

What is the Gospel?

1. The Gospel according to Paul

a) The gospel is about Jesus the Lord

'Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.'

Romans 1:1-4

b) The gospel is about salvation

'For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.'

Romans 1:16

- **From sin & wrath**

- God is angry...

'For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.'

Romans 1:18

- ...because His existence and nature is clear...

'For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his 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. So they are without excuse.'

Romans 1:19-20

- ...and yet we have rebelled.

'For although they knew God, they did not honour him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.'

Romans 1:21-23

"None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."
Romans 3:10-12

- **Through Jesus**

'But now the righteousness of God has been manifested... the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.'

Romans 3:21-25

- **For all who believe**

'It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.'

Romans 4:24-25

'For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.'

Romans 3:28

- **Into a transformed life**

'What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin...? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?

Romans 6:1-2

'I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.'

Romans 12:1-2

2. Distortions of the gospel message

DISCUSSION

What is missing in each of the following presentations of the gospel?

'All of us are broken, sinful, selfish, and prideful people. We carry around the baggage of our hurts, our resentments, and our jealousies. As a result we are just a shell of the kind of people God intends us to be. But our God is a loving God who accepts us and loves us just as we are. He can comfort us, heal us, and make us whole, real, authentic, living, laughing people.'

'We all make a mess of our own lives. Sin is the difference between what we are and what we might have been. It is the rubbish that clutters up our lives and clutters our world. But because God loves us, He sent us His son. Jesus died to save us from the pollution of our sin.'

'Here's the gospel in a phrase. Because Christ died for us, those who trust in him may know that their guilt has been pardoned once and for all. What will we have to say before the bar of God's judgment? Only one thing. Christ died in my place. That's the gospel.'

'Jesus came to show us how to live revolutionary lives of love, compassion, and acceptance. By learning from his teachings and following him, we can live the full and complete lives that God intended. Come and get on-board with God's vision for a renewed world full of peace and justice, and become part of the story!'

'The world in which we live so often feels pressured. These pressures can really make one feel: "What's the point?" Through trusting in Jesus, God's Son, for the forgiveness of their sins, Christians have found peace with God, the world and themselves. This gives real contentment in life. Christians have discovered that God is concerned about their daily lives. This includes an awareness that life is not meaningless but has purpose and direction. Why not give God a try? What is there to lose? There is much that could be gained!'

Why does the gospel get diluted?

- a) To make it less offensive
- b) To make it more attractive

'For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.'

Romans 1:16