

# **Study Guide | Gospel 101**

## **The Essential Nature and Components of the Gospel**

### **Lesson 4**

## **Introduction**

### **Lesson Objective**

To understand the essential nature of the gospel and identify its core components, equipping believers to confidently and accurately communicate the gospel message while understanding both what we're saved from and what we're saved to.

### **Opening Questions**

1. What makes something "essential" in your everyday life? How does that compare to what makes the gospel essential?
2. If someone asked you to explain the gospel in 2-3 minutes, what would you include? What might you leave out?
3. Why is it important to not just know the gospel by repetition, but to understand it deeply?

### **Scripture Focus**

- **Galatians 1:6-10** - The gravity of altering the gospel
  - **Acts 4:12** - No other name for salvation
  - **1 Corinthians 1:18** - The power of the cross
- 

## **Body: Lesson Outline**

### **I. THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF THE GOSPEL**

#### **A. The Gospel Cannot Be Changed (Galatians 1:6-10)**

#### **Key Concepts:**

- Perverting the gospel creates "another gospel" - not 80% but 0%
- Adding to, subtracting from, or twisting the gospel = complete departure

- Strong language: "accursed" shows the gravity
- It's a removal from God Himself, not just incorrect information

**Important Truth:** The subtlety of the adversary is making us think a changed gospel is "still mostly right" - but any alteration makes it false.

## **B. Salvation in One Name Only (Acts 4:12)**

### **Key Concepts:**

- This is the gospel of Christ, not our gospel
- Not the gospel of institutions, personal experience, or cultural values
- Points to the Lord Jesus Christ and His work

## **C. Why Defining Salvation Matters (1 Corinthians 1:18)**

### **The Progression of Compromise:**

- "We preach Christ crucified" → specific, clear
- "We preach Christ" → could be moral teacher, philosopher
- "We preach" → just good words, no substance

**Critical Point:** Salvation must be clearly defined - it's not from:

- A sad life or difficult circumstances
- Physical illness or health problems
- Financial struggles
- General life hardships

### **Salvation IS from:**

- The debt and penalty of sin before a holy, righteous God
- Eternal separation from God
- God's righteous wrath

---

## **II. WHAT MAKES THE GOSPEL ESSENTIAL**

### **A. Eternal Consequences (2 Thessalonians 1:6-9)**

- Everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord

- Vengeance on those who don't obey the gospel
- The wrath of God revealed against ungodliness (Romans 1:18)

## **B. Salvation FROM Something**

### **The Consequences Emphasis:**

- Condemned by sin
- Under God's wrath
- Separated from God eternally
- "The terror of the Lord" to persuade people

## **C. Salvation TO Something**

### **The Goodness Emphasis:**

- Eternal life = knowing God (John 17:3)
- Relationship with God as Father
- Access to God (1 Peter 3:18 - "to bring us to God")
- The goodness of God leads to repentance (Romans 2:4)

### **Important Balance:**

- Don't condemn people without showing God's goodness
- Don't emphasize relationship without showing what we're saved from
- Both are necessary - "saved from God, by God, to God"

"The greatest gift of the gospel is not heaven. It's not that my sins are forgiven. The greatest gift of the gospel is that I get to know God."

---

## **III. THE COMPONENTS OF THE GOSPEL**

### **The Complete List (in logical order):**

1. **God's Holiness and Righteousness**
  - Who God is
  - His character and nature
  - His standard
2. **Man's Sin and Penalty**
  - Universal sin problem

- Personalization (not just "the world" but ME)
  - Consequences of sin
  - Separation from God
  - 3. **God's Justice**
    - Declaration of righteousness
    - The necessity of payment
    - God cannot overlook sin
  - 4. **God's Provision - Christ's Redemption**
    - Christ's deity (essential foundation)
    - His work (death, burial, resurrection)
    - Payment made at the cross
  - 5. **God's Grace (The Offer)**
    - Free gift
    - Unconditional love
    - No works required
    - Not earned by:
      - Personal goodness
      - Rituals or traditions
      - Works of the law
      - Religious activity
  - 6. **The Law of Faith (Reception)**
    - Must be received/believed
    - Not just intellectual knowledge
    - Personal trust and acceptance
  - 7. **Imputation and Justification**
    - Payment applied to the believer
    - Declaration of righteousness
    - Identification with Christ
    - Standing before God as justified
- 

