

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

The word *gospel* comes from the Greek word *euaggelion* (*evangelion* in English), which simply means *good message*. *Gospel* combines the Old English words 'God's spel', or 'God's Story' in modern terms. The gospel is simply:

The GOSPEL is a *message* of salvation through the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ to life in an eternal Kingdom of love, peace, and joy ruled by the God Most High!

I wrote other Sabbath Thought articles<sup>1</sup> about the gospel. The key points of it are being saved from a physical life of death to an eternal life in a Kingdom ruled by the Most High God. What is so desirable about such a life? An indescribable<sup>2</sup> perfect love, peace, and joy. It is hard to substantially envision those things at the beginning of our spiritual conversion but they certainly take on greater meaning as the afflictions and sufferings of this life abound more and more.

There are none who have felt anything close to what Peter called "indescribable" love, peace, and joy. I have talked to a few who experienced a brief taste of it but it was always during a time of affliction or suffering. Even WITHOUT trials I doubt that those feelings are even more than a shadow of what God has promised.

Someone recently asked me to explain the love, peace, and joy promised in the Bible; however, it is not possible to describe the indescribable. I can only say with certainty that love, peace, and joy are the true gifts of the gospel message:

2 CORINTHIANS 9:15 Thanks *be* to God for His **indescribable gift!**

Experiencing the fullness of God's perfect love, peace, and joy in this physical life is impossible. I would guess that the evil of this age even impacts God's own peace since He is holding tremendous anger that will be unleashed against the wicked. But there is coming a time when God will forever put aside His anger:

PSALMS 30:4-5 Sing praise to the LORD, you saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name. 5 For **His anger is but for a moment**, His favor *is for* life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy *comes* in the morning.

PSALMS 103:8-9 The LORD *is* merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. 9 He will not always strive *with us*, **nor will He keep His anger forever**.

While intellectual and physical pursuits give life meaning, it is love, peace, and joy that make life desirable *and* livable. What makes the gospel unique above all other messages is that it must not only be preached and heard, it must be RECEIVED:

MATTHEW 13:19-23 "When anyone **hears the word of the kingdom**, and does not understand *it*, then the wicked *one* comes and snatches away what was sown in his

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<sup>1</sup> [2024-05-18 - Believe the Gospel](#), [2024-06-01 - Commission of Light](#), and [2024-06-29 - Preaching the Gospel](#).

<sup>2</sup> 1 Pet. 1:8.

heart. This is he who **received seed** by the wayside. 20 “But he who **received the seed** on stony places, this is he who **hears the word** and immediately **receives it** with joy; 21 “yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. 22 “Now he who **received seed** among the thorns is he who **hears the word**, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. 23 “But he who **received seed** on the good ground is he who **hears the word** and understands *it*, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”

Jesus Christ describes the message of the gospel as seed that is first RECEIVED and then GROWS. The gospel is nothing like a history lesson heard by students who retain it as intellectual knowledge. Uniquely, the gospel is a message that must be RECEIVED INSIDE a person and then nurtured and grown. Seed is a not a *simile* for the gospel but rather a *metaphor* for it. In other words, the gospel is not *like* a seed but rather the gospel IS a seed. Why? Because the gospel is more than an intellectual pursuit—it must become a part of someone in which it continuously grows. The parable of the sower is not simply an interesting tale but describes the gospel as a real seed that produces spiritual CHANGE inside flesh and blood. This important distinction of can be easily overlooked even though Scripture is clear:

ACTS 2:41 Then those who gladly **received [G0588] his [Peter’s] word** were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them*.

ACTS 7:38 “This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and *with* our fathers, the one [Moses] who **received [G1209] the living oracles** to give to us,

ACTS 8:14 Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had **received [G1209] the word of God**, they sent Peter and John to them,

ACTS 11:1 Now the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also **received [G1209] the word of God**.

ACTS 17:11 These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they **received [G1209] the word** with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily *to find out* whether these things were so.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I [Paul] also **received [G3880]**: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

GALATIANS 1:9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other **gospel** to you than what you have **received [G3880]**, let him be accursed.

