

who's your  
**1**ONE?

**Evangelism Training  
First Baptist Enid  
February 28<sup>th</sup>-March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021**



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**What is the Gospel?** God lovingly created everything. We rebelled against him. He judges our sin worthy of death Jesus, being fully God and fully Man, did what we couldn't- living a perfect life, dying in our place, rising three days later, and finally ascending to sit at the right hand of Father.

**Call to respond!** When the Gospel is proclaimed, we invite anyone who hears to faithfully respond by believing in God for salvation and repenting of their sins.

## **Acknowledgements**

Material adapted from Capitol Hill Baptist Church's Core Seminar "Two Ways To Live".

## **Additional Resources**

- Evangelism, Mack Stiles
- Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God, J.I. Packer
- Gospel and Personal Evangelism, Mark Dever
- Let the Nations Be Glad, John Piper
- Reason for God, Tim Keller
- Tell the Truth, by Will Metzger
- What is the Gospel?, Greg Gilbert
- The Explicit Gospel?, Matt Chandler
- The Gospel for Real Life, Jerry Bridges
- A Gospel Primer for Christians, by Milton Vincent

## **FORWARD**

We believe God has called us to proclaim His Gospel to the world. In His divine wisdom He has select faithful men and women to be the vehicle for Gospel proclamation. The purpose of this material is to unpack, understand, and articulate the Gospel message in order that we might know what we believe and how to share it clearly and boldly. The material is written in such way as to over supply the Sunday School teacher. We understand that it may not be possible to hit every fine detail of the material. The material is not designed to be read verbatim but is designed for every major point to be taught. Every lesson builds off the previous. Failure to work through the material in one week my cause unforeseen gaps in following weeks. Teachers familiarity with material and preparation will go a long way to making this material beneficial.

In each lesson you will find the following format.

1. The big ideas of the lesson. These are there to help guide you through the lesson and stay focused on the priorities.
2. A review of previous weeks lesson. This is to give you time to catch up someone who was missing.
3. The lesson. This is the meat of what we want you to teach.
4. Every lesson will end with either implications for evangelism or a time to practice what you have learned that week; often, the lesson will have both. Please do not neglect this part. Make a priority to leave yourself time to get to this every week as it is key to understanding how each week's lesson is practically used.

You will also see referenced through each lesson appendixes. These are located at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> week material. The purpose of these appendixes is to help equip the teacher to answer questions and to provide a jumping off point for further study. It is not necessary to cover these but would greatly benefit a teacher to be familiar with them.

It can often be the case that we, as Christians, assume the words we use all mean the same things to different people. For this reason, before we begin there are two important definitions we want you as a teacher to be clear on. We believe that these two definitions are critical to understand the material. They are the words Gospel and response. Understand that when we use these words in the lesson the definitions from the previous page are what we mean. We encourage you to find time to go over these with your class during each lesson.



# Who's Your ONE?

## Week 1: Introduction to Evangelism

### Lesson main ideas:

- Faith comes by hearing
- What is Evangelism?
- Who is called to Evangelize?
- How do you know if you've evangelized?

### PRAYER

#### I. Introduction On Evangelism

**In conjunction with** our church wide emphasize on “Who’s Your ONE?” ...for the next 5 weeks we will be seeking (by God’s grace) to unpack, understand, and articulate the Gospel message in order that we might know what we believe and how to share it.

Our goal is to gain confidence in the Good News of Jesus **and** boldly proclaim it.

This morning let’s talk about the topic of **evangelism**.

#### A. Faith Comes By Hearing (Romans 10:17)

To start, I want those of you who are Christians to think about the circumstances in which you **heard and believed the gospel**. Who explained this message to you?

*[Teacher: Give your own testimony as an example. Get a few other examples from the class of how they became Christians. Make it clear that you don’t expect everyone in the room to be a Christian—but you assume a lot are.]*

I ask this to point to the fact that all Christians have had this message proclaimed to them. Our stories aren’t all that unique. All Christians have had the gospel presented to them, whether by family members, friends, Sunday School teachers, or complete strangers. **There is no such thing as a Christian who has never HEARD the gospel**. That is why it’s so important that we share this message...this Good News with others.

And that’s why the primary goal of the next several classes is to *equip us to share the gospel with others*. As we go through these five weeks, let’s keep this primary goal in our minds.

## Read Romans 10:17

*Faith comes from hearing – hearing the word of Christ* – and God has chosen Christians to be the instruments through which others are to hear the gospel.

### B. What Is Evangelism?

(Teacher: Ask someone to define evangelism?)

So then, what is evangelism<sup>1</sup>?

J.I. Packer writes that evangelism is “**To present Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit to sinful people, with the aim that they may come to put their trust in God through Him, to accept Him as their Savior, and serve Him as their King in the fellowship of His Church.**”<sup>2</sup>

Breaking it down, evangelism is to present a specific message (the gospel of Jesus Christ) to a specific people (lost men and women), in the power of the Holy Spirit, with a specific purpose (the aim that they would repent and believe and be saved to God’s glory).

Likewise, Mac Stiles writes “**Evangelism is teaching the gospel with the aim to persuade.**”

\*\*Evangelism is teaching (heralding, proclaiming, announcing, preaching) the gospel (the message from God that leads us to salvation) with the aim (hope, desire, goal) to persuade (convince, convert).

### C. What Is Evangelism NOT?

Well, if that’s what evangelism is, then what is evangelism not? In other words, what are some things that can be confused with evangelizing?

(Teacher: List on board)

[*Personal testimony; being good person, apologetics or debate; judging or shaming; helping the poor; doing good works before others; raising good children*] –

Question: is inviting someone to church evangelism?

***Why aren’t these things considered evangelism?*** [They mostly express the **fruit of the gospel** (or its implications), but they don’t proclaim the gospel itself. They also don’t make

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<sup>1</sup> The word “evangelist” (Gk *euangelistes*) is found three times in the New Testament (Acts 21:8; Eph. 4:11; 2 Tim. 4:5) and means a messenger (*angelos*) of good (*eu*) or good news.

<sup>2</sup> J.I. Packer, *Evangelism & the Sovereignty of God*, p. 37-38.

*a call for repentance and belief. Merely feeding the poor isn't proclaiming the way to salvation through Jesus Christ. The gospel is fundamentally good news, and evangelizing isn't talking about me and what I've done, but about Christ and what he's done. Remember...Romans 10:17 says, faith comes by hearing.<sup>3]</sup>*

Now this does not mean that it doesn't matter how we live as Christians. Our lives are to give testimony to the truths we proclaim. We ought to speak God's Word as those who are truly living out God's Word. Scripture says that we are to be the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing (2 Corinthians 2:15). One person noted that, "**The greatest single cause of atheism in the world today is Christians who acknowledge Jesus with their lips and then walk out the door and deny him by their lifestyle. That is what an unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable.**"<sup>4</sup>

#### **D. Who Is Called to Evangelize?**

Now that we've thoroughly explained evangelism, who gets to do it? Quite simply, every Christian (read - 2 Cor. 5:18-19). This grand task is our task to obey and enjoy!

At the end of Christ's earthly ministry in Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus says to his disciples, "**All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.**"

Then in Acts we see the church doing this very thing. Acts 8:1-4 says, "**On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. ... Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.**"

Class, let's rejoice that God has chosen to entrust His message of salvation to us. We, who have received the bread of life, must show others where to get this bread and so have true life. And I hope this class by God's Spirit will help give you the knowledge and courage to do so.

One of the best stories about someone resigning their lives to proclaiming the gospel is John Paton. He was a missionary in the 1800s to the New Hebrides (heh-breh-deez)<sup>5</sup>. When he was getting ready to go over to the New Hebrides from Scotland, some men were trying to

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<sup>3</sup> A famous quote opposing this idea is attributed to Francis of Assisi and says, "Preach the Gospel at all times and when necessary use words."

<sup>4</sup> Brennan Manning.

<sup>5</sup> New Hebrides was the colonial name for an island group in the South Pacific east of Australia that now forms the nation of Vanuatu.

deter him. One Mr. Dickson exploded saying, “**The Cannibals! You will be eaten by Cannibals!**”

To this Paton responded, “**Mr. Dickson, you are advanced in years now, and your own prospect is soon to be laid in the grave, there to be eaten by worms; I confess to you, that if I can but live and die serving and honoring the Lord Jesus, it will make no difference to me whether I am eaten by Cannibals or by worms; and in the Great Day my resurrection body will arise as fair as yours in the likeness of our risen Redeemer.**”<sup>6</sup>

May we have that same attitude when it comes to evangelism. We only have one life. Let’s use it to honor God and to proclaim the good news about him.

### **E. What Is Successful Evangelism?**

So then, since **we are all called to evangelize**, we must know something about whether we’re doing the right thing or not. We must have a measurement that tells us what successful evangelism is...right?

For some, evangelism is only successful if you “convert” the person, meaning you can get them to walk down an aisle or repeat a prayer after you. **But is this really what we are after?** Is this our responsibility as Christians, to “get the job done?” I think we can agree...No, not according to the Bible. Unless we’re willing to say that Jesus, who was perfect, failed in evangelism, since not all of his listeners came to faith (see John 6:60-71).

SUCCESSFUL EVANGELISM can be broken down into three basic questions:

- 1) **Are you presenting the gospel of Jesus Christ accurately?** Are your words true or do you dumb down parts, such as the wickedness of sin or the cost of following Jesus, to make it more appealing/palatable to your hearer?  
**One of the main aims** of this class is that we would come to grasp a better understanding of why each truth in the gospel is important to the message as a whole.
- 2) **Are you sharing the gospel with lost people?** Which non-Christians in your life have never heard the gospel from you? Who are you praying about to share the gospel with? Are you making the most of every opportunity with your unbelieving friends and family?

Why don’t we share the gospel? (List on board) [*Fear of man; Don’t know the gospel well enough to articulate it; Busyness; Only have Christian friends*]

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<sup>6</sup> John Piper, *Filling Up the Afflictions of Christ*, p. 56.

