

Leading by Faith

Session #12: Living as a Gospel Person

Welcome – You made it! The last session of leading by faith. To close out our time together, this season, here's the plan in four parts:

1. I'm going to provide some content for you about living as a Gospel person. I have five principles for you.
2. We are going to hear from many of you: 60 seconds on what God did in your life through this course. Be ready! Interspersed with the content I'm teaching.
3. Final assignments.

6:05 – Okay, first, what does it mean to live as a Gospel person, or I like to say, live a good news life? First, #1:

- 1. Believe the Gospel is for you, every day for the rest of your life.** The Gospel is not simply a message for those who don't believe. To save them. The Gospel is a daily message for believers. To nourish us. That's what the Bible teaches.

I'm going to review the content I taught on this topic in the session called Growing in Virtue. Because it is so vital that you believe it. And it is so tempting not believe it. I find so often, Christians think that the Gospel isn't for them. It WAS for them to start the Christian life, but then you graduate from it to more important instruction. Not true!

Non-Christians need the Gospel.

- New Christians need the Gospel.
- Long time Christians need the Gospel.
- Immature Christians need the Gospel.
- Mature Christians need the Gospel.

Everybody needs it every day for the rest of their lives.

- It is the most important message from God.
- It is the deepest need of our soul.

I first realized that when studying Romans. Look at Romans 1:13-15:

¹³I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles. ¹⁴I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. ¹⁵So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

Romans 1:13-15 (ESV)

I say again to you what I said months ago on this topic:

- The Apostle Paul wanted to go to Rome, planned many times to go to Rome,
- so that he could preach the Gospel to Christians in order to have a harvest among them.

Notice, he wrote in v.15 that he was eager to *preach the Gospel* to them.

- Notice, he called them *brothers* in v.13, a term used to describe fellow Christian men.
- If you look back further, in v.7, you'll notice the letter itself is addressed to the Romans who are "loved by God and called to be saints" – language that described *their Christian commitment*.

If you look back, in v.8, you'll notice he wrote how much he thanked God for them because *their Christian faith* was being reported over the whole Roman Empire.

- These Romans were not just Christians.
- They were Christians with famous faith. Mature Christians.

Soak this in so that you believe it...

- the Apostle Paul wanted to go to Rome, planned many times to go to Rome, was eager to go to Rome
- so that he could preach the Gospel to Christians, mature Christians with famous faith.

Now there is no question that the Apostle Paul preached the Gospel to non-Christians.

- The book of Acts is filled with his missionary activity –
- preaching the Gospel where Christ was not yet known.

BUT, a very interesting and often unnoticed fact is that the Apostle Paul was just as zealous about preaching the Gospel to Christians.

- He understood his vocation to be set apart for the Gospel of God, a Gospel preacher to human beings, Christian and non-Christian alike.
- Look @ Romans 1:9-10:

⁹For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you ¹⁰always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you.

Romans 1:9-10 (ESV)

The Apostle Paul was zealous about preaching the Gospel, not just to non-Christians, but to Christians. Why?

Why in the world would Paul preach the Gospel to mature Christians with famous faith? Well, it seems Paul was convinced that the Gospel...

- causes *Christians* to live for God.
- is the daily nourishment to our heart needs.
- compels us to live for Christ.

We grow in virtue through growing in disciplines of faith + growing in our understanding of Gospel truth,

- And that one part of Gospel truth helps us be more disciplined in our faith.
- Look again @ Romans 1:13-15:

¹³I have often intended to come to you...in order that I may reap some harvest among you...So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

Romans 1:13-15 (ESV)

Paul wanted a harvest among Christians, that is,

- he wanted them to live lives of obedience to Christ.
- And he connected that harvest of Christ-like living to preaching the Gospel to them.

The more he preached the Gospel.

- The more fruit of the Spirit was produced in the lives of his hearers.
- Romans 1:5 might sum up Paul's conviction on this topic the best...

⁵through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations,

Romans 1:5 (ESV)

In other words, through Christ and for the fame of Christ, Paul was undeservedly given the job description of Gospel preacher to the Gentiles

- so that by the consistent and faithful preaching of the Gospel,
- Gentiles would come to faith and be compelled to obey God.

The Apostle Paul's practice was to preach the Gospel to non-Christians because he believed God worked through the preaching of the Gospel to convert them to Christ.

- Then, he preached the Gospel, re-preached the Gospel, reminded people of the Gospel, explained the Gospel, expounded on the Gospel, taught the Gospel to Christians
- because he believed God worked through the preaching of the Gospel to compel Christians towards disciplines of faith.

