

June: *Prayer*; July *Discipleship* **What is the Gospel?**

Sept. *Revelation* (Sermon 1: "What is the Gospel & Who is it for?" 1 Cor. 15:1-6)

Pop Quizzes: the thing of nightmares: Based off lecture, reading, homework....

#1. What Christian denomination are we? #2. What are our denominational roots?

#3. What is the gospel? *How would you define it?* #4. Does the Gospel matter more to lost/saved?

1. The WELL Community Church comes from a 500 year long line of Protestant Evangelical Ch.
2. What does it mean that we identify as a church as Protestant Evangelical? ***Protestant** means that we are *not* Roman Catholic [500yr protest] and we are *not* Eastern Orthodox.
-But of the many Protestant denominations, what does **Evangelical** mean?

-*Evangelical*: that we still hold true and dear to our Christian experience that **A.** we believe in the **Bible** (as inerrant and infallible) as the standard and rule of our Christian faith and practice; AND that **B.** we believe that the **Gospel** (*Evangel*: Evangelism/Evangelical) is *still good news* for *all* people in that Jesus came to earth to save sinners like you and me; AND that **C.** we still believe the Bible teaches that we are saved (converted or born-again) by God's **Grace** alone, through **Faith** alone. [i.e. Justification by faith alone], which means that our salvation is **NOT** based on our good intentions, our good deeds/works, right words, correct prayer, baptism, taking the Lord's Supper, or faithful church attendance; = **D.** We are not saved through anything that **WE** can do, but we are saved only by grace and this is a miraculous and gracious work of God through Jesus Christ. (Sadly **many "Christian" denominations today have left this biblical way of thinking**: Jesus is only way to heaven; Bible is true; hell exists...) Thus, as Evangelical Protestants, we still believe in the power of God's GOSPEL . . .

3. **So what is the GOSPEL?** & Do you think that we are we a Gospel people? **Are we a gospel-centered, gospel saturated people?** OR have we lost our understanding of the Gospel? Have we become gospel desensitized by our churchy culture? Have we lost our zeal to share the good news of the gospel? *Have we ever even thought about the eternal and spiritual benefits of the gospel applied to everyday life???* **S0, why does this matter?**

*Because there are so many definitions of what the gospel is, many misunderstandings and mishandlings of the gospel, **it is good for us to focus our hearts on the biblical description of *what* the Gospel is and *who* the gospel is for** -reminding each of us that the gospel is so much more than we thought and it truly affects every aspect of our Christian life, walk, & discipleship. *****Church, we have got to get this right!!!!**

If we are going to get prayer right? Discipleship right? Our worship right...we have to get the gospel right!!!!

The goal of this series this month is to present afresh the gospel clearly and strikingly, and thereby expose the ever increasing opposites and counterfeits to the eternal gospel.

***Main Point:** The **GOSPEL** is the biblical and universal declaration that Jesus still saves sinners (like you and me) *by His grace and for His glory!* **The Gospel extends to our eternity & to our everyday life as Believers.**

-*Today*: What is the Gospel and Who is the gospel for? *What should be our response to it?*

-Third Sunday: What the Gospel is NOT & How we keep getting the Gospel wrong

-Fourth Sunday: The Gospel as the Theme throughout all of the Bible (OT & NT)

-Fifth Sunday: What is the Church's responsibility to the Gospel?

THE GOSPEL is Good News for our ETERNITY

****READ 1 Cor. 15:1-11**

¹ Now I make known to you, brothers *and sisters*, the **gospel** [the good news] which I preached to you, which you also received, in which you also stand, ² by which you also are saved, if you hold firmly to the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.

³ For I handed down to you as of **first importance** what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

⁶ After that He appeared to more than five hundred brothers *and sisters* at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; ⁷ then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; ⁸ and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also. ⁹ For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me. ¹¹ Whether then *it was* I or they, so we preach and so you believed."

What is the Gospel that Paul is referring to? What is of first importance in the New Testament?

Here's my working definition of the Gospel:

"The Gospel is the *good news* that a loving **God** sent His sinless Son to rescue rebellious **mankind** from their own sin and death, [through **Jesus'** own substitutionary death & resurrection], forever saving & transforming all who **trust** in Jesus *by faith*." **This is the ultimate good news!!**

The Gospel *is* **good news** =(a declaration; it is a proclamation/a heralding announcement, but more than that, it is a *pronouncement* of Divine power to save any/all through God's grace)

1. The Gospel is a divine **Declaration**: a universal declaration that Jesus is *the* Savior of the World and still saves sinners like us: **A declaration is an official testimony, a sworn affidavit of experience**
Vs. 1: Now *I make known to you*, (Declaration) brothers *and sisters*, the **gospel [=the good news]**

The gospel message *is* that the Bible *declares* to *all* people *everywhere* that Jesus Christ **is** *the* Savior of the World -....That as Savior He still saves sinners (**Jesus is still in the rescuing business**)

***Paul's Declaration:**

- 1 Timothy 1:15 "**It is a trustworthy statement**, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost."