Well, all these things deal with our own failures, but the remedy is found in trusting God through obedience, which brings us to our next question...

- 3) **Are you relying on the power of the Holy Spirit?** Only God performs the miraculous work of bringing the dead to life. We're called to share, to plant and water the seed, but to leave the growth to God. It's not for us to try to manipulate another person into heaven. No matter what we get them to say with their lips, getting them to heaven is God's job, not ours. And that should lead us to pray.

**Prayer is God's ordained means to sovereignly open doors and soften hearts.** Prayer also reminds us that any fruit from evangelism comes from God alone. He gets the glory!

Now if you're saying "yes" to these three questions, then you're being successful in evangelism, regardless of the outcome. This is exactly what Paul was writing to the church in Colossae about in **Colossians 4:2-6** which reads,

***<sup>2</sup> Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. <sup>3</sup> At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison— <sup>4</sup> that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak. <sup>5</sup> Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. <sup>6</sup> Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.***

## F. Concluding Remarks on Evangelism

**An important warning:** Evangelism is not reduced to a specific method of sharing (i.e. bridge illustration, Roman Road, etc.). Rather, it is all about a specific message (1 Cor. 15:3-4). Do not fall in love with a method (use them all). Instead, fall in love with the message so you are not dependent on a method.

**\*\*The gospel is not a once-and-done thing.** It's the essence of becoming a Christian, but it's also what continues to sustain us as a believer throughout our whole lives. Begin where you are as we go through this class, even if you're hearing these truths for the first time.

If you know the story of Andrew and Philip, after they encountered Jesus, they immediately went and got their brothers. The Samaritan woman at the well, after she encountered Jesus, immediately went to the town to tell people about Jesus. **Know this:** on this side of heaven, we will never fully grasp the gospel. You and I will never fully live out the perfect life that commends Jesus Christ. But you can still point others to him.

And, if you're a Christian, you must...this is what a Christian does.



## Who's Your ONE? Week 2: GOD

### **Lesson main ideas:**

- God is Creator
- God is loving
- We are under His authority

### **PRAYER**

#### **I. Review**

Last week we talked about evangelism. If you missed last week ask me after class I can talk with you more, but in short evangelism is:

**“To present Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit to sinful people, with the aim that they may come to put their trust in God through Him, to accept Him as their Savior, and serve Him as their King in the fellowship of His Church.”<sup>7</sup>**

#### **II. God—the Creator & Loving Ruler**

Where does the gospel begin?

**The Gospel begins with God** (always God).

Before we can talk about sin, we must know whom we've sinned against. And before we talk about salvation in Christ, we need to know where he was sent from and who sent him. To talk about heaven, we need to know who created heaven and who the object of worship in heaven is.

Who is God? If someone you're speaking to asked you who God is or what He's like, how would you answer them?

The study of God is, of course, inexhaustible. But for our purposes today, I'll just mention two fundamental descriptions of God.

God is our 1) CREATOR AND 2) LOVING RULER.

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<sup>7</sup> J.I. Packer, *Evangelism & the Sovereignty of God*, p. 37-38.

A great verse that communicates this eternal truth is Revelation 4:11,

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*“You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”*

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God is the loving ruler of the world. He created the world. And He created man to be rulers of the world under Him. (let’s memorize this verse together)

God is the **very important first point** we want to communicate clearly and accurately in our gospel presentation. And Revelation 4:11 is a great verse to begin with and memorize for two reasons:

1. It makes the statement that God is *the* Creator; He is the Author of all things.
2. Because He is the creator and author of all things, He is therefore worthy to receive glory and honor and power. These are the characteristics of a ruler.

**But why** is it important to begin a presentation of the gospel talking about God? Well, IT’S HIS GOSPEL. As Christians, we want to begin with God because we want to show that God is supreme. That we exist to the praise of God’s glory, not our own glory. We don’t naturally do this.

The ultimate goal of the gospel is God. It’s all about His glory!

You see...if we start with man (i.e. ourselves) and make God just a means to make man happy, then we’re missing the point. We’re placing man at the center, not God. Beginning with mankind, the gospel may seem more like a convenient, divine add-on rather than a complete change of worldview and transformation of lifestyle. In our individualistic, self-centered age, we need to recover the basic biblical idea that **God is in rightful authority over us, and whether we like it or not, we’re accountable to Him – on His terms, not ours.**

With this in mind, let’s look to scripture to see how God holds these two positions of Creator and Loving Ruler.

#### **A. God is the Creator of All**

As we have mentioned, God created everything. You see, God alone is eternal. So, while there once was a time when we didn’t exist, God still did. He has always been and always will be. He has no beginning and no end. Everything in the universe is a created thing, God alone is self-existent. No one made God. **He is independent of all things, but all things are dependent upon Him.**

This theme is carried throughout scripture (have someone read):

- **Genesis 1:1** – “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

- **Psalm 90:2** – “Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.”
- **John 1:3** – “Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.”
- **Colossians 1:16** – “For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.”

All that we know came into existence when God created it, and He did it for a purpose – for His glory.

## **B. God Is the Ruler of All**

Since God created everything, without aid or counsel, He is the rightful ruler and owner and authority of everything.

- **Job 12:10** – “In [God’s] hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind.”
- **Proverbs 21:1** – “The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord; he directs it like a watercourse where he pleases.”
- **Acts 17:25-28** – “And [God] is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives to all men life and breath and everything else. From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live...For in him we live and move and have our being.”<sup>8</sup>

Everything that God created is under His rule. Every creature is under His rule. Every human is under His rule. Even the nations and its rulers and kings are under God’s rule. He is in control. That’s another reason why we begin with Him.

*Now, there are many different aspects of who God is that we could have talked about (and should)—but we chose to highlight him as Creator and Ruler.*

**Why would those be of particular importance in understanding and sharing the gospel?**

## **C. Man’s Relationship to God**

If we begin with God, where do we come in? Well, we come into the picture at creation. According to the Bible, we were created in God’s image, appointed to rule over the rest of creation.

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<sup>8</sup> This is a great verse because Paul is evangelizing in Athens and starts with God.

Genesis 1:27-28 says, “**So God created man in his own image...male and female he created them. 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.”**”

This points to the Creation accounts emphasis on man in relation to the earth. It protects against seeing man as meaningless or a cosmic accident. But it also establishes a relationship to God. God created man. And because **God is the rightful ruler and authority over everything He creates**, He is the rightful ruler and authority over man.

**\*\*This means...**that we (all mankind) are ultimately responsible and accountability to God for everything we do in actions, attitudes, affections (Matthew 5:22-23, Luke 10:27, Joshua 1:8, Ezekiel 14:3).

I know most of us do not like to be told what to do. It can sometimes get under our skin when someone is directing us. But God has the right to do just that! Because He has created us, He has a claim on our lives. He calls us to live under His rule, to display His image, and demonstrate His glory to the world. He calls us to be in relationship with Him and to submit to what He tells us and to love Him above all else.

And the good thing is that God is not a cruel or a harsh ruler. He’s a loving and kind ruler and knows what is best for His creation in presiding over it. When Satan tempted Adam and Eve in the garden, he presented them with the lie that God could not be both their authority and loving at the same time.

We’ll get into that more next week, but let me be clear that we **must not** buy into Satan’s lie that God must be withholding good things from us. He created us to live under His rule, and no matter what we sometimes think, **living under His rule is the best place to be**. Living under God’s rule is much better than living under our rule or anybody else’s rule because we’re imperfect and make mistakes.

**\*\*Class Practice:** With a partner practice leading a conversation from a statement (such as the one below) to the truth that God is loving creator and ruler and that we are all accountable to Him:

“Can you believe Jimmy didn’t get arrested for speeding through the deaf and blind children’s school zone?”

*Questions or Comments?*

**PRAYER**



## Who's Your ONE? Week 3: MAN

### Lesson main ideas:

- Man's big problem is sin
- The consequences of our sin

### PRAYER

### Review

- *God is our 1) CREATOR AND 2) LOVING RULER*
- *Because of this we are under His authority*

### MAN - Humanity in Rebellion

Christianity, similar to other religions, recognizes that there's a grave problem with the world we live in. It's clear to just about everyone that something has gone terribly wrong. Whether you're an atheist or a Buddhist or a Muslim, everyone agrees that the world is not as it should be.

### Why is that?

Why do we see things like: addictions, rape, murder, lying, theft, poverty, divorce, disobedient children, racism, political controversy and starvation? (to name a few) According to God's Word, God created the world as good. God looked at all He had made and said, "It is Good!" But when we look around the world, something drastic has happened. Corruption, injustice, hatred, greed, and death are everywhere. So, what *happened*? Where did it all go wrong?

**The fundamental problem**, Christians believe, rests within what has gone wrong in each and every one of us. The real problem lies within our own hearts, not anywhere else, not outside of us. From cover to cover the Bible teaches that the essence of our problem/the root is that: Man Rejected God as Ruler over God's creation.

Man, God's creation, rebelled against Him. In our rebellion against Him, we **rejected** Him as King, and enthroned ourselves, dubbing ourselves as King. Because we want to rule, we try to run our lives our own way, and not His way, and this rebellion has affected the world and everything in it. This is our great problem, and the Bible calls it "sin."

We are going to spend the rest of our time today unpacking this truth of man's rebellion against God.

First, I want to talk together about how this looks in a real conversation. How do you describe sin to someone who's not familiar with the term?

**[You should begin by explaining "The Fall of Man"]**

### **A. The Fall of Man**

Sin began a long, long time ago in the Garden of Eden with the first man and woman, Adam and Eve. God, who is *holy*, created Adam and Eve to live under His rule in the Garden of Eden. Because God created man: He had the RIGHT to tell them what to do, how to live, what was good for them, and what was bad for them. And unlike what any of us would be like, with absolute power and authority, God was completely loving towards His creation, and He ruled them with their best interest in mind.