For the Apostle Paul, the Gospel was, as v.16 reads, "the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes."

- And, for the Apostle Paul, salvation is past, present and future.
- The Bible uses this language regarding your salvation – you were saved, are being saved and will be saved.

The Gospel is the power of God that converted you. It is also the power of God that nourishes you.

- Paul envisioned that Christians would be established by the Gospel so that all nations would believe the Gospel and live in accordance with the Gospel.
- That's how he closes the epistle to the Romans...

²⁵Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ...to bring about the obedience of faith...

Romans 16:25-26 (ESV)

The Gospel is the power of God in our past conversion and our present transformation, the dynamic energy of God that begins the Christian life and sustains the Christian life.

- God uses the gospel to *make it possible* for us to become more like Christ.
- More than that, God also uses the gospel to *make it happen*, so that we actually do become more like Christ.

To say it still another way, the Holy Spirit lives in us to cause us to want to please God,

- and the primary means by which the Spirit causes us to want to please God is the Gospel.
- Christians have been born again by the Gospel in order to live a Good News Life of becoming more like Jesus Christ.

6:15 – *Sharing*.

6:30 – Okay, living as a Gospel person starts with really believing the Gospel is for you. Can't live it if you don't believe it to be true that you need it. Second:

2. Preach the Gospel to yourself every day for the rest of your life. Speak the good news to your soul when you wake up, as go about your day, and when you put your head on the pillow at night. Lord. Sin. Savior. Faith. Being a leader means taking that responsibility upon yourself. Appreciate others who preach the Gospel to you, but don't depend on them. Lead your own soul. Third:

3. Read the Bible as a Gospel book. Every word of Scripture is intended, ultimately, to point to Jesus. That's not my point of view. That's what Jesus himself said. Look at:

If you don't see the Old Testament through the lens of the new, you will likely become legalistic...Pharisaical. The point of the entire Old Testament is to direct us to Christ. Look at Luke 24:13-27, commonly known as the Road to Emmaus.

¹³That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. ¹⁶But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" ¹⁹And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. ²¹But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. ²²Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, ²³and when they did not find his body, they came

back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. ²⁴Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see.” ²⁵And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” ²⁷And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

Luke 24:13-27 (ESV)

Moses is a reference to the first five books of the Old Testament,

- the prophets is the OT prophetic books,
- and all the Scriptures adds the historical books and wisdom literature.

Jesus showed these two men himself in the entire Old Testament.

- He has a Gospel centered hermeneutic. Interpreting the Old through the New.
- And, of course, the all the books of the New are about him too.
- Make sure you read the Bible that way. That’s #3. Fourth:

4. Connect Gospel doctrines to your specific situation –

There are all kinds of ways to connect who Jesus is, what he has done, what he is doing, and what he will do TO what is going on in you and in your life today.

I have one way to do that in a handout at your tables. It is research from my doctoral project.

- And it may overwhelm you with info, but I'm not saying memorize all this.
- I'm just providing examples for how the Gospel and its doctrines connect to your life, specifically making you more like Jesus.
- *Walk through three – love, peace, self-control.*

6:40 – *Sharing.*

6:55 PM – Okay, 5th and lastly...

5. Be reminded of the Gospel in all creation. The entire universe displays the glory of God. And the message that glorifies God the most is the Gospel. So, the Gospel is displayed in creation.

God had the Gospel of Jesus Christ on his mind when he created everything.

- The Gospel was at the forefront of his thoughts when he made the universe.
- It is the governing presupposition of the universe.
- Did you know the Gospel is eternal? Revelation 14:6:

⁶Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people.

Revelation 14:6 (ESV)

God didn't think up the Gospel after the Fall, like it's some sort of plan B.

- God created image bearers, fully knowing they would rebel against him, so that he would redeem a group of them at the cost of his own Son's blood, and resurrect them to perfectly image him forevermore in a new Heavens and new Earth.
- The Gospel is the governing presupposition of the universe. As such the universe displays it. Look for it in creation and be reminded of it.

In other words, when God said, "let there be light," the Gospel was on his mind.

- That means that when Jesus spoke to the people in John 8:12 saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life,"
- he was not making some observation about the world and comparing himself to it.

It is not that God was like, "Good thing I made that thing called light way back when.

- Stroke of luck! I can now tell those humans that my Son is like light. Great metaphor."
- No, God didn't create light primarily so we could see in this temporal world, like drive during the night.

Much more profoundly, God made light (because he is light) primarily to tell us what Christ is like, to magnify the Gospel, to display his glory in creation.

- That's the main purpose of light.
- Secondly, it exists to plug in so that the kids aren't scared in their room at night.

