***The Power of the Gospel: Walking in the Benefits of the Cross***

1. The power of the gospel
   1. The truths related to the gospel are the only basis through which we can experience the power of God. The gospel qualified us to freely receive God’s love, power, favor, and many other benefits. We experience these benefits by having faith—confident agreement—in Jesus’ work on the cross.

16…the gospel of Christ…is the power of God to salvation [from the penalty and power of sin] for everyone who believes…17For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith… (Rom. 1:16–17)

18For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. (1 Cor. 1:18)

* 1. Paul’s confidence was in Jesus and the truths associated with His crucifixion and resurrection

2For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.   
(1 Cor. 2:2)

* 1. Paul’s dramatic declaration that we have become a new creation in Christ, with all things becoming new, has vast implications. The “he” that is a new creation is our born-again spirit.

17If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away…all things have become new…21thatwe [our spirit] might become the righteousness of God. (2 Cor. 5:17-21)

* + 1. ***Old things passed away***: We were under *condemnation* before God and *powerless* with regard to sin at the heart level and to resisting the attacks of the devil.
    2. ***All things are new***:We are *accepted* *and enjoyed* by God and have the *authority of Jesus’ name* and the *indwelling Spirit*, which enable us to resist sin, sickness, and Satan.
  1. David had zeal to experience *all* the benefits of the grace of God available to him (Ps 103:1-5).

2Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: 3who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, 4who redeems your life from destruction, who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies… (Ps 103:1-4)

* 1. ***The Lord who forgives all***: All of our sins are forgiven; there is no condemnation before God.
  2. ***The Lord who heals all***: Jesus purchased our healing on the cross. It is God’s nature to heal as revealed through the ministry of Jesus. One reason Jesus came was to destroy Satan’s works.

8For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil. (1 Jn. 3:8)

38Jesus…went about doing good…healing all who were oppressed by the devil… (Acts 10:38)

17These signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons…18they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover… (Mk. 16:17-18)

1. overcoming the attacks of the enemy: Three principles
   1. The call to overcome is one of primary themes in the book of Revelation (2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21; 12:11; 15:2; 21:7). It includes overcoming Satan’s accusations against us, which are like flaming missiles sent to convince us that we are failures who are guilty, condemned, disqualified, and forgotten, and that our life will be boring, daunting, and irrelevant. He seeks to convince us that the small things that we do will not matter to anyone, especially the Lord.

10The accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night…11And they overcame him [the devil] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. (Rev. 12:10-11)

* 1. ***Blood of the Lamb***: Jesus’ death qualified us to freely receive all the benefits of the gospel. On the cross, Jesus’ gained victory over Satan for us—removing his *legal right* to torment us.
  2. ***Word of our testimony***: Our testimony or confession of faith is what we believe about who Jesus is, what He did on the cross, who we are in Him, and what we believe about Satan’s assaults. We resist Satan by speaking our agreement with Jesus and what He accomplished on the cross.

23Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering…He is faithful. (Heb. 10:23)

* 1. ***Did not love their lives to death***: We set our heart to love Jesus and obey Him more than we love our natural life. We seek to obey Him regardless of what it costs us in terms of our fleshly interests.

1. the Word of our testimony 
   1. We release Jesus’ victory in our life by the word of our testimony or confession of the Word.

14Let us hold fast our confession…16Come boldly to the throne of grace… (Heb. 4:14-16)

* 1. ***Analogy:*** Imagine a homeless beggar who suddenly inherited great wealth. The announcement of his new inheritance doesn’t stop him from living in poverty. He must take the simple step of withdrawing the money. It only takes a few moments, but it is essential to accessing the wealth.
  2. Our confession is what we say to the indwelling Spirit about who we are in Christ. Confession engages our heart with God and His truth. Truth changes us as it gets into our conversation with God. We can know truths intellectually without applying them to our heart by confessing them.

8The word is near you, in your mouth…that is, the word of faith…9that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart…you will be saved [delivered from the penalty and power of sin]. 10For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation [complete deliverance]. (Rom. 10:8-10)

* 1. ***The word is near you***:The word that contains God’s promises and releases His power in our life is so near to us—it is as close to us as speaking it. The power is accessed in our life by faith.
  2. When condemnation, shame, fear, hopelessness, lust, etc. rise up in us to challenge what God promised in His Word about loving, forgiving, empowering, directing, or providing for us, then we must apply the promise of the Word to our heart, by *confessing the truth* and *resisting lies*.
  3. Faith does not come by asking, but by *hearing* the Word. The way our heart *hears* the best and most is when the Word comes *from our own lips* as we speak it to the Lord or to the enemy.