All was well in the beginning, but soon something terrible happened, and this something is *still* affecting us today.

We can read about it in **Genesis 3:1-8**. [Ask someone to read this passage]

God tells Adam and Eve not to do something, not to eat from a specific tree. BUT! Satan comes to them, twists God's Word around, and tempts them to eat from the tree. He makes promises to them, if they would just eat from the tree in verse 5—that they will be like God and we read that the woman is drawn in by this lie. By disobeying God, Eve rejects God as her ruler. It's either God's way or her way, and Eve chose her own way, believing the serpent. Then, Adam does the same thing!

That's the moment the fall of man happened. Man chose to reject God as the rightful ruler and authority of his life and chose to make himself his own ruler and authority. Man did not want to listen to God's Word about how he should live his life; he wanted to run his life his own way, without taking God into account.

### **So what was the result of this sin?**

In verse 8, it says that they, Adam and Eve, hid from God. Here we see what man's relationship with God had become. Whereas before, there was no strain in man's relationship with God; now they are hiding from Him. By rebelling against God, man broke the right relationship that existed between God and man. You see, God's holiness is actually an extremely frightful thing if we're rebelling against God. His purity condemns our impurity.

**Habakkuk 1:13** says of God, "Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong."

The Bible teaches us that sin is an affront to a holy God, and we need protection lest we be consumed in His presence, that's why the prophet Isaiah declared himself ruined when he came before God (Isaiah 6:5), and Ezekiel fell facedown (Ezekiel 1:28). It's a scary thought, to be exposed to God's holiness in our sinful condition!

**[The second thing we should share in explaining SIN is...]**

## **B. The Depravity of Man**

Back to Adam and Eve. At the time of their rebellion, all of mankind became rebels against God by nature. When Adam and Eve fell, all of mankind fell with them, including us. We see this, in **Romans 5:12**: "Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin." All of Adam and Eve's offspring inherited their sinful nature – that's everybody. It's their children, their grandchildren, their great grandchildren, all the way down to us. This wasn't just a problem for Adam and Eve. This rebellion against God and our broken relationship with Him is the same problem that every human being since has faced. We are all infected with sin.

**Romans 3:23** says, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Just like with Adam and Eve, the Bible says that God created us to live in a right relationship with Him. That's a relationship where He cares for His children, where He speaks to us like a Father, and we listen as His children, but we've ruined that relationship. We didn't listen to God. Instead, we listened to the most important person in our lives, ourselves. We rejected God's ways and followed our own. We've set ourselves up in opposition, declaring our independence against God the Father.

We've all broken God's holy law, but beyond that, we've offended a holy God, the one who stands behind the law. The law was there to show us what God's like. At the same time, it shows us what we've become because we can't keep it. **Romans 3:20** says, "For by works of the law no human being will be justified in His sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin." We see then that breaking the law is not an abstract offense distantly removed from our relationship with God, but it's very personal. We are all rebels who have broken our relationship with God.

There are lots of people who share the gospel *without* going here first. They might *present* the *basic problem* as the fact that: We are OUT of God's *wonderful* plan. Or we are living a *meaningless* existence. Or they may present the problem as the fact that this *world is broken*. But we must go right to the issue of sin.

**\*\*\*Why do you think it's important to talk about SIN as a personal offense against a holy God?**

(see appendix 3 on Depravity, page 42)

*Questions or Comments?*

## **Judgment: God’s Response to our Rebellion**

So we see that **our sin** has ruined the world that God gave us to rule. And what’s even more, our rebellion against God makes us **deserving** of His righteous judgment.

This judgment by God is another important aspect of the gospel.

The biblical support that is given for God’s judgment is **Hebrews 9:27**. Would someone please read that verse? [**“Man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.”**] This is the verse that we would like for you to commit to memory to help you in explaining the gospel.

Additional biblical support can also be found in **2 Thessalonians 1:8-9**. Would someone please read that verse. Which says, **“...[God] will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power.”**

### **A. The Consequences of Our Sin**

Now before we discuss in detail about the punishment we’ve brought upon ourselves for our rebellion to God, we should note one thing. Scripture is clear in the passages we just read and many other passages that our opportunity to turn from our rebellion to God is gone when we die—there is no second chance. Not for you, not for me, not for your family, not for your friends. This is why Scripture pleads with unbelievers that **today** is the day of salvation. God’s patience will one day come to an end. He won’t let us rebel forever.

#### **1. Death**

Adam and Eve disobeyed God by eating the forbidden fruit on the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God promised beforehand that this would result in their death, and He confirmed it afterwards in Genesis 3:19: **“By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”**

The curse of death was not limited to Adam and Eve but applies to us today because we are their offspring and carry their sinful nature with us. We read in Romans 5:12 that **“sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death**

**came to all men, because all sinned.”** Physical death is the consequence for our sin. God created life, and in response to our sin, He takes life away.

## 2. Judgment

Yet physical death is not the full or final consequence of our rebellion. As we read earlier in Hebrews 9:27, after death comes judgment. This judgment is something we would be right to dread because we are guilty in our sin. There is no question that God will judge us and when left to ourselves, the judgement would be a **guilty verdict**.

But this raises a question. What will this judgment look like?

Would someone please read what Jesus says in Matthew 13:47-50? **“Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it upon the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”**

Notice that the punishment He warns us about is eternal. Unlike God’s judgment only being poured out for forty days and forty nights on all the Earth (including on the ark), this judgment (at the end of the age) is forever. In other words, for those who are not trusting in Christ (inside the ark) God’s wrath will continually be upon them. This reality stretches our minds, and the concept can be difficult for Christians to accept along with their unbelieving friends.

### B. The Offense of God’s Wrath

*What are some objections that might hinder you or others from accepting the biblical promises of God’s judgment? [1) Violates God’s love; 2) Makes God cruel; 3) Too harsh; 4) Eternal punishment doesn’t fit the temporal crime]*

We don’t like this idea of God’s judgment, do we? Many argue that God’s love should preclude Him from judging those He loves. George Barna’s research group found that 76% of Americans believe in heaven and 71% surprisingly believe in hell.<sup>9</sup> However, only 32% of those who believed that hell exists believe hell to be a real place of torment and suffering for people’s souls after death. But the most telling statistic is that only one-half of 1% of all Americans expect to go to hell upon their death.

The biblical reality of the wrath of God is difficult for sinful man to stomach. Many people will go along with you and agree that there is a God, however they may imagine him. You

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<sup>9</sup> Research was done in 2003.

will also find some people admitting that they're sinners, to whatever extent. **But when you go the next step and say that we also deserve God's wrath and eternal punishment for our sins, that's going too far.**

*This is where the gospel becomes offensive to our pride.*

It's true that from a purely human perspective God's eternal judgment of sinners can seem at best harsh and even absurd. But friends, it's important that ALL of our ideas about God be shaped by what He has revealed in His Word, not our own intuition or feelings.

***Did any of you struggle with this in the process of becoming a Christian? How did you get past it?***

*[If you as the teacher have a good example of trying to explain this to a non-Christian, this would be a great place to share that story.]*

*Other Questions or Comments?*

### **C. Implications for Evangelism**

Okay, let's take a moment and think about this in regards to our evangelism.

Is man's sinfulness an *easy* thing for our non-Christian friends to grasp? Do most people believe this? Why or why not?

While most people will admit they're not perfect, they usually come from the angle that it's a question of merely making a mistake or not, rather than sinning against a holy God. This is because many people think they're basically good, born innocent, and just trying to do the right thing. We like to *think* of ourselves as good. Naturally, we identify with the good guys rather than the bad guys, don't we? But this makes it all the *harder* to explain why we need the gospel so much. If you're telling an unbelieving friend this bad news, he or she is likely to dismiss it. Either they don't want to think about it, which is just more evidence of having a *sinful nature*, or they're not convinced from their own worldview. How do we help our unbelieving family members, friends, and co-workers see that we're ALL sinful by nature and rebellious against a good King and Ruler?

**\*\*WELL**, we need to ultimately remember, God has to *supernaturally* work in the person's heart. He is the one that softens or hardens the heart... BUT we're responsible for telling the gospel message as clearly, accurately, and helpfully as we can. To that end, there are many things that we can point at to help clarify man's depravity (sinful condition).

**Let me give you FIVE practical ways to highlight sin.**

- 1) Look at Children - Point them to children...particularly if they're parents! **Psalm 51:5** says, "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me." [And this was David speaking, the one described as "a man after God's own heart."]

Although children are VERY cute, children are born very corrupt. They have an inherent self-centeredness. I didn't have to teach little Ben to be selfish, or little Sally to cry for mommy in the middle of the night and when we go to calm her, she stiffens her back and kicks us in the face!

Anyone who has ever raised a child will probably understand that the child's *natural inclination* is to serve themselves and fight for what he/she wants. With care and grace, you might talk about this when your friends tell stories of their own disobedient children.

- 2) Look at the World – Point them to the world around them. As we've already said, most everyone agrees that the world is not right. There's too much hate. There's too much injustice. There's too much selfishness. There's too much greed.

That's because the world is full of people, people do these things, people are naturally sinful. Look at ISIS, look at the shootings, look at North Korea and its threats...The reason there are problems in the world trace back to the first sin committed by man's sinful hearts in Genesis 3, after Adam's sin, God curses the ground so that it will be difficult to produce fruit and declares that death is now man's certain fate. Sickness, natural disasters, wars, and famine in the world can all be traced back to man's sinfulness.

- 3) Look at Your Life – Point them to examine their own life, hoping they'll see their own rebellion against God.

[Challenge them,]

Why do they choose to do things they KNOW are wrong? Have they ever lied or cheated or stolen or hated? Why did they do that?

These are just symptoms of something that is more fundamental to who we are. It's like a tree that bears bad fruit. It's the sap, or life, of the tree that needs to be *changed*, not the external fruit.

The Apostle Paul was right when he declared, "**I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature**" (Rom. 7:18).

