

What is the Gospel?

Quick and Easy:

The gospel is defined as the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Quote:

“The Gospel is the good news about the great salvation purchased by Jesus Christ, by which He reconciled sinful men to a holy God.” - Loraine Boettner

Scripture:

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

- 1 Corinthians 15:3-5

The word gospel appears 96 times in the New Testament. It comes from the greek word, *euangelion*, which means *good news*. The good news is that God, in his divine mercy, saved those who believe in Jesus Christ's perfect life, death, burial, and resurrection, and then confess his lordship in their lives.¹ Through the gospel God invites sinners to come to the Lord Jesus through faith and repentance to find forgiveness, life, and peace in Christ.

God's desire is to save, which is great news! God is “long suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”² Paul describes God as being “rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ.”³

The way God made us alive was through the avenue of Jesus Christ, making His Son take our sin so we could have life.⁴ Jesus came down from heaven to live a perfect life here on earth to fulfill God's law. Because of Christ's perfection, God's wrath was able to be satisfied through the punishment and sacrifice of his Son. God did this because he loves us, that while we were enemies to God, he sent his Son down to die for us.⁵

The greatest part of the story comes three days after his crucifixion. Jesus comes back from the dead! The resurrection is the absolute key to the Christian faith and to the gospel.⁶ Christ's victory over death promises that anyone who believes in him will have eternal life.⁷

The hope of the gospel is that through faith in Christ, we will have eternal life in community with our Savior. The gospel is available for all who believe in Jesus Christ!

Review:

The gospel is defined in Scripture as the _____, _burial, and _____ of _____ Christ.

The gospel is available for _____ who _____ in _____.

Questions:

- 1: How does the gospel bring you hope?
- 2: **Read John 11:25-26 and John 14:6.** How many ways are there to salvation? Why is faith in Jesus Christ's life, death, and resurrection so important?
- 3: **Read Ephesians 2:8-9.** What is our role and God's role in salvation? Does this change your view on the gospel?
- 4: **Read Romans 8:1.** What does this verse imply about our past, present, and future as individuals?
- 5: How would you describe the gospel now in two sentences? Has it changed?
- 6: Why do you think that the gospel could help people in your life?
- 7: Reduce your gospel page to three paragraphs, you before Christ, what Christ did, and who you are now!

¹ Romans 10:9

² 2 Peter 3:9

³ Ephesians 2:4-5

⁴ 2 Corinthians 5:21

⁵ 1 John 4:10, Romans 5:8

⁶ 1 Corinthians 15:17

⁷ 1 Corinthians 15:19, John 4:13-14

Why is the Gospel important?

Quick and Easy: The gospel brings hope to sinners in Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Quote: “Deep in the soul of every human being is a longing for transcendence created within us by God himself.” - James MacDonald

Scripture: For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.

- Romans 1:16

Every person in the world wants hope. Many people seek hope and fulfillment through their possessions, relationships, or amount of good works. The problem is that no one can ever be satisfied themselves. No matter how many friends one has or the amount of zeros in their bank account, every human still needs food, water, air, and true hope. Jesus offers hope to all people, saying that those who believe in Him will never die, but that only through faith in him can one be saved.⁸

The gospel is important because it brings hope to sinners in Jesus Christ as their Savior. People need a savior because of sin. Man has a sin problem. Our sins separate us from God, and every single human being has fallen short of God's perfect standard.⁹ Because we have fallen short of God's law, we deserve death and eternal separation from God.

Eighteen percent of Jesus' teaching dealt with the doctrine of hell. Hell is the place of future punishment for anyone who doesn't believe in Christ and refuses to accept God's gift of salvation.¹⁰ Hell is an eternal, fully conscious state of torment, not measured by time or space. There is no indication in Scripture that the judgment of those in hell will ever end.¹¹

The reality of judgement makes grace even more amazing. There is nothing that we can do to be saved. It is completely reliant on God's grace.¹² The gospel is defined in Scripture as the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Because of Christ, there is no condemnation for those believe in Him.¹³ God looks at Christians the way he looks at his Son, His children and heirs of future glory in eternal relationship with Him.¹⁴

The hope of the gospel is that through faith in Christ, we will have eternal life in community with our Savior. The gospel is available for all who believe in Jesus Christ!

Review:

The gospel is defined in _____ as the _____, _____, and _____ of _____.

The gospel brings _____ to _____ in _____ as their _____

Questions:

- 1: How does the gospel bring you hope?
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⁸ John 11:25-26, John 14:6

⁹ Isaiah 59:2, Romans 3:23

¹⁰ Matthew 13:49-50

¹¹ 2 Thessalonians 1:9

¹² Ephesians 2:8-9

¹³ Romans 8:1

¹⁴ Romans 8:15-17

What is Evangelism?

