

Are We Preaching “Another” Gospel: A 31-Day Journey toward Rediscovering the Gospel of the Grace of God

by C. D. Hildebrand, 24-7-365 Version 2026

Day 9

FREEDOM FROM SIN

1 Corinthians 15:1-4

*Moreover, brethren, I declare to you **the gospel which I preached to you**, which also you received and in which you stand, ² by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.³ For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: **that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures**, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.*

Notice first of all that the gospel Paul preached was that Jesus died for our sins. He died for *all* of our sins, and this is very good news, for it is why and how we are saved (v 2). Not only is it how we are saved initially, but the Greek reads, “through which also you are **being** saved”. Again, as previously shown, salvation and forgiveness are not only initial but continual; thus, the gospel is not only for the lost but for the saved.

Salvation is not some cheap “bait and switch” scheme whereby we happily proclaim to the lost that they can be saved and forgiven of their sins, but then after they are born again, they discover that salvation and forgiveness have to be maintained by continually confessing sins and by living “right.” Past sins are forgiven; glory to God, but future forgiveness is always contingent upon something *they* must do, and they must confess each and every sin in order to even have the right to fellowship with God.

God forbid! The glad tidings of good things is not a momentary bliss, later to be replaced with the continual consciousness of sin and the sense that our righteousness is based on our obedience and that even our salvation is in question.

There are so many Christians who, instead of feeling secure in their relationship with God, live daily with a sense of insecurity—never sure whether they are “right” with God, if He is pleased with them, or if they have confessed enough sins to ensure their salvation.

The glad tidings of good things from our great God that we have been totally and forever forgiven, is not only how we are saved, but in which we *stand* (v 1). Thus, the good news is not only for the lost but for us, the beloved children of God. What would happen in a church that focused on the good news of our certain salvation, our forever forgiveness, our blood-

bought holiness, and God's glorious gift of righteousness, instead of constantly pointing out how hopelessly wretched we are, followed by endless prescriptions for self-improvement?

Revival! Authentic revival.

We think that by preaching "hard" against sin, revival will break out, but actually, according to Scripture, the opposite is true. Shouting moral law at Christians does not set them free; it strengthens sin in their lives. Consider Prohibition, which sought to externally stop the drinking of alcohol in the United States of America. Did it? No. In fact, by making drinking alcohol illegal, it was made more desirable. We think we are doing the right thing by shouting, "Thou shalt not," and "Thou shalt," but in actuality, we are robbing from God's people of what Jesus Christ *died* to give them: the *assurance* of eternal salvation, His very righteousness, and freedom from sin. This is because law strengthens sin. Paul makes this clear in verse 56 of this same chapter,

*The sting of death is sin,
and the strength (dunamis) of sin is the law.*

Perhaps some among us might be so bold as to declare this continual forgiveness, but would we be so daring as to tell people that the *reason* they are free from sin is because they are free from law?

"Not so fast!" we would warn, fearing the path of lawlessness. For if proclaiming we are completely and continually forgiven doesn't cause believers to go on a sinning rampage, we think that certainly, teaching that we are not under law will! Yet, that we are free from the law is so obvious, David and I still wonder how we missed seeing it for so many years.

Romans 6:14

For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

How amazing is His grace? It is the precise *reason* sin does not have dominion over us.

Jesus didn't die so that we would be *able* to keep the law. He died so that we could be *free* from it, so that we could live under grace, which frees us from sin's dominion.

We now know that one of the reasons we did not understand this glorious truth is that we tended to segment our reading of certain passages of Scripture instead of perceiving the entire meaning in light of the context. An excellent example of this was that we saw the first few verses of

Romans 7 as a teaching on the permanence of marriage instead of a continuation of chapter six and the information needed to digest the rest of chapter seven and even comprehend chapter eight. Read it again with the understanding that Paul was teaching them that we are delivered from and dead to the law, not giving a message about marriage.

