “We preach Christ and Him crucified.” That is simple but it is not shallow.

Number 22. The gospel is about man from God and for man. Biblical gospel would say that the gospel is about man, from God, and for God. It is from God, for God. The reason we proclaim the gospel of Christ is because it is for Him, it is not for man. We do that for His glory. The problem in my judgment and I’m making this very simple...I hope it is not shallow...is that we have just lost sight of the glory of God in everything that we do: our worship style, we have lost sight of the glory of God. In our Biblical preaching, we have lost sight of the glory of God...in everything that we do. In our evangelism, we have lost sight of the glory of God. Everything is about the glory of God. We have just lost sight of that because we made man the center of the gospel objective as opposed to the glory of God.

Number 23. The gospel deals with man’s legal problem: sin. Biblical gospel deals with man’s legal problem of sin but also man’s moral problem: the heart. The person. Stealing, swearing and cursing does not make a person a sinner. The reason they sin and steal and curse is because they are a sinner; it does not make them one but they are one and that is why they do it. That is why the gospel is so different in modern evangelism vs. Biblical evangelism because modern evangelism never deals with the condition of the person; it just deals with their outward expression of that person which is their sin, because modern evangelism never deals with the condition of the person. It just deals with their outward expression of that person, which is their sin.

Biblical evangelism deals with the heart. That is why Jesus says in Matthew 12: “Out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks.” The best barometers of your personal relationship to Christ and its maturity will be what do you talk about? What comes out of your heart? Modern evangelism does not deal with that. Biblical evangelism deals with your heart so that the things you talk about are different than they were before you were converted. Out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks. We are not what we think we are, but what we think we are. We are not what we think we are, but what we think, we are. Proverbs says, “As a man thinks, so is he.” What do you think about? Here is a great question for us. What do you think about when you have nothing else to think about? What do you think about when you have nothing else to think about? Where does your mind go? Modern evangelism does not deal with that because it does not deal with the person’s heart condition. It only deals with their external sin condition.

Number 24. Christ is the Savior from what one has done. You have been saved from your sins. Well, that’s true. Biblical evangelism goes further and says, Christ is the Savior from what one has done as well as what one is. Who you are as a person. It deals with your nature. It deals with the personhood of who you are. Modern evangelism only deals with what you have done...you are forgiven from your sins but it does not deal with who you are as person. Biblical evangelism deals with who you are as much as it does with what you have done.

Number 25. The offices and benefits of Christ are often separated. Biblical evangelism says the offices of Christ are always combined. He is Prophet, Priest, and King. He is Lord and Savior. You don’t change that. You accept Him on His terms.

Go back to your notes, your handout. 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 4:1-6 . I hope in just comparing modern gospel preaching with Biblical gospel preaching, you will see which ones really say and give us the confidence that God is sovereign, Christ is Lord and God alone is adequate. I hope you take a look at those two contrasts and ask yourself: which one of those two really highlights the fact that God is sovereign? It is the Biblical gospel. Which one really highlights that Christ is Lord? It is the Biblical gospel. Which one really highlights the fact that God alone is adequate? Who is adequate for such things? God alone is adequate for such things.

I was talking to a friend the other day who was saying in modern evangelism there is so much fruit and you see it at these great rallies we have. Twenty-thousand people accepted Christ. I said, “What is the quality of the fruit?” The Scripture says, “By the fruit you will know them.” What is the quality of the fruit? I was reading some statistics the other day and when you add on the current years from the last time I read it, about the last 30 to 40 years, there has not been one county in the 50 states of the United States of America that has shown an increase in church attendance. Not one county in the 50 states of America has shown an increase in church attendance. Where is the fruit? Where is the evidence of a Biblical gospel changing people’s hearts, minds, and lives? Where is the evidence? Now I’m not saying that those mass rallies don’t bring people to saving faith. I’m not saying that; God alone is sovereign and He may use that and He has done that.

All I’m saying is that there is such a thing as a spurious or false conversion. Is there such a thing? I went forward...how many times do you say, “How do you know you’re a Christian?” “Well, I went forward at a Billy Graham rally when I was 16.” Now that may have been the time you were converted and that may be true. But notice the thought: it is what I did 25 years ago that made me a Christian. What does Biblical gospel say? It is who you are today. Present tense reality. All I’m saying is, where is the fruit?



