

Reset
Week 4: The Gospel Truth

We are **pushing the reset button** by going back to what makes us who we are in Christ. We have looked at our core values and our culture as a church. We have looked at our mission and vision, "Be a bridge, build a bridge. We have talked about becoming a church **that makes disciples who make disciples to the 3rd and 4th generation**. This all needs a reset. We are **prone to wander** from what God has told us to do and be.

The most significant way we can wander that affects all other areas we have discussed is in determining what the gospel that Jesus taught really is. **If we drift from the true pure gospel, then we will not become a church who makes disciples who make disciples to the 3rd and 4th generation.**

Here's why. **The gospel that you teach determines the disciples you make.**

What you save them with is what you save them to.

If we were to go into any church in this city and ask everyone to **write down what the gospel is**, we would have as many definitions as we would have people. **I'd like to think that we would do better** in this room because we've been banging on about it for several years.

How is that a problem? That which we are inviting someone to step into, **make the center of their lives, to become a part of the church** is so unclear that we don't even know what it means any more. **We act like we are speaking the same language, but we aren't.**

There was a young couple who, when first married, loved to go to a particular bakery for their **chocolate chip cookies**. Many times they were warm, making them so delicious. One time, when they bought them the cookies weren't fresh out of the oven. Upon arriving home the husband said, "let's warm them up in the toaster." A toaster was a toaster oven. That is the device used to toast bread or anything. But, for his wife, she heard something different when he said, "put them in the toaster." This almost ended in a kitchen fire because the wife put the cookies into a two slice toaster.

It matters when we aren't on the same page, particularly when it is the center of who we are.

"A mist in the pulpit produces a fog in the pew." Or, in our case, a mist from the music stand produces a fog in the colorfully upholstered metal chairs.

If I'm not clear from here, where the largest number of us are listening, from the place we most associate God speaking in authority, then there is no chance that our church will be able to have any clarity about the gospel.

It becomes a moving target.

This is what Paul says to the church in Corinth. *Let me now remind you, dear brothers and sisters, of the Good News I preached to you before. You welcomed it then, and you still stand firm in it. ²It is this Good News that saves you if you continue to believe the message I told you—unless, of course, you believed something that was never true in the first place. ¹ Corinthians 15:1-2*

You cannot make Christ-Like disciples with a non-discipleship gospel.

There are many different gospels that **have part of what Jesus taught and Paul affirmed**. In the book "The Discipleship Gospel" by Bill Hull and Ben Sobels. Gives these examples of...

The prosperity Gospel.

- "Claim your rights."
- What it creates: Entitlement, God management.

The gospel of the Left.

- "Help the needy."
- What it creates: Accommodation to culture, The truth is optional, because you can't really know.

The consumer gospel.

- "Meet your needs."

- What it creates: Self-indulgent impatience, addiction to desire.

The gospel of the right.

- "Be right."
- What it creates: Theological swagger, exclusiveness and detachment.

The forgiveness only gospel.

This is the **default gospel** of the American church.

- "Be forgiven."
- What it creates: Following Jesus is optional, sanctified passivity.
- Vampire Christians

Trying to get people to be mature Christ followers who are being transformed into someone more like Jesus, who believe these false gospels is like trying to **push a boulder uphill**, "because we are trying to get people to act in Christ-like ways without correcting what they truly believe."

The gospel is a scripture based declaration about who Jesus is, what he has done, how he fulfills prophecies, and how we should respond. Pg.106

We should rely on Jesus' words and a summary description in Corinthians to build a clear understanding of the Gospel.

Here is the first place in the book of Mark where Jesus uses the term "gospel" or "good news". As I read this passage and the following two passages, I want you to **mark those parts that are significant if we are to be clear about the gospel.**

Later on, after John was arrested, Jesus went into Galilee, where he preached **God's Good News**. ¹⁵"The time promised by God has come at last!" he announced. "The Kingdom of God is near! **Repent** of your sins and **believe** the Good News!" ¹⁶One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. ¹⁷Jesus called out to them, "Come, **follow** me, and I will show you how to fish for people!" *Mark 1:14-17 NLT*

What is important to know is that for the **first two years of Jesus' public ministry**, he taught almost exclusively on the Kingdom of God. We will get

into what that really means in a bit. For now, it is important to know that **Jesus himself connects the Kingdom of God/Heaven with the gospel or good news.**

In this early passage he also gives **three commands** that he connects to the kingdom and, ultimately, the gospel.

About two years later, in the same gospel of Mark, this happens. **And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?"²⁸ And they told him, "John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets."²⁹ And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are **the Christ.**"³⁰ And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him.³¹ And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be **killed**, and after three days **rise again.** *Mark 8:27-31* **ESV****

In this passage, Jesus starts talking about who he is and what he must do. He is **expanding upon what he first taught about the gospel**, which was mostly about the Kingdom. Now he is talking about **who he is and what he will do.**

Now we go to Paul, who was someone who hated the followers of Jesus to the point that he persecuted them by dragging them into jail where some were killed. That is, until he met the risen Jesus on a road trip to Damascus to arrest some Jesus followers.

