

Preaching the Gospel to Yourself and to Others

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I just got done reading a wonderful, short book from C.J. Mahaney, “The Cross Centered Life: Keeping the Gospel The Main Thing”. The central message is that the cross is central to everything we believe and do: “we should preach the gospel to ourselves daily.” We’re to continually remind ourselves of where we came from and who we are because of what Jesus did for us on that cross.

Take a look at the life of Paul- in spite of all his troubles, in all of his letters he always kept the cross his focus, and never forgot that he was a sinner who justly deserved hell but for the grace of God through the cross: “I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man, but **I obtained mercy** because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And **the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant...** This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief...**I obtained mercy.**” (2 Tim 1:12-16) He kept preaching to himself the cross- and he encourages us to do the same. One way to keep reminding ourselves of the incredible grace and mercy of God at the cross is to be active in evangelism- it keeps bringing us back to the cross, and there is a well of gratitude rising from our hearts as we see sinners rescued from the pit of hell and recall the day that Jesus rescued us as well. Paul wrote Philemon, “I pray that you would be active in sharing your faith, so that you would know **every good thing you have in Christ.**”

I’ll ask people at work, “How are you doing?” and get sarcastic answers like, “Another day in paradise.” When people ask C.J. Mahaney how he’s doing, he says, “Better than I deserve.” I’m making this a new habit and believe it will help me continually preach the gospel to myself and to open up more opportunities in everyday life to share the gospel. I am doing better than I deserve. The Law of God, the Ten Commandments, shows me who I am apart from Christ. If anyone thinks my religion is self-condemning, I can easily ask them, “What do you think you deserve? Do you consider yourself to be a good person?” and take them through some of the Commandments. The Law shows us what we deserve, “the Law brings about wrath” (Rom 4:15) - thank God for the cross!