

Why Are People Afraid of the Gospel?

Matthew 10:34 - "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword."

The Gospel Offers Comfort

- God wills to comfort the suffering and discouraged
 - 2Cor. 1:3-7 - “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. 6 Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. 7 And our hope for you is steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you will partake of the consolation.”

The Gospel Offers Comfort

- However, there is a difference between God providing comfort and believers being comfortable
- The same God who sought to comfort His people...
 - Isaiah 40:1-2 - “Comfort, yes, comfort My people! Says your God. 2 Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, That her warfare is ended, That her iniquity is pardoned”
- ...Also condemned His comfortable people
 - Amos 6:1 - “Woe to you who are at ease in Zion...”

And The Gospel Causes Fear

- The Gospel addresses our sins
 - Heb. 12:1 - “Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us”
 - Rom. 3:23 - “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”
 - Rom. 6:23 - “For the wages of sin is death...”
 - 1John 1:8 - “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”

And The Gospel Causes Fear

- The Gospel forbids sin
 - 1John 2:1 - “My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin...”
 - 1John 3:4-6 - “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.”

And The Gospel Causes Fear

- The Gospel says that sin was the cause of Jesus' suffering
 - Rom. 5:6-8 - “For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
 - 1Peter 2:24 - “Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed.”

And The Gospel Causes Fear

- The Gospel addresses the sins of those dear to us
 - Matt. 28:18-20 - “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.”
 - Rom. 1:16 - “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”

And The Gospel Causes Fear

- Men do not want to hear that many of the people they love are destined for Perdition
 - 2Thes. 1:6-9 - “Since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, 7 and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, 8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power”

And The Gospel Causes Fear

- The Gospel dispels ignorance
 - Men love the gray areas of ignorance and partial knowledge
 - John 3:19 - “And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”

And The Gospel Causes Fear

- It is easy to get comfortable with one's level of understanding, but to stand still is to fall back
- 2Peter 3:15-18 - “And consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation--as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, 16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures. 17 You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.”

And The Gospel Causes Fear

- Men fear to learn, because learning brings responsibility
 - 2Tim. 2:15 - “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

And The Gospel Causes Fear

- The Gospel makes one righteous
 - 1Peter 1:14-16 - “As obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; 15 but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 because it is written, Be holy, for I am holy.”

And The Gospel Causes Fear

- People are afraid to be clean; they are afraid of the pressure, the restraints, and the effort required by righteousness
- People in sin are afraid to face their own image. The mirror of the Gospel exposes their own dirt to themselves.
- People are afraid of their own self-loathing, the disgust they feel about their sins at the innermost level. The Gospel shines a light on that level.

And The Gospel Causes Fear

- The Gospel makes this world irrelevant
 - Phil. 3:18-21 - “For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame--who set their mind on earthly things. 20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.”

And The Gospel Causes Fear

- Sin has deceived most people into believing this world is comfortable.
 - Heb. 11:9-10, 14-16 - “By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; 10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God... 14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. 15 And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.”

And The Gospel Causes Fear

- The world would prefer the hog mire of sin and dog vomit of evil than the blessings in Christ. That's what long term sin does to one.
- The world is afraid of the Gospel because it separates the world from its comfort zone
 - 1John 2:15-17 - “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”

Fear Should Drive One Toward The Gospel

- Fear should not press one further into sin, but instead move him against sin
 - 2Cor. 7:9-11 - “Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. 10 For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. 11 For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.”

Fear Should Drive One Toward The Gospel

- Fear of the eternal fate of others should not cause one to despair, but motivate him to press them toward the Gospel
- Fear of knowledge should not drive one away from learning, but motivate him to rise above himself by accepting the challenge of the responsibility knowledge brings
- Fear of being clean should not move one to cower in the muck of sin, but move him to be more self-aware and to do something about it.
- Fear of losing one's place in this wicked world is not designed to isolate him, but to keep him longing for a better place

Why Are People Afraid of the Gospel?

- Discomfort and fear are not pleasant, but they are necessary motivators if one wishes to be saved in heaven and escape hell
- Don't get too comfortable, as a sinner or as a Christian
 - Rev. 3:17-19 - “Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' --and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked-- 18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. 19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.”