

THE GOSPEL IS A COMMAND

MARK 1:14-15 • TV198A

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By

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Mark 1:14-15

“Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.”

I would like for you to open your Bible with me today to the book of **Mark**. I will be reading from **chapter 1 of Mark’s Gospel, verses 14 and 15.**

Here is the title of this message; I am going to be speaking on the subject: **“THE GOSPEL IS A COMMAND.”**

I am going to sound a note that I believe needs to be sounded, especially in this day, loud and clear. What I am saying is this; now see that you understand from the beginning what I am preaching.

I am saying that the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Gospel of God’s saving mercy in Jesus Christ is more than a mere invitation, it is more than a mere offer; the Gospel of Jesus Christ is a command.

Now you listen to **Mark chapter 1: verses 14 and 15:** It says, *“After John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee preaching the Gospel.”* Jesus Christ our Lord came preaching the Gospel,

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the Gospel of the kingdom of God and saying, *“The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye and believe the Gospel.”*

Now I know that we hear a lot today about the Gospel invitation. Preachers today, especially on television, put much stress on inviting men to believe on Jesus Christ and inviting men to accept Jesus Christ, and inviting men to let God have a part in their lives.

Now, without being contentious; (I don't mean to be contentious, and I don't mean to be offensive), but I wish to declare unto you as clearly as I can declare it, that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not just an invitation, it is a command.

Actually, my friend, the word invite and the word invitation does not even occur in the Word of God anywhere, not one single time; not one single time do you find in the Word of God connected with the Gospel or anything else, coming from the mouth of God. You never find one time the word invite or the word invitation.

Now listen to me; listen clearly; you and I may invite people to hear us preach, that is perfectly legitimate. I invite people to come and hear the Gospel.

Moses said to his father-in-law; *“Come with us we are the people of God. Come with us and we will do you good.”* That was Moses inviting a man. I may invite people to hear me preach. I may invite people to listen to this television program.

Then, as Paul said; *“Knowing the terror of the Lord, I persuade men.”* You and I may persuade men to look to Christ and be saved.

Then, you and I may beseech men to be reconciled to God. That is what Paul said; *“I beseech you; be ye reconciled to God.”* I may invite men to come hear me preach. I may invite men to give attention to the Gospel. I may persuade men to seek the Lord. I may beseech men to be reconciled to God.

Now listen to me and let me sound this note clearly; the King of kings and the Lord of lords does not invite rebels to obey him, He commands them to obey. The King of kings and the Lord of lords does not invite His subjects to believe His Word. He does not invite His subjects to believe His Book; He commands them to believe. It comes as a command. Even an invitation from a Sovereign is a command.

The King of kings and the Lord of lords does not invite men to honor Him or to bow to Him; He commands them to bow. He said, *“God hath given Christ a name which is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father.”*

“Every knee shall bow in heaven, in earth, and under the earth.” Not ought to bow, not should bow but they shall bow; *“every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, whether in heaven, earth, or under the earth.”*

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Does that sound like an offer? Does that sound like an invitation; my friend that is a serious command.

Now, to believe God is to reap great benefits and blessings from His bountiful hand. He said, “*As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so, must the Son of man be lifted up that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.*”

Those are the benefits and those are the blessings: everlasting life, justification, regeneration, sanctification, wisdom, and all of these things are to be had in Christ. They are to be found in Christ.

To receive Christ and to believe Christ and to come to Christ is to receive all those benefits. But, not to believe Christ, to refuse to believe Christ, is to incur great sin. He said, “*He that believeth not hath made God a liar.*”

Now that is serious. That doesn’t sound like an offer or an invitation. God said, “*Believe my Word.*” You might say, “I won’t believe your Word because you are a liar.” That is what he is saying.

Then, to refuse to believe on Christ is to be forever damned. In **Mark 16:16** it says clearly; “*He that believeth not shall be damned.*”

My friends, I preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, as a command. I know it is an invitation. I know that there is in a sense, an offer involved, but this is an invitation from a Sovereign, from a King. This is an offer that cannot and must not be refused. He commands men to repent and believe the Gospel.

Let me ask you some things. Is it optional to you to believe God; is that optional? I shall believe God or I shall not believe God. Is it optional to men to believe God’s Word? Is it optional to men to believe God’s Son? No sir! It is a command; not to believe God is to make him a liar.

You parents, how many of your parents out there invite your children to believe your word? How many of you parents out there invite your children to obey you? “Now son; I invite you to bring in the stove wood. Son I invite you to cut the yard.”

