

Paul's Work in Ephesus

September 25, 2016

Acts 18:24-19:10

I believe we see in this section of Scripture and these Biblical historical accounts, Paul's commitment to make known the full counsel of God. We have, in Acts 18:24-20:38, the case of Apollos; accurate, sincere, but deficient. We also have in this section, 12 men on the right side of Easter, but the wrong side of Pentecost. And then there is Paul's farewell instruction to the Elders of Ephesus in which he reviews his work among them, his present plans to continue on, and then warns them of dangers to come.

The key phrase in this section:

For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.

Acts 20:27

For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!

1 Corinthians 9:16

And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

What did Paul mean by the "whole counsel of God?"

In an online article, Justin Taylor summarizes what D.A. Carson says the "whole counsel of God is."

"What he must mean is that he taught the burden of the whole of God's revelation, the balance of things, leaving nothing out that was of primary importance, never ducking the hard bits, helping believers to grasp the whole counsel of God that they themselves would become better equipped to read their Bibles intelligently, comprehensively.

It embraced:

- GOD'S PURPOSES IN THE HISTORY OF REDEMPTION (*truths* to be believed and a *God* to be worshiped), this includes dot connecting to the roots of the Old Testament
- AN UNPACKING OF HUMAN ORIGIN, FALL, REDEMPTION, AND DESTINY (a *worldview* that shapes all human understanding and a *Savior* without whom there is no hope),
- THE CONDUCT EXPECTED OF GOD'S PEOPLE (*commandments* to be obeyed and *wisdom* to be pursued, both in our individual existence and in the community of the people of God), and
- THE PLEDGES OF TRANSFORMING POWER BOTH IN THIS LIFE AND IN THE LIFE TO COME (*promises* to be trusted and *hope* to be anticipated)."

—D. A. Carson, "Challenges for the Twenty-first-century Pulpit," in *Preach the Word: Essays on Expository Preaching: In Honor of R. Kent Hughes*, ed. Leland Ryken and Todd Wilson [Crossway, 2007], pp. 177-178; bullets and italics added.

Where are you in the Gospel account this morning?

1) My first time hearing the Gospel (what Jesus did for me).

Possible to have not heard Jesus and the Gospel, though not probably in the U.S.

Probably to not have heard the total, complete Gospel.

2) I have heard the Gospel many times, but often get incomplete or inaccurate accounts.

Maybe people have **added** things to the Gospel.

Maybe the Gospel has been skewed by another **agenda**.

Maybe you have read the Bible and then heard “other” accounts, but are unsure about the truth; both atheism and Christianity require **faith**.

3) I have heard the Gospel many times and intellectually (in my head) I know the Truth.

Not lacking knowledge

Not lacking accurate account

Not lacking awareness

Not lacking hearing the Truth

However, I haven’t trusted the Gospel and let it reside in my heart because:

- I still have **questions**.
- If I do, I realize I’m committing my life to Christ (Follow Me).
- I realize it’s a big decision.
- I know truth, but never really given it much **thought**.
- I know the truth, but want to keep doing things my way; **rebellious**.
- It may work for you, but not for me.

4) I’ve heard the Gospel many times, responded to God’s Grace, but only because everyone else was, or it was the thing to do and it was expected of me.

Either you have or you have not trusted in Christ.

5) I’ve heard the Gospel many times, I’ve trusted Jesus as my Savior, but I am not in tune with the Holy Spirit.

Realize there is more to knowing Jesus than going to Heaven.

Knowing and walking with Jesus (Holy Spirit) is what Salvation is all about.

6) I’ve trusted Jesus, walking with the Holy Spirit, and seeking to tell others about Him.

What has Jesus done for me? The Gospel!

Prayer Focus:

- I would put my trust in Jesus and follow Him.
- I would be in tune with the Holy Spirit.
- I will share Christ with those around me.