It's **important to say** (and mean it) that when making the case that this person you're speaking with is sinful, also make sure that you include yourself in that indictment.

Here you should feel free to expose some of the sin in your own heart. This will actually serve to breakdown barriers that may be up and will invite further conversation and sharing and it **reminds** you that you need Jesus' just as much as the person you are sharing the gospel with.

- 4) Look at God – When asked to “look at themselves,” people will undoubtedly compare themselves to other people.

Instead, challenge them to compare themselves to God. When they see who God is, they will be better able to see who they are. They might feel like they're not all that bad, but that's because they haven't understood how holy, blameless, and morally pure God is. They need to understand that God demands perfect obedience to His law. He is a holy, holy, holy God (Isaiah 6:3).

- 5) Finally, Look at the Bible – The Bible is where God's law is found.

We can help our unbelieving friends to “look at themselves” by holding up God's law to their lives like a mirror.

Ask them, does God think they're okay? Walk them through the Ten Commandments to see whether or not they meet His standards.

After that, walk them through the Sermon on the Mount to see the far-reaching extent of those commands and what it means to keep them perfectly. At this point, some people may object that their good deeds will outweigh their *evil* deeds if called to *account*, but we need to be clear that's NOT how God judges sin.

Once sin is committed there's no amount of good works that will fix it, at least from *sinfully* depraved people and this is where Christ comes in, which will get to in a couple more weeks, *Lord willing*.

[At this point, have the class practice a bit.]

-Have them split up into pairs and ask some questions about sin that a non-Christian might often ask.

*Questions or Comments?*



## Who's Your ONE? Week 4: CHRIST

### Lesson main ideas:

- Christ is God
- Christ lived a perfect life
- Christ died on a cross
- Christ was resurrected three days later
- Christ now sits at the right hand of the Father

### PRAYER

#### Review: Man

- The root: *the essence of our root is that Man Rejected God as Ruler over God's creation*
- The consequences: *Physical death is the consequence for our sin, and God will judge us that way and left to ourselves the judgement would be a **guilty verdict**.*

#### A. Jesus, The Man Who Died for Rebels

Last week, we talked through God's judgment on all men for their sin. **Now we let's FIX our gaze on God's gift of rescuing grace.**

**Rom. 5:18-19** says: "Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's [Adam's] disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's [Jesus] obedience the many will be made righteous."

Paul is explaining that God chose to save man from sin through Jesus Christ, the Son of God. There is a lot of biblical support for this. In fact, all of scripture testifies to it and points us to the person and work of Jesus. But instead of asking you to memorize the whole Bible, there is one verse that helpfully summarizes this great truth that we can commit to memory. That verse is 1 Peter 3:18.

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*"For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous, for the unrighteous, to bring you to God."*

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God loved the world and sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to live perfectly under His rule, *unlike* Adam. Jesus, being **found** *sinless*, took **our** *punishment*, died in **our** place, **brought** forgiveness and He gave the **righteous** He had **earned** to us. For us, He kept the Law, atoned for our sin, and satisfied God's wrath. He took our filthy rags and gave us His righteous robe.

To understand Christ's death for sinners, let's look at **four truths** about Jesus that we see in the Bible, and this will be the focus our time today.

### **First: Jesus is God**

To say that God is love (or is loving) isn't that big of a stretch for many people to make. Most people today believe in a benevolent divine being. It's when you start getting into the particulars about *who* that divine being is, that differences begin to surface. If we're going to understand what Jesus' death meant, we need to understand *who it was* who was dying. The question of "Who is Jesus?" is of huge importance. This was the question that Jesus asked His disciples before His transfiguration.

#### **\*\*Read Matthew 16:13-17**

Who is Jesus? He is the **Son of God**.

- o a title that *reflects* both His **humanity** (Ezekiel 2)
- o and His **divinity** (Daniel 7).

**Hebrews 1:3** says, "The Son is the **radiance** of God's **glory** and the **exact representation** of his being, **sustaining** all things by His **powerful** word."

Are there examples you can think of in Scripture that give evidence of Jesus being God? **All knowing** – *Woman at the well (John 4)*; **Sovereign** – *Feeding of 5,000 (Matt. 14)*; **Worthy of worship** – *Healing of blind man (John 9)*; **Authority over creation** – *Quieting the squall (Mark 4)*] We could also cite numerous accounts in the gospels, where Jesus showed His divine authority through physically healing people and other miracles. But the most telling sign of Jesus' divinity and most important to us is shown in:

**Mark 2:5**: "When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the **paralytic**, "Son, your **SINS** are forgiven."

If Jesus could truly forgive sins, then He could be no other than God Himself. Only God has the right to forgive sins, and Jesus came for this very purpose. We see then that Jesus is God.

*Questions or Comments?*

## **Second: Jesus Became a Man and Came into the World**

What makes Jesus alone able to address the problem of sin? Well, we just answered part of the question—Jesus is God. Yet Jesus’ divinity is only half of the equation. Jesus also became fully human. We see evidence of this in several portions of scripture.

*(Ask for **three volunteers** to read the following passages:)*

- **Matthew 1:20-21** – “But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”
  
- **Romans 5:17** – “For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God’s abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.”
  
- **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.”

**“The Word became flesh.” The “Word” is Jesus.** We see in this phrase alone— that the Eternal One became the mortal. The Son of God took on human flesh and came into the world. Yet in no way did Jesus’ humanity compromise His divine nature. He wasn’t half God and half man—He was 100% divine and 100% human, fully God and fully man. It’s beyond our ability to grasp this wonder known as the incarnation. Yet this truth is essential. It means that Jesus did what no one else ever could – and this leads us to our next biblical truth about Jesus.

*Questions or Comments?*

## **Third: Jesus Lived a Sinless and Perfectly Righteous Life**

Why was it important that Jesus became man? *Man sinned and so MAN had to atone for that sin.*

In Luke 4, we see the tempting of Jesus by Satan:

“Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil.” Satan tempted Jesus to sin for forty days, and for forty days Jesus resisted the devil. How difficult is it for us to resist 40 minutes of temptation, let alone 40 days? Jesus does what we CAN’T do.

This is why the writer of **Hebrews** says, “For we do not have a **high priest** who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been **tempted** in every way, just as we are—*yet was without sin*” (Heb. 4:15).

Maybe we think Jesus’ sinless life is less remarkable because He’s God. After all, James tells us that, “God cannot be tempted by evil” (James 1:13). Yet Hebrews says that Jesus was tempted in every way. In Jesus’ humanity, He knew the appeal and attractiveness of sin, but He didn’t give in. To put it more positively – Jesus obeyed God’s law perfectly. Jesus’ righteousness was the currency that He used to purchase man’s salvation.

**Rom. 5:19**—

“For just as through the **disobedience** of the one man the many were **made sinners**, so also through the **obedience** of the one man the many will be **made righteous**”

Jesus became man like us, but *in this* He was *completely* different. None of us can say we obeyed God’s commands completely like He can.

*Questions or Comments?*

#### **Fourth: Jesus Died on the Cross to Bring Forgiveness to Sinners**

We have seen who Jesus is, and we have seen how He lived His life. Now let us consider His death. The biblical truth that we want to devote our time to, is the fact that Jesus died on the cross. To help us better understand this from a biblical perspective, let’s walk through a few passages together.

**Mark 8:31** *“[Jesus] then began to teach [his disciples] that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again.”*

Here we see Jesus predicting his death. He came for a reason. His death wasn’t a surprise to him.

**Acts 10:39** *“Speaking to those gathered at Cornelius’ house, Peter says, “We are witnesses of everything [Jesus] did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree...””*

Here we see Jesus’ death actually occurred and was witnessed.

**1 Corinthians 2:2** *Paul says, “For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”*

Jesus' death was the message of Paul and the apostles and the early church and remains our message to proclaim some 2000 years later. Jesus' obedient death on the cross was: **predicted, occurred, witnessed, and proclaimed.** This is an undeniable, **HISTORICAL** fact.

Jesus died on the cross. So what!? Most non-Christians **acknowledge** that Jesus died, and many believe that He was not guilty or deserving of such a horrific execution. But the *same* can be said of countless others throughout history. What's so special about Jesus and the cross? Remember that because of our sin, we all deserve death. But because Jesus never sinned, He didn't deserve death. Yet in a great irony—Jesus was the one who suffered God's wrath for our sin. In fact, this death is the very reason why Jesus, the Son of God, came to earth. Jesus was born into the world, so that He could die. He was punished, so that WE could be forgiven. This is the climax of the gospel; it's the culmination of all that's gone before in Scripture.

**THE ULTIMATE QUESTION:** “How will a just God **forgive** sinful man without ceasing to be good?”

**THE ANSWER:** through Jesus' DEATH on the cross!

Paul writes in **Romans 3:25-26**, “*God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it, to demonstrate his righteousness at the PRESENT time, so as to be JUST and the ONE who justifies --those who have faith in Jesus.*”

Christ's sacrifice was to demonstrate God's justice, which we looked at last week. The wages of sin is death. Jesus' sacrifice satisfied God's wrath once and for all, for *all* those who have faith in Jesus. In the heavenly courtroom, God the Father accepted Jesus' sacrifice on the cross as payment for His people's sins, forgiving them and declaring them innocent. We've been talking about the fact that Jesus died as a substitute, that is, He died in our place. People talk about all sorts of other reasons for His dying as an example of love and sacrifice (which we also see in the Bible). But why is it important when we *share the gospel* for us to explain His death as a substitute for our sins?

[JUSTICE and LOVE of GOD]

*Other Questions or Comments?*

## **B. Jesus, The Risen Ruler**

We cannot share the good news of the gospel and leave Jesus dead, can we? His death is certainly important—because through it we receive forgiveness. But there is so much more!

I had someone (who is a Christian, goes to church regularly, and even worked on staff) recently say to me, “I know that the resurrection is important because of Easter and all, but why? Why does it matter for the Christian life?”

