

Evangelism Training Notes by Member Ngobeni

What is the gospel message?

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What is the gospel of Jesus Christ? You will think that would be an easy question for Christians to answer. But if you ask fifty professing evangelical Christians that question, you are likely to get almost as many answers!

Main idea

The gospel is the good news about what God has done to save sinners through the sacrificial death and resurrection of Christ.

The most detailed, systematic discussion of the gospel in the whole Bible is found in Paul's letter to the Romans, especially in the first four chapters.

After announcing that he is not ashamed of the gospel because the righteousness of God is revealed in it (Rom. 1:16-17), Paul begins his proclamation of the good news by delivering some sobering bad news in 1:18 through 3:20.

Roman 1:18,

- Romans 1: 21-23 what does God require from people?
- Romans 2:1-2 to whom are human beings accountable?
- Has any human being done what God requires of us? Romans 3: 9-12, 19-20
- What are the results of humanity's universal rebellion against God? What is God's attitude toward humanity because of our sin? Romans 1:18; 2:2; 3:19-20
- Have you ever heard evangelistic presentations that minimized or ignored the bad news Paul explains in these chapters? If so
 - How would you evaluate them in light of these passages?
 - What do you think the results of the "gospel" messages that ignore sin and God's wrath will be?
- What are some problems that people tend to present as our main problem when they share the gospel?
- What, according to Paul, is the most fundamental problem people face?

To sum up, there are two main points that Paul is communicating in this three- chapter- long explanation of the bad news of humanity's rebellion against God:

1. All people are accountable to God, who is our holy Creator and Lord, and who is worthy of our worship and obedience.
2. All people have rebelled against God, continually sin against God, and are therefore objects of God's wrath.

Now the good news:

Romans 3:21-26

- What is God's solution to the problem Paul has been expounding for three chapters?
- According to Paul, how do people receive the salvation God offers in Christ?
- The word "**propitiation**" (3:25) means "a sacrifice that satisfies and turns away God's wrath."
 - Who needs to be propitiated? Why?
 - Who does the propitiating? How?
 - What is the result of Jesus's propitiating death for God? Romans 3:26
- The word "**justify**" means "to declare someone to be righteous" (Rom. 3:24; 4:5; see also 3:20)
 - According to Paul, on what basis can people be justified by God?
 - Can we be justified by doing good works? Romans 4: 4-5

We can summarize Paul's explanation of the good news in these passages in two main points:

1. Through putting Christ forward as propitiation, God had made a way for guilty sinners to have their sins wiped out, to have God's wrath turned away from them, and to be declared righteous in God's sight.
2. The way we receive this salvation is through faith in Jesus, by trusting in him alone to save us, not any good works that we do.

Putting it all together, we could summarize this gospel in four words: God, Man, Christ, Response.

God. A right understanding of the gospel begins with a right understanding of God: God is the Creator of all things. He is perfectly holy, worthy of all worship, and will punish sin.

Exodus 34:6-7

- What are the aspects of God's character we see in this passage that people are generally happy to embrace? Why do you think people are generally happy to think about God in these ways?
- What are the aspects of God's character we see in this passage that people generally reject or oppose? Why do you think people so often oppose these aspects of God's character?

Man. One core component of the gospel that people often either don't understand or angrily reject is the Bible's teaching about what humanity's basic problem is. All people, though created Good, have become sinful by nature. From birth, all people are alienated from God, hostile to God, and subject to the wrath of God.

Christ. Jesus Christ, who is fully God and fully man, lived a sinless life, died on the cross to bear God's wrath in the place of all who would believe in him, and rose from the grave in order to give his people eternal life. Far from being a religion of self-salvation, Christianity insists that we are totally unable to save ourselves from the wrath of God. The Christian message, the gospel is that, through Jesus's death and resurrection, God has accomplished salvation, a salvation we could never achieve ourselves.

Main idea: In his death on the cross, Jesus Christ satisfied God's wrath against all those who would turn from their sin and trust in him. The heart of the gospel is the good news that Jesus has accomplished salvation for us through his death and resurrection.

Response. God calls everyone everywhere to turn from their sins and trust Christ in order to be saved.

The Gospel- Driven life or Gospel centred life

The gospel is not only the means by which we become Christians; it is also what enables us to grow as Christians.

In chapter five of Romans, Paul proclaims the free salvation which God grants in the gospel to all who believe in Christ. In chapter 6, Paul anticipates and answers a question that sinful people will naturally ask when we hear about the free grace of God: Romans 6:1-14

- What question does Paul address in this passage?
- Why do you think he addresses this particular question?
- List all the different things Paul says have already happened to us who believe in Christ?
- By what means have these things happened to us? verse 5

As we learned in this passage, through faith in Christ we not only have our sins forgiven but we're given an entirely new life. When we put faith in Christ, our old self died –in fact, our old self was crucified- and we were raised to a new spiritual life through union with Christ.

The gospel not only gives us new status before God, it gives us new life a new self- a self that is no longer enslaved to sin but is able to obey God by the power of the Spirit.

- Read verses 13 and 14. What reason or ground does Paul give in verse 14 for his instruction in verse 13?

If you have trusted in Christ for salvation, then according to this passage you have been united to Christ in his death and resurrection, which means:

- You have died to sin (v. 2).
- Your old self was crucified with Christ (v. 6).
- You have been set free from sin (v. 7).
- You have been brought from death to life (v. 13)

What are some specific sins you struggle with? How does this passage's teaching equip you to overcome those sins?

Many Christians think that the gospel is simply how we become Christians and then it's up to us to grow in holiness. What does this passage teach us about how the gospel relates to our growth as Christians?