1 THESSALONIANS 1:6 And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having **received [G1209] the word** in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit,

1 THESSALONIANS 2:13 For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you **received [G3880] the word of God** which you heard from us, you welcomed *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.

2 JOHN 1:4 I rejoiced greatly that I have found *some* of your children walking in truth, as we **received /G2983/ commandment** from the Father.

The Greek translated *received* in these scriptures variously mean to receive fully, to welcome, to accept, to take, to take hold of, to learn, and *to associate with oneself*. That the gospel must be "**received**" is what differentiates it from all other teachings and knowledge, biblical or otherwise. Receiving the gospel is not just elegant prose in the Bible. The gospel cannot be understood or realized if it is not actually INSIDE a person:

JAMES 1:21 Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and **receive** with meekness **the implanted /KJV, engrafted/ word**, which is able to save your souls.

Jesus said, "**The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.**" (John 6: 63). This is the point of the parable of the sower. The gospel is a message of *WORDS THAT ARE LIFE*. The seed of the gospel inside a person grows in the fertile ground of the heart of those who are "holding fast **the word of life.**" (Phil. 2: 16).

What exactly are the words of life of the gospel? Agape love, peace, and joy from God the Father through the 'implanting' of the Holy Spirit. Salvation is the result of RECEIVING the gospel whereby agape love is implanted *inside* them. Every seed produces a specific plant and the Holy Spirit is the seed planted by God:

MATTHEW 15:13 But He [*Jesus*] answered and said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted [*inferring God also plants seed*].

The Holy Spirit is a SEED that grows into *agape love*. The words of life literally die unless they are *received* in the ground of a fertile heart and nurtured. Without it, the words of life become nothing more than intellectual knowledge that pass away when the 'host' person dies. The seed implanted when the gospel is received inside a person must *grow* until the recipient BECOMES agape love:

EPHESIANS 4:11-16 And He [*Jesus*] Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for **the edifying [building up, growth]** of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, 15 but, speaking the truth in love, **may grow up in all things** into Him who is the head—Christ— 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, **causes growth** of the body for the **edifying [building up, growth]** of itself **in LOVE**.

Experiencing perfect love, peace, and joy is not possible in this physical life because we are burdened by afflictions and sufferings. These are the only conditions from which anyone can understand and value love, peace, and joy:

1 THESSALONIANS 1:6 And you became followers of us and of the Lord, **having received the word [of life] in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit.**

But fiery trials only make the gospel message more desirable and that is why faith is required. Faith is believing that the realization of love, peace, and joy in a spiritual body is literally INDESCRIBABLE:

MATTHEW 25:23 “His lord said to him, ‘Well *done*, good and **faithful servant**; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. **Enter into the JOY of your lord.**’

Paul calls it the “joy of faith.” (Phil 1:25). In fact, the agape love, peace, and joy manifested in an eternal spirit body is such a “pearl of great price [*lit., extreme value*]” (Matt. 13:45-46) that Jesus *willingly* endured the cross:

HEBREWS 12:2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of **our faith**, who for the **JOY that was set before Him endured the cross**, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

The word translated *before* literally means “to lie before the view.” Jesus lived that ‘indescribable’ agape love, peace, and joy before He became flesh and it was always His vision and desire to return to that state of existence. But He put it aside momentarily so that God could bring many children<sup>3</sup> into that same perfection of agape love, peace, and joy:

1 PETER 1:3-10 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through **faith** for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your **faith**, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is **tested by fire**, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the **revelation of Jesus Christ**, 8 whom having not seen **you love**. Though now you do not see *Him*, yet **believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable** and full of glory, 9 **receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.**

That is why the gospel is so desireable. We can become one with God the Father and Jesus Christ in the perfection of Their indescribable love, peace, and joy<sup>4</sup>:

JOHN 17:23 “**I [Jesus] in them [the saints], and You [God the Father] in Me; that they may be made perfect in one**, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have **loved them as You have loved Me.**

May God’s grace and peace be upon you!

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<sup>3</sup> Heb. 2:10.

<sup>4</sup> Also Col. 3:14.