***The Angel Gabriel's Declaration:**

- Luke 2:10-11 "**But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news** that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a **Savior** has been born to you; he is the **Messiah** [the anointed One, the Christ], the Lord [God Himself].

***Peter's Declaration:**

-Acts 4:10-12 "**let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel**, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, *whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by this name...* there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among mankind by which we must be saved" -the Name of Jesus Christ

***The gospel is a divine Declaration that Jesus is Savior of the world**

****The Bible declares that Jesus *does* save sinners** (i.e. you *still* can be saved today) =**GOOD NEWS**

2. The Gospel is a divine **Proclamation** -The Good News is to be heralded, preached, exclaimed
Vs. 1: Now I make known to you, (Declaration) **brothers and sisters, the gospel which I preached to you**, (Proclamation) **which you also received, in which you also stand**,
A proclamation is an official, legal announcement of public significance. =This matters/listen up!

-The Gospel is the divine proclamation that *only* Jesus can save/rescue us & He did that perfectly!

-We see this in the very beginning of Jesus' public ministry:

-Mark 1:14-15 "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching [proclaiming] the gospel of God, ¹⁵ and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe in the gospel." In the peak of all human history, the culmination of all time, God sent Jesus into the World to inaugurate God's Kingdom, a spiritual Kingdom of the heart first, then later over all the physical earth and over all other Kingdoms – and the message of the Good News [the gospel of God] is that Jesus is now here, as the awaited Messiah, as God in the Flesh, as the promised and prophesied Savior of Israel and the World, the ONLY perfect, sinless One, the only One who could completely keep and perfectly fulfill all the Law's commands so as to represent all of humanity, Jesus is the second Adam -so therefore in recognition of this Gospel good news = repent of your sins and empty religion & trust in Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord NOW! -Jesus' message not changed!

-Acts 10:38-43 "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, ³⁹ and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. ³⁹ We are witnesses of all the things that He did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross.⁴⁰ God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He be revealed, ⁴¹ not to all the people, but to witnesses who had been chosen beforehand by God, that is, to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. ⁴² And He ordered us to preach [proclaim] to the people, and to testify solemnly that this [Jesus] is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ All the prophets [OT] testify of Jesus, that through His name everyone who believes in Jesus receives forgiveness of sins." -Proclamation is that ALL are sinners in need of forgiveness =ONLY via Jesus!

-Mark 16:15 "and Jesus said to them go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole of creation." -we are commanded to herald, share, preach, teach, proclaim the gospel to all peoples

And what is the Gospel that we are to proclaim/preach to all people?

"**The Gospel** is the *good news* that a loving **God** sent His sinless Son to rescue rebellious **mankind** from their own sin and death, [through **Jesus'** own substitutionary death & resurrection], forever saving & transforming all who **trust** in Jesus *by faith*."**This is the ultimate good news!!**

*This Gospel proclamation is **that salvation is needed by all** (all=sinners/guilty/depraved) & that this **salvation is exclusive** =only through Jesus Christ *by faith* –& this **is news** & it's **offensive to a lost world**. The gospel has never been popular among hardened hearts -**BUT greatest news of all!**

*The Gospel is the divine Proclamation that Jesus **is the ONLY Savior of the world**.

The Bible proclaims that **only Jesus can save the world & the whole world needs a Savior!

[=the gospel is clear in that proclamation that because all the world is guilty in their sin, everyone needs to be saved, to be rescued from their own sin and death & **good news** is that Jesus **can/will** save any/all who **ask**. Rom. 10:13 "**whoever will call upon the Name of the Lord will be saved**"]

As it was of first importance (the MAIN THING) **Paul states that He has to share this good news with everyone he can**. Their souls/eternity depend on it ...

-1 Cor. 9:22-23 "I have become all things to all people, so that I may by all means save some. ²³ I do all things for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it."

- 1 Cor. 9:16 "For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast *about*, for I am under compulsion; for woe to me if I do not preach the gospel." Paul takes the gospel proclamation as deadly serious

-Who was the last person you share the good news of the gospel to?

But More than a declaration that Jesus is Savior, or a proclamation that He is ONLY Savior of world

3. The Gospel is a **Pronouncement** that God's grace is powerful to save any/all that He desires

Vs.1: Now I make known to you, (Declaration) brothers *and sisters*, the gospel which I preached to you, (Proclamation), which you also received, in which you also stand, ² **by which you also are saved**,

-The gospel pronouncement is that God's gospel is a **powerful** gospel, that by God's authority alone as the Author of the gospel, His grace & free offer of salvation are for *ALL* people

(**Pronouncement**) an official decree of a new state of being: a new reality *(wedding pronouncmt)

*The Gospel pronounces the divine reality (for all people) of God's power to save anyone, anywhere by His Grace alone, based on the saving work of Jesus on the cross. **The Gospel is powerful!** *This gospel pronouncement is a powerful, eternal message to transform hearts and souls by God's grace & goodwill toward man.* ***The gospel is the power of spiritual transformation**

-Romans 1:16 "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the **power** of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

-1 Cor. 1:18 "For the message of the cross [the gospel] is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the **power** of God.

