

Obey the Gospel

Two passages of Scripture warn of the coming Judgment for “those who do not obey the gospel” (2 Thessalonians 1:6-10; 1 Peter 4:17). Obviously, obeying the gospel is something we all need to do, but how can we?

When the apostle Paul described the gospel he preached in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, he wrote:

¹Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, ²by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. ³For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures...

This is the primary message of the gospel. It is the power of God for salvation for those who believe it (Romans 1:16), but how can we obey it?

The gospel is more than just a record of these historical events. It is also the expression of God’s will for us. In fact, when we obey the gospel, we reenact the historical events of the gospel.

Notice Romans 6:3-7:

³Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? ⁴Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, ⁶knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; ⁷for he who has died is freed from sin.

Just as Jesus died on the cross, so also we die to sin. This means that we repent and cease from the practice of sin. Just as Jesus was buried in the tomb, so also we are buried in baptism. Baptism is an immersion or burial in water. Just as Jesus was raised from the grave to live again, so also we emerge from baptism with a newness of life. Romans 6:11-13 says,

¹¹Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. ¹²Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, ¹³and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

All of this is based on the faith we obtain by hearing the gospel. In Mark 16:15-16, Jesus said,

¹⁵“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. ¹⁶He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.”

Have you obeyed the gospel?