No sir! There is a command extended; “son, cut the yard.” Not to cut the yard is to bring upon you the wrath of your father. It is a command. It is a command to believe your parents. It is a command to obey your parents. It is a command to receive the word of your parents and it is a command from God to believe his Word.

I don’t believe that the police in the tri-state area invite men and women to obey the law. Neither does the living God invite, beg, and plead with men, to believe Him. He commands them to believe Him or be damned.

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That is exactly what the Scripture declares; the Gospel is a command. I preach the Gospel to every creature expecting them to believe it, expecting them to obey it, expecting them to receive it because God says, *“he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned.”*

Secondly: It is not optional to men to bow to the Lord Jesus Christ and worship Him whom the Father has sent, it is a command.

When Peter was preaching on Pentecost, he said this in **Acts 2:36**; *“God hath made this same Jesus whom you crucified to be both Lord and Christ.”* They were troubled and they were pricked in their hearts. They cried, *“Men and brethren, what shall we do?”*

Peter said, *“If you are obliged to do so or if you find your will turned into this direction, why don’t you repent and why don’t you be baptized?”*

That is not what he said. They said, *“What shall we do? We have crucified the Lord of glory. Our hands are dripping with the blood of the Son of God. What are we going to do? God is angry. The wrath of God is turned against us. What are we going to do?”*

Peter commanded them; listen, he said; *“Repent and be baptized, every blessed one of you.”* It’s not those who disposed to do so; not those who feel so led. He said, *“Repent every one of you. Confess Christ every one of you.”* There is no simple plea, no simple invitation. There was a command extended there.

I am saying this to you; all men are going to bow to Christ. He said, *“Every knee is going to bow,”* here or hereafter; God has commanded it. *“Bow; kiss the Son lest he be angry.”* Bow to the crown rights of Jesus Christ. Submit to the scepter of Shiloh, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

“We will not have this man reign over us.” Oh yes you will; oh yes you will! God’s designed it, God decreed it, and by His death He bought it. *“He is Lord of the dead and the living.”*

I heard a man say, just this afternoon; *“that he invited God to have a part in his life.”* My friend, in God *“we live and move and have our being.”* You couldn’t breathe without God; you couldn’t raise your arm without God; you couldn’t take a step without God.

Almighty God, whether you know it or not, has all power and all authority over you and has put you in the hands of His Son with whom you have to do; it is not a question of inviting Him to have a part in your life.

Pilate said to our Lord; *“Do you refuse to answer me; don’t you know that I have power to crucify you and let you go?”* Our Lord said, *“You don’t have any power over me at all except it be given you from above.”*

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My friend, it is not optional to men to repent and believe the Gospel of the righteousness and sacrifice of Christ. Look at **Acts 17:30**; what does it say? “God invites all men to repent.” It does not say that; it says, “*God commandeth all men everywhere to repent.*”

When Christ Jesus was on the mount of transfiguration with the three apostles, what did the voice of God say? “This is my beloved son; you sure ought to hear him. I would be much obliged if you would let him speak to you. I invite you.”

He said, “*This is my beloved Son, hear ye him.*” That is a command. *Christ said, “If you believe not that I am, you will die in your sins. There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.”*

Listen to me; Abel was not invited to offer a blood sacrifice, he was commanded to offer a blood sacrifice.” Noah was not invited to build an ark, God commanded him and said, “*Noah; make an ark.*” That is a command.

Israel was not invited to put blood on the door; they were commanded upon the penalty of death, to put blood on the door.

You are commanded to repent upon the penalty of death. You are commanded to believe the Word of God. You are commanded to bow to Jesus Christ. You are commanded to receive Him upon the penalty of eternal damnation.

Moses wasn't invited to build a tabernacle; God told him to build one; he was commanded. Aaron was not invited to bring the atonement into the Holy of Holies and put it on the mercy seat; he was commanded to do that.

I am telling you this and I am saying this to myself and to all who will hear me; I know that we have the pleaders, the aisle draggers, and the folks who are trying their best to get people to come down to the front and let Jesus have his way and let God do something else.

Any god that you have to let do anything is no god at all. The God of the universe is a sovereign God who does as He will, when He will, and with whom He will.”

His commandments are for you to believe His Word. His commandments are for you to repent. His commandment is for you to believe His son.

Listen to me, will you; why is the Gospel of Jesus Christ and all the Word of God, for that matter, a command? Why is the Gospel more than just an invitation? Why is it a command?

