

“The Gospel”

We need to not assume the Gospel and we need to make it explicit. Too many Christians simply do not understand the Gospel.

A. Mystery to the Gospel

There is a mystery to the gospel. If you think you have figured it out - a plan - simple - then something is wrong. If you are still not amazed at why God loved you then you have stopped looking at the gospel.

There is a mystery to the election of God and yet the free will of man.

Ephesians 1:9; Colossians 1:26

B. Mandate of the Gospel

The mandate of the Gospel is not the Great Commission; but that all glory goes to God the Father.

Galatians 6: 14-15

David Platt: “When you see His glory, casual worship is no longer possible, total surrender no longer optional, global mission no longer negotiable.”

C. Message of the Gospel

Colossians 1:13-23

David O. Cofield

CrossRoads Baptist Church

Remember Series #6

February 14, 2010 6:00 pm

What is the Gospel? In our Bible belt churches, we have consistently spoken about morality, and behaviors and we have confused people about the Gospel.

God is righteous, and we are not. It's not the fact that our sinfulness is unclean that should rattle us, but rather it is the fact that our righteousness is unclean that should rattle us. We must be saved from both our sin & our righteousness. The Biblical Gospel is that we are hopelessly wicked, with nothing inside ourselves, that would allow us to transform ourselves. This runs counter to what we often value within the evangelical church today.

We can't start where we did 25 years ago in evangelism. Instead of starting in Romans and leading them to Christ, we need to start in Genesis.

When you ask someone if they believe in God, they will answer you "Which God?"

If you tell them that Jesus is the only way to Heaven, you will be accused of being narrow minded.

If you tell someone you have found peace and meaning in life, they may respond that they also found it in their meditation.

The essence of sin...man substitutes himself for God. The essence of salvation...God substitutes Himself for man.

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Will Metzger said, “Francis Shaeffer was once asked the question, ‘What would you do if you met a really modern man on a train and you had just an hour to talk to him about the gospel?’ He replied, ‘I’ve said over and over again, I would spend 45-50 minutes on the negative, to really show him his dilemma—that is he is morally dead—then I’d take 10-15 minutes to preach the Gospel. I believe that much of our evangelistic and personal work today is not clear simply because we are too anxious to get to the answer without having a man realize the real cause of his sickness, which is true moral guilt in the presence of God.’”

Are you confident in God’s ability to save? One of the great problems in many of the modern methods of evangelism and decision based preaching is we simply usurp the work of the Spirit. We jump right over the sickness to the cure, offer the pill that cures (the sinners prayer), and then offer immediate assurance that you are eternally secure in heaven. Is that how Jesus did evangelism?

If you only preach salvation from hell but not from sin you will fill a church with those who want heaven but aren’t holy. Heb12:14 Rick Warren

Jesus saves from our sin and self. This is what God Paul all jazzed up - he is a new creation in Christ.

Don Carson's keynote address delivered at The Gospel Coalition's first conference in May 2007.² Carson clarifies the gospel from 1 Cor 15:1–19 with eight summarizing words:

- 1.Christological: The gospel centers on the person and work (the life, death, and resurrection) of Jesus Christ.
- 2.theological: The gospel tells us that sin is first and foremost an offense against God and that salvation is first to last the action of God, not our own.
- 3.biblical: The gospel is essentially the message of the whole Bible.
- 4.apostolic: The gospel is passed on to us by Jesus' disciples as authoritative eyewitnesses.
- 5.historical: The gospel is not philosophy or advice on how to find God, but rather news of what God has done in history to find and save us.
- 6.personal: The gospel must be personally believed and appropriated.
- 7.universal: The gospel is for every tongue, tribe, people, and individual.
- 8.eschatological: The gospel includes the good news of the final transformation, not just the blessings we enjoy in this age.

Here are some quotes from Dr. Charles Stanley's book *The Wonderful Spirit filled Life*.

God's method for reaching this generation, and every generation, is not preachers and sermons. It is Christians whose life-styles are empowered and directed by the Holy Spirit. Somewhere around 85 percent of all Christians came to Christ through a friend or family member. People are the key to reaching people! (page 5)

In light of that, let me give you a statement from [The Art of Personal Evangelism](#) by [Will McRaney, Jr.](#): "My contention is that if Christians are not experiencing Jesus in the everyday concerns and problems of life, then we will miss most of the potential transition points to talk about the impact of Christ in our lives. For what is on the heart and mind will also be on the tongue. If we are not experiencing Christ in the ordinary affairs of life, then we do not have Christ in our hearts. As we listen to people talk about their marriages, finances, or disappointments, we need to hear opportunities to talk about how our relationship with Jesus has made a difference in those areas of our lives." (pages 173-74)

The fruit of the Spirit is the most effective evangelistic tool we have. Nothing is more powerful than the life characterized by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. The most powerful sermon in the world can't match the power of a fruit-filled life. Why? Because unbelievers are not nearly as impressed with what we believe and preach as they are with how we act, especially under pressure. (page

Our light is not primarily in the words we say. It is in the life we live. A life filled with the fruit of the Spirit is the most powerful sermon anyone can preach. It is a sermon that leaves critics dumbfounded. (page 118_

The life characterized by the fruit of the Spirit cannot help be noticed. It stands out like a candle in a dark room. It draws attention. It makes some people uncomfortable. It makes others mad. But it will consistently capture the curiosity of a few. There will always be a handful who say, "There's something different about you. What is it?" (page 119)

We don't need more full-time Christian workers in the church. We need more full-time Christian workers in the marketplace with the people who need to hear the truth. Please don't use church work as an excuse to escape from the ministry God has chosen for you. Some people you rub shoulders with every day will never darken the door of a church. You are their only link with the truth. Humanly speaking, you are their only hope. And that is why God put you there. Typing reports, filing records, selling widgets - it's all God's work. Your attitude and excellence on the job are the bridge to someone's heart. (page 143)

But there has to be words. The gospel must be proclaimed. Many today denigrate the importance of this. Instead, they say, the only true apologetic is a loving community; people cannot be reasoned into the kingdom, they can only be loved. "Preach the gospel. Use words if necessary."

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[Ephesians 2:8](#) says, “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

We quote that verse often, but do we really believe it? It is indeed only by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone for God’s glory alone!