



EXPLORE THE BIBLE®

Acts 13 – 26 Sermon Series

Supports Session 4: The Gospel

Sermon Title: “The Gospel According to Peter” (Acts 15:5-11)

Connection to Session 4

The gospel is a free gift provided to Jew and Gentile alike.

Introduction/Opening

It was the hottest gift of the early 80s. Short in stature with pudgy cheeks and bulging eyes, these dolls were known as the Cabbage Patch Kids. Stores were packed, people were trampled, and lives were risked just to get one of those dolls along with their “adoption papers.” And as chaotic as this toy craze was, however, the intention of an adult who purchased this product was clear: this present was to be for a soon-to-be-grateful child, just in time for a birthday or Christmas. In other words, it was a gift. A free gift. A free gift with no expectation of anything in return.

This is the nature of the gospel. It is a free gift from God to man, based not on works but on grace.

Today, this truth is often understood and repeated by faithful teachers of the Word. Yet in the early days of the church, this was something that needed to be discussed and understood. Peter led the way for the church to understand the true nature of salvation. This is the gospel—inspired by the Holy Spirit and shared by Peter.

Outline

1. The gospel is not about religion (Acts 15:5-7)

- a. The problem:
 - i. Some were choosing rules over relationships (v. 5).
 - ii. They held the view that believers needed to become Jewish first before becoming Christian.
- b. Peter’s explanation:
 - i. He was sent by God to preach to the Gentiles (v. 7).
 - ii. Peter preached that the gospel was also for the Gentiles in Acts 10:34-43.
 - iii. In Acts 11:18, the church agreed that the Gentiles had been saved: “God has given repentance resulting in life even to the Gentiles.”

2. The gospel is sealed by the Spirit (Acts 15:8-9)

- a. The problem:
 - i. Some were overlooking the spiritual when discerning the things of God.

- ii. They had focused so much on the small things that they missed the big thing.
- b. Peter's explanation:
 - i. He saw evidence of the Holy Spirit on the Gentiles.
 - 1. Acts 10:44,47
 - 2. Acts 11:15,17
- c. Ways the Spirit is seen today:
 - i. The seal of the Spirit
 - 1. Ephesians 1:13
 - 2. Ephesians 4:30
 - ii. The fruit of the Spirit
 - 1. Galatians 5:22-23

3. The gospel is freely given, freely received (Acts 15:10-11)

- a. The problem: no one can be saved by works
- b. Peter's explanation:
 - i. That's the point: the gospel is a free gift
 - ii. Ephesians 2:8-9
 - iii. 1 Thessalonians 5:9
 - iv. 1 Peter 1:18-21
- c. Share the gospel.

Conclusion

It is truly an amazing grace that God provides us with the free gift of eternal life. But it is not automatic. Just as the Jews and Gentiles of years past had to receive it by faith, so do we today.

No ritual, religion, or work can save because the gospel is not about religion. But when a person receives Christ, the Spirit seals and guides the person to grow in his or her faith. The remarkable thing is that it is freely given, freely received, and free for you to ask for today.

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