

To the Jew First
GFC – 2-6-22

We're in a series called **Forward in Faith**.

In this series we are using the word **FORWARD** as an acrostic.

All these words **are verbs**:

Follow – Obey – Resist – Worship – Abide – Reach – Disciple

We've spent a few weeks talking about what it means **to follow Christ**.

We are now moving to the **O in Forward** and teaching **on obedience**.

Jesus gave the **Great Commission** in Matthew 28:19-20 which says:

Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

Following Christ **includes obeying** all His commands.

And the command in this verse is **to make disciples**.

This command is **for all of us**.

This whole month we will have an **emphasis on missions**.

Local and global.

But I want to talk to you today about **where discipleship began**.

So, I'm preaching a message entitled **To the Jew First**.

Romans 1:16 says:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

We see several things in this verse:

1- **Don't be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ!**

Some people are **embarrassed to say** they are Christians.

In our politically-correct culture, people think **religion is private** and should **never be shared**. Wrong. It is **personal**, but **never private**.

The gospel is **nothing to be ashamed of**.

And there are **many more people who are for** the gospel than against it.

In spite of what anyone else tries to tell you, this nation was established on Judeo-Christian beliefs.

The US was built on biblical principles.

And this nation is predominately Christian to this day.

I know it's popular to say we are a nation of Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists and unbelievers – and we are.

But do you know what % of Americans are actually Muslim or Jewish or other religions?

The answer might surprise you.

When I ask people this, they usually think Muslims make up 10-20% of our population.

But listen to this – according to the Pew Research Center:

71% of Americans claim to be Christians

23% of Americans have no religion

Those 2 groups make up 94% of Americans.

That means all religions other than Christianity make up only 6% of our population.

Jews make up 1.9% of our population.

Buddhists make up only 0.7%

Muslims make up only 0.9%

Hindus make up only 0.7%

All other faiths and religions are 1.8%

Do you get what I'm saying? Regardless of what anyone tries to tell you – the facts are the United States of America is predominantly Christian.

Nothing else even comes close.

Don't be ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Our country was founded by Christians.

Our major universities were started by Christians.

Major hospitals were started by Christians.

Charitable organizations that help the poor were started by Christians:

The Salvation Army, The Red Cross, YMCA, Food for the Hungry.

Don't be ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ – it is the power of God unto salvation.

1 Corinthians 1:18 says:

For 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.

2- The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the Power of God

If we quit sharing the Gospel, we lose our power.

Every denomination that has gotten away from the Bible is dying.

Every denomination that is embracing non-biblical beliefs by endorsing things like abortion and same-sex marriage is dwindling away.

Every denomination that is saying many roads lead to heaven has lost their power.

Why? The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God.

Without the Gospel of Jesus Christ there is no power to save.

Without the blood of Jesus there is no forgiveness because without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.

Without the body of Jesus there is no healing, because it is by His stripes that we are healed.

Without the name of Jesus there is no freedom because we resist the enemy in His name.

There is power, power, wonder working power in the precious blood of the Lamb. And that power is:

3- The Gospel is to the Jew First and also for Everyone

Some of us feel that there is something about us that always rules us out when it comes to getting blessed in this life.

Either we come from the wrong family or the wrong side of the tracks.

We're the wrong color or the wrong race or the wrong culture.

We have the wrong background or the wrong track record.

But when it comes to Jesus – none of that matters.

There is no wrong family, race, culture, background or track record.

This Gospel is for everyone who believes.

The only thing that will rule you out is unbelief.

But what does it mean that the gospel is for the Jew first?

To the Jew first means that the **Gospel was proclaimed to them** before anyone else.

Why? Because they are **God's chosen people** to whom had been committed the **law of God**.

Deuteronomy 7:6-7 says about the Jewish people:

The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be His people, His treasured possession. The Lord did not set His affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples.

God's ways are not our ways.

He chooses the **small** to confound the great.

He chooses the **foolish** to confound the wise.

He chooses the **weak** to confound the strong.

He chooses the **few** to confound the many.

He chooses the **poor** to confound the rich.

Why does He do that?

So it is obvious that the **wisdom is God's** – the **power** is God's – the **riches** are God's. **All glory** belongs to Him and Him alone.

This was the **order in which the gospel was actually preached** to the world, **first to the Jews**, and then to the Gentiles.

Jesus ministered to **Jewish people**. In fact, when a **Gentile woman** came to Him with a need, Matthew 15:24 says:

He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel."

But **after His resurrection**, He told His disciples in Acts 1:8

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

That was the **order – Jew first**, then Gentiles.

So, when the **disciples ministered** in the book of Acts, they first went to Israel.

Acts 13:5 says:

They proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues.

It wasn't until the **Jews rejected Jesus** that the disciples began to **preach to Gentiles**.

Everywhere **Paul went**, he preached to **Jews first**.

This happened in **Antioch** and after Paul preached to the Jews, Acts 13:44-47 says:

On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and talked abusively against what Paul was saying.

Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: "We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles.

For this is what the Lord has commanded us: "I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth."

Even so - it took an **act of God, a dream and an angel to convince them to preach to Gentiles.**

Why did God select **Cornelius to be the **first Gentile** house in Israel to **receive the Gospel**? The answer is given repeatedly in Acts 10.**

Acts 10:2-3 says:

He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly.

Who were the **people to whom Cornelius gave? They were Jews!**

Acts 10:22 says:

He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people.

