

Hidden Gospel

(Sermon Notes) By Warren Zehrung 5/2/2015

This is a Pre-Pentecost sermon. Today, we have come to the 4th Sabbath in our count **to 7** complete **Sabbaths**. [So far 28 days out of 49 days]

Then Pentecost will be the "Morrow" after the 7th Sabbath. We are a little over half way to Pentecost. We will look at how God is working with us through a marvelous process.

As we move forward from Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread where we saw the Children of Israel – Old Covenant Israel - being saved and delivered from their long-time Egyptian slavery and bondage... In Exodus 6:6:

...We saw that God gave Israel correction and guidance as He built a foundation for them which lead to them becoming a great nation among nations.

Deuteronomy 4:1 Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers gives you.

Deuteronomy 4:6 Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the **sight of the nations**, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.

The Old Testament had this rule – "love God and neighbor."

Deuteronomy 6:5 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

Leviticus 19:18 ...Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the Lord.

It sounds very much like the New Testament doesn't it? Ancient Israel was God's holy people. Moses told the Israelites,

Through Moses, God asked ancient Israel, ". . .

Deuteronomy 10:12-13 ...What does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the Lord and His statutes which I command you today for your good?

Deuteronomy 14:2 For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and **the LORD hath chosen you** to be a peculiar people unto himself, **above all the nations** that are upon the earth.

Who was the **Church in the wilderness**? They were God's "congregation."

Acts 7:37 This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear.

Acts 7:38 This is he, that was in the **church in the wilderness** with the angel which spoke to him in the mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:

Deuteronomy 26:17 Thou hast avouched [declared] the LORD this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice:

Deuteronomy 26:18 And the LORD hath avouched [declared] thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou should keep all his commandments;

Deuteronomy 26:19 And to make thee **high above all nations** which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour; and that thou may be an holy people [set apart] unto the LORD thy God, as he hath spoken.

At Passover and Unleavened Bread last month we were to draw spiritual parallels of **deliverance** and **coming out of sin**.

Have we learned the lessons of Passover and Unleavened Bread?

Jesus Christ, rescuer of Israel set them up in a new life with a perfect society.

Those who had been incarcerated by hard taskmasters were **freed** for a new life. Their successful community was established with a **set of rules** for their association, society and Godly Nation.

They had the right foods: Deuteronomy 28:4.

They had the right security Plan with ultimate protection: Genesis 14:13 and Genesis 15:1.

They had a good Health Plan – with Promises of divine healing: Exodus 15:26.

They had GREAT PROMISES OF POWER AND WEALTH AND MULTITUDE of People Genesis 15:5 and Genesis 22:17.

They knew how to have High Standards – the Ten Commandments.

They had Jobs, Homes, Good Schools.

No one was to take advantage of others.

They Kept God's **Holy days**.

God prophesied that we would become a **very great nation** – and the surety that blessings would flow.

Genesis 26:4 And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed [**Jesus Christ's** coming] shall **all the nations** of the earth be blessed;

That is a Messianic Prophecy of Jesus Christ.

Read about the Great RICHES and Blessings in Genesis 49:25 and Exodus 32:13. Israel was a veritable utopia.

Specific Purpose Statement: The purpose of this Pre-Pentecost sermon is so that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ be not lost on us.

Israel was set apart for God's purposes: You will prosper and be blessed – God told them: What a wonderful world.

And that was the Old Testament! Most Christians set their goal on attaining to that Old Testament standard.

The Old Testament plan was for the purpose of establishing a Godly society...

What more is there?

Pentecost answers the question, "what more could you ask?"

How are we different from the Old Testament church in the wilderness?

They were given the Law of God, security, health, out of the **land of affliction** and bondage, recognition by the rest of the world. (Genesis 15:13)

What more is there? The answer is - Israel of old was to become a great and blessed **physical** nation – a showcase to the world.

But the brethren of the Church of God are given **exceeding great promises** of the Kingdom of God and eternal Glory forever more.

Hebrews 8:6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon **better promises**.

Hebrews 8:7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

Hebrews 8:8 For finding **fault with them** [there was no fault with the Old Covenant], he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a **new covenant** with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:

Hebrews 8:9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because **they continued not** in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

Hebrews 8:10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me **a people**:

Not a bunch of separate groups - but "A People" - God's people!

The apostle Paul talks about the fact that not everyone who **hears** the Gospel being preached is able to understand what it means to be a Christian.

Paul aims his comments at ministers who somehow elevate themselves into superior roles – thinking very highly of themselves.

The title **Hidden Gospel** from here:

2Corinthians 4:2-3 [We] have renounced the **hidden** things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But if our **gospel be hidden**, it is **hidden** to them that are lost.

Paul is saying that there are those who make use of schemes that are not Godly in nature while supposing to walk the walk.

The use of conniving tactics is not the way to preach the Gospel. There is the way of this present evil world – and then there is God's way.