Romans 7:1-6

*Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? ² For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. ³ So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man.¹ ⁴ **Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.** ⁵ For when we were in the flesh, the **sinful passions which were aroused by the law** were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. ⁶ But now we **have been delivered from the law**, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.*

This could not be stated more clearly. We are dead to the law through the body of Christ. Prior to that, our sinful passions were aroused by the law. **Just to repeat that, law arouses sinful passions.** It doesn't diminish them. Now, however, we are delivered from the law. This death allows us to experience the joy of being freed from sin as described in Romans 6 and being alive to God as proclaimed in Romans 8.

If we don't teach this, if we insist that believers are still under law and that our right-standing with God is maintained or improved by keeping laws (the "dooties" and "don'ties" of "Christianity"), then we are preaching "another" gospel and making His sacrifice worthless or at best, provisional. As I have quoted before, "If righteousness comes through law, then Christ died in vain," (Gal. 2:21).

We must preach **the** gospel. This is what Paul is saying in Galatians. If we preach "another" gospel, we are accursed. Righteousness, right-standing with God, does not come through obedience to law. To teach this

¹ At this point, one might think that Paul would declare that the law died and that is why we are free from it, but he gives us a supernatural twist. We aren't set free because the law died. We died in Christ to the law and are therefore free from it. We also see that the law and Jesus are put in opposition to each other.

is to bring a curse upon oneself. Just that statement is difficult to write because the idea of saying such a thing, to me, seems over-the-top. I would have been the first to caution Paul against declaring something so severe! In my “civilized” live-and-let-live upbringing, it seems extreme. Why, Paul, do you have to be so unyielding about *what* is taught? Why can’t you simply go with the flow when it comes to teaching? Why do you have to threaten teachers of the gospel? Why can’t you just “walk in love and unity”?

Paul wrote with such boldness because he knew that the true gospel was being perverted, and he was fighting for its very survival. He cherished the gift of righteousness because it was purchased for us with the precious blood of his Savior. He bore in his body the proof that he suffered repeatedly for this truth.

If our righteousness is based on law, then Jesus did not need to die! He wasted his time on earth and His blood on the cross. Jesus did not die to help us get the ball rolling, and now it’s up to us. If Jesus died only to *empower* us to keep the law, instead of to set us free from it, He died for no reason. **Salvation is not the starting line for believers when it comes to sin and righteousness. It is the “It is finished!” line.**

Paul is not calmly telling us to consider our *manner* of preaching. He is imploring us to preach the one true gospel and not a *mixed* gospel based on grace plus keeping laws as a means of perfection. It is God’s amazing *grace* that saves us and keeps us saved, not law. If you are preaching law-keeping as a means of continued righteousness, holiness, perfection, or even as the way we now please God, you might as well spit on His beaten and bruised face as He hung dying on the cross to set us free from law!

It’s not that we would do this deliberately. God forbid! Most of us are teaching as we were taught. Nonetheless, since many of us were taught incorrectly, we do well to consider these things. Whether deliberately or in ignorance, teaching “another” gospel brings misery to the hearers, and those who do so are accursed.

Some of us shudder at the idea of teaching something different than what we were taught by those we love so deeply. It seems disrespectful to the memory of those who have gone before. Yet, do we seek to please men or God? If you want the praise of men, then go on preaching the same message that is being preached almost everywhere: that God saves us, but after that, we have to maintain or improve our salvation by obedience and good works. No one within the church will persecute you for this. They will pat you on the back, in fact, and welcome you with open arms.

If you want the praise of God, then preach His radical gospel: that we were saved by God’s grace through faith in Jesus, not by works, and this is exactly how we live this life. Teach that we began in the Spirit, and now we simply walk in the Spirit. Teach that our forgiveness is final and that God is not holding our sins against us at any time. Teach that we can KNOW 24/7/365 that we have eternal life. Teach that we are righteous

apart from the works of the law. Proclaim that we are holy. You can rest assured that you will suffer persecution within the church for teaching such things.