My guess is that many Christians, if honest, might have this same question, maybe you have that question. And it is okay. Because today we are going to seek to understand the WHY.

**Now, what does the word “resurrection” mean?** [*It refers to someone who is dead being raised to life from the dead.*]

**To get us thinking, why would you say Jesus’ resurrection matters in sharing the gospel?** [*It gives us hope that we will be saved from our sins.*]

**What is missing if we share the gospel but leave out the resurrection?** [proof of who Jesus claimed to be; assurance that God accepted his sacrifice; an advocate in heaven]

Scripture is clear that the resurrection is central to Christianity. Consider what Paul writes to the church in Corinth...1 Corinthians 15:17-19, “*And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.*”

These verses underscore how critical it is that we understand and communicate the truth of the resurrection when sharing the gospel. The resurrection is not merely a pleasant add-on to the gospel—it’s fundamental to our faith. **Without it, we would still be in our sins.** We must explain that, though Christ died, God raised Him to life on the third day (just as He said) as ruler of the world. The **resurrection proves** that Jesus has conquered death, gives new life, and will return to judge. The verse that goes along with this and that we want to memorize is 1 Peter 1:3,

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*“In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”*

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So, God’s act of mercy to us through Christ is not only in His sinless life, His atoning death but also in His resurrection. **How can we know that Jesus is the author of life and the source of forgiveness?** Because He was raised from the dead, and He continues to live and rule today. Let’s look at Jesus’ resurrection by making seven statements about it that we see from Scripture. By doing so, we’ll hopefully see what it means for us and how it should affect our lives.

## C. RESURRECTION - Jesus Was Truly Raised

Jesus' resurrection was not merely predicted, it actually happened! The resurrection was a real historical event. Again, listen to these testimonies from Scripture:

- **Mark 16:1-8** – “When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?" But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, "He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you." *[Notice that God sent angels to proclaim this good news like He did to Mary when Jesus was to be born and like He did to the disciples when Jesus ascended into heaven.]*
- **Acts 1:3** – “After his suffering, [Jesus] showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.”
- **1 Corinthians 15:3-8** – “For what I received I passed on to you as of 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. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.”

Over the years, many people have debated the historicity of Jesus' physical resurrection from the dead. From the Jewish religious leaders of Jesus' day spreading a lie that the apostles had stolen His body (Matt. 28:11-15) to people today saying that the resurrection was something the Apostle Paul made up. While this is not a class on apologetics, **let me just say a few things why we should believe Christ's resurrection occurred.** Remember, we don't have an ignorant faith, but an informed faith...

1. God is truthful and so is His Word. He hates deception. Besides that, nothing is impossible with God. The resurrection doesn't establish Jesus' deity, but as I mentioned before, it is evidence for it.<sup>10</sup>
2. As we read in Scripture, the resurrection of Jesus was predicted, and there were many first-hand eyewitnesses testifying to it. Jesus' resurrection wasn't done in a closet but

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<sup>10</sup> John Stott, *Basic Christianity*, p. 46.

was made public. After the third day, a dead body could not be found, but over 500 people witnessed Jesus living after being put to death (1 Cor. 15:6). And they gave their names! Now, these people were still around to confirm or deny these stories—and yet they continued to circulate widely. That’s pretty strong evidence that something amazing happened.

3. Scripture describes the persecution of the apostles, from imprisonment to severe floggings. Tradition holds that almost all of the apostles were actually killed for the message they proclaimed. It would be remarkable that this group of men would die for a lie. The sudden change in them from being afraid to boldly proclaiming our risen Lord is evidence itself.
4. Beyond that, the explosion of the early church in numbers is undeniable. *Something* must explain why so many people started following Christ, at great risk to themselves. You’d be hard-pressed to identify a better explanation than the resurrection.
5. Some of the most conservative traditions in a society are its religious traditions. Yet in the first century AD, you see thousands of Jews—perhaps hundreds of thousands—abandoning a centuries-old tradition of worshipping on Saturday to worship on Sunday. What would have the power to make for such a change?

The historicity of the resurrection is important, for if Christ was never physically raised, then nothing else we talk about is significant.

*Questions or Comments?*

#### **D. Jesus Is Exalted as the Risen Ruler**

What happened to Jesus after He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven? God exalted Him as Ruler over all. Jesus didn’t simply rise and come to live as a normal person. No, He rose to the highest place. He rose to sit at the right hand of God, and to be the ruler and judge of the whole world and all who live in it.

- **Ephesians 1:19-22** – “[God’s] power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church.”

Remember how we talked about mankind wanting to rule their own lives? Well, those who follow the sinful nature and despise authority won’t naturally accept the fact that Jesus is the Risen Ruler.

*Has anyone ever received objection to the resurrection when sharing the gospel with someone? Can you tell us what it was?*

## **[Let's consider] Implications for Evangelism**

Well, before we conclude, let's ask what all of this means for our evangelism?

How does the fact that Jesus became man and died for sinners impact our evangelism?

- 1) We must know **the bad news** before we can know **the good news**
- 2) Jesus is the **focal point** of **ALL** scripture
- 3) We can't **save** ourselves
- 4) Christianity is **NOT** *just* another **religion** – it is the only one that rescues...the only one that **saves**
- 5) God's *holiness, justice, and mercy* are **consistent** within **His divine** being
- 6) The gospel makes **sense** – there is no **inconsistency** in the story

**\*\*Class Practice:** Have the class pair up and practice how they would respond to questions about the resurrection.



## Who's Your ONE? Week 5: RESPONSE

### Lesson main ideas:

- Because of what Christ has done, sin is conquered, death is conquered, new life is offered, and judgement is coming.
- “No” is a response to the Gospel
- A saving response is to believe and repent

### PRAYER

#### Review: Christ

- Christ is God
- Christ lived, died, was buried, rose again, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father.

#### I. What are the implications of the Gospel?

##### A. Jesus Conquered Sin

Romans 4:25 says, “[Jesus] was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.” Justification is the declaration by God that His people are “not guilty” and are now considered righteous before Him.

Now someone might say, “Wait a second, I thought we were justified through Jesus’ death?” Well, that’s true. Romans 5:9 gives the grounds for our justification: “*We have now been justified by his blood.*” But our justification doesn’t just stop there. Paul goes onto say, “*For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life*” (Romans 5:10)! This is the hope we have as Christians, that we will be raised from death to eternal life and be with our risen savior.

Jesus’ resurrection ensures our justification. It ensures that Christ paid the full penalty for our sins. It ensures that there is no penalty left for us to pay. “*If we have been united with him...in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection*” (Romans 6:5).

While sacrificial goats and lambs had to be offered over and over again in the Old Testament, Christ needed to be offered just once. And while the lambs remained dead because they never truly took away the sin of the people, Christ was raised from the dead because His sacrifice was accepted and sufficient. The wrath of our just God was perfectly

satisfied. Jesus didn't die for His own sins; otherwise, He would still be dead. Jesus' resurrection vindicates His own claims and was proof of His sinlessness. By raising Jesus from the dead, God was saying that He approves of Christ's work of salvation, and Jesus no longer needed to remain dead.

### B. Jesus Conquered Death

If Jesus defeated sin, it shouldn't surprise us then that He also conquered the result of sin, namely, death. 1 Corinthians 15:55-57 says, "*Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?*" *The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

Or Romans 6:8-9, "*Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him.*"

Christ cannot die again. And if you are in Christ, though you may die once, you will not die again. Like Jesus you will be raised to live with Him forever, and you will be given new bodies like Christ's.

### C. Jesus Gives New Life

So far, we've seen that Christ's resurrection is connected to man's justification and glorification of having new bodies. Here we will see that the resurrection is also connected to man's regeneration, or new birth. This is the focus of the verse 1 Peter 1:3: "*In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*"

Even as Jesus' body rose from the grave, our dead, sinful hearts can be made alive. Christians don't just do good works through their own effort. Christians are people who have been given new hearts, new lives.

### D. Jesus Will Return to Judge

While Jesus' resurrection is exciting for Christians, it's dreadful for those who continue to reject Christ. Acts 17:31 says, "*For [God] has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man [Jesus Christ] he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.*"

In our evangelism, we need to stress not only the hope of embracing Christ's resurrection, but the consequences if we don't. His resurrection means that someday He will be our judge. If we reject Jesus during our lives, He will certainly reject us upon our deaths.

*Questions or Comments?*

## **II. Living in Light of the Resurrection**

We need to mention one way that the reality of the resurrection should affect the way we, as Christians, live.

Colossians 3:1-4 says, *“If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”*

We’ve hit on this some throughout our time, but note Paul’s logic. Those who are in Christ have been raised with Him, and so it follows that their focus should no longer be on this life. The world is passing away—it will soon be gone. But that’s no worry for the Christian. For believers, the end of this life means living with Jesus in glory. This certainty frees Christians to live for God and for eternity.

What might “seeking the things that are above” mean for us this week? In our seeking, are we also showing others the riches of salvation and the hope that we have in this life and the life to come?

To conclude, not only did Christ die for our sins, but God raised Him from the dead, as well. Christ rules over the world and will one day judge the world. In addition, God’s work extends to us. He gives those who believe in Him new life—one in which our sins are forgiven and one where He lives in us and changes us. On the Day of Judgment, we can know that He will accept us because He died in our place and rose in victory over sin. We have hope because God raised Jesus from the dead, and so we know that He will also raise all of those in Him.

*Questions or Comments?*

## **III. Response**

Gospel proclamation should always include a call to respond. The question then becomes what does a CALL TO RESPOND look like? In part, you’re asking the person you shared the gospel with, what they think about it:

- Is this NEW to them?
- Is there anything that they had questions about?
- What do they think about Jesus?

But what's even MORE important, we need to ASK them is, if they believe it? When you ask this specific question, you're likely to get a range of reactions. Let's take some time and walk through different likely SCENARIOS to think through how you can best help your friend you've just shared the gospel with.