The way of this present evil world would be like the proverbial “Used car salesman” who would utilize any sneaky and disreputable means to convince a person to unknowingly purchase an inferior product.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is **not** an inferior product that needs to be misrepresented in order to convince people against their will.

“**Thy word is truth**” and God’s word must be handled with the greatest reverence (John 17:17)

2Corinthians 4:2 That is why Paul says [We] have renounced the **hidden** things of dishonesty, - because the true Gospel lets in the **light** of day. It opens the eyes of those who have been blind.

Why would anyone want to try to pull the wool over the eyes on those who are being called to truth?

2 Corinthians 4:2 Paul says that he is not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; - he is intimating that there are those who present a façade when they represent themselves and their faith.

Paul is saying that a minister should only let his light shine and let his life’s example fully represent how a Christian lives.

Suffice it to say that God never uses **coercion**, craftiness, trickery, dishonesty, lies of deceit – and we cannot either.

Within God’s Church there is to be no pretending. No spinning. No bragging. That is no way to deal with God’s precious flock. Within God’s scattered Church, no man is to set himself up and declare that he is at the forefront of the Gospel work.

A man or organization cannot put themselves as being first and foremost - - without intimating that all the other brethren are somehow inferior and just do not measure up.

That conduct is promoting, propagating and promulgating further Church division between the brethren – which God hates.

2Corinthians 4:2-3 but by **manifestation of the truth** commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But if our **gospel be hidden**, it is **hidden** to them that are lost.

So Paul is not crafty or deceitful or arrogant and boastful... Paul does just the opposite – he is humble and **self-deprecating** rather than boasting.

1Corinthians 15:9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

Paul is humbled that God would even see fit to use him at all.

“If there is anything good in me,” Paul says, “it is God’s doing - and not my own.”

1Corinthians 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

“Labored more abundantly” - we can see in the epistles of Paul how **diligently** and seriously he took his commission to bring the gospel to the **gentiles** and all the world. Thankfully, God has preserved so much of Paul’s inspired writings – as examples for us. Paul was being honest and humble when he described his legacy of a work ethic.

He did not gloat or boast of greatness. "For I am the least of the apostles," he said.

When you think more highly of yourself than you ought - you are not able to judge and examine yourself according to God's word. That is because you think – after all "We're the best." "God uses us – more than He uses the others." "We do everything right – we are beyond reproach."

You are unable to work on yourself because you have been bred in an atmosphere of **superiority**. That makes all the other brethren in God's Church – lesser people – also-rans... Like a horse that does not **win**, **place**, or **show** in a race.

That makes all the other brethren in God's Church lower than yourself - unsuccessful people, losers, nonentities and unimportant.

Brethren – God hates that kind of one-ups-man ship where some take advantage of other brethren.

God's people deserve better than that – they deserve respect.

Jesus Christ died equally for all men.

We have seen over and over how wrong it is within God's Church to have various groups of brethren vying for superiority over the others. Through Paul, God calls it '**division**.'

1Corinthians 1:10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and **that there be no divisions among you**; but that ye be perfectly **joined together in the same mind** and in the same judgment.

Paul is saying I implore of you..., I beg of you not to be a **shattered** people.

1Corinthians 3:3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and **divisions**, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

1Corinthians 11:18 For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that **there be divisions among you**;

In 1Corinthians 12 Paul describes that Christ has only ONE Body of which ALL are a part – the one Body of Christ – the Lord's Body.

In 1Corinthians 11:29 Paul describes what is happening to God's people when they will not recognize, discern or distinguish WHO it is that comprises the one Body of Christ.

Paul says – **Here** is what happens when you are not discerning the Lord's body. You are looking down on some... You won't have anything to do with some... You are setting at naught – some of your brothers and sisters in Christ. You are looking down and laughing at some...

Here is what is happening...

1Corinthians 11:30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

Why are some sick and dying – while others sail along virtually unscathed all of their lives. It has to do with who is actually a child of God.

Hebrews 12:8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye illegitimate children, and not sons.

God sends chastisement to His children whom He loves very much.

But if someone lives a life of thinking himself to be superior to others and he is not chastised and turned around by God – it is because he is a pretender to the family of God and NOT a legitimate child of God – but is of the world.

We do **not** have to undergo severe chastisement and correction by God.

1Corinthians 11:31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

1Corinthians 11:32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

When we receive correction – God can heal and remove the ordeal, suffering, distress and misery in a snap!

Why is there so much “us and them” rivalry and strife within God’s Church?

Most people would say that they love the people in their group.

But can we agree that all those who have God’s Holy Spirit are brethren, and that there are many brethren in various groups? If so, our love must extend to those brethren as well, and not just to those in our particular group.

This is God’s priority for salvation. It is very simple – and it is not optional. If we do not love the brethren, we are headed for death.

Almost every person will say, “I love all Christians.” Brethren, we do not get off so easily!!!

