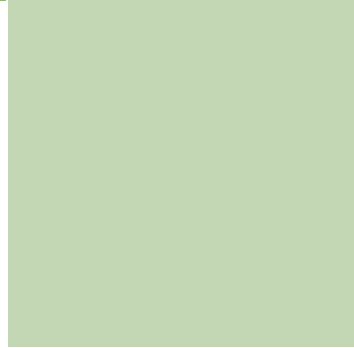




NAC-USA  
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# WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?



# Course CGP-101

## What is the Gospel?

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the core of the Christian faith. All that is believed in Christianity centers on the death and resurrection of Jesus. The message of the Gospel is not something to be taught once and then stored away. It is to be talked about and remembered. It is a source of hope, peace, comfort, and security. As a leader, the message of the Gospel should be at the forefront of your teaching and work. This course will provide you with an understanding of the Gospel that you can use to remind yourself of the goodness of God and to encourage those around you on their spiritual journey.

### Lesson 1: The Gospel

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#### **The Gospel: The Good News**

The good news is the proclamation of the work of Jesus accomplished on behalf of sinful mankind. The message is for all people as proclaimed by the angels to the shepherds in Luke 2:10 – “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for **all** people.” The Gospel message is for all people because we are all in need of the saving power of Jesus Christ. Paul wrote that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). We are

a broken, sinful people, but the good news of salvation is for all of us. It is a message for all of us to proclaim because “all are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus (Romans 3:24).

To fully grasp the power of the Gospel, knowledge and understanding of how the world and all mankind became separated from God is necessary. We'll now turn our attention to this history and our place in it.

## **The Gospel: A response to the human experience**

### ***The Beginning***

Part of understanding the Gospel is recognizing that it's just not a story told in the New Testament, it's a message that is threaded throughout the entirety of Scripture. Starting in Genesis, we can read that God spoke and everything came into existence. The masterpiece of His creation is man and woman who were created in His own image (Genesis 1:27). God blessed them and said to them in Genesis 1:28, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth”. God endowed Adam and Eve with ability and purpose, placed them in the garden of Eden, and directed them to tend and keep it.

### ***The Fall***

In the beginning there was harmony. Harmony between God and man, between Adam and Eve, and throughout creation. That all changed one day when Satan deceived Adam and Eve, causing them to question God and disobey His direction to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Let's take a moment to read Genesis 3:1-13

*Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden’? And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’” Then the serpent said to the woman, “You shall not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”*

*So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.*

*And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, “Where are you?” So he said, “I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.” And he*

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said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?”

Then the man said, “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.” And the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

Adam and Eve used their freewill to decide against God and the consequences were devastating. Sin, death, pain, suffering, and remoteness from God were now the experience of man. Additionally, the results of sin – war, poverty, greed, jealousy, eternal separation from God - all came into the human experience.

God removed Adam and Eve from their home in the garden of Eden and in the next few chapters of Genesis, we see the continued results of sin as Cain killed his brother Abel. In Genesis 6, the Scripture tells us that the world becomes populated with people and with the increase in population, there is an increase in the wickedness of man.

God then decides to destroy His creation by sending a flood to wipe out all people, with the exception of Noah and his family who had found “grace in the eyes of the Lord.” After the flood, God made a covenant with creation that He would never again destroy creation in the same way.

After the flood, the consequences of the fall still remained and have afflicted mankind continually ever since – right up to our present day.

### ***How can things be straightened out?***

At the time of the fall, God promised Adam and Eve that one of their descendants would someday save mankind from sin. Genesis 3:15 reads, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”

This promised was fulfilled by God Himself becoming man in Christ Jesus. In John 1:14, the Bible says, “and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” Jesus’ arrival fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament prophets. He lived life completely obedient to the will of God and free from sin, and willingly offered His life as a sacrifice to pay for the sin debt for all mankind. Because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, everyone has the opportunity to be set free from their sin and receive the promise of eternal life.