**The Gospel Pronounces divine power that Jesus *can* save anyone (no one is beyond His reach); the pronouncement of the gospel is that God is all powerful, all authoritative, all wise to save those who *ask, seek, & knock* (Luke 11:9), those who call on Jesus by faith to save them (Eph. 2:8-9)

So, what is the Gospel? The Gospel is a divine Declaration; Proclamation; and divine Pronouncement of God's ultimate grace and power to save those He wants & those who ask by faith to be saved. The Gospel is God's divine message of salv. through Jesus's life/death/resurrect

-The gospel is a divine *Declaration* that Jesus is **Savior of the world**

-The gospel is the divine *Proclamation* that Jesus is **the ONLY Savior of the world in a world of lost sinners who desperately need a Savior**

-The gospel is the divine *Pronouncement* (for all people) of God's power to save anyone, anywhere by His Grace alone based solely on the saving work of Jesus on the cross. **This Gospel is powerful & eternal!!**

[The gospel *emphasizes* God's story, God's love, God's power, God's authority, God's saving grace, & God's glory!! **The Gospel is about GOD** (not us); God is *the* central character in this story of **redemption!** The gospel was given to us - **to receive, live, & to share...WHO will you share with?**]

THE GOSPEL is Good News for our ETERNITY b/c of Jesus Christ

AND

THE GOSPEL is Good News for our EVERYDAY life for those who are IN Union w/ Jesus Christ

Now that we have underscored what the gospel is... “The Gospel is the *good news* that a loving **God** sent His sinless Son to rescue rebellious **mankind** from their own sin and death, forever saving & *transforming* all who **trust** in Jesus *by faith*.”

So... WHO is the Gospel for? The Lost?... YES! Believers today?...YES.

Vs. 1: Now I make known to you, brothers *and sisters*, the **gospel** [the good news] which I preached to you, which you also received, in which you also stand, ² by which you also are saved

Paul highlights that for those who are saved by the gospel, that they also **STAND firm** in that same saving gospel every day of their life. The gospel is the living foundation for how every believer is to see the world (worldview) and thrive as a Believer who abides with Christ every minute of every day. We call this **UNION with Christ** (that *we are united to Jesus* by His death for us and our death into Him). The gospel means that Christ's perfect work and power **STILL** continue in my life every single day for how I live in perfect peace, sp. power, and **JOY** while continuing His mission to rescue the lost near me and serve His Church around me!

-2 Tim. 2:10-11 “For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus *and with it* eternal glory. [the gospel extend to our *eternity*] **11** The statement is trustworthy: For *if* we died with Him, **we will also live with Him**; [the gospel extends to everyday life]

THE GOSPEL is still Good News for our EVERYDAY life (for every Believer for every day)

By His grace, the gospel means therefore that **IN Christ**, (those United with Christ/In Union with Him) = we are forever changed [*transformed* from death to life] AND now ... forever and *perfectly loved*, accepted, forgiven, secure, comforted, adopted, empowered, and justified through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross and His glorious resurrection as the reigning King of Heaven.

What does the Gospel actually mean for you and me?

That the gospel is *not just* a message about the death of Jesus, but also the LIFE of Jesus: (a life that we now share in as we are UNITED with Jesus through faith); Jesus didn't just die for us, He lived for us. Our merit, worth, and value are ALL tied to Christ's life and merit.

-Jesus led a perfect, sinless life (*fully God/man*) & Jesus lived out the Law perfectly/Righteously = **Only** Jesus fulfilled the Law and was perfectly obedient to the LAW =as the 2nd ADAM He won!!!

=SO NOW, *In Him* & through Him, we become His very righteousness; we are holy & accepted **by** His works righteousness; =we are *pleasing* to the Father as He sees Christ **IN** us; *His work in us*!

-Christ's eternal rewards, blessings, inheritance (are all ours – now & forever) We share in it!!

-Romans 8:17 “Now if we are children of God, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.”

-1 Peter 1:3-4 “who according to His great mercy God has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,”

So **NOW In Christ**, we share in His Life, His death, and His resurrection:

-Jesus' perfect *life* and works righteousness becomes our through Imputation/gifted to us

-Jesus sacrificial *death* was **vicarious**; He died in our place (substitution)/judged for us -we are now justified through Christ; we are in right standing before holy God; we can enter in Heaven

-Jesus' *resurrection* was divine vindication that Jesus' sacrificial death on behalf of all humanity

was **accepted** by God. Jesus' resurrection from the grave means that Jesus ultimately conquers all sin and all death for all eternity. So now we are accepted by God through Christ; through His power we conquer sin and death. Death loses its power to scare us; sin loses its power to chain us.