God is so good. He provided you a daily reminder of his Gospel in light.

- When you look at light, remember the Gospel. That will help you preach it to yourself.
- And this isn't just light. It's all over creation. Here are some more examples:

When God created...the Gospel was on his mind...

- Fish...Matthew 4:19 – ¹⁹And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”
- Lamb...John 1:29 – ²⁹The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!
- Clay...Isaiah 64:8 – ²⁹But now, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand.
- Eagle...Isaiah 40:31 – ³¹but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

When God created...the Gospel was on his mind...

- Lion and a tree w/roots... Revelation 5:5 – ⁵And one of the elders said to me, “Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.”
- Laden the clouds with snow, put wool on sheep, made colors like red, crimson, scarlet and white...Isaiah 1:18 – ¹⁸“Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.
- Even concepts in God’s mind, that we then form in life like ‘Gates’ & ‘Roads’ – ¹³“Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy^[a] that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many.
- Maybe most profound, Male & Female/marriage ...Ephesians 5:25 – ²⁵Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.

God decided to redeem a group of rebellious image bearers at the cost of his own Son’s blood and spend eternity with them, that’s the Gospel, eternal acc. to Rev 14:6, that was on his mind first, then he created.

- Then, he made male and female.
- Marriage in the temporal realm exists to glorify Christ & his church.

See, I even think, it wasn't good for Adam to be alone, not just because he needed companionship, but because male and female is a temporal, earthly expression of the eternal Gospel.

- That's why God declared male and female very good.
- A unisex image bearer that procreated on its own would have worked, but male and female displays the glory of the Gospel way better.

The Gospel is the governing presupposition of reality itself.

- God had the Gospel of Jesus Christ on his mind when He created all things. Colossians 1:15-20.
- It is sweeping and cosmic and stunning.
- It is mind blowing and mind numbing, foreign to our natural thought process.

So often, our focus is completely on the secondary purpose of things. We do not regularly recognize the eternal realities that the temporal world glorifies. God wants us to direct our attention to that which is primary, Heavenly things, w/o neglecting the secondary, Earthly things, so that Christ might have pre-eminence in all things.

Listen, that's not weird or overly philosophical thinking or being too heavenly-minded, nor does it diminish the integrity of the temporal when you think about its eternal purpose first and foremost.

- In fact, it greatly enhances the temporal.
- It infuses all temporal life eternal significance.

Whenever I eat grouper, or gyros, see someone fashion clay or watch an eagle soar, see a lion, or a tree with roots, watch snow fall, walk through the gate in my yard or every doorway in my house, or look at my wife, I have the opportunity to be reminded of the glory of the Gospel. Isaiah put it this way:

³Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.

Isaiah 6:3 (ESV)

5 principles for living as a Gospel person:

1. Believe the Gospel is for you, every day for the rest of your life.
2. Preach the Gospel to yourself every day for the rest of your life.
3. Read the Bible as a Gospel book.
4. Connect Gospel doctrines to your specific situation
5. Be reminded of the Gospel in all creation.

7:05 PM – *Sharing.*

7:20 PM – Final assignments

Recruit someone to this class. You will receive the link again in the summer to send along. We have 33 so far. We need to get to 100. I plan on teaching this course for 4-5 years as one way to reconstitute the leadership core of this church.

Step up into greater leadership. To that end, we have needs. **Slides with top 3 in each area.** And our ministry leaders are here for you to connect with before you leave. How do you want to step up into church leadership?

Prayer & Outreach – Pastor Miguel Vasquez

- **Ambassador Team Leader**
- **Missions Team Leader**
- **Prayer Team**

Worship/Media – Brad Franklin

- **Tech Assistant (PT staff)**
- **Social Media Content**
- **Audio/Video Production**

Congregational Life – Pastor Bobby Meltzer

- **Faith for Life Leader**
- **Group Life Leaders & Coaches**
- **Event Coordinators**

Students – Pastor Manny Fernandez

- **Insight Leaders (Sunday AM Grade 6-12)**
- **Impact Leaders (Wednesday PM Grade 6-12)**
- **Trail Life Leaders (Monday PM Grade K-12)**

Children – Melissa Diaz

- **Gems & Fresh Leaders (Monday PM Grade 1-12)**
- **Kids Praise Leaders (Wednesday PM Grade 1-6)**

- **The Cove & Village Leaders (Sunday AM Birth-Grade 5th)**

Lastly, look for the role of deacon to be re-established. We had that role in the past. As we look to amend our constitution this Fall, that is one of the topics. Maybe the Lord is calling one of you to become a deacon in the future. Let's pray.