

8 GOSPEL DEFINED

THE GOSPEL: GOOD NEWS

but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles - 1 Corinthians 1:23

The gospel, or "good news," refers to the person, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It comes from the Greek Word εὐαγγέλιον (euaggelion), which literally means good news.

THE GOSPEL: THE POWER OF GOD

for all have sinned and 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. - Romans 1:16

The gospel is described as the "power of God," indicating its divine authority and ability to effect change. This power is an active force (dunamis in Greek), and has the ability to bring about salvation through God's working.

THE GOSPEL: THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

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. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith." - Romans 1:16-17

It is the righteousness of God that is by faith. Righteousness can be defined as God's approval and acceptance of us, not by our good deeds or performance, but by faith in His Son alone. This is good news because we call short. This divine acceptance is exemplified in the thief on the cross account. The thief said, "*Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.*", a confession of faith and trust in Jesus. Then Christ said to him, "*Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.*" (Luke 23:39-43). He was immediately accepted into paradise. He did not do anything else nor had the opportunity to do anything else. He simply entrusted his life to Christ and Christ accepted him, not on the basis of anything good in his life but because of the goodness and mercy of Christ.

THE GOSPEL: A MESSAGE

Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures - 1 Corinthians 15:1-4

The gospel is something that is preached - "*the gospel I preached to you*"! Therefore it is a message, a specific message. The gospel Paul refers to is the good news, good message of who Jesus is and what He has done - His death, burial, and resurrection. This message is rooted in the fulfillment of Old Testament (Scripture) prophecies and is the core of Christian faith.

THE GOSPEL: A MESSAGE TO BE RECEIVED

The gospel message must be received - *"which you received"*. This act of receiving is more than intellectual assent (mental agreement to the message); it involves personal commitment to Christ (wholehearted surrender to His lordship, His sovereign rule over your life) resulting in the transformation of the soul (new birth - *John 3:3-8*). This is what's involved in the act of confessing Him as Lord - *"if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."* (*Romans 10:9*)

THE GOSPEL: A MESSAGE TO STAKE OUR LIVES UPON

Standing firm in the gospel - *"in which you stand"* implies perseverance and stability in faith despite challenges, opposition, and false teachings. This phrase underscores the importance of the gospel as the foundation of Christian life and doctrine. This strength and ability to stand on the gospel despite challenges is evidence of genuine faith (*1 Peter 1:7*), Jesus' lordship over your life (His lordship becomes your priority), and is by the power and grace God provides. We are given this promise - *"And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ"* (*Philippians 1:6*)

THE GOSPEL: SALVATION TO EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES

A message that not only saves you from the penalty (consequence) of sin, but also saves you from the power of sin - *"which you are being saved"*. It is a righteousness of God that is revealed *"from faith for faith, as it is written, 'The righteous shall live by faith.'"* (*Romans 1:17*). The gospel not only reveals what Jesus did to pay the penalty for our sin, it also gives us the ability to live by faith despite our daily struggle with sin. Since Christ already dealt with our sin problem once and for all, and for all time - we can quickly rise up when sin causes us to stumble or fall. The gospel allows us to live a guilt-free, condemnation-free life each day. God's promise for us through the gospel - *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* (*1 John 1:9*)

THE GOSPEL: A MESSAGE OF FIRST IMPORTANCE

Paul tells us that the message he is delivering is not of his own invention but something he received - *"I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received"* - through revelation and instruction from other apostles (*Galatians 1:11-12*). The phrase "of first importance" shows the foundational nature of the gospel message, is of first or highest importance. The beginning of a Christian's life begins with the gospel. It's like a key or gate that opens people's lives to all the spiritual and heavenly blessings God prepared for those who believe - including salvation, eternal life, heaven, purpose, joy, peace with God - to name a few.

THE GOSPEL: SEEN ONLY BY A HUMBLE HEART

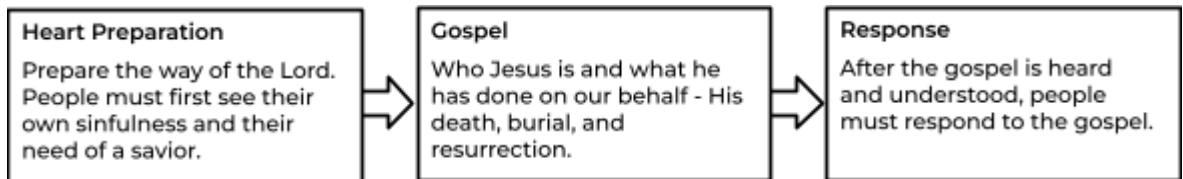
John the Baptist was tasked by God to prepare the way of the Lord. This was his mission ...

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough places shall become level ways, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'" - Luke 3:4-6

The different terrains in this passage refers the different kinds of heart that's filled with pride - self-righteousness (mountain - *"I'm a good person, I don't need the gospel"*), self-depreciation (valley - *"I'm a hopeless case, far too lost for God to be able to save me"*), which is another form of pride.

The gospel is Christ's person, life, death and resurrection. However, people who are filled with pride and self-righteousness will not be able to *"see the salvation of the Lord"*. The mountain of self-righteousness must be made low. The valley of self-condemnation filled.

Hence, in preaching the gospel we first prepare the heart! Prepare the soil, the ground on which the seed will be planted. People first need to see their own sinfulness and their need of a savior. If they think they can save themselves or do enough good deeds to be saved - they will not see the salvation of the Lord. The message regarding sin is one way to prepare people's hearts. God himself supernaturally humbles hearts for the gospel (like in the Apostle Paul's case).



THE GOSPEL: COMMANDS A RESPONSE

After Peter preached a powerful sermon, the gospel message on the day of Pentecost ...

Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. - Acts 2:37-38

The people asked Peter, *"what shall we do?"*. Peter replied *"Repent"*. Some of these people, if not most of them, were likely around when Jesus was put on trial and crucified (around 50 days earlier). Repent means they need to change their thinking and hearts about Jesus, previously they rejected Him, now Peter says, believe my message and *"Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."* (Acts 2:36).

Though the act of baptism does not save (*the thief on the cross was saved without baptism*), it's a humbling act for a Jew*, signifying repentance - turning away from sin and submission to the Lord Jesus Christ.