## IV. PRACTICAL APPLICATION FOR SHARING THE GOSPEL

### A. The Purpose of Having a List

- Not to mechanically rattle off points
- To help us listen and discern where people are
- To know where to spend time in conversation
- To purposefully guide the discussion

- To have substance under each component

## **B. The Romans Road Approach**

Following Romans 1-5 provides natural order and development:

- Starts with the Creator
- Develops logically
- Provides a pathway to follow

## **C. Meeting People Where They Are**

### **Key Principles:**

- Don't assume prior knowledge
- Don't presume church background
- Start with common ground
- Be patient - people rarely go from A to Z immediately
- Find what they do understand and build from there
- Condescend to their estate without compromising truth

### **Paul's Example at Mars Hill (Acts 17):**

- Used their "unknown god" inscription
- Quoted their own poets
- Found common ground
- Taught more excellently from there

## **D. Representation Matters**

**Critical Truth:** How we communicate the gospel represents where we want to bring people (to God).

- The message is offensive enough - don't add carnality
- Show love even when rejected
- Demonstrate the character of God as you share about God
- Forbear insults and rejection graciously
- Be the ambassador you're called to be

## **E. Common Mistakes to Avoid**

1. **Assuming "grace message" knowledge** - Don't start with right division

2. **Getting to Point Z too quickly** - Most people need time and patience
  3. **Making unnecessary divides** - Find agreement first, build from there
  4. **Compromising vs. Condescending** - Meeting people where they are isn't compromise
  5. **Neglecting personalization** - Help them see it's about THEM, not just "the world"
- 

## Conclusion

### The Foundation Principle

These gospel components form the foundation for all other biblical truth. Understanding righteousness in salvation helps understand:

- The breastplate of righteousness (Ephesians 6)
- Righteousness in God's character
- Righteousness in Christ's work
- Righteousness imputed to believers

Everything builds on this foundation.

### Reflective Questions

1. **Personal Assessment:** Which component of the gospel do you tend to emphasize most when sharing with others? Which do you tend to neglect?
2. **Balance Check:** When you think about salvation, do you emphasize more what we're saved FROM or what we're saved TO? How can you better balance both truths?
3. **Preparation:** If someone asked you right now to explain the gospel, which components would you be most confident explaining? Which would you struggle with?
4. **Listening Skills:** Think about a recent gospel conversation. Did you take time to listen and discern where the person was, or did you try to give them everything at once?

### Application Questions

1. **This Week:** Choose one person in your life who needs to hear the gospel. Where are they in understanding these components? What's the next step in meeting them where they are?
  2. **Study Plan:** Which component of the gospel do you need to study more deeply? What passages will you examine to strengthen your understanding?
  3. **Practice:** Who in your life could you practice explaining the gospel to - perhaps a fellow believer who would give you feedback on your clarity and completeness?
  4. **Heart Check:** Are you communicating the gospel in a way that represents God's character well? Is there any carnality, impatience, or pride you need to address in how you share?
  5. **Boldness:** What's holding you back from being a more active herald of the gospel in your various spheres of influence (work, home, community)? How does understanding the essential nature of the gospel address those hesitations?
- 

## For Further Study

**Next Session Preview:** We'll examine "God's Holiness and Righteousness" - the first component of the gospel.

**Preparation Assignment:** Search the scriptures for passages that address God's holiness and righteousness. Consider what verses you might use when sharing the gospel to establish who God is.

**Recommended Reading:** Romans 1-5 (observing the order and development of Paul's presentation)