

Session 1 | The Gospel Gap

Primary Passages: Genesis 3, Romans 3

Big Idea

As Christians, our hope in Jesus is central. Yet most of us recognize a gospel deficit in the midst of everyday life. We know Jesus and understand His saving work on the cross, but struggle to see how the gospel helps in the nitty-gritty of daily life. We understand how the gospel saves from yesterday and into tomorrow, but struggle to see how the gospel applies to today.

Definitions

- Gospel Gap means the space between what Jesus did on the cross and what He will do when He returns.
- Sin is disbelieving God by disobeying His Word.
- Idolatry is worshipping anything besides God.
- Total Depravity means that sin affects every aspect of our life; our minds, our wills, our desires, our bodies, etc.

Reflections

What is the gospel gap?

How do we try to fill the gap?

Formalism

Legalism

Activism

Mysticism

Biblicism

Psychology-Ism

Socialism

Why is the gap there?

How do we try to change?

Circumstance

Behavior

Thinking

Self-Understanding

Trust in Jesus

Discussion Questions

- What are the areas of your life where you feel the gospel gap? Areas where you don't think the gospel is actually being applied?
- Which false means of change do you typically fall into?
- What's an area of your life where you want change?

Quote

It's amazing how long it took me to really understand the gospel. Like many Christian, I understood early on that my sins had been forgiven (past grace) and that I was going to spend my eternity with Christ (future grace). But I did not grasp the depth of my need for the benefits of the work of Christ now (present grace). My externalist Christianity needed to be infused with the present power of the gospel. It is not enough to embrace Christ's promise of life after death. We must also embrace his promise of life before death, which is only possible because of Christ's grace at work in our hearts today. (Paul Tripp and Timothy Lane, *How People Change*, 12).

Session 2 | The Good News

Primary Passages: Mark 1:14-15, Ephesians 2:1-10

Big Idea

Everyone has an opinion as to what is central to Jesus' mission and life. You have one. The person sitting next to you has one. I have one. Though the Bible has a nuanced answer to that question, it is also relatively simple. Bound up with Jesus' kingdom is a movement toward repentance and faith. In other words, Jesus is in the business of change.

Definitions

- Gospel means the good news that God in Christ is saving a people for Himself and His glory.
- Growth, Change, Sanctification is the process by which the Holy Spirit applies the effects of Jesus' death and resurrection to patterns of sin and idolatry.

Reflections

Change is at the heart of Jesus' mission

We have stone-cold hearts

The gospel is good news

Therefore, we are...

Justified (Gal 2) ... not condemned.

Adopted (Gal 4) ... not orphans.

Reconciled (2 Cor 5) ... not estranged.

Saved (Acts 2) ... not sinful.

Redeemed (Eph 1) ... not in bondage.

Washed (1 Cor 6) ... not unclean.

Discussion Questions

- If you had to boil down Jesus' mission to one thing or describe it in one sentence, what would that be?
- What are some of the secondary things Jesus' mission entails?
- What connotations does the word gospel have attached to it, negative and positive?
- How would you define the gospel?

Quote

[Jesus] lived the worthy life we have never lived and he died the guilty death we don't want to die. By his life, death, and resurrection, Jesus fulfilled every demand of God in our place. He atoned for our guilt. He satisfied the wrath of God against us. He conquered death on our behalf. He did all that as our substitute, because in our helplessness we could never dig our own way out. God gave us his Son fully, without holding back at all. God even gave him up at the cross. He abandoned him to the desolation of the hell we utterly deserve, so that forever and ever he would give us heavenly things we cannot deserve (Rom 8:32). (Ray Ortlund, *Gospel*, 31).

Session 3 | Change in Community

Primary Passages: Galatians 6

Big Idea

The primary place where healthy change happens is within community. People are the means by which God helps us see who we are. Relationships are usually the place where we see our sin displayed most. The Church isn't a building or a service, but a gathering of people loving each other, bearing each other's burdens, speaking truth, and walking alongside one another through sin and pain and joy and life.

Definitions

The Church is a community of believers, a blood-bought people of God saved from their sin and united in and through Christ to God by the Holy Spirit.

Reflections

Called out and called in

Optional community?

Gospel-centered community

The Church a gift to the Church

Discussion Questions

- What is the hardest part of starting relationships for you? Keeping relationships?
- What makes you nervous to be honest and open with a group of people?
- How can we support one another in changing?
- What keeps you from making change the regular agenda of your relationships?
- What makes you nervous about committing to bearing the burdens of other people?
- What makes it hard to ask for feedback about how you relate with others?
- Everyone's family history affects what their relationships look like. How does your family norms affect your relationships today, either positively or negatively?

Quote

We must conclude that if God created community for this purpose, it should be an essential part of every Christian's life. The marginalization of community within the church and culture has not come from conviction but from apathy and isolation brought on by sin. Isolation is our response to sin. Community is our response to reconciliation. (Brad House, *Community*, 42)

Session 4 | The Big Picture

Primary Passages: Jeremiah 17, Luke 6:43-45

Big Idea

Frameworks are important. We all have specific ways we do certain things. Whether it's washing the dishes or mowing the lawn, all of us have a method or MO for most of what we do on a regular basis. The Big Picture presented in this chapter focuses on the method for walking through life and applying the gospel to every day situations.

Definitions

Heat is the person's situation in daily life, with difficulties, blessings, and temptations.

Thorns are the person's ungodly response to the situation. It includes behavior, the heart driving the behavior, and the consequences that result.

Cross focuses on the presence of God in His redemptive glory and love. Through Christ, He brings comfort, cleansing, and the power to change.

Fruit is the person's new godly response to the situation resulting from God's power at work in the heart. It includes behavior, the heart renewed by grace, and the harvest of consequences that follow.¹

Repentance means turning away from sin.

Faith means turning toward Jesus, trusting that He has forgiven us of the sin we repent of.

Reflections

Centrality of the heart

The Big Picture

Repentance and Faith

¹ Each of these definitions (Heat, Thorns, Cross, Fruit) are taken directly from Paul David Tripp and Timothy Lane, *How People Change*, 83-85.

Discussion Questions

- What situations of Heat do you often find yourself reacting with Thorns ... at work? With your spouse or someone you're dating? With your family? With friends?
- How do you typically deal with challenging situations where your sin and someone else's sin creates conflict? What would you say your MO is in challenging situations? Why do you think that is?
- Would you say that repentance is a regular rhythm in your life? Why or why not?

Quote

As we live our lives, we deal with difficulties or blessings every day. Our hearts are always interacting with these situations and relationships. We are always thinking and desire, trying to make sense of what is happening. There are always things we want. Those thoughts and desires shape the way we respond to what is going on. And because we are sinners, we tend to respond sinfully. Everything we say and do has some result or consequence. We harvest what we plant and every day we plant seed we will harvest in the future. (Tripp and Lane, *How People Change*, 88)