

# The Essential Elements of the Apostolic Witness

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## Session 5: The Holistic Gospel Witness

### I. The Apostolic Trust

#### A. Received from Heaven

He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and *speaking about the kingdom of God*. (<sup>ESV</sup> Acts 1:3)

And they devoted themselves *to the apostles' teaching* and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. <sup>43</sup> And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles... <sup>46</sup> And day by day, *attending the temple* together and *breaking bread* in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those *who were being saved*. (<sup>ESV</sup> Acts 2:42-47)

#### B. Entrusted to Men

Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that is in accordance with godliness, <sup>2</sup> in the hope of eternal life that God, who never lies, promised before the ages began— <sup>3</sup> in due time he revealed his word through *the proclamation with which I have been entrusted* by the command of God our Savior, <sup>4</sup> To Titus, my loyal child in the faith... (<sup>NRSV</sup> Tit. 1:1-4; cf. 1 Cor. 9:17; 1 Thess. 2:4; 1 Tim. 6:20)

All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup> that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and *entrusting to us the message of reconciliation*. (<sup>ESV</sup> 2 Cor. 5:18-19)

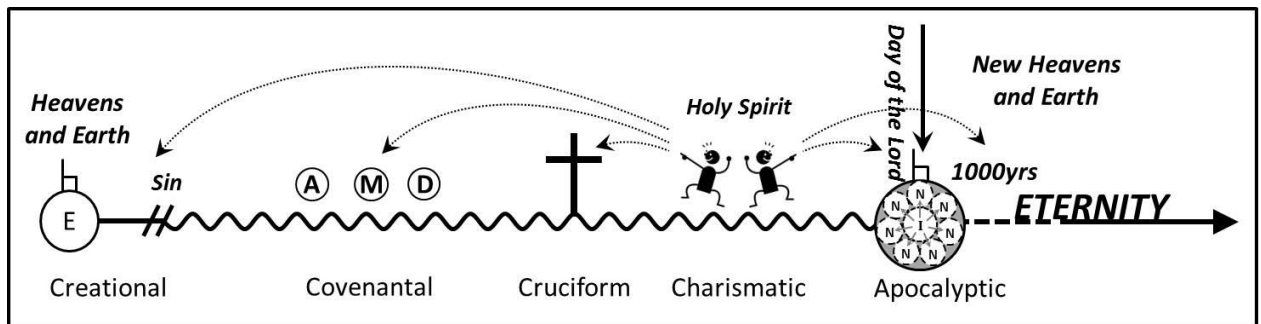
This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and *stewards of the mysteries of God*. <sup>2</sup> Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful. <sup>3</sup> But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court... <sup>4</sup> It is the Lord who judges me. <sup>5</sup> Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. (<sup>ESV</sup> 1 Cor. 4:1-5)

You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup> And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these *entrust to faithful men*, who will be able to teach others also. (<sup>NASB</sup> 2 Tim. 2:1-2)

But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, <sup>5</sup> he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, <sup>6</sup> whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, <sup>7</sup> so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. <sup>8</sup> This is a *trustworthy saying*. And I want you to *stress these things*, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone. (<sup>NIV</sup> Tit. 3:4-8)

## II. The Apostolic Gospel

### A. Characteristic Elements



#### 1. Creational

Therefore, just as *sin came into the world through one man*, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned...<sup>16</sup> And the free gift is not like the result of *that one man's sin*. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification.<sup>17</sup> For if, because of *one man's trespass*, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. (<sup>ESV</sup> Rom. 5:12-17)

If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.<sup>20</sup> But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.<sup>21</sup> For as *by a man came death*, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.<sup>22</sup> For *as in Adam all die*, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.<sup>23</sup> But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. (<sup>ESV</sup> 1 Cor. 15:19-23)

#### 2. Covenantal

It was *necessary* that the word of God be spoken *first to you*. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. (<sup>ESV</sup> Acts 13:46)

