

Text: Various

Title: What is the Gospel? (Part 2 of Evangelism Series)

Truth: The Gospel is the good news that Jesus died on the cross for sins and rose again from the dead, and now offers forgiveness of sins and eternal life to all who repent and trust in Him.

Date/Location: October 16, 2022 at FBC

Introduction

I mentioned last week that our objective in this series on personal evangelism is to reinforce our ability to communicate a *clear* and *complete* Gospel message. We began by considering the challenges of personal evangelism.

- Unbelievers have an innate inability to understand (i.e., embrace) the Word (1 Cor 2:14)
- Unbelievers suppress the truth; their hearts are darkened (Rom 1:18, 21)
- Idolatry/worldly pleasures (Col 3:5-6)
- Sin nature/spiritual immaturity
- Lack of understanding of the Gospel or the Bible as a whole
- Fears (e.g., rejection, persecution, embarrassment/inability)

None of these challenges ought to keep us from evangelizing.

Scripture commands us to make and mature disciples (Matt 28:18–20; Mk 16:15–16; Luke 24:46–47; Acts 1:8; Acts 13:47). But our motives ought to go beyond mere obedience to the command. A love for God and for the Lost is what will should also be motivating us to obey this command. Said differently, the person who has no desire to share the Gospel severely lacks in love for God and for the Lost. I hope you desire for you neighbor, co-worker, family member, spouse to come to Christ.

If you have a desire, but do not know what to say, that problem can be overcome. It will require you to put in some sweat and effort to be better equipped, but you must believe that God can use you and that He desires to use you.

We must be crystal clear on what is the Gospel if we are going to effectively share it with others. Let's consider the following definitions of the Gospel and see if we can arrive at a clear understanding of the Gospel. This would be an excellent exercise for all of us to do. Try coming up with a clear, concise definition of the Gospel.

I. The Gospel Defined

"The good news is that God's face will always be turned toward you, regardless of what you have done, where you have been or how many mistakes you've made. He loves you and is turned in your direction, looking for you."

"The gospel itself refers to the proclamation that Jesus, the crucified and risen Messiah, is the one, true, and only Lord of the world."

"Here's the gospel in a phrase. Because Christ died for us, those who trust in him may know that their guilt has been pardoned once and for all. What will we have to say before the bar of God's judgement? Only one thing. Christ died in my place. That's the gospel."

"Jesus, who is God, lived, died, and rose again, and you will be saved if you turn from your sin and trust Jesus."

¹"Jesus who died on the cross for sins, rose again as the Lord and Christ of the world, and now offers forgiveness and salvation and eternal life to all those who repent and submit to his rule in faith."

"The gospel is the good news that Jesus Christ died for sinners and rose again from the dead, and that if you exercise repentant faith in Him, you will be forgiven of your sin, you will be accounted righteous in Christ, you will enjoy a good relationship with God, and you will participate in the kingdom of God forever."²

"The Gospel is the good news that Jesus died on the cross for sins and rose again from the dead, and now offers forgiveness of sins and

¹J.D. Payne's definition of the Gospel.

²Matt Postiff, "What is the Gospel?" sermon series at Fellowship Bible Church.

eternal life to all who repent and trust in Him.”³

II. The Gospel Preached by the Apostles

We can successfully define the core tenants of the Gospel by looking at what the earliest Christians, namely the writers of the Scriptures (including OT authors too!) said about the life, death, and resurrection of Christ Jesus.

“If we look at the apostles’ writings and sermons in the Bible, we’ll find them explaining, sometimes very briefly and sometimes at greater length, what they learned from Jesus himself about the good news.”⁴ I believe that we can discover some shared framework of truths around which the apostles and early Christians structured their preaching of the good news of Jesus. For instance, last week we saw in Acts 17 that Paul, when preaching in Athens, began by explaining to them who the Creator is and how we ought to relate to the Creator. Paul explained that God has appointed a man to judge the world. This man being Jesus. I encourage you to read through other passages where the Gospel is being preached (e.g., Acts 2, 5, 9, 10, 13, 17 just to name a few examples!).

III. The Gospel Fundamentals

The following is one helpful framework to commit to memory that will help you in your presentation of the Gospel. The one-pager which you have been given, titled “Fundamentals of the Gospel” is one way of outlining the content of the Gospel. It is not the only way, and you may come up with a better way than this.

Depending on the length of time you have with the person you are trying to reach, you can provide more explanation and more Scripture. I would not comfortably condense the Gospel any further than what is provided.

I challenge you to commit the things which we are about to look at to memory, and to be able to say them in your own words. You may already have a different framework that you like to use, and that is

³Definition provided by yours truly.

⁴Gilbert, Greg. *What is the Gospel*, (Illinois: Crossway, 2010), 27.

okay. Be sure that you are prepared with Scripture to back up what you say though.

1) God

- i. God is the *Creator*. God created mankind to love and serve Him, and to have fellowship with Him. As God's creation, we are accountable to Him (Gen 1:27; Rom 1:20, 3:19)
- ii. God is the *holy & righteous Judge*. Because of His holiness and righteousness (Ps 89:14), God cannot overlook sin (Ex 34:6-7; Hab 1:13).

2) Man

- i. Humanity *rebelled and sinned against God*. Adam, the first man created and the representative of all humanity, rebelled against God. As a result, sin and death entered the world (Gen 3:1-19). Adam passed his sinful nature to all his offspring, including us (Rom 5:12).
- ii. *We all sin, and rightly deserve His just punishment*. No one is perfect. Sin is disobedience to God's commands, whether in word, thought, or action. God's punishment for sin is physical and spiritual death (Rom 3:10, 23; 6:23; 1:18).

3) Christ

- i. *Jesus, the Son of God, came and lived a perfect life*. "Son of God" means that he is equal to God. He was also fully man, yet without sin (Matt 16:16; Jn 1:14; Heb 4:15).
- ii. *Jesus died for our sins and was buried*. Jesus voluntarily died in our place to satisfy God's righteous wrath (Jn 10:17-18; 1 Cor 15:3; 1 Pt 3:18). The proof of his death is in His burial.
- iii. *Jesus rose from the dead so we can have eternal life*. Jesus' resurrection from the dead ensures that we can be

forgiven and justified (Rom 4:25; 8:33-34). It also shows His authority over all things.

- iv. *The Lord Jesus will return to judge all people and rule the earth with justice.* Those who believe in Jesus will be judged as righteous (Ps 98:9; 2 Cor 5:10; Rom 4:5) because of the applied work of Christ. Those who do not believe in Jesus will be judged as guilty for their sins.

4) Response

- i. *God commands everyone to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus.* To repent means to turn from sin and turn to God (Mark 1:15; Acts 17:30). It includes intellect, emotion, and will. To believe in Him means to trust in the person and work of Jesus as the only way to receive forgiveness of sins (Col 1:14).

5) Result

- i. *If you believe in Jesus, God forgives your sins and restores you to a right relationship with Himself.* The result of belief is justification and fellowship with God forever (Rom 5:1), freedom from bondage to sin (Jn 8:34-35), entrance into the future Kingdom of God which will be ruled by Jesus (Matt 5:3), eternal life with God forever (Dan 7:18).

Conclusion

Sharing the good news that Jesus died on the cross for sins and rose again from the dead, and now offers forgiveness of sins and eternal life to all who repent and trust in Him, is the greatest thing you could ever possibly tell a person. If you walk an unbeliever through the truths laid out what has been laid out above, you can be assured that you have communicated the Gospel. Remember, your responsibility is simply to communicate the Gospel and pray that the Spirit of God works in their hearts to effectually draw them to Father.