



New Life Christian Community

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." 2 Cor 5:17

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Pastoral Ponderings

If you know Jesus as your Lord and Savior, then you know there is a special calling on your life to share the good news about Jesus, what we call the Gospel, with others. Sometimes, though, we hesitate to enter into an evangelistic or witnessing moment because we are unsure of what the Gospel is actually. In this pondering, I would like to summarize the Gospel for you so that in the future you might know how to tell the story of Christ's salvific work. Throughout the article, I will embolden the key elements that must be present in any presentation of the good news of Jesus Christ.

Paul, writing to the Roman Christians in order to reveal the message he would come to them preaching, summarized his understanding of the gospel in this way: "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is *the power of God* for salvation to everyone who believes... For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith" (Rom. 1.16-17, *ESV*). In another epistle, First Corinthians, Paul again declares that the gospel is the *power of God* (1 Cor. 1.18, 24). When Peter preached the first evangelistic message of the Apostles, he began by stating, "Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you *by God* with mighty signs and wonders and signs that *God did through him* in your midst" (Acts 2.22). With this weight of biblical evidence, any summary of the gospel must begin with a statement paralleling one of the following: the Gospel is about God, the Gospel is the work of God, the Gospel is the power of God. The Gospel, which means good news, is the good news that God has powerfully done something through Jesus Christ. But, what has God done?

Mark's account of the good news begins with this statement: "the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mark 1.1). John begins his account in the same way, "In the beginning" (John 1.1)... Both introductions force the reader to consider the beginning of time, which is divinely and perfectly documented in Genesis 1:1. In the beginning, God created all and saw that His creation was very good. Genesis 1 reveals that God alone is the Sovereign God over all things and, therefore, **God possesses all authority** in heaven and on earth. As the Sovereign Creator, God determined that man and woman should live a specific way before Him, without sin. However, man and woman determined to worship themselves, the created, rather than praising God the Creator (Rom. 1.1).

In Genesis 3, which is a historical account, Adam and Eve commit the first sin by determining what is good instead of trusting God for His goodness. Due to this crime against the authority of God, Adam and Eve, as representatives of the entire human race, are cast out of God's presence and experience physical and spiritual death. They, and all subsequent human beings, are no longer permitted fellowship with the Holy God.

Because of an inherited sinful nature, passed from Adam to all mankind, man is now totally depraved and utterly unable to reach God through any work **Continued --->**

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Pastoral Ponderings Cont.

or merit. The Law of the Old Testament proves over and over again that man, in himself, is destined to sin and rebel against God as His enemy (Rom. 5.5-11). The only one who could restore the broken relationship between God and man was not sinful man, but the Holy God.

Therefore, driven by love, God, before the foundations of the world, determined to act in order to rectify man's sin problem (Eph. 1.3-10). God's plan was to send His one and only Son into the fallen, broken world that he had cursed. Paul told the Ephesians that God's rescue plan had been set forth in Jesus Christ (Eph. 1.9). Jesus is the good news from God. As fully God, Jesus was able to stand before God in holiness, without sin, and in perfect righteousness. Unlike fallen Adam, who was cast out of fellowship with God because of sin, Christ lived in perfect harmony with almighty God as a result of his holiness. And, since Jesus was also fully man (the hypostatic union), Christ was able to act as a new and better Adam or as a new representative for the human race.

Jesus, as holy God and representative man, took His perfect life and sacrificed it in sinful man's place in order to endure all the wrath of God against sin, which brings us to the heart of the gospel. How can Jesus, the God-man, pay for man's sin? He exchanges his life for man's. This is the heart of the gospel, Jesus Christ's death on the cross atones or pays for man's sin. Gilbert states, "A righteous and holy God can justify the ungodly because in Jesus' death, mercy and justice were perfectly reconciled. The curse was righteously executed, and we were mercifully saved" (69).

That's the good news and it is the power of God; however, after being called by God, man and woman must receive this good news, this gift, in order to know its effect. Jesus, the gospel Himself, calls all men and women to **faith and repentance** (Mark 1.15). Faith is relying on Jesus to represent the unrighteous on the day of judgment. The faithful believe that God will not look on their failures and sins and determine a guilty verdict, but instead God will look on Christ's atoning work of the cross and declare, "perfect!" Repentance is the turning away from sin; it is allowing Jesus Christ to be the Lord of life instead of allowing sin to lord over life.

God, the Sovereign Creator God who possesses all authority, has acted in Jesus Christ to rescue His fallen creation. This is the gospel and it is all vindicated in the fact that Jesus Christ, God's King, is not lying in a tomb somewhere, but that he was **resurrected and is alive and**

reigning today at God's right hand. The faithful know that **Christ is returning in a bodily return soon to judge the living and the dead.** Faith in Christ alone is the only means of salvation on that day.

If you're wondering, this is what we call the "creation, fall, redemption, consummation," storyline. God, as the only Sovereign God created, man fell away from God and brought on death because of sin, Jesus alone saves man from sin and death and restores a right relationship with God, and in Jesus the Kingdom of God has come and is coming in a fuller sense on the day when Christ returns. If you'd like a more extensive account of the Gospel, read the entire Bible, but also check out Greg Gilbert's book *What is the Gospel?* in the New Life Resource Center.

Preaching the Gospel with you for the sake of Christ and the glory of God,

Chandler

- Gilbert, Greg. *What Is the Gospel?* Wheaton: Crossway, 2010.

Updating the New Life Directory

I don't know about you, but I often find it difficult to remember people's names. Having a directory helps with this deficiency! We have a vibrant and growing family at New Life. With this growth we want to do everything we can to help people meet one another. As such, we will be updating our long out-of-date directory.

What that means is, over the course of the next three weeks (starting Jan. 28), we will be taking pictures of anyone who wants to get to know others and wants to be known by others at New Life.

This directory is not for partners only. This is for all who call New Life their church home.

We hope that this directory will be a helpful tool for the body of Christ here at New Life Christian Community. As Paul rightly puts it, "So we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another." Let's not remain anonymous any longer.

Check out New Life Online newlifechristiancommunity.org

Find Links to:

- Events • Sermons Online
- Set Lists • The Table • & More

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January Memory Verse

"know that the Lord, He is God! It is He who made us, and we are His; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture." - Psalm 100:3

this week [events]

- 1.28 Forge @ 6:30
- 1.31 Immerse @ 6:15
- 2.1 Men's Bible study @ 6:30 am
- 2.1 Women's Bible Study @ 9:30 am
- 2.1 GriefShare @6:30pm

Today's Passage

JUDGES

Our Desperate Need for the King

Pastor Tony will be teaching from the
Book of Judges.
Our passage for today is Judges 2:1-5.

New Life has an Instagram account! Follow us @newlifechristiancommunity

Sign up in the entry way to be added to New Life Connect

201 State Road 35 N, Dresser, WI ~Sunday service starts at 9:30 am
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