



The Gospel

The greatest news ever told

UNDERSTAND IT.

BELIEVE IT.

LIVE IN RESPONSE TO IT.

The Gospel

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes”

ROMANS 1:16

At the center of the Christianity there is a message. That message is the power of God when it is deeply received by the person who hears it. **That message is called the gospel.**

Gospel = Good news

Following Jesus starts by understanding this message and responding to it. In this booklet, you will discover...

01 **What is the gospel?**

02 **What does it mean to believe?**

03 **What are the effects of the gospel?**

04 **Things that sound like the gospel but are not**

What is the Gospel?

Here are two different ways to understand it:

01 The Gospel in one verse

The reason John 3:16 is the most known verse in the Bible is because it summarizes the gospel in one sentence. There are four components of the gospel that are each represented in John 3:16, but it's important to understand the depth behind each component.

“For God so loved the world
that he gave his one and only Son,
that whoever believes in him
shall not perish but have eternal life.”

JOHN 3:16 (NIV)

Now let's break that down.

“For God so loved the world...”

JOHN 3:16

God doesn't just love some people or “religious” people. God loves everyone in the world, both people that follow him and people that don't.

When understanding the Gospel it's important to start here. You are not a mistake. You are not a random product of a dispassionate universe. You were created by God and he loves you.

“...that he gave his one and only Son...”

JOHN 3:16

This love is not a feeling, it is carried out in action. God gives his one and only son, Jesus, as a sacrifice. This act of sacrificial love had a very specific reason.

But why did Jesus have to die?

One truth that is self-evident to every person on earth is that something is wrong. Whether we are observing the broken nature of human beings or the natural world that is dying, no one looks at the world and says, “it’s perfect just the way it is.” There is a reason for that, and that is what the entire Bible is about.

To put it simply, humans are guilty of sin that comes from disobedience to God. In Genesis 3, we learn about “the fall.” This is a simple story about Adam and Eve, the first humans being disobedient to God. This disobedience did not end with them. From that point on it has been the human condition. We are all disobedient to God and engage in sin.

Sin is the opposite of good. When we engage in sin we are harmful to others, ourselves and our relationship with God. As humans, we choose to engage in sin and this results in judgement from God. This judgement is eternal separation from him, which is what we call Hell.

God is **just and loving**.

God is a just God, which means he cannot ignore our sin and the judgment we deserve, but he is also a loving God and does not want anyone to perish. His solution? He sent his only son Jesus as a substitute for our sin. When Jesus died he was paying the price that was ours to pay, by receiving the judgement we deserved.

It is through Jesus’ sacrificial death that God offers **salvation** to the world.

John 3:16

“that whoever believes in
him ...”

JOHN 3:16

It is very true that God’s **love** is unconditional. However, his offer of **salvation** comes with a condition. The person who would accept Jesus as a sacrifice for their sin must believe.

Believing is accepting that something is true. This is not something you do outwardly for people to see, this is something you believe deeply in your soul. **Belief leads to change in thinking and behavior.** True belief is met with a supernatural transformation. God gives us the gift of His Spirit, who regenerates us and empowers us to live for Him.

When you actually believe that Jesus is the son of the living God, it means that you live the rest of your life in response to that. Learning his ways and following the leading of the Holy Spirit.

“...shall not perish but have eternal life.”

JOHN 3:16

When understanding the gospel, it is important to understand what you're being saved from. You are not being saved from a sad life or a life without purpose, though living for Jesus will certainly change your perspective on both of these things. You are not being rescued from anxiety or depression though hope of eternal life will shape this dramatically.

You are being rescued from the judgment of God. Because of what Jesus did on the cross you are no longer guilty in the sight of God. Therefore, not only are you saved from your sins, but you are promised eternal life.

Eternal life is dwelling with God forever in perfect relationship, free from sin and its consequences.

Believing in the gospel changes our perspective. We realize that this world is finite and brief and our true hope is found in eternity with Christ.

What is the Gospel?

Another way to understand that same message is in a simple picture.