I ask, then, *has God rejected his people*? By no means! ...<sup>29</sup> For the gifts and the calling of God are *irrevocable*.<sup>30</sup> For just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience,<sup>31</sup> so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now receive mercy.<sup>32</sup> For *God has consigned all to disobedience*, that he may have mercy on all. (<sup>ESV</sup> Rom. 11:29-32)

#### 3. Cruciform

For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God.<sup>20</sup> I have been *crucified with Christ*. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And *the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God*, who loved me and gave himself for me.<sup>21</sup> I do not nullify the

grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose. (<sup>ESV</sup> Gal. 2:19-21)

We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; <sup>9</sup> persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. <sup>10</sup> *We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus*, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. <sup>11</sup> For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body... <sup>14</sup> because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence. <sup>15</sup> All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God. (<sup>NIV</sup> 2 Cor. 4:8-15)

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. <sup>31</sup> Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. <sup>32</sup> Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, *just as in Christ God forgave you*. <sup>5:1</sup> Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children <sup>2</sup> and live a life of love, *just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us* as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (<sup>NIV</sup> Eph. 4:30-5:2)

#### 4. Charismatic

For in him you have been enriched in every way—in all your speaking and in all your knowledge—<sup>6</sup> because our testimony about Christ was *confirmed in you*. <sup>7</sup> Therefore you do not lack *any spiritual gift* as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. <sup>8</sup> He will *keep you strong to the end*, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. (<sup>NIV</sup> 1 Cor. 1:5-8)

For all who are *led by the Spirit of God* are sons of God. <sup>15</sup> For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” <sup>16</sup> *The Spirit himself bears witness* with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup> and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him... <sup>26</sup> Likewise *the Spirit helps us* in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but *the Spirit himself intercedes for us* with groanings too deep for words. <sup>27</sup> And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because *the Spirit intercedes for the saints* according to the will of God. <sup>28</sup> And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. (<sup>ESV</sup> Rom. 8:26-28)

#### 5. Apocalyptic

God is just: *He will pay back trouble* to those who trouble you <sup>7</sup> and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when *the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven* in blazing fire with his powerful angels... <sup>2:1</sup> Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, <sup>2</sup> not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that *the day of the Lord has already come*. <sup>3</sup> Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that

day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. (<sup>NIV</sup> 2 Thess. 1:6-10)

This is what I mean, brothers: *the appointed time has grown very short*. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, <sup>30</sup> and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, <sup>31</sup> and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away. (<sup>ESV</sup> 1 Cor. 7:29-31)

## B. Apostolic Reductionism

But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and *straining forward to what lies ahead*, <sup>14</sup> I press on toward the goal *for the prize* of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. <sup>15</sup> Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. <sup>16</sup> *Only let us hold true to what we have attained* [Gk. *phthano*, “1) to come before, precede, anticipate 2) to come to, arrive at 3) to reach, attain to”]. (<sup>ESV</sup> Phil. 3:13-16)

As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons *not to teach any different doctrine*, <sup>4</sup> nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, *which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God* that is by faith. <sup>5</sup> The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. <sup>6</sup> Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into *vain discussion*, <sup>7</sup> desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions. (<sup>ESV</sup> 1 Tim. 1:3-7)

## C. Apostolic Stewardship

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: <sup>2</sup> *Preach the Word*; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. <sup>3</sup> For the time will come when men will not put up with *sound doctrine*. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. <sup>4</sup> They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. <sup>5</sup> But you, *keep your head* in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, *discharge all the duties of your ministry*. <sup>6</sup> For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. <sup>7</sup> I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, *I have kept the faith*. <sup>8</sup> Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing. (<sup>NIV</sup> 2 Tim. 4:1-8)

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh *I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions* for the sake of his body, that is, the church, <sup>25</sup> of which I became a minister according to *the stewardship from God* that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, <sup>26</sup> the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. (<sup>ESV</sup> Col. 1:24-26)