The Bible tells us that the Plan of God is going to be fulfilled, but only by **practicing** true Christianity will we be a part of God's Kingdom.

The truth of the matter is that many within God’s Church who believe that they "have it made" are going to be seriously disappointed when Jesus returns.

Why else do the Scriptures say: "The children of the Kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matthew 8:12)

Too many within God’s Church have failed to mature spiritually and sufficiently to realize that True Christianity goes far beyond a show of religious customs.

Oh, we learned about pork, birthdays, make-up and hair length, etc.; but that did not make us Christians – did it?

Did we learn the most important doctrine of all – how to support one another fully in our walk in the Truth?

We learned a form of religion, but how many of us arrived at the substance of Christianity as Christ would have us live it?

The most important unifying doctrine – the one which is so often overlooked – is the command to love one another as Christ loved us, and help one another into the Kingdom of God (John 13:34).

Let me be very straight-forward for a moment. Do you believe that you are straight with God because you keep the Sabbath in the right place?

Do you suppose that your salvation is assured because your Pastor or headquarters would not let you down?

Do you think that your doctrine, or your congregation is better than all the others, and that the knowledge you possess will bring you to salvation?

When was the last time you truly laid down your very life for another human being?

No one wants to hear Jesus Christ utter the words, "**I never knew you.**" (Matthew 7:23)

The answer to having Christ **know us** is for us to be practicing true Christianity. Christianity is not a matter of building or being a part of a great lasting earthly enterprise. All organizations and establishments of man throughout history have fallen apart – or soon will.

Even the first century Church of God fell apart and was scattered to the four winds.

Did God intend for His Church, established on the first Pentecost, to become ever larger and larger? No!

Christ called His Church "the little flock." (Luke 12:32)

It should be clear at this point in history that nothing is permanent on this earth – not organizations of men, not even God's Temple at Jerusalem – nothing, that is, except the Spirit of God in the children of God.

God's Spirit alone will endure.

The Pharisees of Jesus' day made the mistake of measuring their faith too lightly. The Bible gives us God's litmus test of those who count as His Church brethren.

Here, in this scripture, John explains the essence of Godly Christianity – **righteousness** and **brotherly love**.

1John 3:10 In this the children of God are manifest [here is how you tell], and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loves not his brother.

John makes an astounding claim – a claim that is lost on much of God's Church today.

In God's Church we have stressed righteousness – much more than the unity and oneness of brotherly love.

There is no room in the meaning of these verses **to place any less emphasis on brotherly love**.

A Christian through his actions will be caring, honest, serving, loving – doing what is right for all of our brothers and sisters.

This is **not** possible when there is division.

Keeping God's command to love the brethren is not possible when we are not interacting with one another.

Can we have salvation without fellowship and love for the brethren? Scripture is clear; fellowship is a matter of salvation.

The Israelites needed to escape from impossible odds – and they needed a new start in life. Ransoms were paid – they were freed from servitude and slavery.

The Israelites of old did not have **God's Holy Spirit** as a component of their **minds** nor of their **hearts**.

The Israelites in the wilderness were **not** Children of God as the New Testament Saints are. The people of the **Church in the wilderness** are not destined to be a part of the First Resurrection with Jesus Christ as we are.

The millions of Israelites who came out of Egypt – and the subsequent generations that inherited the Promised Land - - will not be a part of the **spiritual resurrection** that reigns and rules with Jesus Christ in the millennium.

The NEW TESTAMENT – that is US.

What is the Church of the New Covenant? The Church of the New Covenant is not of the world. The Church of the New Covenant is not the same as the Church in the wilderness under the Old Covenant. We are not Old Testament Christians - There is something more.

There is something much more! There are **better promises**... There are greater promises for New Testament Christians.

There was nothing wrong with the Old Covenant promises God gave to Israel. It was the same Ten Commandments that are in affect for all of mankind for all time.

There is never anything wrong with the rules and laws of God – He lives by them Himself.

The weakness of the Old Covenant was in the people without God's Spirit.

That weakness was remedied by God's Spirit being poured out beginning at that first Pentecost after Christ's death.

The Church of the New Testament or New Covenant was raised up and established on Pentecost – after Jesus Christ's resurrection.

Leviticus 23:15 And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; **seven Sabbaths** shall be complete:

Acts 1:1 The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

Acts 1:2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Spirit had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:

Acts 1:3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

Acts 1:4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.

Acts 1:5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence.

Acts 2:1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

Acts 2:2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the **gift** of the Holy Spirit.

Repent of breaking those same Old Testament Laws given to Israel – who promised to keep them...

Exodus 24:3 the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the LORD hath said **we will do**.

And then they did not! Because they lacked God's Spirit to **lead – guide – strengthen** and **change** them and **empower** them.

Holy Spirit – the Mind of God, the character of God, the power of God, the love of God, the life of God – placing us within the very Family of God.

Acts 2:39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

The Church of the New Covenant is not an organization of Men but a spiritual entity.

End: Hidden Gospel