

The Gospel Perfectly and Proportionately Humbles and Exalts

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by David Schrock

Why is the Gospel of Jesus Christ so vital to the restoration of mankind?

Simply put, there is no other message or medium, person or power that is able to elevate a man without making him an arrogant ogre. The gospel humbles a man to dust, and raises him to glory. Through its life-giving message of Christ's life, death, and resurrection, sinners are forgiven and given the very life of God.

This balanced-work of the gospel was observed centuries ago by Blaise Pascal (1623-62). In his [Pensées](#) (208), he observes.

Without this divine knowledge, how could we help feeling either exalted or dejected? The Christian religion alone has been able to cure these twin vices, not by using the one to expel the other according to worldly wisdom, but by expelling both through the simplicity of the Gospel. For it teaches the righteous that they still bear the source of all corruption which exposes them throughout their lives to error, misery, death, and sin; and [yet] it cries out to the most ungodly that they are capable of the grace of the Redeemer. Thus, making those whom it justifies to tremble, yet consoling those whom it condemns, it so nicely tempers fear with hope through this dual capacity.... Grace and sin! It causes infinitely more dejection than mere reason—but without despair, and infinitely more exaltation than natural pride—but without puffing us up! (cited by Tim Keller in his foreword to J. D. Greear's book [Gospel](#)).

Pascal was followed by Charles Hodge (1797-1878), who said of the finer points of the gospel, "the doctrines of grace humble man without degrading him and exalt him without inflating him." Indeed, this is the reason why Christians must never leave the gospel behind; it simultaneously humbles and exalts.

The gospel restores men wrecked by the Fall to reflect the glorious image of God, but it also forces them to confront the ugliness of their sin and the immensity of God's holiness. The result? Men are most glorious when they fall face down before the King of Glory. Only the gospel of Jesus Christ can effect that.

May we endlessly delight ourselves in the perfect, proportionate gospel of Jesus Christ.

Soli Deo Gloria, dss