17So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Rom. 10:17)

* 1. We are transformed by changing how we think. Transformation begins by *knowing* who we are in Christ. As our mind is renewed, our emotions are transformed, and thus our behavior changes. Our emotions are not transformed by *trying harder*,but by *seeing the truth* more clearly.

2…be transformed by the renewing of your mind… (Rom. 12:2)

32And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. (Jn. 8:32)

* 1. Paul exhorted us to reckon ourselves alive to God or to see ourselves as God sees us in Christ.

11Reckon [see] yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ… (Rom. 6:11)

* + 1. ***See yourself alive to God***: We see ourselves as enjoyed, indwelt, and empowered by God.
    2. ***See yourself dead to sin***: We are no longer condemned by sin and powerless to challenge the attacks of Satan and the sinful promptings that arise in our emotions.
  1. We can overcome oppression or live in it according to our confession. Our words are powerful in causing either faith or fear to grow in us. If our words agree with God’s Word, then we release His power in our life. If our words agree with Satan’s lies, then we allow darkness to continue. Many have “faith” in the devil’s words. The war of words determines who has dominion in our heart.
  2. Whose words do you allow to take root in your heart? There are consequences to our choices. When we speak, we can cause the influence of God’s grace to increase or decrease in our life.
  3. ***Principle of the kingdom:*** The demonstration of the Spirit follows a declaration of a believer. The Spirit moves as the Word is spoken. We resist oppression by rebuking it in Jesus’ name.
  4. The primary way Satan tries to gain access to people is through their mind and body. The degree to which one yields to Satan in these areas determines how much Satan is able to influence him.
  5. We must not allow Satan’s attack against us to go uncontested, because his attack against us continues if we accept it. We must challenge it by speaking the Word against him. Do not confuse holy resignation to do God’s will with passive resignation to accept Satan’s attack against us.

19I give you the authority…over all the power of the enemy… (Lk. 10:19)

* 1. Authority is delegated power. A police officer stops a car by the authority of the government, not his own physical power. We use our authority in Christ to resist Satan’s “breaking into our house” to steal and destroy God’s blessing in our life by fears, addictions, sickness, emotional or financial oppression, or broken relationships. We must enforce our rights by resisting Satan as an intruder.

10The thief [Satan] does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. (Jn. 10:10)

* 1. Walking in victory includes an element of “wrestling” in our resistance of Satan’s attacks.   
     We employ the shield of faith by consistently declaring the Word against the enemy’s attack. Speaking the Word of God is our weapon and protection against demons. We must maintain the ground we take from the enemy, knowing that demons often return to attack again (Mt. 12:43-45).

12We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers…in the heavenly places…16taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one …17Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God… (Eph. 6:12-17)

* 1. ***Darts***: Heightened strife or negative emotions often involve Satan’s flaming missiles striking us. Sometimes we feel an irrationally heightened lust, fear, oppression, or anxiety. We resist these demonic influences by committing to obey Jesus and declaring the truth of God’s Word. In this way we can quench all the demonic missiles with their heightened energy against our lives.
  2. Our problems are often the result of several factors working together, including *psychological* issues (our mindset, belief systems, and life choices), *physiological* issues (diet, alcohol, chemicals, etc.), *sociological* issues (what others do to us), and *spiritual* issues (demonic attack).
  3. By using our authority, we can remove the added pressure that demons bring to our problems. This makes it much easier to solve physiological, psychological, and sociological problems.
  4. Exercising authority against Satan’s attack does not automatically cancel all the consequences of our wrong choices or all the effects of what others do to us. Demons can oppress a Christian’s body and soul without “possessing” their spirit. There are varying degrees of demonic oppression.
  5. We are called to enforce Jesus’ authority on earth as His body. Satan’s attack against us will continue if we accept it, instead of refusing it or challenging it with our authority in Christ.

7Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. (Jas. 4:7)

8Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 9Resist him, steadfast in the faith… (1 Pet. 5:8-9)

* 1. By the prayer of faith and confidence in the Word, we enforce Jesus’ victory in our life.

15The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. (Jas 5:15)

* 1. We must take authority over the spirit of fear. It must not be accepted or allowed to grow.

7God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. (2 Tim. 1:7)

* 1. Fear, rejection, and addictive urges are a form of demonic oppression that must be rebuked. If they are allowed to gain dominance in our thinking, they will dominate our life with despair.

1. questions for small-Group discussion ***(e.g., FCF Friendship Groups)***

1. Identify one point that inspired or challenged you. Why? What will you do differently to apply it?  
 2. Identify one area in your life for which you would like prayer to overcome the enemy’s attack.  
 3. Identify one point that you would like to gain more understanding of. How will you seek to gain it?