Jesus' resurrection is the single greatest reality of history, because in Christ's resurrection God vindicates Jesus' sinless life and through His accepted sacrificial death, Jesus conquered for all time *all* sin, *all* death, and *all* evil. THAT means everything for us!!!! For all who are **now IN Christ**, (united to Him) (**hitched our wagons to Him**), we now have New life, spiritual life, victorious life, **joy-filled** life, and eternal life (**regardless of our earthly circumstances or station**).

That *IN* Jesus' finished work of salvation, we can rest fully and forever because He was rejected by men and God, that we might be fully **accepted** by God;

-He was punished that we might be **forgiven**;

-He became sin that we might become **righteous**;

-He became our guilt that we become **innocent** before God

-He was crucified that we might be forever **justified**;

-He was crushed for us that we might receive **mercy**;

-He became afflicted for us that we might be **comforted** by God

-He became a curse for us that we might become a **blessing** to God;

-He was emptied of His life that we might have the **fullness** of life;

-He was impoverished that we might taste the **riches of glory**, that we might be escorted into the presence of the living, holy God with boldness and confidence of worship.

*Jesus died that we might have **life** today, and life to the fullest (**abundant life = victory, peace, hope, rest, and JOY**). **Are you experiencing this in your daily life?**

Jesus' victory over sin and death becomes our very victory and the substance of our life and hope on this earth.

This means, **In Christ alone** do we find our security and identity-In **Who He is** and Who He says we are IN Him! The gospel focuses our hearts on who we now become through Jesus since Christ ever lives to intercede for us, sustain us, and grow us into His likeness everyday (Rom. 8:29)

Therefore, the GOSPEL focuses more about what Jesus has done than about what we could ever do!

The gospel is about Jesus not us. The gospel is about His glory, His grace, and His power. The gospel aims to put Jesus on full display for all His beauty and majesty - showcasing His marvelous grace and finished work of redemption for us.

-What is Our Response to the Gospel ?

Vs. 1: Now I make known to you, (Declaration) **brothers and sisters, the gospel which I preached to you, which you also received**, =the response to the gospel is belief/trust/acceptance

²by which you also are saved, **if you hold firmly** (believe/cling) **to the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.** (*easy believism*; mental ascent, but **NOT** real saving faith/TRUST) **Vs. 11:** Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed."

A. Repentance -our hearts are pricked and convicted by the truth of the gospel that we are each sinners in need of a Savior; we are sinners, rebellious, depraved, and who stand guilty before a righteous God/judge. -**Conviction** reveals our rightful sentence of death & justice.

B. Faith (Belief) (**Trust**) -Faith is the response of a guilty and desperate heart that clings to the truth the only Jesus can save; only Jesus can rescue us from our own sin and rightful sentence of death; only the resurrected Jesus is righteous enough to pay for our sins, redeem us, forgive us, save us to eternal life, adopt us, transform us into His very righteousness.

-**Belief** is our agreement with this eternal reality that only Jesus' death & resurrection count toward eternal life (not ours); -**Trust** is our placing our whole life & eternity in His capable saving hands that Jesus freely offers to save us; Trust is our complete surrender of our life, our rights, our wants, and our future unto Jesus as our Savior and Lord in all things forever.

C. Assurance -Assurance is our new identity that we are His forever and **He holds us** forever. Heb. 7:25 "**Therefore Jesus is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, because he always lives to intercede for them.**"

When we see Jesus in ALL His glory, and understand and embrace His gospel which is not only able to save for our eternity **but empowers for everyday life** - then we rest in His glorious work on the cross and out of the overflow of a transformed heart can we rightly praise, live, and serve in His power for His glory.

When we rightly see Jesus and understand His glorious gospel - we are changed.

-Our mind is powerfully engaged to rightly think eternal thoughts of God as revealed in Scripture;
-Our heart is inflamed with the love of God for His own glory and His work of restoration in my life and others;
-My body is animated to be faithful in serving His Church with Joy;
-and my lips are consecrated to praise Him with all of my being for all of my days - and all for His glory alone!

Application:

- Do we know the gospel? Can we define it? How can we simply talk about it clearly?
- Are we changed by the gospel? Have I been radically transformed by His gracious gospel?
- Does the gospel affect our life daily? What does it mean for me to live daily in Christ's perfect accomplishments, in His finished work of salvation TODAY? In my NOW?
- Do we know how to share this gospel of hope to a desperate and despairing world?
- Are we living such a joyful transformed life that people would want "what we have been given?"