

---

**Sharing the Gospel – Gospel Basics**

---

*“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’” -Matthew 28:18-20*

---

**Go Make Disciples Check-in:** Last week we challenged you to identify specific people in each of the four environments of whom God is calling you to make disciples. Who would you say you are most excited about beginning or continuing to invest in?

Over the next four weeks (Weeks 5-8) we are going to be focusing specifically on how we can be sharing the gospel better with others. Weeks 6-8 will focus on three different gospel sharing strategies. However, before we can learn strategies on how to share the gospel, we must be absolutely clear on what the gospel message actually is.

**1. How would you explain or summarize the message of the gospel?**

The Greek word for gospel is *euaggelion* which is where we get the English words evangelism and evangelist. This Greek word literally means “good news” or “good tidings.” Therefore, an evangelism means taking this good news to others, and an evangelist is the one who shares this good news to others.

But that still begs the question, what is this good news, or what is the gospel? We do not have to read the Bible cover to cover to discover the gospel story (though that would help in understanding the full story). Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15:1-7

*Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, <sup>2</sup> and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.*

*<sup>3</sup> For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, <sup>5</sup> and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. <sup>6</sup> Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. <sup>7</sup> Then he appeared to James, then to all the*

*apostles. <sup>8</sup> Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. -1 Corinthians 15:1-7*

**2. According to Paul (and without looking ahead ☺), what are the key elements of the gospel?**

In this passage, Paul identifies several key elements of the gospel. First, that Jesus Christ died for our sins. This teaches us two basic truths: that Jesus lived a perfect life and therefore could offer himself as the perfect sacrifice for our sins, and that we are sinful and thus needed a Savior to rescue us. Paul states clearly that Jesus suffered and died in our place, just as the rest of the Scriptures affirm.

Secondly, Paul declares that Jesus was buried in the tomb. This dispels the Muslim belief that Allah spared Jesus before he died on the cross, taking him up to heaven. It also dispels any false belief that Jesus was not fully dead when they took him off the cross. If either of these were true, then our punishment was not fully paid, as the punishment for sin is death. So if Jesus did not truly die for us, then we will one day die for our sins. Paul alleviates our fears here, though, asserting that Jesus did in fact die and was buried in the tomb.

Thirdly, Paul affirms that Jesus was raised on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. This proves false the Jewish rumors that Jesus' body was stolen and he never really was raised from the dead. It also proves false the modern day scientific view that no one could come back to life once dead for that long, which means Jesus did not rise from the dead. But Paul states clearly that Jesus did rise from the dead, just as he prophesied (John 2:19, 11:25, Matthew 12:39).

Fourthly, Paul confirms the resurrection of Jesus by reminding the Corinthians of Jesus' resurrection appearances. More than 500 people witnessed the resurrected Jesus with their own eyes, many of whom were still alive when Paul wrote this so any reader could verify this truth. In fact, there is more eyewitness testimony of Jesus' death and resurrection than almost any other historical event. In other words, if you trust history books about wars, kings, and civilizations, then you have great reason to trust that Jesus truly died and rose again.

Finally, Paul uses the first two verses of this passage to talk about how we are to respond to the good news of the gospel: we are to believe it. We are to believe that Christ died in our place for our sin, that he was buried, that he rose again, and that he appeared to others. And Paul says if we do that, we will be saved.

That's the message of the gospel that Paul preached. Of course, there are other parts of the larger story that we can add in, such as creation (God created us to be with him) and culmination (Jesus will come back to judge the world and glorify the saved), or we can expand on certain parts by explaining how exactly we sin or that Jesus death results in us being justified, adopted, glorified, etc.

However, our presentation of the gospel to others should never include less than what Paul teaches here in 1 Corinthians. And, should we expand on the gospel, we should never include statements that contradict what Paul writes here, such as we are saved by good works.

**Group Discussion:** How does the message of this gospel Paul is teaching differ from how other “Christians” define the gospel (Hint: think Catholicism, Prosperity gospel, Social gospel, Mormonism, etc.)?

Hopefully by now we are realizing the importance of understanding the true gospel message. If what we present, and if what they end up believe, is not the gospel that saves, then our labor and their faith will have been in vain. If we teach people that Jesus just wants us to live a good life like He did, or that he only wants us to love others and does not care about our sin, or that he did not really die on the cross, or that we should believe in him so that we can receive riches here on earth, than their belief in those truths get them no closer to Jesus and eternal life. Again, it is important that we learn how to share the core truths of the gospel well, as it could mean the difference between life and death for those listening.

However, lest we are tempted to shy away from sharing the gospel altogether for fear of proclaiming it wrong, let us also remember the result if we DO NOT share the gospel: people will perish apart from Jesus.

Let me liken this scenario to giving CPR to someone who has stopped breathing. If we never learn to give CPR correctly, we may try to save the person and end up crushing their ribs or not provide enough air, and thus they may go on to die. However, if we never try to give CPR, the individual will assuredly die.

Therefore, the best response is to learn how to give CPR correctly, so we are best prepared to offer the life-saving help someone needs. In the same way, poor responses to what Paul is teaching here are to either carelessly approach the gospel truths (and thus risk sharing the wrong gospel) or to avoid sharing the gospel altogether. The best response, the one that honors Jesus, obeys the Great Commission, and could potentially save our listener is to diligently learn the core truths of the gospel so we can present them clearly and truthfully.

**Group Discussion:** Would you describe your approach the true gospel message as A) Careless B) Avoidant OR C) Diligent and why would you describe it this way?

3. **What essential truth of the gospel do you feel you need to work on explaining more clearly to others?**

Finally, as we grow in our ability to share the true gospel with others, let us also remember that our job as evangelists is not to produce converts. As J.I. Packer points out, “Evangelism is man’s work, but the giving of faith is God’s.” In other words, we will be faithful to what Jesus has commanded us to do in the Great Commission if we learn to present the truths of the gospel clearly to others. From there, it is God’s job to work in the person’s heart to believe in the good news and be saved.

Therefore, before we proceed the next three weeks into gospel sharing strategies and beyond that into dealing with objections of the gospel, let us first master the gospel basics. Jesus died for our sins, he was buried, he rose again, he appeared to many, and if we believe that to be true, we are saved.

---

### **Go Make Disciples**

Take time this week to memorize the five core truths of the gospel that Paul teaches in 1 Corinthians 15:1-7 and practice with another believer in your home, this group, or our church.

**Bonus:** Once you commit those to memory, feel free to expand on those truths by explaining in 1-2 sentences what each of those phrases mean.

---

### **Praying This Week**

- Thank God for working in others to share the true message of the gospel with us.
- Ask God to forgive us for the times we were careless or avoidant with the gospel.
- Ask the Spirit to help us commit the core truths of the gospel to memory.