02 The Gospel in a picture

The beauty of this picture is that it is so simple it can be drawn on a piece of paper or even a napkin.

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

ROMANS 6:23

Illustration #1

The brokenness in the world comes from separation with God.

This separation is caused by our sin.

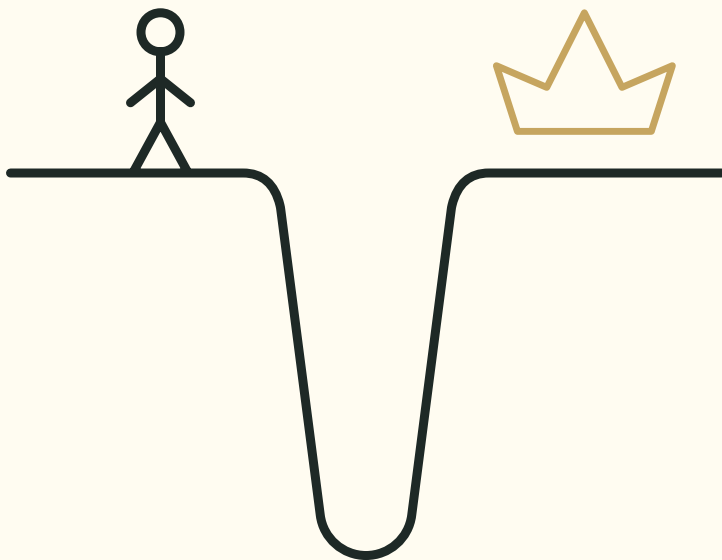


Illustration #2

We are powerless to be “good enough.”

None of our good behavior comes even close to bridging this gap.

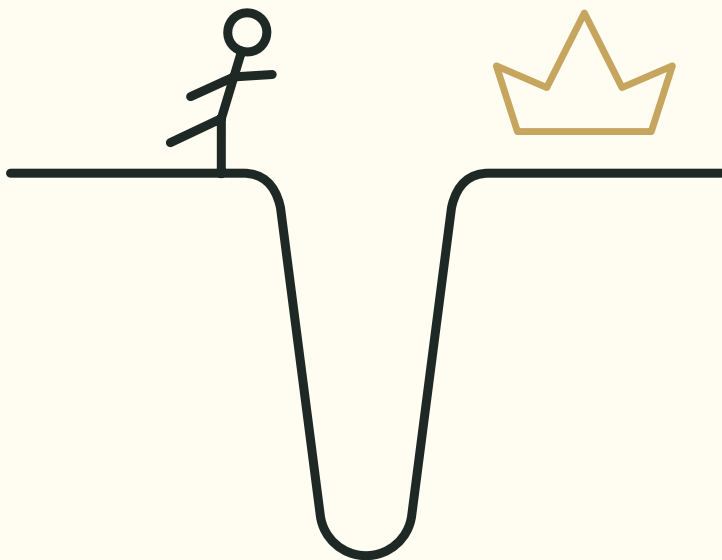
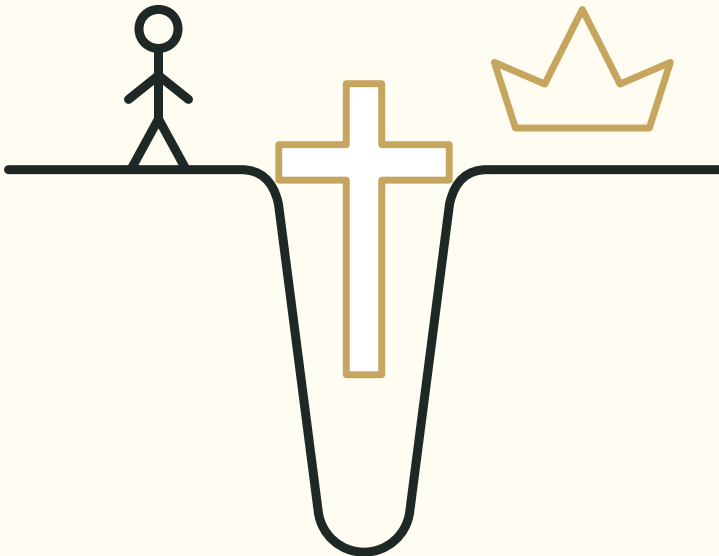


Illustration #3

The good news of the gospel is that God loved us enough to offer us the free gift of salvation through Jesus Christ.

