

Learning from Jesus ... learning to live where the load is light



“How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’” —Isaiah 52:7

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What is The Gospel?

Let's start with a little pop quiz:

- What does the word “gospel” literally mean? _____
- What is the message of the gospel? (write a clear and comprehensive statement in 15 words or less)

- What are the key passages that best summarize the message of the gospel (besides John 3:16)? _____

Knowing the answer to these three questions is essential as disciples and witnesses of Jesus Christ. Many of us have heard preachers say “you need Jesus so say ‘yes’ to Jesus” or “Jesus loves you and wants you to have a relationship with you, so give him your heart.” But what does this mean? What must we say “yes” to? Let's take a moment and answer the above three questions about the meaning of the gospel.

- What does the word ‘gospel’ literally mean? Good News. I love how the Louw and Nida Greek Dictionary defines the word ‘gospel’— “information that causes joy.” It is really good news!
- Bad News: The fact that the message about Jesus is called “good news” indicates that there is also bad news. In order to understand just how good the good news is, we must understand how bad the bad news is.
Key Scripture #1 – Ephesians 2:1-10. We will walk through most of Ephesians 2:1-10 but at this point let's focus on the first three verses, which describe the bad news (Ephesians 2:1-3).

- At what stage of life does this passage refer to pre-Christian or Christian? _____

- What does the passage mean when it says we were “dead in our transgressions and sins”? _____

- According to this passage, who is it that we used to follow? _____

- According to this passage, how does a person that followed this spirit behave? _____

- As such, according to this passage, what was our relationship like with God? _____

- An acronym that helps me remember what this passage says about our state before we become Christians is, DEAD. We were DEAD:
D – Disobedient to God, and therefore
E – Enemies of God,
A – Alienated from him, and
D – Dead spiritually

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As I mentioned above, we must understand how bad off we were to really understand just how good the “good news” of Jesus is. Ephesians 2:1-3 indicated that we weren’t partially wounded. Our relationship with God wasn’t somewhat fractured. No, we were as bad off as possible. We were DEAD!

3. Now that we have an understanding of the bad news, we are desperately ready to hear the “good news.” Let’s focus on this question: What is the “good news”? In a general sense, it is the story of Jesus. But what are the key pieces of this story that make it such “good news”? A great passage that summarizes the “good news” is *I Corinthians 15:1-5* – *Key Scripture #2*.

- a. What is it that Paul reminded the Corinthian Christians of in this passage? _____

- b. What was the result of the gospel in their lives? _____

- c. How important was the gospel message that Paul passed on to them? _____

- d. In verses three to five, Paul reminds them of the heart of the gospel message. List the key pieces that make up the heart of the message. _____

- e. According to verse three, what was unique about Jesus’ death as compared to anyone else’s death (write the words from verse three that indicate this fact)? _____

- f. In speaking of the heart of the gospel message, why did Paul include the resurrection of Christ? _____

I Corinthians 15:1-5 is so helpful for us to see the key pieces of the gospel. The two key facts are Christ died for our sins, and Christ rose from the dead. When we help a person become a Christian, we haven’t told them the gospel until we’ve told them these two facts. I have heard people preach the so called “gospel” by simply saying things like, “Jesus loves you and wants a relationship with you. Just say ‘yes’ to Him.” According to *I Corinthians 15:1-5* (and the rest of the Bible), that is not the gospel! It is part of the story, but what makes this relationship possible is His death and resurrection. And don’t forget the resurrection. I’ve shared the gospel so many times and have accidentally left Jesus dead on the cross (forgetting to mention the resurrection). Our Lord is risen! If it wasn’t for His resurrection we would have no “good news.” To help us remember these two key facts it is helpful to remember two images: the cross and the empty tomb.

4. Result #1: Now that we’ve taken a brief look at the bad news and the good news, let’s focus on the results of the good news. In other words, let’s consider what difference the good news make in our lives. Let’s return to *Ephesians 2:1-10* – *Key Scripture #1* and focus on verses four to five.