**a. The first response you may get is: “no” – Outright Rejection**

The most extreme negative response is an answer of, “No, I don't believe this gospel.” What do we do with such a blunt rejection of the gospel? How should we respond? The reasons given by the person for rejecting the gospel may be many. Perhaps the person is a practicing Muslim and doesn't want to be ostracized by their family and friends. Or the person could be a staunch atheist, maybe they don't believe in miracles. They're naturalists or evolutionists. Maybe the person had a bad experience with Christians and want nothing to do with our gospel. While the reasons given for rejecting the gospel can be many, the answer the Bible attributes to rejecting God's gospel is man's love for sin. The apostle Paul says, “*The sinful mind is hostile to God*” (Rom. 8:7).

While there is tremendous joy in telling others the gospel, there also can be sadness felt when they give a negative response. We can often feel ATTACKED ourselves or rejected, as though they are disapproving of us, and in some sense, they are. But remember, it's not us who they are finally rejecting – it's the Lord Jesus Himself. The war is not with us, it is not against flesh and blood, but as Eph. 6:12 says, it is a spiritual battle. This is what makes the response sad, that they reject the one who was rejected for them.

Rejection of the only way to salvation is devastating. Instead of choosing grace and mercy in Jesus, they are saying, “I'll reap the consequences of my own life and actions!” [that's a scary thing] Ultimately, what will they do about their sin and guilt? Jesus says in John 3:18, “*Whoever believes in [me] is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.*”

The way we should address an outright rejection of the gospel is to do the only thing that we can do. We should warn them that if what Jesus says is true, there are very serious consequences for rejecting Him. It goes back to what we learned about man's rebellion against God and consequent judgment. Although the person might feel like they're free when they choose to rule their own lives, they're actually enslaved. In John 8 when Jesus told the Jews that the truth would set them free, they responded by saying, “*We have never been slaves to anyone.*” But Jesus replies, “*everyone who sins is a slave to sin*” (John 8:32-34).

**b. The second response you may get is a: “Maybe”**

This type of response is an indecisive rejection. Why does a person respond this way? It's polite in our postmodern culture to be tolerant towards what someone else's beliefs. People

don't want to offend you, but they also don't want to agree wholeheartedly, particularly when it comes to religion. Especially when they have misunderstandings about Christianity—likening all Christians to Westboro Baptist or that women who went into Target with a bible yelling out transgender supporters are going to hell! In our day, it's politically correct to keep one's cards close to their chest and try to be agreeable without being dogmatic.

At the same time, some people are genuinely unsure of what they think about the gospel. The gospel may very well be NEW to them, and they may want to research it a bit more before deciding. What should we say to people who are indecisive? We probably need to begin by asking WHY the person is hesitant? If they truly want to research the gospel some more, then we should make ourselves available to read through part of the Bible with them, such as the Gospel of Mark. You can ask them to meet with you and read through this gospel. Many people may have doubts about Christianity, but they have never opened the Bible!

On the other hand, if they're not wanting to pursue the gospel further, then once again, we need to warn them of their dangerous position before God. We need to urge them to investigate the claims of Jesus, particularly when such matters are of the utmost importance in life. It's really a matter of life and death. It's important for you to remind them of this—since they don't know this truth—and we do! We should also warn them that a state of indecisiveness is actually an act of rejecting the gospel. There is no middle ground when it comes to God. Jesus said, *“He who is not with me is against me”* (Matt. 12:30).

### **C. A third type of response may be: “later” – Passive Rejection**

The person doesn't really want to deal with the gospel now. Why would a person respond in this way? A person may not want to engage with the gospel because they don't want to make any changes in their lives. Maybe they're having lots of fun, or perhaps things are too difficult or hard and they just don't have time—they are just too busy. What should we say to a person who gives this kind of response?

Once again, we are dealing with someone who is still rejecting the gospel, even if they didn't explicitly say so. And once again, we need to warn them that no one is promised another day in this world. Just because we're not experiencing God's wrath now, it doesn't mean that it won't be coming. Jesus tells us to keep watch and be ready for when He returns, because no one will know that day or hour (Matt. 25:1-13).

For all of the last three responses that reject the gospel in one way or another, we need to make sure that we've made the gospel clear and stress the urgency of the person's decision. In addition, we need to continue to love them, and pray for them, as opportunity arises. If you're a Christian, then you know that even in your rebellion and rejection, God loved you,

and you know that you can't make someone accept the gospel – that's God's work (1 Cor. 3:6)— continue to faithfully, prayerfully, witness CHRIST and share THE GOSPEL!

As for evangelizing, you've been successful or better yet faithful despite the response. We cannot and should not badger the person into believing; our job is to treat them with respect because you never know when God will convict someone of their need for Him.

*Questions or Comments?*

#### **D. Finally: “Yes” – Acceptance**

A fourth type of response to the gospel is an affirmative “yes.” This person believes the gospel and wants to become a Christian. What do you tell someone who tells you that they want to become a Christian?

In Mark 1:15 we see Jesus calling out to people in Galilee to “*repent and believe the good news!*” We see elsewhere in scripture that [belief and repentance] are the proper responses to becoming a Christian, and a follower of Jesus Christ. In Acts 17:30, after revealing the truth of God to Areopagus in Athens, Paul says that God now “*commands all people everywhere to repent.*” In John 5:24, Jesus says, “*I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes in Him who sent me, has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.*”

There's a lot packed into these two words – repentance and belief. We are going to look at each separately and explore a little more thoroughly of what we mean. These two words are a great summary of what it means to be a Christian.

**A Christian is someone who has repented and believed—and who CONTINUES to repent and believe.**

Want to become a Christian?

Repent and believe!

It's a JOYFUL RESPONSE!

1. So, let's talk a bit more about: **Belief**

What do you think we mean when we tell someone that they must believe? [everyone believes in SOMETHING, most will say they BELIEVE in God]

a. Trust

While belief means agreeing that the gospel is true, it also means more than that. James makes this point vividly when he says that even demons believe that there is ONE God (James 2:19). Yet, this doesn't make demons Christian. We can give a concurring head-nod to something without putting our trust in it. Belief is not merely agreeing to the facts of the

gospel, it means personally relying on those facts. Belief is trusting or having faith that God did create the world and rules over it. It agrees with His statement that we rebelled against His rule and deserve His just punishment. It has faith in His promise that Jesus Christ died for our sin and was raised to life for our justification.

Such a belief will transform the way we think and the way we live. Our actions will start to line up with the gospel and God's Word. We'll begin to trust in God's promises of salvation. We'll begin offering prayers in faith to an unseen God. We'll begin changing every area of our lives – where we spend our money, what we do with our time, who we date, who we marry, and where we focus our energy – to glorify God. We'll begin reading His Word because we trust that what God says is true, and we'll start obeying His Word for the same reason. We'll begin hoping in the new heaven and the new earth, and we'll even begin telling others the gospel!

#### b. The Object of our trust/belief/faith

Furthermore, what we should remember to emphasize, as we explain that believing is trusting, is to point to the *object* of our trust.

It's not just belief that matters, but also *what* we're believing *in*. There is an object to our belief, and that object says everything about whether our belief is grounded firmly or not. A Christian is not someone who "just believes" or "has faith". A Christian is someone who believes in Jesus Christ and His gospel, because "*salvation is found nowhere else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved*" (Acts 4:10-12).

John 3:16 says, "*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*"

Notice it's not "believe him" but "believe in him." Saving faith is trust in Jesus Christ as a living person for forgiveness of sins and for eternal life with God.

#### c. Trusting in God also requires continual belief

The last thing we want to mention about belief is that it's not a once-and-done thing. This should already be obvious from what we've already said, but we need to be clear on this point. In John 3:36, Jesus says, "*Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life.*" It's not "whoever believed" (past tense), but "whoever believes" (present tense). A Christian is one that continues in this belief.

\*\*\*This is the picture we have in taking the LORD'S SUPPER...all those who partake are confessing again, just like baptism that we are still trusting in Jesus' perfect life, death, and resurrection to save us from eternal judgment.

While merely walking down an aisle once, in response to an altar call, may be an expression of this belief that we've been talking about, it's certainly not the full picture of what belief is. In the same way, just because someone prayed a prayer once asking Jesus into their heart, it doesn't mean that they're a Christian. Belief in scripture is understood to be continual trust in Christ, and not just momentary assent.

The biblical formula for responding to the gospel is repentance and belief. This is all that is required. There's NO magic words to say, it's not about raising your hand to accept Christ as your Savior, and it's not about walking down an aisle. It's about living day-in and day-out in repentance and belief.

1 John 3:6 says, "*NO ONE who lives in [Jesus]...abides in Him keeps on sinning.*"

As evangelists, we're not here to seal the deal and give our personal affirmation that they are now a Christian. Rather, we should point them to God's promises of forgiveness for those who repent and believe in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins. Our assurance...now and forever more will only ultimately be based on Christ and His SAVING WORK on the cross.

*Questions or Comments or Encouragements?*

## **2. Repentance**

The second word that we want to look at is "repentance." And like belief, it's a loaded word.

### a. Turning from Sin

Repentance is primarily turning from our sin whether in thought, word, or deed. Peter tells the people in Acts 3:19 to "*Repent...and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out.*" If we're on a road, sin is what we're doing when we drive on that road away from God.

What does repentance look like?

Repentance would be slamming on our brakes and making a U-turn. It's not dwelling on shameful thoughts. It's, putting to death our deceitfulness in speech. It's not getting drunk on alcohol. It's resisting our pride and self-centeredness. Repentance is a heart adjustment. When we repent, we're showing that we're no longer following that which is opposed to God. We stop sinning, and we begin to take God's side against our sin. We don't indulge our sinful natures and desires, and we stop defending our evil actions.

To put it more strongly, repentance means hating our sin and resisting it. We've taken up arms and have begun fighting with it, for the sole purpose of putting it to death because we love our God. Repenting doesn't mean that we never stop sinning. As long as we're living

in this world, we'll continue to sin. The difference, though, between a Christian and a non-Christian is that the Christian will struggle with their sin and make war against it.

