

Evangelism Training Series

Session 02 - Presenting The Gospel (NIV based)

(a duplicate from the series "Biblical Counseling Training For Lay Counselors" on the "Counseling" webpage of this website, www.BelieverAssist.com)

What is the Gospel?

- - The word 'gospel' means "good news or good message". (1 Corinthians 15:1, Strong's #2098)

KEY VERSES: 1 Corinthians 15:1-8 - "1. Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. 2. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. 3. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4. that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5. and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. 6. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. 7. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, 8. and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born."

- - Jesus is God; He came to the earth, having taken on human form; He was sinless - both perfect God and perfect man. (John 1:1,14; 1 Peter 2:22)

- - He suffered and died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins - for those persons who put their faith in Him to have paid the eternal penalty for their sins. (1 Corinthians 15:3, 1 Peter 2:24)

- - He was buried and then raised from the dead. (1 Corinthians 15:4)

- - We all have sinned, fall short of the perfection or complete sinlessness that He requires in order for us to get into heaven, and therefore we are headed for and deserve (permanent) eternal punishment for each of our sins. (Romans 3:23)

- - God says that each person needs to place his/her faith in Jesus (John 3:16) in order to receive eternal life rather than automatically being subject to receive the default eternal punishment for our sins.

- - God completely rejects letting anyone into heaven based on their good works. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

- - By nature, the gospel advocates a 180 degree change in the direction of one's life (repentance). (Acts 20:21)

- - The gospel requires a personal response for the hearer - to sincerely commit a step of faith by placing his/her faith in Jesus, to apply His atoning work on the cross to forgive his/her sins and thereby grant him/her eternal life in heaven and salvation from eternal punishment for sins. (John 3:16)

How To Present The Gospel

- - Advance preparing of the person is good - God needs to work in their hearts to prepare them to receive Christ.
- - Watch for suitable opportunity and time to present the gospel.
- - Watch for a willingness of the person to listen - a strong negative reaction usually only comes when the person is trapped and forced to listen.
- Utilize suitable lead-into questions:
 - - - "Do you think that you are connected to God? On what legal or technical basis?"
 - - - "If you were to die today, do you think you would go to heaven?", perhaps followed by the questions "What do you base that on? Are you sure God lets people into heaven on that basis?"
- - Record the person's response as to what basis the person is relying on to get into heaven; later the person may try to argue otherwise.
- - Explain the gospel clearly and concisely.
- - It is best to read out of a Bible the verses that relate to the gospel, rather than quote or paraphrase them to the person - it is hearing and believing the Word that will save people. (Romans 10:17)
- - Use a sin verse, such as Romans 3:23 or 6:23.
- - Use an 'if / then' salvation verse, such as John 3:16, Revelation 3:20, Romans 10:9-10, Acts 16:31, or John 1:12.
- - Make sure to emphasize that Jesus died for **YOUR** sins - personalize it to the person.
- - Ask for the person's reaction, "What do you think about this?"
- - Address any issues the person may have.
- - Ask for a response to the gospel (invitation to receive Christ), "Would you like to believe in Jesus to pay the penalty for your sins?", "When do you want to do that, right now?"
- - If the person appears to be ready, assist the person to pray with sincerity, basing the prayer on the gospel-relating verses that you used; otherwise allow the person to decline or to think about it.
- - When supplying the person with a prayer for salvation, present each sentence in short phrases, so the person can repeat them to God. Below in bold print is a sample salvation prayer based on John 3:16 with Romans 3:23, and each sentence is correspondingly divided into short phrases, with a pause in between, to allow the person time to repeat each phrase to God:

**Dear God,
 I know that I am a sinner,
 and because of my sins, I fall short
 and therefore I cannot get into heaven on my own.**

**But, I also know
that you love me so much
that you sent Jesus
to make a way for me
to get into heaven.
So right now, I believe in Jesus,
that He had never sinned,
that He died on the cross
to take the punishment for my sins,
and that He rose from the dead on the third day.
Please forgive me of all my sins
and give me eternal life in heaven
one day when I die,
because I sincerely believe in Jesus
to save me from the eternal punishment
that I deserve for my sins.
Thank you. Amen.**

- - Follow-up the prayer by asking the person what he/she just prayed about - this can give you a good indication of whether or not the person understands what you have been explaining to him/her, what they just prayed, and what the person actually may want from God, which may be greatly different from what you supplied in the salvation prayer.

- - If it looks like they understand and willingly prayed to receive Christ, then reinforce from the salvation verse you used that God says in this verse that "if you believe in Jesus, then you have eternal life", but do not you yourself declare that the person is now saved, (because you cannot see into their spiritual heart).

- - If it seems that the person did receive Christ for salvation, then emphasize that God now wants the person to grow and mature in the faith, which God has designed to be accomplished by going to a good Bible-teaching church that has sound doctrines. You can use the statement, "Jesus died for you, now you are to live for Him".

- - A common major misconception in some cultures is that 'Jesus died for our sins and took care of them, so we do not have to worry about our sins'. This thinking is not correct because if Jesus died for everybody's sins, then everybody would get to go to heaven. Jesus' sacrifice of Himself on the cross is sufficient to cover all sins, it is available to everybody, but it only applies to those who believe and trust in His sacrifice to pay the penalty for their own personal sins and get them into heaven (personalized and exclusive).

- - A common major belief in every culture is that 'God will let you into heaven if the good things or religious things (for example: church membership, communion, baptism, going forward in an altar call, catechism, confirmation, and etcetera) you have done outweigh the bad things you have done'; Ephesians 2:8-9 or Romans 3:19-22 address and refute this clearly.

- - For a culture of predominantly Catholic adults, Romans 3:20-25 works excellently.

- - For young children, Romans 3:23 (sin verse) and John 3:16 (salvation verse) work good.

- - Be sensitive to and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.

- - Offer the gospel, with an invitation to respond to the gospel. If the person does not or is not interested in genuinely placing his/her faith in Jesus during your gospel presentation encounter with him/her, nevertheless you have properly planted the gospel 'good news' message in their spiritual heart, which may sprout and grow at some time in the future.

- - An important concept to remember, 'You have to get them lost before you can get them saved.' In other words, before they can get saved, they have to realize that if they die in their current state of technically not meeting the absolute requirements of God for being forgiven of all their sins and accepted into heaven, then upon death, God says that He will immediately send them to the place of punishment for their sins, where they will be locked in, stay, and suffer forever - for all of eternity. (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9)

- - A lot more sowing / planting is done than reaping / harvesting.

- - Wait for and allow God time to work in their spiritual hearts.

- - Make sure to emphasize that they must understand it (the gospel) and believe with sincerity, in order for it to work - for God to accept them for the receiving of salvation.

- - If possible, follow-up a seemingly successful salvation, preferably a week or two later, in order to try to ascertain whether or not the person actually got saved; watch for any measurable change; ask the lead-into questions again.

- - Realize and remember that as long as the person rejects placing his/her faith in Christ for salvation, then because technically the person is not saved, he/she essentially may not be open to obeying anything else that God says in the Scriptures.

Works Cited:

Bible. "The Holy Bible: New International Version." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

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