Well, now listen:

First of all: This is reasonable; it is a command in keeping with the very character and honor of God. It is a command in keeping with a great King.

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A great, sovereign ruler does not beg men to do his will. Can't you hear a General, a five-star General begging a private; "Private, I invite you to go get my jeep and bring it and have it in front of headquarters in five minutes, if you are disposed to do so, if you feel led in that direction."

He will say, "I will give you four minutes to have that jeep in front of this tent." That is just a five-star General; I am talking about God Almighty. That's the character of God. A great king does not bargain with slaves. He doesn't say, "Would you like to row the ship?"

A great judge, a just judge, does not negotiate with criminals. I am telling you the truth; I am telling you who God is. The god that we are hearing preached in this day is not worthy of worship or worthy of your faith or worthy of your confidence; he can't do anything anyway unless men let him.

God is holy and holiness must prevail. God is just and "*he will not clear the guilty.*" The law is unchangeable and it shall be honored and it shall be obeyed either in the person of Christ as your substitute or in yourself. God's justice will be honored.

The Gospel is a command; it is a command in keeping with God's character. It is a command in keeping with God's honor. Anything less than a command coming from the throne of God would do dishonor to God Almighty.

A king doesn't beg servants to obey him and a king does not negotiate with criminals. A king does not bargain with slaves and that is what we are.

Secondly: Then, it is a command; it is to give boldness to God's ambassadors.

God's ambassadors don't go out here like the hucksters and merchandisers of souls today begging people to let God have His way. Those are not God's ambassadors. God's ambassadors go forth in the victory of Jesus Christ.

Our Lord Jesus Christ stood on the Mount of Olives and gathered His disciples around Him and before He sent them out to preach, Peter, James, John, and all the rest of them, and He said this to them; "*all authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and preach the gospel.*"

I am telling you this; God's servants go forth in the name of Him who is victorious. God's servants go forth in the name of Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords. God's servants go forth in the name of the conquering Christ who finished what he came to do.

They go forth to call through the preaching of the Gospel, His elect, His sheep, and His people, "*out of every tribe, kindred, nation, and tongue, under heaven.*" And Christ said; "*My sheep will hear my voice and they will follow me and I will give them eternal life.*" "My Word, my Gospel, is not a request it is a command, and they will believe me."

I will tell you this; the Gospel is a command to encourage the humble seeker.

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Now listen to me; if I am commanded by Christ, if I am commanded by Christ to believe on Him and to be forgiven, if I am commanded by Christ to receive His mercy, then I am at full liberty to do so.

What God commands me to do I can do. What God commands me to do I am expected to do. When our Lord gives a command; with that command come permission and ability.

Listen to him when he stands outside the grave of Lazarus; he said, *“roll away that stone.”* Lazarus was dead; he had been dead four days. Our Lord stood outside the grave of Lazarus, our Lord, who is life itself, who is the giver of life, the source of life.

He shouted so that His voice could be heard all around; *“Lazarus, come forth.”* That is no invitation. That is no helpless offer. That is no pitiful plea; that is a command from the Lord of life. Brother, let me tell you something; Lazarus walked out of that tomb. He couldn't but he did.

I will tell you something else; one day our Lord stood before a man who had a withered hand. That hand had never known any strength or power. Our Lord said to that man; *“stretch out your hand.”* That is a command; *“stretch out your hand”* and with the command came permission. With the command came the power. With the command came the ability.

Our Lord stood one day beside the bed of a man who had been lame for 38 years; he had not walked in 38 years. My Lord said to him; now listen, “If you are so disposed, if you are so moved, if you would like to do, why don't you take up your bed and walk?”

That is not what he said. He said to that man; *“Arise; take up your bed and walk.”* That is a command. That man got up and walked away praising God.

I am saying that when the Lord of glory gives a command, there is no reason for men to debate the possibility of retraction. When God commands men to repent, they have the ability to repent. When God commands men to believe, I am certain, He means for them to believe, He commands it.

Now, this is terrible, but it is true; I want you to listen to me; the Lord of heaven today, in today's preaching, (and I am embarrassed by most of it); in today's preaching the Lord of heaven is pictured in this way by the average preacher; “he is a benevolent, old, granddaddy, up there in heaven, of some sort, up there somewhere.” That is what they are saying, who is offering a reward to everybody who will recognize Him and take Him into their lives and let him bless them.”