#### b. Godly Sorrow

In addition, repentance isn't just feeling sorry that we've sinned. It's not merely emotions. We can't say we've repented because we feel bad about our sin. There are unfortunate consequences to sin. If I lie to my boss and get fired, I'm going to wish I DIDN'T lie and feel bad about it. But while everyone feels sorry because of the consequence for making a bad choice, a Christian's sorrow will show the fruit of repentance. They will renounce their sin, commit to forsaking it, and walk in obedience to Christ.

Paul says that, "*Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death*" (2 Cor. 7:10). Belief is NOT without action. There was a reason why Jesus called people to both repent and believe the good news.

\*\*\*Belief and repentance are not mutually exclusive.

- They're two sides of the same coin.
- If we turn from sin in repentance, we turn to God in trust.

Conversion is a single action of turning from sin in repentance and turning to Christ in faith.

James 2:17 says, "*Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.*"

*Questions or Comments?*

#### E. "I'm Already a Christian"

The fifth and final response that we might get when speaking to someone about the gospel is that they tell you that "they're already a Christian". How do we respond to this person?

In this day in age, being a Christian might mean a LOT of things to a lot of people. It's good to be clear whether or not they believe the gospel message. If they do, then we should look for fruit in their life. For example, are they members of an evangelical church? How has God been growing them spiritually? In what areas do they struggle with sin?

#### IV. Conclusion

Let's conclude.

In the first class, we defined what evangelism is.

We said that evangelism is presenting a SPECIFIC message (the Gospel of Jesus Christ)

- to a specific people (lost men and women),
- in the power of the Holy Spirit,
- with a specific purpose (the aim that they would repent and believe).

By God's grace, I hope that you've been helped to do this, over these past FIVE WEEKS.

\*\*\* Class Practice: spend time practicing some of these conversations (if there is time)

Close by praying together as a class. Pray for these specific things:

1. That we would believe the Gospel more and more as individuals and as a Church.
2. That as individuals we would be consumed with a passion for proclaiming the Gospel.
3. That as a church we would be defined by a culture of evangelism.
4. That we would be blessed to see the fruit of our efforts for the Kingdom of God.
5. That God would all glory from all our words, thoughts, and deeds.

## APPENDIX 1

Philippians 3:10-11

“I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.”

Aren't the wicked also resurrected?

Yes, the wicked are also resurrected but for a different purpose than those who are in Christ. Acts 24:15 says, “there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.” All of the dead will be raised, but the wicked will be raised to be judged and won't be received into God's blessed dwelling. In God's justice, the wicked are given their due. John 5:28-29 says, “Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out – those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.”

What did Jesus' resurrection make possible?

(Raised with Christ – Adrian Warnock)

- The sending of the Spirit (Acts 2:33)
- Physical healings (Acts 3:15-16)
- The conversion of sinners (Acts 3:26)
- Salvation by union with Jesus (Acts 4:11-12)
- Jesus' role as the leader of his church (Acts 5:30-31; 9)
- Forgiveness of sins (Acts 5:30-31)
- Comfort for the dying (Acts 7)
- The commissioning of gospel messengers (Acts 9; 10:42)
- Freedom from the penalty and power of sin (Acts 13:37-39)
- Assurance that the gospel is true (Acts 17:31)
- Our own resurrection (Acts 17:31)
- Jesus' future judgment of this world (Acts 17:31)

### III. [Let's consider] Implications for Evangelism

Well, before we conclude, let's ask what all of this means for our evangelism?

How does the FACT that Jesus became MAN and DIED for Sinner impact our evangelism?

- 1) We must know the bad news before we can know the good news;
- 2) Jesus is the focal point of ALL scripture;
- 3) We can't save ourselves;
- 4) Christianity is NOT just another religion – it's the only one that rescues...the only one that saves;
- 5) God's holiness, justice, and mercy are consistent within His divine being;
- 6) The gospel makes sense – there is no inconsistency in the story

[PRACTICE]

Have the class pair up and work through the first 4 cells of Two Ways to Live—including (ideally) saying the verses from memory.

### IV. Conclusion

So to summarize,

- while we were UNDER God's wrath
- sinners before a HOLY God –
- God responds to our HELPLESS state.

In His love – and not because of anything we had done –

- God purposed to save us.
- And His plan for salvation centered on Jesus Christ,
- the Son of God, who took on human flesh.

Jesus lived a sinless life,

- and then died on the cross
- to suffer God's wrath in our place.
- His atonement took away our sins and
- brought us forgiveness
- so that we might be saved and have eternal life with God.

Brothers and sisters... This is the good news of the gospel.

And Lord willing,  
we'll follow up NEXT WEEK with the continuation of this good news  
with Christ's resurrection and His eternal reign as King.

## APPENDIX 2

What Is the Message of Evangelism?

Now then, what is this specific message we are to present?

The message of good news begins with God as loving ruler and creator- he created the world and man. Revelation 4:11 says, "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power. For you created all things. And by your will they were created and have their being."

God is worthy to receive glory and honor and power. He is the loving ruler and creator.

But man rebelled, wanting to be king. Man tried to run his own life his own way. In essence, man tried to dethrone God. Romans 3:10-12 says, "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."

But so what? We all know that "nobody's perfect" and "to err is human." What's the big deal? The big and eternal deal is that God will not let people keep on rebelling against Him forever. He will one day call us to account for everything we have done. Hebrews 9:27 says, "Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment." We will all die, and we will all face God's judgment, a judgment according to God's holy and righteous character and standard. Therefore, the punishment for rebellion against God is death and eternal torment in hell.

But God so loved the world, that he gave his One and Only Son, Jesus Christ, to come to earth as a man, to live the perfect life no one else could and thus deserving no punishment. Jesus Christ died on the cross, taking the punishment we deserve and providing the offer of forgiveness. 1 Peter 3:18 says, "Christ died

for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit.”

God accepted Jesus’ death as payment in full for sins of people like you and me and demonstrated His acceptance by raising Him from the dead. Jesus conquered death, and now gives new life. And one day Jesus will return to judge the world.

Philippians 2:9-11 says, “Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

And so, God demands a response. There are only two ways to live. Our way, by continuing to reject God as ruler, bringing condemnation, or God’s way, to repent and believe, submit to Christ as our Ruler, and rely on Jesus’ death and resurrection alone for salvation.

Friends, this message is the gospel in a nutshell, the good news about Jesus Christ! This good news is the specific message that the Christian brings to the lost world around him. And later today and in the coming weeks, we will be unpacking this glorious message.

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **Depravity of Man**

People may think that they’re free to do whatever they want. And in a sense, they’re right. But that’s not the issue. As slaves to sin, they’re free to do what they want, but they don’t have the ability to do what is good. An example of this is an alcoholic or a crack addict. These people are free to do what they want, but the problem is that their wants, their desires, are to do the very things that destroy them. They’re not free. Rather, they’re enslaved.

In the words of Jesus, we love darkness (John 3:19). We can do whatever we want, but by nature we want to reject God. By nature, we are dead in our sins. So, remind your friends that though they may feel free, their sinful desires make them slaves unless God intervenes.

## **APPENDIX 4**

### **Preaching the Gospel to Children**

Scripture identifies children as good gifts from the Lord. **Psalms 127** it says, “Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward. And **Proverbs 17:6** says, “Grandchildren are the crown of the aged, and the glory of children is their fathers.”

As persons made in the image of God, they are to be incredibly valued and diligently taught to bear God’s image well.

Scripture teaches that apart from grace, all children enter the world with a corrupt, sinful nature inherited from Adam. In Adam, their rebellion against God and guilt before God warrants condemnation by God. Therefore, all children need the great salvation that is Christ.

The **GOSPEL**, meaning “GOOD NEWS,” is Scripture’s all-embracing message that promises this great salvation to sinners through the person and work of Jesus Christ, yet threatens judgment upon those who reject Him. Faith in the truth of this gospel message unites children to Jesus Christ and all the saving benefits secured for God’s people.

However, that **faith will not come apart from the right hearing of the preached word of Christ as articulated in the gospel** (Rom 10:14-17).

*So, let’s learn together, be equipped, and be reminded of the very message by which our children must be saved.*

### **Gospel on the Ground**

We see in the Bible two frames of reference for the same gospel message a micro level and a macro level. The gospel on the ground is where we will see grace transforming the individual human heart and this is why we use the phrase, “personal” salvation. The gospel on the ground is God’s story of redemption as explained by the Apostle Paul’s outline in the letter to the Romans, perhaps the clearest explanations than any other book of the Bible, and so we can summarize the contents of the gospel of Jesus Christ: **God, Man, Christ, Response**.

In chapter 1-4 of Romans Paul tells his readers

1. That it is God to whom they are accountable
2. Their problem is that they have rebelled against God
3. God’s solution to the problem is the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rom 3.21), BUT NOW
4. How they can be included in this salvation (Rom. 3.22).

### **We are going to try and answer four crucial questions**

1. Who made us, and to whom are we accountable?
2. What is our problem? In other words, are we in trouble and why?
3. What is God’s solution to that problem? How has he acted to save us from it?
4. How do I – myself, right here, right now – how do I come to be included in that salvation? What makes this good news for me and not just for someone else?

We need to always be leading and shepherding our kids and the children and youth in our ministries to answer these questions.

### **God**

The gospel begins with God. Scripture assumes and teaches that God is the starting point. Genesis 1:1 literally says, in the beginning God. In the first 3 chapters of the Bible we see that God **CREATED** the heavens and the earth. God is the beautiful creator and mighty sustainer of everything and He sovereignly rules over that universe and He is the gracious initiator of his saving purposes.

If our children are to grasp and believe in the gospel we must introduce them to **God the Righteous Creator, King, and Judge**. Without knowing God in this way, the rest of the gospel message will remain irrelevant to them. Therefore, as we unfold Scripture’s story to children, we must equip and teach them to know who God is and what He is like.