Jesus died on the cross and was buried in a tomb. Three days later He resurrected from the grave, conquering death and defeating the power of sin. Jesus promised that He would send the Helper, the Holy Spirit, to His followers to aid them in their journey of faith and He promised that He would return to raise up His bride into the glory of His kingdom. In Hebrews 9:28 scripture says, “To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.” That is why the message of the Gospel is to be continually repeated in the hearts of Jesus’ disciples. As they journey through life and the challenges that arise, the good news of

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Jesus Christ serves as a source of encouragement and strength so that each one can persevere till His return.

### ***What does this story mean for the individual?***

The Gospel simply means new life for all who turn from their sin to belief in Jesus Christ. Through faith in Jesus Christ, we can be participants in His story of rebirth, renewal, and restoration. In Romans 6:4 Paul wrote, “Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” And in Romans 10:9-11: “If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. As Scripture says, ‘Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame.’”

When a person embraces the message of the Gospel, their life is changed. They are no longer slaves to sin and subject to eternal death, but they are set free from the condemnation of sin, they are justified in the sight of God, and they receive the promise of the resurrection – to be raised up with Jesus. The evidence of a believer being transformed by the Gospel is the change in their conduct, language, and love for God and their fellow man.

### **The Gospel: Is a story**

The Gospel is a story of God’s love that is told throughout the entirety of Scripture. God had a plan from the beginning to restore mankind and to invite them to live eternally with Him. His desire is for all to be saved through faith in Jesus Christ and that is why it is the mission of all who have received the message of the Gospel to share it. Listen to what Paul wrote to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 – *For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures...*

Paul shared the message that He had been given and accepted. The story of the Gospel has been shared with you and now it is your privilege to share it with others. Repeat the story to yourself and have no fear in sharing it with those you meet who are in need of a Savior.

### **The Gospel: Cannot be reduced**

The Gospel cannot be reduced to a few comprehensive points that can be universally used in every context. The Gospel should be explained in a way that connects the present situation and audience. Simply put, connect with your audience at their level, the place that they are in. Get to know and understand them. Paul did this when he was speaking to the people in Athens as recorded in Acts 17.

Before speaking the name of Jesus to them, be an example of Jesus to them in your attention, care, and love. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you to the right moment to share your faith and the story of the Gospel.

### **The Gospel: Is at the heart of the church community**

The Gospel unifies us as believers – as the church of Christ. The message has impacted all of our lives and it is what we all have in common. We are all sinners in need of God’s grace which is offered through faith in Jesus Christ. That is the Gospel. That is the core of our belief and the heartbeat of our community. The Gospel is continually proclaimed through the apostle ministry, heralded in the preached word, and it is experienced more tangibly through the sacraments. Every time we gather as a congregation and celebrate Holy Communion, each believer proclaims the power the Gospel has had on their lives.

### **The Gospel: Leads to action and shared communal experiences**

As mentioned earlier, those who have embraced the message of the Gospel and have turned from their sin to new life in Jesus Christ, are being transformed. This means that there is a change in their actions. When the community of believers gather together, the evidence of this change is witnessed in the willingness each one has to reconcile and in the love that is shown and felt in their fellowship. There is a desire to serve the needs of the world as the hands and feet of Jesus and share the motivating and encouraging Good News with the whole world.

As Christians we want to be shining examples of the Gospel and share it in our congregations, families, and communities.

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### **Follow Up Questions**

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1. When did you embrace the message of the Gospel? Why? How did this change your life?
2. Why can the Gospel not just be taught once?
3. Why is the Gospel important to you?
4. Can you share the Gospel with others without being an expert on the Bible?
5. What keeps you from sharing the story of the Gospel?

### **Course Conclusion**

The Gospel is the core of our faith. Without the sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus Christ we would all be hopeless, but because of Him, we have the promise of eternal life. Repeat the message of the Gospel to yourself again and again and be a shining example of a person who has been transformed by the good news of Jesus Christ.