

## What Is the Gospel?

Many people have heard the term, but few can accurately define it. “Gospel” is a word from the Holy Bible that means good news. This message of good news is central to the Christian faith. Here is a brief outline of the Gospel.

There is one true and living God who has revealed Himself in Holy Scripture. He is infinitely superior to us. He eternally self-exists. He had no beginning and has no ending. He is holy, pure, and perfect. He never changes. He is all-powerful. He knows everything. He is present everywhere. He is the very definition of goodness, uprightness, and excellence in every way. He is the standard of right and wrong. He loves that which is consistent with His moral character, and hates what is not. In His one essence are three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He is the Creator and Sustainer of all things. He is the Sovereign of the universe. He is the Judge to which all of us shall give an account. He is worthy of all praise, honor, and glory.

We are created beings, made by God with a spiritual capacity to know Him. But the disobedience of the first man, Adam, plunged the whole human race into sin. We are separated from God. We are enemies and rebels against Him. We are offenders against His law, doing what He forbids and failing to do what He commands. We refuse to bow to His authority. We love our sins. We are slaves to sin. We are sinners at heart; our very nature is corrupt through and through. All we have ever done in God’s sight is sin. Though individual actions vary widely from person to person, we all have the most basic things in common: we are all dead to God, alive to sin, and well-deserving of His wrath, curse, and condemnation. We have no hope in ourselves to fix what is wrong between us and God. We are desperate, headed to everlasting punishment because of all our sins against a holy God.

In the face of this very bad news, the good news shines brightly! In amazing grace and for His own glory, God took upon Himself to make a remedy, to save a great multitude of unworthy sinners. God the Father sent His beloved Son into this world to rescue, to redeem, to ransom. In order to do this work of mediation between God and man, the Son took human nature, became uniquely God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ. He acted as a substitute for sinners in life and death, to do for us what we could never do. In our place, He lived a life of perfect obedience to the will of God, satisfying our need of righteousness. In His death on the cross, He suffered our penalty for disobedience, satisfying the demands of divine justice. The sins of His people were credited to Him, and His perfection was credited to them. Thus He accomplished the reconciliation of God and sinners. He more than restored what was lost by Adam. The Father declared His approval of the work of the Son by raising Him up from the dead. He is a living Savior. Now highly exalted, He sits at the right hand of the throne of God in heaven. He will come again at the last day to punish the lost and glorify the saved. He is the only Savior. There is no other way to God.

This message about Christ demands a response. It is the immediate duty of every one of us to repent of our sins and believe on Christ as our Savior. By this means we receive the benefits of His saving work. To repent is a profound change of mind about my sin, to be willing and eager to

give it up. It is to agree with God in His case against me. It is to plead guilty without any defense. To believe on Christ is to depend fully and only upon Him for all I need to be right with God. It is to repudiate my own merits, which are really demerits in God's sight, and claim Christ's merits as my only ground of acceptance with God. It is to surrender to His authority and lordship in all my life. In this conversion, I come to hate what I used to love, and love what I used to hate. Such a radical revolution and transformation occurs by the inward operation of the Holy Spirit. It is to be born again. Becoming a Christian is not a work I achieve. It is not a self-help program. Nor is it a joint-effort by Christ and me. It is all His work for me and in me by His grace.

Great blessings accrue to those who obey the Gospel summons to repent and believe. We are forgiven of all our sins, justified (declared righteous), at peace with God, adopted into His family, given new life with new desires and delights. The reigning power of sin is broken. The Holy Spirit comes to live within us and comfort us in all our earthly afflictions. We enjoy communion with God in prayer and in His Word. We find a satisfying purpose for living: to love God supremely and to love our neighbor as ourselves. In church fellowship, we find friendship with other believers and opportunities to serve. God promises us that He is working all things together for our good. We look forward to being with Him forever in heaven. The rejection by this world because of our identification with Christ is far offset by our spiritual privileges in Christ, both here and hereafter. How good is the good news!

Friend, do you believe the Gospel?