#### **1. God is the sovereign creator of all things**

Nothing and nobody existed before God. By His powerful word, he spoke and the world and everything in it was made.

Many biblical passages tell us how creation testifies to God's glory and power. **Ps. 19:1** – “the sky above proclaims His handiwork.” And Paul writes in **Romans 1:20** – that God's “invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made.”

God has total control over his creation, and rules over it with absolute authority. God owns and sustains everything (the cattle on a thousand hills). Meaning that all creation is utterly dependent on God, and He has absolute claim on everything and every person's life. Nothing that exists belongs to anyone else other than God. **Abraham Kuyper said “ There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry: ‘MINE!’”**

So, our kids need to understand that we are created and that every one of us is the result of the idea, the plan, and the action of God himself.

**Greg Gilbert author of “What is the Gospel?” writes, “None of us is autonomous, and understanding that fact is the key to understanding the gospel...We are created. We are made. And therefore we are owned.”**

## 2. *God is holy and righteous*

God is completely perfect, holy, pure, separate from sin, and perfect in every way all the time. He always does what is right, because He always acts according to his holy character and perfect will.

God is the final standard of what is right and the true judge of what is wrong. And because He created us, God has the right to tell us how to live. God is always good and knows what is best for His creation and so He gave them laws that would preserve and increase their happiness and well-being.

## 3. *Created for His glory*

**Isaiah 43:7** tells us that everything (**that we**) exists to bring glory to God. **1 Cor. 10:31** – “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

**“The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.” (Westminster Confession of Faith)**

That means that God designed people, even the youngest of children, to delight in making much of His person and worth, to be glad in showing how valuable He is in the world, and to enjoy heeding His holy and precious Word.

The “enjoyment of God forever,” we call that worship. The essence of worshipping God is acknowledging, submitting to, and enjoying the supremacy of God's glory in all things. We are created to worship God and bring Him glory. Everybody worships something. You are either worship God or your worshipping some of His stuff.

God is creator and owns everything and is worthy of worship and everybody must worship and obey God. The gospel is God's response to the rejection of His rights over His creation.

**Which brings us to the PROBLEM.**

## **Man/Sin**

We are designed to bring glory to God and enjoy Him forever (to worship) but as **Matt Chandler writes, “we have attempted to hijack God's story about himself and rewrite it with ourselves at the center.”**

By our nature we and our children delight in the lusts of the flesh and worship anything but God. This is idolatry! Instead of loving Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength; instead of attributing to Him glory and honor and praise and power and wisdom and strength – we try to take his toys and run.

Since the Fall (Gen. 3) every human being enters the world with this corrupt bondage inherited from Adam (Rom 5:12-19) and they cannot meet the requirements of God's holy law. Every godless thought, deed, action, and motives are personally offensive to God.

**Sin** is rejecting God's authority over us and declaring our independence. And all people will be held accountable to God (Rom 3. 19). God is holy and righteous, and therefore, he will not excuse sin. Romans 6:23 says God will deal with sin by death (physically and spiritually). In other words the payment we earn for our sins is to die a spiritual and physical death.

Therefore, children not only do bad things; their very natures are bad (Rom 3:9-20). They are sinners and unable to reflect God's glory as they were created to do.

When we talk about sin to our kids we have to gently guide them to the root problem a bad heart not just behaviors or the specific sins themselves. Modern psychologists and teaching philosophies will tell us to steer away from this kind of confrontation, because it may harm the child's "self-esteem." However, the Bible's assessment of human beings is not that they need to be affirmed in what is good in them, but saved from all that is bad in themselves. Let's not be interested in building up self-esteem, to that they think more of themselves, but by helping their God-esteem, so that they think more of God than they do themselves. Thomas Watson put it this way: "Till sin be bitter, Christ will not be sweet."

### **Just a couple warnings as we talk explain sin to kids:**

- We must be careful of not confusing sin with sin's effects – meaning we don't teach that Jesus came to save humanity from an innate sense of guilt or meaninglessness or purposelessness or emptiness. Which those are real problems that people deeply feel, but Scripture teaches that **WE** are the problem and meaninglessness and guilt are merely symptoms of a much deeper and profound problem: our sin.
- We must be careful of not reducing sin to just a broken relationship – meaning we don't teach that sin is merely a relationship tiff between God and man and what is need is for us to simply apologize and accept God's forgiveness. It communicates that there is no broken law, no violated justice, no righteous wrath, no holy judgment – and **therefore, ultimately, no need for a substitute to bear the judgment for us.**
- We must be careful not to confuse sin with sins – meaning there is a huge difference between understanding yourself to be guilty of sins, and knowing yourself to be guilty of sin. Most people have no problem at all admitting that they have committed sins (in the plural sense) as long as they can think about those sins as isolated little mistakes in an otherwise pretty good life. **Sin is in us and of us, not just on us.** It is a deep, deep heart issue. One in which we cannot fix it, and so we are by nature children of wrath (Eph. 2:3).

Scripture teaches that our sinfulness of not worshipping God and the rebellion stemming from it wanting our independence, separates us from fellowship with God and makes us objects of His just wrath and displeasure (Eph. 2:1-3). In **Isaiah 59:2** it says – "Your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear."

But thank God for his response to all our sin and rebellion by the wrath-absorbing cross of Christ.

### **Christ**

"So far we have seen that the Scriptures reveal God as sovereign and glorious and tell us that his sovereign plan is to make manifest the supremacy of his glory.

We have also seen that the Bible tells us that we fall short of God's glory in our sinfulness, which is made manifest in our predisposition and efforts to worship thing and people that are not God.

Because God's passion is for his own glory, then and because he is perfectly righteous, his response to our idolatry is wrath, eternal condemnation administered by him in consigning us to eternal conscious torment in hell.

So we have highlighted the bad news. The problem is that there is a chasm between God and us, and the problem compounding that problem is that not only does our sinfulness cause this chasm, but our sinfulness prevents us from being able to bridge the chasm ourselves. The same law that diagnoses our depravity cannot cure it. We are not just down; we are out. There is no pulling ourselves up by our bootstraps in this situation. We have dug ourselves into a grave too deep to climb out. We need radical intervention. Enter grace." – Explicit Gospel (p.53)

\*\*\*For children we can review the person and work of Jesus Christ by giving attention to five summarizing sentences:

1. God the Father has revealed himself perfectly in God the Son.
2. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was crucified for sinners.
3. God the Father raised Jesus from the dead.
4. Jesus Christ sent God the Holy Spirit.
5. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is coming again.

**(1).** Forever the Son has existed with the Father as God. The Son has always been fully God and will always be fully God. God the Father, sent his only Son, into the world as a man, a real flesh and blood man named Jesus. Jesus humbled himself, entered the world, being conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born to the virgin named Mary. As a man, Jesus bears the image of the invisible God. By being made like his brothers (you and I) in every respect, yet also divine, only Jesus could and did accomplish all the saving work planned by the Father for his fallen people and broken created order.

**(2).** If the wages of sin is death, and God is a righteous and just God He must not allow for sin to go unpunished. Unless something happens, some intervention to remove the guilt of our disobedience and rebellion against God, we are still separated from him and destined not for the joys of a new heaven and new earth, but for the eternal punishment of hell. And so, Jesus suffered death at the hands of sinful human beings, and Jesus' death alone achieved total salvation for sinners. (the great exchange – 2 Cor. 5:21). This is called a substitutionary atonement – though we and our kids and every human being that has ever lived deserves ongoing subjection to God's wrath in hell, Jesus bore the entire weight of that curse for those who believe in Him. Jesus absorbed the wrath of God for us.

In his death on the cross Jesus satisfied God's wrath against sinners (Rom 3:25-26), brought about forgiveness of their sins, imputed to them his own righteousness, and reconciled God to them and them to God.

**(3).** This is only good news because Jesus the Son of God is no longer dead! After enduring the cross in which God the Father, who is holy and righteous and who's eyes are too pure to look on evil, looked at His Son, saw the sins of His Son's people resting on his shoulders, turned away in disgust, and poured out his wrath on his own Son, Jesus suffering death and then He rose bodily from the dead on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, proving God's faithfulness to His word.

The resurrection guaranteed and sealed salvation for his people upon. It is the ultimate defeat over sin, death and the devil. And the resurrection means for the believer –

**“Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died – more than that, who was raised – who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.” Rom. 8:33-34**

(4). When Jesus was raised and ascended to Heaven it was so that the Holy Spirit might come upon the church to bear witness to the risen and glorified Savior, Jesus Christ.

The Spirit, who Jesus declared it is better that He go to the Father so the Spirit can come, reveals the truth of God through the writings of the Apostles concerning the gospel of Christ, thus convicting people of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He regenerates human hearts, gives new spiritual life to sinners, seals believers for the day of redemption, and empowers them to do the ongoing work of the ministry.

(5). Just as Jesus rose from the grave bodily He will personally, bodily, and visible return. He will come to establish his kingdom in its fullness on earth. The Lord will reign in perfect harmony with his people, and they will never cease to bring Him glory and enjoy Him forever. And in last chapter of the Bible it says He is coming soon!

## **Response**

But, this raises a question of WHO are “his people?” His people are those that respond to the gospel with faith and repentance. The gospel always demands both of its hearers.

Faith is a gift granted by God to those His Word has humbled. Faith includes a preserving trust and an enduring confidence that God fulfills and provides his saving promises through Jesus Christ alone. While grace is God’s sovereign unmerited favor by which someone is saved, faith put in Jesus is rely on him, and trusting him to do what he has promised to do. Simply put – we are relying on Jesus to secure for us a righteous verdict from God the Judge, rather than a guilty one.

Our children must be exhorted to entrust themselves to the person of Jesus, who helps them abide by His word and submit to His lordship. Jesus himself should always remain the object of their faith.

Repentance includes not only the person’s genuine sorrow for sin and their despising of it, but also their total forsaking of it for the purpose of ongoing obedience to Jesus.