Quick and Easy: God uses redeemed sinners to spread his gospel to the world.

Quote: “According to Jesus, people are God’s method for winning the world to himself. People who have been radically transformed by Jesus.” - David Platt

Scripture: But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who ask you for a reason for the hope that is in you.

- 1 Peter 3:15

One of the amazing aspects of God is the fact that He allows people who were once dead in their sins to be ambassadors of his glory.¹⁵ God saved us through His grace alone, but He saved us for a purpose, to glorify and honor him through our transformed lives.¹⁶ The greatest way we serve God is by showing his glory to the people He has put in front of us.

To evangelize is to go to the world and proclaim a divinely inspired message known as the gospel; the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Every believer has been transformed and redeemed through Christ, and all are instructed to be ready to share the hope they have in Him.¹⁷ The reassuring fact of the gospel is that it isn’t about what you know as much as it is about whom you know! The gospel is not about us or what we’ve done, but instead is all about Christ and what He has done.

Evangelism is clearly a command in Scripture, and while simple in nature, it is incredibly intimidating. Fear can be a major barrier to the sharing of the gospel. Breaking through the fear of evangelism is the fruit of having an abiding relationship with Christ.¹⁸ Biblical evangelism is the natural expression of a changed heart. Because of our love for God and His gracious gift to us, we can overcome our fears to share our faith with lost people.¹⁹

Real evangelism flows from a heart that has been transformed by love. Love for others is what makes an evangelist. Christ gave his disciples three simple and profound commandments; love God, love each other, and love your neighbor.²⁰ Believers love others because they understand that they were loved first by Christ. The most loving thing you can do for someone is to share the message of God’s love for them.²¹

The hope of the gospel is that through faith in Christ, we will have eternal life in community with our Savior. The gospel is available for all who believe in Jesus Christ as Lord, and God uses redeemed sinners to spread that message to the world.

Review:

The _____ is defined in _____ as the _____, _____, and _____ of _____.

God uses _____ to spread His _____ to the _____.

Questions:

- 1: How would you explain the role of the Christian in evangelism? Is that different than you previously thought?
- 2: Why is evangelism essential for the Christian?
- 3: **Read 1 Peter 3:15-16.** Why is it important to have a defense ready? How should we be exhibiting hope to others?
- 4: **Read Proverbs 29:25.** What are barriers that you need to overcome to have the mindset of an evangelist?
- 5: **Read Psalm 27:4 and Matthew 28:19-20.** How does Jesus’ command apply to our lives today? How are these two verses related to each other? How do these verses give you strength to overcome fear?
- 6: Who is the person or group of people in your life that need to hear the good news of Christ? Pray for them now in your group!

¹⁵ Romans 8:16-17

¹⁶ Ephesians 2:8-10

¹⁷ 1 Peter 3:15-16

¹⁸ John 15:4-5

¹⁹ 2 Timothy 1:7

²⁰ Matthew 22:37-39, John 13:34

²¹ 1 John 4:7-11

How do we Evangelize?

Quick and Easy: We evangelize through speaking the gospel of Jesus Christ with honesty, urgency, and joy.

Quote: “Evangelism is one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread.” - Richard Baxter

Scripture: Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

- Colossians 1:28

Evangelism is preaching reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ to unbelievers, and then training them into disciples. In order to make disciples there must be converts. This is the importance of evangelism. Sharing the good news of Christ is not only the job for missionaries around the world, but for us with the people God has sovereignly placed in our lives.

God promises be with us as we teach His word to the lost.²² If we are faithful to obey his call to evangelize, we will be successful in leading many to Christ. This all must be done in a spirit of prayer and submission to God’s glory. In sharing our faith, there must be balance between honesty, urgency, and joy, because these three correctly represent the gospel.

Honesty is being transparent with your faults in sharing your story with others. Because we all have sinned, we are all in daily need of God’s grace in our lives.²³ We must humbly recognize that without God’s grace we would all be lost. Repentance is an essential part of coming to Christ, as it represents a turning from sin and self to a holy God and His lordship.²⁴ It admits that one is not God, and is need of Christ’s saving work on the cross. The reality is that a person must recognize the need for a savior to submit to one. The cost of following Christ is high, as God will not settle for anything less than a persons entire heart. The gospel message needs to be honest with that truth.²⁵

The reason for urgency is the fact that time is running short, and that must translate in our mindset and gospel message.²⁶ It is not manipulative or insensitive to lay a foundation of urgency to the gospel and your testimony. The fact is that we are all in eternal relationship right now, either with God or against God. Relationship with God brings eternal life. Relationship against God brings eternal judgment.²⁷

There is a great sense of joy in a restored relationship with God. Our gospel message should be filled with joy and hope, because when we have hope in Christ, we have incredible joy in our relationship with Him.²⁸ The hope of the gospel is through faith in Christ, we will have eternal life in community with our Savior. The gospel is available for all who believe in Jesus Christ, and as God uses redeemed sinners to spread that message to the world with honesty, urgency, and joy.

