

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

The Gospel

1 Lord Jesus told His disciples, that's you and me, to preach the gospel to the whole creation. ¹ That was His command to us as His children. But how many of us really do that? Do you even know what the gospel is, let alone, proclaim it?

I want to tell you what the gospel is so you will know what to present. As Christians, the gospel is the core of our faith and God wants you to share it with everyone who has a listening ear. So, what is the gospel? ²

The presentation of the gospel promises the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes it. ² That means that when you prayerfully share the gospel that God is in it some way. Maybe the Holy Spirit works in your mind and heart to present the gospel in a logical and persuasive way. Maybe God's Spirit works in the mind and heart of the listener. Maybe it's a

¹ Mark 16:15-16 - Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

² Romans 1:16 - I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes . . .

combination of both. Maybe there is simply power within the gospel message, in and of itself, to convince the recipient to respond. However this works, God supplies the power and you simply provide the willingness to present it. ³

The word gospel, in the original language, ³ means "the good news of victory". The idea is a courier would arrive from the battlefield to bring the announcement to the King of Persia that his army had won a victory. It was the cause for celebration. It was the "good news!"

The Bible actually gives us a definition of what the gospel is. ⁴ In First Corinthians, chapter 15, verses 1 through 5, we read, Now, brothers, **I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of**

³ εὐαγγέλιον.

first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. ⁵ So, what is the gospel? It is the story of the life, death and resurrection of Lord Jesus! ⁶

I. The Context for the Gospel

But, before we can get into the announcement of this victory story, we need to put the gospel into a context. What's the reason for telling this story? Why bother?

There are some facts you need to understand before a presentation of the gospel makes sense. ⁷

The first fact is that God exists and He created everything in the universe. Genesis, chapter 1, verse 1, tells us **In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.** He created you and everything you experience. ⁸

The second fact is that God created man and woman for a purpose. Do you know of people wandering

around wondering what life is all about? "Who am I?" "Why do I exist?" "What's the purpose for living?" "Are we just the meaningless product of our parents expression of love?" "Are we simply to eat and drink and breathe air?" God tells us in His Word that He created you for a purpose!

Observe what the Bible tells us in the very first book; Genesis, chapter 1. 9

In verses 26 and 27, **Then God said, Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”** So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. You are created in God's image and likeness. Since humans are the only creatures the Bible says this about, it must at least mean that God created you to be more like Him than anything else He created! 10

In verse 28 we read, **God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”** God created us to be stewards, to manage God's creation for Him. So Adam and Eve immediately started caring for the garden and naming animals. So, you are like God in that you have the ability and responsibility to take care of what He made. God created you to be a free moral agent, like He is. You are to make decisions and to be held accountable for those choices. ¹¹

Then, the following verse promises us, **Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.”** ⁴ God will provide for us through His creation. ¹²

I believe we have the main purpose for our creation in Genesis, chapter 3, verses 8 and 9, **Then the man and**

⁴ v29.

his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?” It appears that God routinely walked with Adam and Eve in the garden in the cool of the day. Adam and Eve probably enjoyed this fellowship. ¹³ We know God did because when they didn't show up one day, God called out, “Where are you?” ¹⁴ I believe that the reason God created you was so He could enjoy your company! He enjoys you and loves being with you! ¹⁵

But, Adam and Eve rebelled against God's authority. They ate the forbidden fruit so they could be more like God than, apparently, He intended for them at that time. ¹⁶ “You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” ⁵

⁵ Genesis 3:4-5.

Whatever the full intent of that rebellion was, it had terrible consequences. ¹⁷ They were expelled from God's presence and holiness. **So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.** ⁶

You and I have followed after Adam's and Eve's rebellious example so sin has become a part of our lives.

Our Bibles are divided into two parts; the Old Testament and the New Testament. Three quarters of the Bible, the Old Testament, shows you what sin is. Read it and understand why God considers you a sinner. You don't have to read far, if you are honest with yourself, before you say, "Yup; there's me. That's my attitude."

⁶ Genesis 3:23-24.

You and I are dirty, rotten, sinners from God's perspective. ¹⁸ ¹⁸ You shouldn't need the Bible to tell you that you **have sinned and fall short of God's glory.
⁷ ¹⁹ Romans, chapter 3, verses 10 through 12, continues with, **There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.****

The other section, the New Testament, shows you what God did about it! That's where the gospel is! There is where we find the story of the life, death and resurrection of Lord Jesus!

So, the first fact of the gospel is . . . ²⁰

⁷ Romans 3:22-23 - There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God . . .