When Jesus died on the cross, He made it possible for our sins to be forgiven and our relationship with God to be restored. When we place our faith in Him, Jesus becomes our Lord. We no longer live for ourselves but submit our lives to His leadership. To be a disciple, then, is to be an ongoing learner, a student, and a follower of Jesus as Lord.



What does it mean to believe?

Believing in Jesus is more than saying you believe, it's trusting Him and following Him.

01 Repent of your sins

Turn away from your sin and turn toward God.

“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out.”

ACTS 3:19 (NIV)

02 Get baptized

Go public with your faith.

Baptism is a public declaration of your faith in Jesus and what He has done for you.

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

MATTHEW 28:19 (NIV)

03 Follow the teachings of Scripture

God’s Word is your guide for how to live and grow in your faith every day.

“To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, ‘If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.’”

JOHN 8:31 (NIV)

**True belief
changes
your
direction,
your
declaration,
and your
daily life.**

It's not just lip service, it's
living for Him

What Are the Effects of the Gospel?

01 We Are Made New by the Holy Spirit

The gospel doesn't simply forgive our past—it transforms who we are. Through the Holy Spirit, God regenerates us, gives us new life, and begins the lifelong work of making us like Christ.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

02 We Are Set Free to Live for Christ

The gospel frees us from the penalty and power of sin so that we can joyfully live under the lordship of Jesus. We are no longer slaves to sin but servants of Christ.

“But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.”

ROMANS 6:22

03 We Bear the Fruit of the Holy Spirit

As the Holy Spirit works in us, our character is increasingly shaped to reflect the character of Christ.

Spiritual fruit is the evidence of a transformed life, not the means of earning God's favor.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”

GALATIANS 5:22-23

Things that sound like the Gospel but are not

✘ The “Be a Good Person” Gospel

“God wants to save good people”

This falls short because the gospel says no one is righteous enough to save themselves and we need Jesus’ grace.

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

ROMANS 3:23

✕ The Self-Improvement Gospel

“Jesus helps you become the best version of yourself.”

This falls short because Jesus did not come merely to improve us but to save and transform sinners.

“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

LUKE 19:10

✕ The Prosperity Gospel

“If you follow God, He’ll bless you with health, wealth, and success.”

This falls short because the gospel promises eternal life in Christ, not earthly comfort or prosperity.

“In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

JOHN 16:33

✘ The Social Gospel

“Christianity is mainly about helping the poor and fixing injustice.”

This falls short because good works and justice cannot replace repentance and faith in Christ.

“The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

MARK 1:15

✘ The Therapeutic Gospel

“God just wants you to be happy.”

This falls short because Jesus calls us not just to comfort, but to repentance, holiness, and surrender.

“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.”

LUKE 9:23

✕ The Gospel of Power

“If we can make our laws more Christian, Jesus will be King.”

This falls short because Jesus is already King, and the gospel advances through transformed hearts, not transformed laws.

“My kingdom is not of this world.”

JOHN 18:36

Things that
sound like
the Gospel
but are not

Conclusion

The gospel is not simply good advice, religious effort, self-improvement, or earthly success. The gospel is the good news that God loved us enough to send His Son, Jesus Christ, to die in our place and rise again so that anyone who believes in Him can be forgiven, restored, and given eternal life.

Through the gospel, God changes our standing before Him, transforms our relationships with others, and gives us hope for the future restoration of all creation. The gospel is not just information to understand, it is an invitation to respond.

Jesus calls us to repent, trust Him, follow Him, and surrender our lives to Him as Lord and Savior.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ.”

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17-18 (NIV)

The Gospel changes everything because Jesus changes everything.

FAQ

? How can I know if I am truly saved?