Now, my friend, such is not the case. The Scripture says, *“The Lord God omnipotent reigneth; the Lord God reigneth in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of this earth And the Lord giveth it to whomsoever he will.”*

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He said, *“I have declared it and it shall be done. My council shall stand. I declare the end from the beginning and from ancient times the things that are not yet done. None can stay my hand or say unto me what doest thou.”* God is not a beggar; He is a King; He is a King.

He is not dependent upon on any human being. He is independent of all His creation. Everything that exists today in matter, physically, and every other way, came out of God. He was the same before He made us as He was after He made us.

He is not dependent upon us; we are dependent upon Him. He said, *“If I was hungry I wouldn’t ask you.”* We are the ones who are hungry. We are the ones who are poverty stricken. We are the ones that need God.

I see these signs “God needs you.” God doesn’t need you; you need God. My friends; God created man in holiness, in righteousness and beauty. Man fell; he disobeyed God and he plunged the whole human race into death, deceit, disease, and destruction.

Almighty God determined within Himself, according to the good purpose of his own will, to redeem a people and make them like Christ. He gave them to Christ. He made Christ their Surety. He purposed to save a race of people out of Adam’s race. He chose *“not to take upon himself the nature of angels but the seed of Abraham.”*

He promised a Redeemer. All through the Old Testament from **Genesis 3:15 to Malachi**; He prophesied that a Redeemer would come, that a Christ would come, that a Messiah would come, that He would send one to redeem those people.

In the fullness of the time, God sent his Son into this world, in the likeness of sinful flesh, as our substitute, as our representative, as our federal-head, to meet His perfect, holy, law and to obey it that we might have a righteousness before God and to die on that cross, bearing our sins in His body on the tree.

He now commands men to believe His Son, to honor His Son, to obey His Son and to bow to His Son. I will tell you this; He told his disciples; *“you go preach this Gospel.”* This is the Gospel that is presented to a fallen race, the Gospel of a finished work. Christ redeemed us by His blood on the cross, the Gospel *“that is able to save to the uttermost, them that come to God by him.”*

You are commanded, not just invited, you are commanded by God to believe his Word. Not to believe it is to *“make God a liar.”* I don’t know of a more serious charge that can be brought against a man in judgment that he made God, who is the truth, a liar.

Now, what is the obedience commanded by the Gospel, what is it?

First of all: There are four things, quickly: We are commanded to hear his Word.

He said, *“Hear O Israel; hear; the Lord our God is one God.”* Ezekiel said, *“O ye dry bones; hear.”* That is the first thing; that is the first thing; *“hear the Word of the Lord.”*

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Our God said, *“If you hear my Word, your souls shall live.”* Our Master said, *“He that heareth my Word and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life: Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.”* That is the first command, hearing; *“this is my beloved Son; hear him. Take heed what you hear.”*

Secondly: We are commanded to repent.

He said, *“Except you repent you will perish. God commands all men everywhere to repent.”* Repentance has to do with a change of attitude, a change of thoughts about God and a change of thoughts about ourselves.

It has to do with bowing. It has to do with acknowledging our sin. It has to do with confessing our sin. It has to do with owning our sin. It has to do with facing our inability. It has to do with a spirit and an attitude toward God.

That is where repentance is; it is a heart work. *“As a man thinketh in his heart so is he. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.”* That is where the work of repentance is done, in the heart.

It’s not just a change of habits. It’s not just a change of habitation. It’s not just a change of companion but it is a change of God’s. It is under new management; in the heart business.

Thirdly: We are commanded to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, who He is, very God of very God.

What he did; *“He knew no sin but was made sin for us.”* Why he did it, *“that God may just and justifier.”* Where he is now; *“He is the man Christ Jesus on the right hand of the majesty in glory.”*

Fourthly: We are commanded to confess Christ publicly.

Jesus Christ said, *“He that confesseth me before men; I will confess him before my father which is in heaven.”* That is what Peter is saying in **Acts 2:38** to those people. He is calling not only for repentance but He is calling for a public acknowledgement and public identification and a public confession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Master has no secret disciples. No king has secret subjects. *“You are either for me or against me,”* Christ said. *“If you are not with me, you are against me.”* There is no possible way for you to play both sides of the fence; you can’t do it.

Fifthly: We are commanded to love Him.

He said, *“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart. If any man love mother, father, husband, wife, brother, sister, yea, his own life more than me, he is not worthy of me.”*

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Sixthly: We are commanded to love one another.

Our master said, “This is my request; that you love one another.” You might say, “Oh no; we don’t read that, that way; that’s not what the Word says.” Our Lord says, “*This is my commandment.*” The King does not request, he commands; “*This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you.*”