II. The Lord's Life

The Lord's life. At the perfect time in human history, God invaded planet earth and became a man! ²¹ Christians call this the incarnation. There are many scriptures in the New Testament that point this out but one of the most dramatic passages is Philippians, chapter 2, verses 5 through 8, ²² **Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross!** ²³

Another equally powerful scripture is Colossians, Chapter 2, verses 9 and 10, **For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.** ²⁴

That's why Christians celebrate Christmas. Christmas is not about Santa Claus, reindeer, trees or presents under them. Christmas is the account of God becoming a man, a little baby in a manger, in a stable in Bethlehem. ²⁵

That's one of the reasons Christians celebrate the communion service. Eating the unleavened bread reminds us that God took on flesh and dwelt among us so we could see His glory. ^{8 26}

God identified with your human experience. When you pray to Him you have a listening ear. He understands what you are experiencing! ²⁷ He Himself experienced temptations. ^{9 28} He felt rejection and the pain of the scourging; the crown of thorns jammed down on His head; the nails hammered into His hands and feet; and the sword jabbed into His side. He felt it the same as you would have felt it if you had experienced that

⁸ John 1:14 - The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

⁹ Matthew 4:1-11.

event. Lord Jesus was totally human. He had to experience the pain of your human condition so that He could be the Lamb of God.

The second fact of the gospel is . . . 29

III. The Lord's Death and Burial

The Lord's death and burial. 30 Lord Jesus volunteered to go to the cross! 31 He wants you so badly to walk routinely with you in the cool of the day forever in heaven that He was willing to go to the cross for you!

32

The reason for this was the cross was the ultimate expression of God's love for you. 10 33

His death on the cross, paid for your sin! Ephesians, chapter 1, verse 7 explains, **In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.** 34 Jesus

¹⁰ Romans 5:8 - But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

bore your sins in His body on the cross. ¹¹ ₃₅ It brought peace and reconciliation between God and His creation. ¹² ₃₆

The cross did something else very significant. The religious systems of justification before God by obeying rules and regulations were nailed to that cross when Lord Jesus died on it! Colossians, chapter 2, verses 13 and 14, state, **He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.** ₃₇

Because of the cross you are now free to return to God and walk with Him in the cool of the day. All you need to do now is surrender to Him as Lord. Begin letting Him call the shots in your life! ₃₈

¹¹ I Peter 2:24 - He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

¹² Colossians 1:19-20 - For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

That's why Christians celebrate Good Friday before Easter Sunday. ³⁹

That's why we drink the cup during the communion service to remember the price that was paid for us. ⁴⁰

But, why the cross? The world doesn't understand the cross, so it ridicules us for believing in it. ⁴¹ First Corinthians, chapter 4, verse 18, says, **For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.**

Why couldn't God have chosen an easier, less horrible way, to pay for your sin? I don't know, but I have an idea. ⁴²

Human sin, rebellion against the way God wants you to behave, is taken so lightly by so many of us. Sin is really not that important. A white lie really doesn't hurt anyone. Stealing the contents of a wallet lost on the sidewalk can be justified with, "The owner wouldn't find it anyhow." Speeding down the Interstate ten

miles per hour faster than the speed limit doesn't hurt anybody. Nobody is around to see you do it! Deceptive advertising is good business, right? Apparently, the cross was to show you how horrible sin is to God! Sin is so important to God that it would take the horror of the cross to pay for it! ⁴³

Let's continue with the third fact of the gospel . . .

IV. The Lord's Resurrection

The Lord's resurrection. ⁴⁴ The Lord raised Himself from the grave to prove Who He claimed to be: the Son of God ¹³ ⁴⁵ and God in flesh! ¹⁴ ⁴⁶

He made this claim many times in the New Testament. ⁴⁷ It was made so clear that even His enemies correctly understood. When Jesus asked His enemies why they wanted to execute Him, they replied, **“We are not stoning you for any of these,”** replied the Jews,

¹³ Romans 1:4 - . . . who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.

¹⁴ John 2:19 & 10:18 - Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days” . . . No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again.

“but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God.” ¹⁵ 48

Only God could do the things that Jesus did. Only God could raise Himself from the dead! 49

So, how does the resurrection of the Lord Jesus affect you? 50

First, the resurrection justifies you before God the Father. Romans, chapter 4, verse 25, **He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification. When you genuinely surrender to the Lord you are declared "not guilty" for all the sins you have committed. 51**

Second, the resurrection of our Lord Jesus indicates that God will raise you too! There are two Bible passages that speak this loud and clear. First Corinthians, chapter 6, verse 14, says, **By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. 52 The other is First Thessalonians, chapter 4,**

¹⁵ John 10:33.

verse 14, We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. 53

Christians celebrate Easter as Resurrection Day each year. It's more than bunnies and Easter egg hunts. It's the most victorious day of the year. Lord Jesus was resurrected from the dead! We have the assurance that each of us will follow right behind Him. 54

God loved you so much that He was willing to pay for you by dying on the cross! He wants you back as His child to walk with you in the cool of the day forever! 55

Simply surrender yourself to Jesus as Lord of your life. When He starts calling the shots you will begin discovering an abundant life!

You can have a superior faith to any other faith in the world. No religion today even comes close to this. Just respond to His grace right now!

<http://biblelifemessages.org/>