“And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.” 1 John 5:11-13

The Bible teaches that you can have confidence that you are saved. Our assurance is not based on our emotions, our performance, or a single spiritual experience—it is based on the finished work of Jesus Christ and the promises of God’s Word.

If you have repented of your sin and placed your trust in Jesus Christ alone for salvation, God promises to forgive your sins, adopt you as His child, and give you eternal life (John 1:12; Ephesians 2:8–9). At the same time, genuine saving faith produces evidence over time. While Christians still struggle with sin, they will see the Holy Spirit at work in their lives—growing in love for Christ, a desire to obey Him, conviction over sin, love for others, and increasing Christlike character (Galatians 5:22–23; 1 John 2:3–6).

Assurance comes from looking first to **Christ’s finished work**, and then seeing the **fruit of His ongoing work** in your life. If you belong to Jesus, you can rest in His promise: **“Whoever has the Son has life.”**



Can someone be too sinful to be saved?

No. No one is beyond the reach of God's grace. In fact the Apostle Paul writes that he was specifically chosen to teach people that no one is beyond God's reach

"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life." 1 Timothy 1:15-16



Do I need to be baptized again?

This question has different answers based on your background.

I WAS BAPTIZED AS A BABY

True baptism is a decision someone makes when they believe in Christ. This is not a decision someone can make for you. Your infant baptism was a step of faith your parents or someone who loved you made for you, but it was not your decision and it therefore was not an actual baptism.

I WAS BAPTIZED BUT I HAVE MADE A LOT OF MISTAKES.

You don't need to be baptized again just because you returned to sin or lived in disobedience. The primary question is, was your decision sincere. Many people get baptized because someone wanted them to, because they felt coerced, or for other reasons, but it wasn't a genuine faith decision. In that case, your baptism was probably not sincere and it would make sense to get baptized if this is your authentic decision. But you shouldn't get re-baptized anytime you feel like you need a do over!



Is Jesus really the only way? What about other religions?

Jesus himself is very clear about this in John 14:6

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me"

Other religions and beliefs do not lead to salvation because they teach the opposite of what Jesus taught.



What is the role of the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit literally does everything as we live for Christ

The Holy Spirit **regenerates us** (Titus 3:5), **indwells every believer** (1 Corinthians 6:19), **seals us as God's own** (Ephesians 1:13–14), **assures us that we are God's children** (Romans 8:15–16), **empowers us to live for Christ** (Acts 1:8; Galatians 5:16), **produces Christlike character** through the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23), **transforms us into the likeness of Christ** (2 Corinthians 3:18), **convicts us of sin, righteousness, and judgment** (John 16:8), **teaches and reminds us of God's truth** (John 14:26), **guides us into truth** (John 16:13), **helps us understand Scripture** (1 Corinthians 2:12–14), **intercedes for us in prayer** (Romans 8:26–27), **gives spiritual gifts for the building up of the church** (1 Corinthians 12:4–11), **unites believers into one body** (1 Corinthians 12:13), **strengthens us inwardly** (Ephesians 3:16), and **guarantees our future inheritance** until the day of redemption (Ephesians 1:13–14; 4:30).



Why do I keep sinning?

Because you still have a sinful nature even after salvation, believers still battle the flesh.

“So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want.”
Galatians 5:16–17 (NIV)

Becoming a Christian doesn't eliminate the battle, it begins it. We will all wrestle with our sinful nature until we are fully made whole with Christ in eternity.



Can I be a believer and live in disobedience/sin?

This is one of the biggest questions you will wrestle with as a Christian. In 1 John 3:9-10 it gives a very clear answer.

No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God. This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not God's child, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister." 1 John 3:9-10

Now, this verse would disqualify everyone because we all fall short and stumble. **The overall point of following Jesus is a change in our heart.** We no longer intentionally sin. We don't justify sin. His point, is that no true believer would be dismissive of sin. John also writes a very comforting message just one chapter prior in 1 John 2:1-2

My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. 1 John 2:1-2

**You Matter
to God.**

**You Matter
to us.**

FOUNDATIONS
CHURCH

