



Entrusted with the Gospel

MAKING THE GOSPEL CENTRAL IN LIFE AND MINISTRY

"Whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock; and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock" (Matthew 7:24–25).

"This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil" (Hebrews 6:19).

The gospel of Jesus Christ is the Bible's integrating theme. It is the underpinning of all biblical truth. It is the skeletal structure of the Scriptures, the scarlet thread that weaves together God's story of redemption.

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

"Now brothers, I want to clarify for you the gospel I proclaimed to you ... For I passed on to you as most important what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:1, 3-4).

THE GOSPEL is the good news about the salvation from sin's curse and God's judgment that He has provided through faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ.

A BRIEF PRESENTATION OF THE GOSPEL: We were all far away from God because we all chose to walk away from His love and His ways. We went our own way instead of God's way so we all walked into darkness. With every step away from God it drew darker. No one could find the way back to God. But God loved us still and sent Jesus, His Son, to shine the light to the world and bring us back to God. Only Jesus always went God's way and only Jesus can bring us back to God. Going our own way instead of God's way is sin; we've all done it. Jesus paid for every step we've made away from God when He died for us on the cross. When He died He took all our darkness and offered us all His light. Three days later He broke out of death and now He is alive forever. Now He offers this same forever life to us. Without Jesus we would have forever been in the dark, without God and without hope. But when we turn around and go God's way and trust Jesus to take us out of

darkness we become brand new. Jesus puts His light and life in us! It's just like being born a second time. Jesus brings us light and a new life.

UNIQUE ASPECTS OF THE GOSPEL:

- God's grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)
- God's righteousness (Romans 1:16-17)
- Christ's death in our place (Romans 5:6-8)
- Christ's resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:20)
- A restored creation (2 Peter 3:13)

The gospel is the astounding announcement that all of God's pure wrath against sin landed on His Son. Now, with His righteousness fully intact, God can be "both just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26). You won't hear a story like *that* anywhere else!

HOW DO WE ANCHOR OUR LIVES IN THE GOSPEL?

PRIZE THE GOSPEL

"And we have sent with him the brother whose praise is in the gospel" (2 Corinthians 8:18).

"... our Savior, Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1:10).

The gospel is the story of the greatest rescue. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15).

The gospel is the story of the greatest exchange. "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

The gospel is the story of the greatest assurance. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31).

The gospel is the story of the greatest love. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

God – the greatest lover

So loved – the greatest degree

The world – the greatest number

That He gave – the greatest act
His only begotten Son – the greatest gift
That whoever – the greatest opportunity
Believes – the greatest simplicity
In Him – the greatest attraction
Should not perish – the greatest promise
But – the greatest difference
Have – the greatest certainty
Everlasting life – the greatest possession

“But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world” (Galatians 6:14).

PRAY FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE GOSPEL

“Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified” (2 Thessalonians 3:1).

“And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness” (Acts 4:31).

“Men may spurn our appeals, reject our message, oppose our arguments, despise our persons - but they are helpless against our prayers.” (J. Sidlow Baxter)

Evangelism is gathering the harvest of the victories won in prayer. Talk to God about men, then talk to men about God.

PROTECT THE GOSPEL

The apostle Paul’s most stinging rebuke was reserved for those who tampered with the gospel. He wrote, “[T]here are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:7-8). To those who tried to distort or add to the gospel, Paul said, “... to whom we did not yield in submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you” (Galatians 2:5).

As stewards we are entrusted to protect the gospel against

- Distortions
- Direct assaults

- Distractions

As ministers of the New Covenant we are “appointed for the defense of the gospel” (Philippians 1:17). Peter admonishes us, “But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15, ESV).

The Greek word translated *defense* is *apologia*. From this we derive the English word *apologetics*. We need to give our people a rational defense for their faith in Jesus Christ. Some helpful books on the theme of apologetics include *The Case for Faith* and *The Case for Christ* by Lee Strobel, *Who Made God? And Answers to Over 100 Other Tough Questions of Faith* by Norm Geisler, and all books written by Ravi Zacharias.

LIVE IN THE PRIVILEGES OF THE GOSPEL

Remember, “our Savior, Jesus Christ, ... has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim. 1:10). Let’s embrace and experience the gospel’s benefits.

Live in the power of the gospel. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power to salvation for everyone who believes, first to the Jew and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:16).

Live in the blessing of the gospel. “But I know that when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ” (Romans 15:29).

Live in the hope of the gospel. “... continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, ... not moved away from the hope of the gospel” (Col. 1:23). When the Bible speaks of hope, it means our confident assurance based on God’s promises. Because of what Jesus has done by taking our sins on Himself on the cross and rising from the dead, we have:

- **Hope that those who die having placed their faith in Christ are now safe in arms of Jesus.** For the Christian believer, to be “absent from body” is to be “present with the Lord” (2 Cor. 5:8).
- **Hope in His salvation through Christ’s cross and resurrection.** We sorrow, but not as those who have no hope, “for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so those when Jesus returns God will bring back those believers who have died” (1 Thess. 4:14).
- **Hope that we will be reunited with those who have died in faith.** “The dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord” (1 Thess. 4:16-17).

- **Hope that all that is wrong will be made right.** “And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away” (Rev. 21:4).

PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL

“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation” (Mark 16:15, NIV).

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witness to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Without question the glory of God is the highest motive for sharing the gospel, but it is not the *only* motivation. Reaching people who are lost in every sense of the word without Jesus – headed for an eternity devoid of God and thus devoid of hope – this is an equally valid, biblical motive for evangelism. There is both a vertical motive for evangelism and missions (the glory of God), and a horizontal motive (the lost state of humanity).

We are to be “making the most of the time because the days are evil” (Eph. 5:16). From an eternal perspective, one of the wisest uses of time – an investment that will yield eternal dividends – is bringing people to personal faith in Christ and challenging others to do the same. The writer of Proverbs counsels us that “he who wins souls is wise” (Prov. 11:30).

How can we recover urgency for reaching unbelievers with the gospel? First, ask God for it. Second, make evangelism intentional. Third, see the world through “gospel glasses.” Make the gospel first – first in your loyalties, first in your preaching, first in how you view people, and first in how you view life.

Start today:

- **Tell someone.** Share the gospel and your testimony with someone today.
- **Help someone.** Help lift the load of someone in need. Then point them to Jesus.
- **Pray for someone.** Pray for the salvation of those who do not know Jesus as Lord and Savior.
- **Send someone.** Give financially to spread the gospel where you live and around the world.