

Chris Miller
SESSION 1 | Grasp the Gospel
Check Your Context

What is the Gospel?

An Announcement: The word translated as “gospel” in our English Bibles means “good news.” It is a word that describes a pronouncement of a significant event that had significant importance to the hearers.

Good News:

“At the heart of Christianity is Good News. It comes not as a task for us to fulfill, a mission for us to accomplish, a game plan for us to follow with the help of life coaches, but as a report that someone else has already fulfilled, accomplished, followed, and achieved, everything for us. Good advice may help us in daily direction; the Good News concerning Jesus Christ saves us from sin's guilt and tyranny over our lives and the fear of death. It's good news because it does not depend on us. It is about God and his faithfulness to His own purposes and promises.” (M. Horton).

Mark 1:15: *“The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of heaven is at hand; repent and believe the gospel!”*

Grasp The Gospel:

- “You cannot do evangelism if you do not grasp... the good news of Christianity.” pg.5

- “To grasp the good news of the gospel...we must internalize the significance of that word “*news*.”” pg.5

The Gospel in 6 Movements	

1. Creation: *“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” Genesis 1:1.*

- *“...God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” Genesis 1:27*
- Being *an image* gives humanity a sense of humility; being an *image of God* gives us dignity.
- “The triune God made humanity—you and me—in his image to know and enjoy his love. So we are made *by* God (which means he owns us) and *for* God (which means he alone satisfies us).” pg. 9

2. Rebellion:

- “...sin came into the world through one man...” Romans 5:12

- “...and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned...” Romans 5:12b
- “For the wages of sin is death...” Romans 6:23a

RC Sproul suggests three ways for us to summarize the human plight:

God	Humanity	Christ	Result
As Owner	Debtors ^[1]	Our Surety or “Guarantor”	
God’s Justice	Enmity	Mediator	
God as Judge	Criminals	Righteous Sub.	

3. Judgment.

- “Your iniquities have separated you from your God,” the prophet Isaiah declares, “your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.” Isaiah 59:2, NIV’
- *“And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind” (Eph 2:1-3).*

4. Christ our Substitute:

- **John Stott** writes, “...for the essence of sin is man substituting himself for God, while the essence of salvation is God substituting himself for man. Man asserts himself against God and puts himself where only God deserves to be; God sacrifices himself for man and puts himself where only man deserves to be. Man claims prerogatives that belong to God alone; God accepts penalties that belong to man alone.” pg. 17
- “The One who made the law kept it, and then died for those who had broken it. The law-maker became the law-keeper and died in the place of law-breakers.” pg. 15
- **So, the gospel is the announcement of good news that Jesus has lived the life that you were supposed to live and didn't (*debtors*), wouldn't (*enemies*), couldn't live (*criminals*).**

5. Response: Repentance and Faith

Three Steps of Response: Turn, Trust, Treasure

- “First, we turn from sin...This is the meaning of repentance—changing your mind and doing an “about-face,” a 180-degree pivot from living for yourself.” pg. 20
- “Second, we trust Jesus Christ. We say “no” to sin and “yes” to him, embracing what he has accomplished for us and his invincible promise to forgive.” pg. 20

- “Third, we treasure Jesus...the outcome of the second. But it’s worth spelling out...Grasping the gospel...entails *embracing* Jesus as your Lord and Savior and Treasure.” pgs. 20-21

The gospel demands a response.

- “The critical question facing each of us blows right past everything outward, for it is laser-aimed at the heart: *Are you, right now, relying on Jesus alone for your standing before God?*” pg. 21

6. Renewal and New Creation

- “...one day, this same Jesus—who died and rose and ascended to heaven and intercedes for his people—is going to make a comeback.” pg. 18
- “Our ultimate hope as Christians is not evacuation from the earth, but the restoration of this earth. God’s redeemed people will inherit a remade world, unmarred by the scourge of sin.” pg. 19

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Some concepts are no longer broadly understood or accepted as true:

- *God loves you*
- *You are a sinner*
- *You need a Savior*
- *The Bible says...*

Contextualization: we must consider the “context” we are ministering in. This doesn’t have anything to do with compromising the message. It has more to do

with removing unnecessary hindrances to our communication so that it 1) can be clearly understood, and 2) to remove any offense except for the gospel.

1. **Entering and Adapting:**

- “When it comes to the gospel, we don’t need to dress it up in order to make it cool. We need to break it down in order to make it clear. *That* is the purpose of studying your surrounding culture in light of God’s Word.”

pg. 27

Examples:

“...The Son of God did not engage lost persons in a one-size-fits-all manner. He took a certain approach with self-righteous Pharisees, another with skeptical Sadducees, and another with notorious sinners.” pg. 27

“Paul did likewise...he took one approach with biblically literate Jews in Thessalonica and Berea, but a different approach...with pagan Greeks in Athens. Was the apostle confused? Cowardly? Spiritually schizophrenic? Not at all. He was simply dialed into his various contexts and willing to adapt accordingly.” pg. 28.

“The goal in Jesus’ example and with Paul’s is to try to understand the fears, desires, beliefs, and values of a people well enough to flex as far as they can in order to meet them on their turf—as far as wisdom will allow.” (31).

2. **Challenge and Confront the Culture:**

David Foster Wallace: (*award-winning non-Christian author and prof. At Pomona College*).

“everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship. And the compelling reason for maybe choosing some sort of god or spiritual-type thing to worship..is that pretty much anything else you worship will eat you alive. If you worship **money** and things, if they are where you tap real meaning in life, then you will never have enough, never feel you have enough...worship **your body and beauty and sexual allure** and you will always feel ugly. And when time and age start showing, you will die a million deaths before they finally grieve you. If you Worship **power**, you will end up feeling weak and afraid, and you will need ever more power over others to numb you to your own fear. Worship your **intellect**, being seen as smart, you will end up feeling stupid, a fraud, always on the verge of being found out. But the insidious thing about these forms of worship is....they are unconscious. They are default settings.”

3. **Appealing to the Listener**

1 Cor 1:18-25—Paul knows that a portion of the culture pursued and valued “wisdom and eloquence.” He was living in the Roman culture, where power was treasure—so what did he do? He preached Christ as the ultimate expression of both wisdom and Power.

3 Applications and An Encouragement:

1. Every aspect of the personal ministry of the Word (counseling, discipleship, evangelism) seeks not only to see the person in front of you rightly, but to see as they see.
2. Use the 6 Point Presentation, but start from any box.

3. How does the gospel fulfill our deepest longings and subvert their most cherished idols? (27).

An Encouragement:

- “The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.” **1 Corinthians 2:14**

“Christ calls those who are not prepared, are not waiting, do not get it, and are busy doing other things.” (Horton).

[1] “That Christ is our surety means that He is the one who cosigns our note. He backs up our indebtedness by taking upon Himself the obligation to pay what must be paid (who derives no personal benefit for what you are obligated to. He is obligated, you get to be free of debt). Christ



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