We have churches that have 36,000 people. Where are they coming from? They are coming from other churches. We have church hoppers. We go from one church to another church to another church and find the one where I received a blessing, one that I like. I just go to a different church. But we do not see new people coming into the church, so can we say that we have had revivalism in America? I say we have revivalism but not revival. Revivalism would mean all the activities associated with revival, but not the fruit.

Now those are just some general observation.

Yes?

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT:** *I'm just trying to account for the people who have passed away and the people who were born 30 or 40 years ago. Those guys, the newer and younger people, are they part of the growth or are you just saying...those increases [UNCLEAR] the dead people would be increase?*

Well, I don't have the answer to that because I didn't take the survey. So I don't know. All I'm saying that my concern was this: we talk about these great big mega-churches doing such a great work and I trust that they are. God is sovereign and He can do that. Was it really impacting...what do we see in the States? Do we see increased righteousness in American? No. Why is that? Because in my judgment, we have lost sight of the glory of God and everything we do in the Church. We have lost sight of that. Does the role of the Church to really highlight the position where God's glory is put on display? And that is by the restoring of the glory of God in mankind to reflect the glory of God. That is what the role of the Church is by proclaiming the gospel.

Somebody else had their hand up? Yes, Bill.

**BILL** *I see three problems in modern evangelism and I hear preachers say, "God can't help you unless you do something first. I have a big problem with that. God is sovereign. The other thing I hear is, God will not violate your free will. I have a problem with that. And God certainly violated Paul's free will on the Road to Damascus, and hopefully mine too. The third thing I do not hear much about repentance. If I do I hear a watered-down repentance. You are just changing a different direction in your life.*

Right. Those are all implications when you compare modern evangelism, which I am calling neo-Finneyism. Neo meaning new. New-Finneyism because this is the ministry that he started back in the 1800's. He is the one who started the anxious seat, the one who had the altar calls by basically saying, "You have got to do something." When you go to the Billy Graham Center of Evangelism at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois, you will see a plaque on the wall that says something like this: "Evangelism. A revival is not the work of God, it is the result of the means of man." Revival is not the work of God, it is the result of the means of man; and here are the things you do: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6." And it lists those six things.

One closing story and I think I told you this. After I did my doctoral dissertation and this is just a part of it, but at seminary graduation my advisor, who happened to be the Dean of the Seminary, asked me to give a ten minute brief on my doctoral dissertation; they pick one person and asked if someone would do that. So he asked if I would do that. Well just before I got up, they were giving an award to the Chancellor of the Seminary this wonderful plaque. He is a wonderful, Godly guy. They gave him the plaque for having scheduled 300 revivals. {LAUGHTER} They gave him a plaque and he had created and started and held 300 revivals in his lifetime. Then they introduced me. {LAUGHTER} Do you know what the first statement I had on my script to say? "You can't schedule revival." {MUCH LAUGHTER} So I got up and I looked at the Dean and he is going like this..... {MUCH LAUGHTER} because I had given him what I was going to say, my

outline. Boy, I was just sweating bullets. {LAUGHTER} But I had to go ahead and say what I said. And I said, “With all due respect to Dr. So-and-so who I admire greatly and will always be grateful for his life, and yes God is sovereign and God has used those immensely for His glory, but my position is that you cannot schedule revivals because it is a sovereign act of God, not the means of man.” Then I went on with my presentation.

You see, the world basically says, “Revival is something that we do.” How do you define revival? It is a sovereign visitation of God in all of His glory and power. A sovereign visitation of God in all of His glory and power. It is not something that you and I schedule. How does revival occur? It is going to occur, Brothers, when you and I are courageous, non-manipulative, and truthful in proclaiming the gospel of Christ. The reason we can do that is because we have every confidence of knowing this: God is sovereign, Christ is Lord, and God alone is adequate.

May God receive the glory for our evangelical lifestyle. Let’s pray.

Father we thank You for the clarity of Your Scripture. We just pray again that if we have said anything that is contrary to Your Word, to Your glory, to Your attributes, or Your nature that You would remove it from our minds; and only those things that are consistent with Your revealed Word and Your glory will be the things that we remember. And may it be so for Jesus’ sake. And all the Brave Men said, Amen.