

The Cornerstone Vision, pt. 2 – The Gospel is the Answer

Mark 16:15-18 - 15 And [Jesus] said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. 17 And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; 18 they will pick up serpents with their hands; and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

Why Preach the Gospel?

- Some Statistics
 - Netflix viewers watch 1 billion hours every week... 2 hrs / day / person
 - YouTube viewers worldwide watch 1 billion hours every day
 - 1960 - 70% of US population went to church regularly
 - 1990-2010 - Weekly church attendance dropped 1% per decade
 - 2010-2014 - Weekly church attendance dropped 1% per year
 - 2014-2018 - Weekly church attendance dropped 18% in 4 years

The Gospel Worked in the 1st Century

- Christianity went from a few hundred to 30 million in 300 years
- Romans 1:18-32 - 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. 21 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. 24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, 25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. 26 For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; 27 and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. 28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. 29 They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. 32 Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.
- It Was a Crooked and Twisted Generation
 - Matthew 12:39 – Jesus called the Jews “an evil and adulterous generation”
 - “evil” = *ponéros* = evil that causes pain and misery
 - Matthew 12:41 - Even Nineveh would stand and condemn them
 - Mark 8:38 – Jesus calls them a “sinful” and “lost” generation
 - Mark 9:19 – Jesus calls them a “faithless generation”
 - Luke 9:41 – Jesus calls them an “unbelieving and twisted generation”
 - Luke 11:50 – Jesus refers to them as a murderous generation
 - Acts 2:40 – Peter told those gathered at Pentecost, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation” (Acts 2:40)
 - “crooked” = *skolios* = warped and bent, like a piece of parched wood... morally twisted, perverse

- Philippians 2:15 - Paul encouraged the Philippians to shine brightly “in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation”
 - “twisted” = *diastrephó* = so completely twisted and turned and warped that it becomes a whole new shape
- This Was a World Of...
 - Greco-Roman Gods
 - The Coliseum
 - Warfare
 - Tyrannical Leaders
 - Insane Leaders: Caligula, Nero, etc.
- Other Snippets of How Bad the Times Were...
 - 1 John 5:19 – John wrote that “the whole world lies in the power of the evil one”
 - 1 John 2:18-19 – John talks about “many antichrists” who were already in the world.
 - 2 Corinthians 4:4 – Paul wrote that “the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers”
 - 2 Thessalonians 2:7 – Paul writes that “the mystery of lawlessness is already at work” in the world
 - “lawlessness” = *anomia* = the utter disregard for God's laws
 - 2 Timothy 3:1-5 – 1 But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. 2 For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, 4 treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.
 - Titus 3:3 – For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.
 - 1 Peter 4:3-5 - 3 For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. 4 With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; 5 but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead
 - 1 Peter 1:18 - ... the futile ways inherited from your forefathers
 - Romans 6:21 – The Romans had done things of which they are now “ashamed”
 - Colossians 1:21 – The Colossians were once “alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds”
 - Colossians 3:5-8 – The wrath of God was coming upon the world for “sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, covetousness, idolatry... anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk”
 - Galatians 4:8 – The Galatians had been “enslaved to those that by nature are not gods”
 - Titus 1:12-13 – Writing about those who live on Crete, Paul quotes one of their philosopher-poets (Epimenides) and says, “‘Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.’ 13 This testimony is true.”
 - Other Translations: evil brutes, worthless beasts, savage animals, barking dogs... greedy and lazy like wild animals
 - 1 Corinthians 5:9-10 - 9 I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people - 10 not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.

The Answer Was and Is the Gospel

- 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 - 9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, 10 nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the

kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.