Here's what he says to a young church in the city of Corinth. **Let me now remind you, dear brothers and sisters, of the Good News I preached to you before. You welcomed it then, and you still stand firm in it.**² **It is this Good News that saves you if you continue to believe the message I told you—unless, of course, you believed something that was never true in the first place.**³ **I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me.** In other words, these aren't my ideas that I cooked up. These were from Jesus and were inline with what the other first hand eyewitnesses have said about the gospel. **Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said.**⁴ **He was buried, and he was raised from the**

dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. ⁵He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve. *1 Corinthians 15:1-5 NLT*

Look back at **what you marked** as important. Now let's put this in some sort of order.

What is it? Declaratives

(Diagram)

1. **Kingdom**...The restoration of God's rule over all things. Present reality and a future hope.
2. **Christ**...King, Messiah are all interchangeable. Messiah is a Hebrew word while Christ is Greek.
3. **Died**
4. **Resurrected**

This is the "just the facts" part of the gospel. **This is the declared truth about who Jesus is, what he did and how he fulfilled prophecy** within the larger story of what God has been doing since creation.

Our response. Imperatives.

(Diagram)

1. **Repent**, about face, seeing that the direction of your life is wrong, turning in the direction of submission to Jesus. **This is the head part of the gospel.** We turn our heads in the direction of hearing his voice calling, acknowledging that we are sinners.
2. **Believe**, trust, much more than intellectual agreement on some list of facts. We will get to that later ("About" and "of"). **This is the heart of the gospel.** This is where we give our hearts to Jesus.
3. **Follow**, obedience to all Jesus taught and did. This is the **main part** of the gospel. We live like him.

"The gospel about Jesus without the gospel of Jesus becomes destructively incomplete." Having a partial definition of the gospel, but not a full definition is something that is dangerous and creates a lack of clarity.

"A mist in the pulpit creates a fog in the pews."

Remember when we said that believing the gospel is more than just the intellectual agreement on a few facts? That is the gospel "about Jesus." That is when we agree to those four declaratives as being true. Yes, I believe in the kingdom of God because that, to me, is heaven for those who believe. Yes, Jesus was Christ, the Son of God. I also believe that it is a historical fact that Jesus both died and rose from the grave.

I checked the box beside all of these, therefore I have accepted the gospel.

Can you see the problem we have here? You can agree to these and not have to repent of your sins or really turn away from them. You don't need to put your trust in Jesus for today, tomorrow to the point that your heart cries out to be like him and you desire to please him. You don't need to obediently follow, because you have punched your ticket to heaven.

"The gospel about Jesus without the gospel of Jesus becomes destructively incomplete."

Look at our culture? Do you think it would be in the mess it is today if people were accepting the gospel about Jesus as well as the gospel of Jesus? If for the last decades we had been preaching this gospel and people were accepting this gospel and allowing it to transform them, we wouldn't need to cry out to the political powers to turn our nation around. It wouldn't have gotten so far off track. We have preached the forgiveness only gospel as the default gospel of the American church since at least the 60's.

And I have been complicit in that. I did it and I've since repented and made a commitment to not throw that weak stuff around anymore. The true, complete gospel of Jesus Christ has no rivals, if preached, taught, and

repeated by all of us, it will devour all pretenders and it will produce a church that "the gates of hell cannot prevail against."

That's why we need a reset. **Have you been following the gospel about Jesus, but not the gospel of Jesus that demands your head, your hands, and your heart?** Jesus is a king, a good king who asks for nothing less than all you and me. After all, if Jesus ushered in the Kingdom of God, because he is THE KING, who died to pay the just penalty for our sins and rose again to life validating that he is Christ the king, **then the only reasonable response is to repent, believe, and start following.**

Pushing the Reset Button.
Six days to Gospel Clarity.

Oh no, he's giving us another one of those papers with that Gospel stuff. Yes, I am **unapologetically** putting this in front of all of us again, with a challenge to take the next week to dive into it. I want you to focus on each sentence for one day, then moving on and building the next on to it.

Right now, think about where you are going to put this paper so that you see it either first thing in the morning or right before you go to bed. Read over that sentence and meditate on it, repeat it, and ask God to speak to you about the gospel you have accepted.

If today or through this process this week you find that you have missed the real gospel and you decide to repent, believe and begin following anew, please tell me. I'd love to celebrate that rebirth with you.

Let's read this together.

The Gospel is...

The **Kingdom of God** has been ushered in through Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus is **Christ**, the King, God in a human body. This Jesus suffered and **died** on a cross and on the third day was **resurrected** according to the Scriptures. Through Jesus' sacrificial death and God's grace, the separation between people and their creator was bridged. Therefore, anyone who **repents** of their sin, **believes** the good news and demonstrates this belief by **following** Jesus, God rescues. It is only through the Holy Spirit that we are able to live this new life as Jesus' disciples. When King Jesus returns as He

promised on the Day of Judgment, everyone who is following Him will enter into God's eternal Kingdom.