

Date: **December 4, 2011**
Title: **The Confidence of the Gospels**
Series:
Speaker: **Phil Schaefer**

christianfellowship



Summary

Scripture: Matthew: 1:1-16

In today's world we see a decline in interest in religion, especially Christianity. Today, the message has become that faith is whatever works for you, as long as you don't think it's true for everyone else. Postmodernism says that truth is whatever you make it to be, and that everything is relative. All institutions, knowledge, beliefs, morals, history, is whatever you make of it. Religion rests on private opinion. Faith rests on personal values while reason is based on facts.

We have become defensive in expressing the gospel. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, writers of the four Gospels, were not intimidated by what others would think. For them, faith was not based on feelings values, or individual viewpoints. For them, faith was based on the facts of the Gospel. There is a confidence within the Gospel itself. They proclaimed the truth without apology, defensiveness, or concern about what others would make of it. They were proclaiming this Jesus before all mankind, saying that He is unique in all of history, that God has come in Jesus Christ. They said, "This is the gospel! Here it is, deal with it!"

Matthew is writing his gospel to the Jews. He is ushering in the theme of the fulfillment of all the promises of God to Israel; that fulfillment that comes to man from God, only through Jesus Christ. He is making a proclamation of a new beginning to them. He is saying, "The climax of God's work throughout history comes to us in Jesus Christ. He is the fulfillment of all history, He is the fulfillment of all prophecy, He is Immanuel, God with us. He is Jesus. He will save us." It is an unapologetic pronouncement. Jesus' birth is the most important birth in history. God is a person not an idea. The gospel is, "We cannot get to God in our own way, but God has come down to us." Jesus is no mere teacher, no guru, no Muhammed, no Ghandi, no Buddha, no representative of God. He is God!

The genealogy listed in Matthew shows us that Jesus is the son of Abraham, and the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham that through his offspring, all the peoples of the earth would be blessed. Jesus is the promised Messiah come from God. Matthew included 4 women in Jesus' genealogy, with blemishes in their bloodlines and in their history to show the all-inclusiveness of salvation. Matthew is tracing the genealogy of Jesus from the beginning of the promise to Israel as a people, through Abraham, to its highest point during King David's reign, to the lowest point during the Babylonian captivity, to the seeming impossibility of God ever fulfilling his promise. He is saying, "Jesus is the consummation of all that God has promised. This is the truth!"

You do not need to be ashamed of Jesus, or believing in Him. You do not need to be defensive about the gospel. It speaks for itself. You do not need to be confident in yourself, that you have your faith all figured out. The gospel has confidence within itself.

You do not need to worry about whether or not the gospel will prevail, or whether God's plans will be thwarted. Nothing will prevail over the gospel! You don't need to defend it. Our job is to announce it, rejoice in it, hold it central in our lives, to rehearse everyday what God has done for us through Jesus Christ, and to give God the glory in all things. For from the beginning, to the very end Jesus is the summation to all life, history, and outcomes. The confidence of the gospels is our confidence! Acts 4:20 "for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard."

Discussion Questions:

1. In what ways is our faith in Christ and in Christianity based on facts, not on values or opinions?
2. What does it mean that there is a confidence "of the gospels" and "within the gospels"?
3. What is the true gospel message?
4. What is the true gospel message?