Review:

The _____ is defined in _____ as the _____, _____, and _____ of _____.

We _____ through _____ the _____ of _____ with _____, _____, and _____.

Questions:

- 1: What is your story? How can you share the gospel’s work in your life?
- 2: **Read Acts 2:37-41.** Why is repentance a hard teaching with the gospel? Why is it essential?
- 3: **Read Luke 9:23.** What is the cost of following Christ? Why is it important to share that honestly with the gospel? What things have you had to give up to make Jesus Lord? How was it worth it?
- 4: **Read Romans 13:11-14.** Why is important to be urgent? How do we be urgent with the gospel while being joyful?
- 5: How are you going to apply what you have learned? Who are you praying to share the gospel with?

²² Matthew 28:19-20

²³ Romans 3:23

²⁴ Acts 2:38

²⁵ Luke 9:23

²⁶ Romans 13:11-14

²⁷ Psalms 1:6

²⁸ Romans 5:2

How To Prepare Your Testimony

One of the most effective tools you have as a Christian is your testimony. Jesus has done an incredible thing for you, granting you eternal life and enriching your life today. We have that gift and our story to share with the world! All believers should be able to share their testimony spontaneously, simply, and clearly. The purpose of your testimony is to express in words your sincere and genuine appreciation for the change that God has made in your life.

Your testimony should consist of three foundational components: Before Christ, how you took the step of faith, and how your faith has changed you.

Before: Who were you before becoming a Christian?

Were you ever introduced to God or church growing up? Were there other Christians in your family or circle of friends? What was in your life that made you aware of your need for Christ? How did you justify or rationalize your way of living before Christ? Consider these questions when painting the picture of what your life looked like before Christ.

Tip: Be sure to include the good *and* the bad. This isn't to glorify the horrible things you've done, but communicating that you needed a Savior. Use general statements (selfish, temper, greedy, self-centered). This isn't a time to wow people with all the sin you committed in your life, but an opportunity to relay that you were lost without Christ.

The Step of Faith: How did you become a follower of Christ?

Was another person instrumental in leading you to Christ? What did this person say that was compelling to you? Where were you? Was it at church? In your room? What happened? What influenced your decision to follow Christ? All of the questions are helpful to communicate with your audience your conversion to Jesus.

Tip: What is your "Life Verse"? This should be a verse that has been instrumental in your coming to know Christ personally or in your growth as a Christian. Sharing this can be a powerful and practical way to communicate the gospel.

After: What has changed with Christ as Lord of your life?

Look at your life now. What has changed in your life? Why? What are some of the examples of the "old you" and the "new you"? What are the two or three most significant changes in your life? Example: Before Christ, I did everything for myself, and it didn't fulfill me. Now that Christ is Lord of my life, I am completely satisfied in Him and Him alone.

How is God continuing to work daily in your life? What are the personal and consistent benefits of an eternal relationship with Christ? Example: I used to worry all the time about everything, but now I have peace in Christ. Here are some tips to help build your story.

1. **Keep it Christ focused.** Jesus Christ is the center of your story. He should be mentioned often!
2. **Make your story simple and commit it to memory.** It should be conversational in nature, it doesn't need to be poetic or overly dramatic. It needs to be you. Simple and honest.
3. **Make "I" and "me" statements.** Your testimony is what Christ has done for you, not anyone else!
4. **Be careful of religious words and phrases.** Avoid sayings like "I went forward", "I felt goosebumps", or "I prayed and sensed Christ came in." They won't mean anything to someone who isn't a Christian, and would most likely confuse them.
5. **Your story in Christ always has a happy ending.** You aren't guaranteed comfort and ease as a Christian, but we are given life, joy, peace, and confidence of eternity! Everyone likes a happy ending, and you have that because of Jesus!

So Now What?

What happens if you tell your story to someone and they say, "I want what you have! How do I get it? How do I start a relationship with Jesus?" These are simple steps you can help people take to receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

Admit that you are a sinner and need a Savior. Romans 3:23 says "for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." You must admit that you have fallen short of a perfect standard because of your sin, and that you see a real need in your life for a Savior. You must realize that you are a sinner and that you need to turn from your sin to a Holy God and his lordship.

Believe in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." You must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that He lived a perfect life on earth, died on a cross to pay for your sins, and then rose from the grave three days later so that through belief in Him you could have eternal life.

Confess that Jesus is the Lord and Savior of your life. Romans 10:9 that "if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Jesus wants your entire heart. You must confess that Jesus saved you and can have total control of your life. There needs to be a recognition that your life is now for him instead of yourself.