Here is even more good news that we seldom hear. Jesus came to set us *free* from sin. Yet, do we really believe that we are free from sin? Romans 6 in its entirety is seldom taught; I believe, because its content is so radical. Imagine the Sunday sermon about how we are “dead to sin” as contrasted to the weekly sermons that *assume* we are controlled by sin.

Some use 1 John 1:8 to teach that it is wrong for believers to say they “*have* no sin”—that this would be untruthful, but the verse isn’t speaking to believers at all, but to non-believers who thought there was no such thing as sin. I’ve also heard this verse used to prove that believers *aren’t* really *free* from sin, and for one to claim that we *are* free from sin *is* to sin! Are we to ignore, then, what Paul said in Romans 6 that we are dead to and free from sin? This is a severe error that contributes to the continued false belief that believers are the same as unbelievers concerning sin and to sinning.

Let me state this clearly. Sinners sin. It is their *nature* to sin. The righteous live righteously. It is our *nature* to live righteously. Believers are forgiven of all sin, dead to sin, set free from sin, and John states that he wrote his letter so that the reader would “not sin”. If he is saying that believers “have sin,” then he is contradicting himself in the same letter when he writes these shocking statements.

1 John 3:4-9

*Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. ⁵ And you know that **He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin.** ⁶ **Whoever abides in Him does not sin.** Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. ⁷ Little children, let no one deceive you. **He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.** ⁸ **He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.** ⁹ **Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.***

I have never heard a Sunday sermon on the above passage. It is one of the most stunning and amazing passages in Scripture! Is John out of his mind? Is he speaking in hyperbole? No. He is stating *truth*. Contrary to what is taught, the normal condition for a born-again believer is to *not* sin. This makes some people very angry—to say that we don’t sin, and usually 1 John 1:8 is used as evidence. **Of course, we are capable of sin, just as Adam and Eve were before the fall, but it’s not normal for new creations**

to sin. In fact, the more we understand that we are forgiven, the less we desire to sin and the less we do sin.

I've said this while teaching, and made a few people significantly upset with me, some even sure that I am lying, but I seriously have no desire to sin. I don't struggle with sin, don't think about sin, and don't have to try really hard not to sin—in fact, the idea of possibly sinning saddens me, and if I do sin, I feel awful about it. I have a new nature. I am a new creation. I am holy and righteous. I am one spirit with the Lord. I am no longer a sinner. It is my new nature not to want to sin and to want to please God in every thought, word, and deed. **If you are a born-again believer and this does not describe your life, my most educated opinion is that you are somehow living under law, which is strengthening sin in your life.** The more we understand the grace of God and our total forgiveness and freedom from sin, the less power it has in our lives.²

The good news is, we are forgiven perfectly and forever of all sin and marvelously set free from sin. This is the glorious reason that Jesus came and became a sin offering for us—to save us from our sins—to give us total and complete forgiveness and to make us the very righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21).

Romans 6:5-11

*For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,⁶ knowing this, that **our old man was crucified with Him**, that the body of sin might be **done away with**, that we should **no longer be slaves of sin.**⁷ For he who has died has been **freed from sin.**⁸ Now if we **died** with Christ, we believe that we shall also **live** with Him,⁹ knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him.¹⁰ For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.¹¹ **Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.***

² If you are struggling with a particular sin or with a behavior that you want to eliminate, try this: Next time you are tempted, remind yourself that you are forgiven, that you are righteous, that you are holy, that God is with you, that He isn't condemning you, but loving you and working in you to set you free. Do this each and every time asking Him to help you see the freedom from sin that is yours. Study the Scriptures to see what He has accomplished in you. Reject the lie that you still have a sinful nature. (P.S. Contrary to certain translations, the terms "sinful nature" and "sinner" never apply to Christians.) Focus on the new creation He has made you. Thank Him that He is not holding your sins against you—that He is imputing to you His righteousness, not your sin. Reject the idea that you "can't" stop. Stop seeing sin as normal. It isn't. Embrace the freedom that is yours. Expect a supernatural change.