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Not Simply With Words (1 Th 1:5)

In John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* we find a story of a traveler who was taken to a room. The room was in a mess. So, a servant was called in to clean up the room. But, when the cleaning started a cloud of dust almost choked him. "Sprinkle some water," said the Christian to a girl who was standing next to him. Dust settled down as soon as some water was sprinkled. The room became clean after some cleaning.

The traveler asked the Christian: "What does this mean?" "It means that the more you try to purify your heart by observing the law, the more sinner you become." In this story the messy room represents the mind of sinful man, dust the useless effort, ego and conceited heart of sinner who tries to cleanse his heart by keeping the law, the girl represents gospel and the water the grace of God.

No matter how much I try, I cannot become pure by my own self-esteem or self-taught inspirations. It's because we cannot take care of sin by our own effort. The point in the story is that you become pure only by the Gospel that is by grace.

That is why the Reformation began with the three pillars of confession: "*Only Scripture,*" "*Only Faith*" and "*Only Grace.*" Grace comes from accepting and trusting the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Believing in the Word is grace. To believe in the Word of God is the first and foremost condition of receiving God's grace.

The Word of God has to be experienced. As 1 Th 1:5 says "because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction." The power of the gospel begins with power. In 1 Co 4:20 "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power." What kind of power is it?

***Only the Gospel came with the power.*** It's the strength in which "I can do everything through him who gives me strength," says Php 4:13. This strength is the power of love which motivates and enables you to do anything for God. No weapon on earth is stronger than the power of love. There is no power that surpasses the power of love here on earth or in heaven. It is simply nonexistent.

***Only the Gospel came with the Holy Spirit.*** You have joy thru the Holy Spirit. Nothing else matters. Jesus was full of joy through the Holy Spirit (Lk 10:21). You understand thru the Spirit (1 Cor 2:10), pray thru the Spirit (Eph 6:18), reach out by the Spirit (Ac 1:8), be renewed by the Spirit (Tit 3:5) and be one with God thru the Spirit (Eph 4:3-6).

***Only the Gospel came with deep conviction.*** The phrase 'deep conviction' in Greek is 'plerophora polle,' meaning full assurance or confidence. What did the Apostle Paul say about that he is convinced of (pepeismai)?

Rom 8:38-39 “For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Dear beloved, the Gospel came not simply with words. The gospel is the expression of God’s love. It is the sound which revealed the eternity of God. That is why the gospel becomes hymn when you add melody to it;

prayer when you add hopeful request to it; worship that honors God when you live it. The believer is being sanctified by the gospel. It is the gospel because it began with the Holy Spirit.

***The gospel in the ear (Ac 2:2).*** In 1907 the spiritual movement began in the Jang Dae Hyun Church in Pyongyang on the 14th of January in the evening rally. On that evening Elder Sunju Gil led the rally by confessing of his own sins.

His confession and repentance spread like fire, and all people were challenged and moved by the inevitable inner workings of the Holy Spirit, who convicts the lost souls to the cross of Jesus Christ.

That evening people weeped over their past lifestyles. People cried over their sins. People wailed over their unconfessed hidden sins. They knelt down on their knees and they asked for the grace. And, the rest was history. The Holy Spirit movement began throughout the country.

***The gospel in the eyes (Ac 2:3).*** The Holy Spirit is the gospel. Be confident that you receive the Holy Spirit when you hear the gospel by faith. In Gal 3:2 Paul asks “Did you receive the Spirit by observing the Law, or by believing what you heard?”

When Jesus was baptized the heaven opened. John the Baptist saw that the Holy Spirit descended in the form of dove (Mt 3:16). The Bible doesn’t say it was a pigeon, but rather a dove. Why?

Pigeon is multi-colored, representing world-centeredness, whereas the dove is white, symbolizing the holiness of God. And, the oily ingredients from the under the wings of the dove covers its entire body, making the feathers essentially water-proof.

It’s a characteristic of not being polluted by the world. Holiness and set-apart are the divine nature of God and they are the personalities of the gospel.

***The gospel on the mouth (Ac 2:4).*** You share the gospel of Jesus Christ as you become the witness of the Lord when you receive His Holy Spirit (Ac 1:8). In Ac 2:4 we

see that when the Holy Spirit came upon the believers, they began to speak in languages that other people could clearly understand.

What did they say? They spoke the gospel of Jesus Christ. They reached out by the gospel. When the gospel comes to you in power, leading you in the control of the Holy Spirit by convicting you deeply in faith you know that you will continue to praise the Lord even when you are behind the bars.

You know you won't stop praying in the Lord's name (Ac 16:24-25). The gospel didn't come simply with words, you know. It came with the power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction *by faith!*