- a. How does the first word in verse four impact the flow of thought when reading verses one to five? _____

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- b. According to verses four and five, what was the result of God’s love and mercy displayed to us through Christ’s death? _____

- c. According to this passage, what state were we in when we received this great benefit? _____

- d. According to this passage, what good deed did we do to gain such a benefit? _____

5. Result #2: The first key result of Christ’s death for our sins and resurrection is new life, eternal life. The second key result is found in *Key Scripture #3 – Acts 2:38*.
- a. Because of Christ’s death and resurrection, what does God do with our sins? _____

- b. When thinking of the bad news (Ephesians 2:1-3), why is this second result so critical? _____

6. Response #1: We have seen that the gospel (the good news) is that Christ died for our sins and rose from the dead. We have also seen the two key results of these two facts in our lives – new life and forgiveness of sins. One question remains: What must we do to gain this new life and forgiveness? To answer this question let’s return to *Key Scripture #1 – Ephesians 2:1-10* and focus on verses eight to ten.
- a. In looking at verses eight and nine, what is it that our human nature tells us to do in order to gain the benefits of the gospel? _____

- b. Yet in verse eight, what one word does God use to directly contradict what we think we must do to gain these benefits? _____

- c. According to this passage, what is the response we must have in order to gain the benefits of the gospel? _____

- d. When considering the above discussion of the gospel, what is it that we are to have faith in (be specific)? _____

7. Response #2: Now that we’ve taken a look at the first response to the gospel, let’s focus on the second. Turn again to *Key Scripture #3 – Acts 2:38*.
- a. According to this verse, what two ways are we to respond to the gospel message? _____

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(A passage that helps us understand the concept of repentance is Acts 26:20. This verse indicates that true repentance is a decision flowing from a deep desire to stop our sinful ways and obey God. When making this decision, we know that we will fail and sin again at times. Yet God will continue to forgive our sin).

(Baptism – The response God is looking for is repentance. Once we have repented we must also get baptized. Baptism does not equal repentance. Baptism doesn’t result in the forgiveness of our sins. It is an external symbol of an internal reality. Baptism is like a wedding ring. A wedding ring doesn’t make a man and woman married. It symbolizes that they are married).

The most important question in life we must ask ourselves is this: Have I responded with faith and repentance to the good news that Jesus died for my sins and rose from the dead? If you have, you have received complete forgiveness for all your sins and a new life with God that will last for eternity. So have you done this? If not, why not do it right now? If you do believe and want to repent of your sins, simply talk to God about this. Let him know you believe and deeply desire to repent. Thank him that Jesus died on the cross for your sins and rose from the dead. That’s what God requires of us to receive the new life and forgiveness. If you have just had faith in the gospel and repented of your sins for the first time, please share it with your small group leader or a Christian you admire and trust so they can help you know how to live in your new relationship with God.

8. Now that we’ve looked at these key passages and have a better understanding of the gospel, let’s take another shot at the pop quiz we did at the beginning. Please try to answer the following questions without looking back at the above lesson:
 - a. What does the word “gospel” literally mean? _____

 - b. What is the message of the gospel? (write a clear and comprehensive statement in 15 words or less) _____

 - c. What are the key passages that best summarize the message of the gospel (besides John 3:16)? _____

Way to go! See, you’re really learning! You CAN share this good news with others!

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*Where God is Praised
Lives are Changed
and People are Loved*

*“Come to Me all you who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest.
Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble at heart.”*

Hi Bible Study Friends!

Pastor Andy has written an excellent study on “What is the Gospel”. Carefully do the study, as it is a great foundation for the Life Concept series we will be starting next. We are rounding the last corner of this Bible study year; can you believe it? And, I am so excited for this next phase. For the month of April we are going to be capping off our discipleship series with some basic studies designed to equip us with great information so that we are more confident in who we are in Christ. These studies are also great tools to use to help others come to the same understanding.

No matter where you are on your journey I know this will be helpful for you. Yes, we will be encouraging you to consider who God might have placed on your shore to grow with, but don't let that scare you! This is all in God's control. You may not be ready yet, or you may be anxious to pass on what you're learning. Either way, I want to encourage you to finish strong! Take time with these lessons, listen intently to our guest teachers and pray for God's will to be done through us.

The materials cost for the Life Concept studies you will be receiving after this lesson is \$5.00 total for a set. We need to ask you to help us cover this expense. Just give \$5.00 to your small group leader when you can. If that's a problem for you, don't worry about it.

I am suggesting that you not write on the Life Concept studies themselves. I am going to get an inexpensive composition notebook or spiral to write my answers in and take notes in as needed. I encourage you to do the same.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please don't hesitate to ask. Pray for our guest teachers. Be ready to listen and grow as God speaks to us through His word and those who have agreed to share their stories with us.

Learning with you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Grace Cabalka".

Grace Cabalka