The point is made **three times in the same chapter.**

A godly Gentile who **expressed his love for the Jewish people in a practical manner was **chosen by God** to be the first Gentile to receive **the Gospel** and the first to receive the **outpouring of the Holy Spirit.****

So, the first Gentiles that **received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit were those that **blessed the Jewish people** and the **nation of Israel.****

Jews and Gentiles now stand upon the **same level, both equally lost without a Savior, and both **equally welcome** to the Savior.**

Colossians 3:11 says:

In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and He lives in all of us.

There are **2 major ways that some Christians **get into error** concerning **Israel and Jewish** people.**

One error is the error of **replacement theology** which says the **church has replaced Israel** in the eyes of God.

This theology says that **God is no longer concerned with Israel** or Jewish people.

We know that **can't be true** because God made an **everlasting covenant** with them.

Also, Romans 11:1 says

Has God cast away His people? Certainly not! ...God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew.

Verse 11 goes on to say that **because they rejected Jesus** **salvation has come to the Gentiles.** **12 Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!**

15 For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

In other words, the **Jew's falling away** has resulted in **salvation and blessing** for non-Jews.

There will come a day when **Israel will accept** her Messiah and it will be like **life from the dead.**

The **other error** that some Christians get into regarding Israel is that Jewish people can be **saved apart from Jesus Christ** – that they are saved by being part of **the Old Covenant.**

Not true!

In John 14:6, Jesus – speaking to Jewish people – said, **I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.**

In the book of Acts, the Jewish leaders **called in the disciples** and commanded them **not to preach Jesus** anymore, but the disciples said in Acts 4:12 says:

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.

There are **not 2 plans of salvation** – there is one.

There are **not many roads** to God – there is one.

There are **not many ways** to heaven – there is one.

Jesus is the way!

Jesus is the one way!

Jesus is the **one and only** way!

Romans 10:12-13 says:

There is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; for whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.

I want to close with seven Bible reasons why Christians should support Israel. These are also reasons America should support Israel.

1- God promised to bless those who bless Israel.

In Genesis 12:2-3 God said to Abraham:

I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.

History has proven beyond reasonable doubt that the nations that have blessed the Jewish people have had the blessing of God; the nations that have cursed the Jewish people have experienced the curse of God.

What convinced Jesus to go to the house of a Gentile centurion and heal his servant? Luke 7:4-6 says:

When they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with Him, "This man deserves to have you do this, because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue." So Jesus went with them.

This Gentile received the blessing of God because he loved the nation of Israel and he did something practical to bless the Jewish people. God blesses those who bless Israel.

2- God promised to curse those who curse Israel

Zechariah 2:8-9 says:

For thus says the Lord of hosts: "He sent Me after glory, to the nations which plunder you; for he who touches you touches the apple of His eye. For surely I will shake My hand against them, and they shall become spoil for their servants. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me."

One of my most frequent prayers for every American president is that they continue to be a strong ally and supporter of Israel. I want America to be blessed, not cursed.

3- Christians owe a debt of eternal gratitude to the Jewish people for their contributions that gave birth to the Christian faith.

In John 4:22 Jesus said, **Salvation comes through the Jews.** Consider **what the Jewish people have given** to Christianity:

- a) The Sacred Scripture
- b) The Prophets
- c) The Patriarchs
- d) Mary, Joseph, and Jesus Christ
- e) The Twelve Disciples
- f) The Apostles

4- Jesus was born Jewish.

Jesus had **Jewish parents** from the tribe of Judah.

Jesus was **circumcised** on the eighth day in keeping with Jewish law.

Jesus had his **Bar Mitzvah** on his 13th birthday.

Jesus kept the **law of Moses.**

Jesus died on a cross with an inscription over His head, **"King of the Jews!"**

5- Jesus considered Jewish people His family.

Jesus said in Matthew 25:40 **Whatever you did for the least of My brothers and sisters, you did it for Me.**

Who was He calling His **brothers and sisters or family?**

The **Jewish people.**

6- The Bible commands us to pray for Israel

Psalm 122:6 says:

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: may they prosper who love you.

Biblical **prosperity is tied to blessing Israel** and the city of Jerusalem.

So – we should **all be praying** for the peace of Jerusalem.

7- We support Israel because all other nations were created by an act of men, but **Israel was created by an act of God!**

The land of Israel was given to Abraham and his seed with an everlasting and unconditional covenant.

Genesis 17:7-8 says:

I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.

The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God.

Not only was Israel created by an act of God, Israel is sustained every single day by an act of God.

Israel's very existence is obviously supernatural. They are a small nation – smaller than the state of Rhode Island – and they are surrounded by rich, powerful nations dedicated to their destruction.

Yet they stand strong.

If America wants the blessing of God, we must continue to stand by Israel. That does not mean we support everything they do, but we do support them as an ally.

If we as a church and you as an individual want the blessing of God, we must continue to stand by Israel and pray for Israel.

God put it on our hearts years ago for our church to give to ministries that reach out to Jewish people.

That's why we support Val and Tatyana Sviontek and Jewish Partner Initiative.

This ministry exists to take the Gospel to the Jew first.

So when you give to missions at GFC – you are obeying the command to take the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Jew first.

To the Jew first does not mean you must witness to Jews before you can witness to anyone else.

It means that you help take the gospel to the Jews and you pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

When you do that, you are obeying the Lord and the Bible says that the blessing of God will be upon you.

I don't know about you, but I want every blessing God has!