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 REDEEMER

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GOSPEL

HOW IT TRANSFORMS
YOUR LIFE

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LOOKING FOR GOOD NEWS

What comes to your mind when you think of good news? Perhaps you think about a promotion at work, a clean bill of health, or an update from DoorDash that your food is on the way—all of these could be considered good news. Whatever it is, it's clear that in today's anxiety-filled, politically-charged, and socially-isolated world, we want to hear good news; in fact, we crave it. Even if things in our world were less chaotic, we would still search for good news. Why is this?

Simply put: God created each of our hearts to live on good news, but not just any good news. There's a specific form of good news God created us to know, love, and embrace. Two thousand years ago, the apostle Paul wrote to Christians in the city of Rome and shared this news with them. This news wasn't political or social in nature, although it would inform each of these things. No, this news was something altogether different.

LISTEN TO THE NEWS PAUL SHARED WITH THOSE EARLY CHRISTIANS:

For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet God, in His grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when He freed us from the penalty for our sins. — Romans 3:23-24 NLT¹

¹ New Living Translation.

² English Standard Version. This is the version we preach from on Sunday mornings.

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. — Romans 5:6–8 ESV²

WHAT’S PAUL TALKING ABOUT? THE GOSPEL.



In short, the gospel is the message of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection in our place. In a world full of news of every sort, people need to hear news that brings them hope, fills them with faith, and has the power to transform them forever. The word “gospel” literally means good news and Paul calls it “the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16). In the gospel we discover the news we need, the news we long for, and—if we will believe it—the news that will change our lives.

This is why at Redeemer, we are a Gospel-Centered, Missional Family. We want everyone in our church-family to know, love, and experience the power of the gospel in their lives. But this requires us to understand what the gospel is and what it is not. Perhaps you personally have some questions about the gospel: “What is it? What does it mean? What’s the difference between the Christian gospel and the message of other religions?”

These are great questions. The purpose of this document is to give you a brief introduction to the gospel and it’s powerful implications for your life. Once you complete it, please connect with a pastor or member of our staff. We would love to hear your questions, discuss next steps, and pray with you about what God’s doing in your life.

REFLECTION QUESTION:
What is your current understanding of the message of Christianity?

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

The gospel is the good news of God sending His Son, Jesus, into our world to save us from our sins and bring us into an eternal relationship with Himself. In other words, the gospel is about what God has done for us, not about what we do for Him or for ourselves.

Specifically, the gospel tells us that God created us to live in a loving relationship with Him. This is wonderful! God loves us so much that He created us to enjoy His presence.

But there's a problem. In our natural state, we have all rejected this relationship through living self-centered, self-focused, and self-directed lives. The Bible calls this rejection of God sin. What's more, our sin separates us from God, which is why we feel so empty and unfulfilled apart from Him. But it gets worse: our sin leads to death and is deserving of the righteous judgment of God.

As Scripture says, "...for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury" (Romans 2:8 ESV). Because God is holy and perfect, the only proper response is for Him to issue a judgment of justice against us for our sins. Theologian Wayne Grudem says:

If [God] did not punish sin, He would not be a righteous God, and there would be no ultimate justice in the universe. But when sin is punished, God is showing Himself to be a righteous judge over all, and justice is being done in His universe.³

³ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 510

So, God must punish sin. But in order to do this, He must punish us for the sin we have committed. Sin is not some abstract thing in the universe, but a personal reality living within the heart of every person. As such, God cannot punish sin without punishing sinners. It is here that we see why the gospel is good news for us.

Even though we deserve to die for the sins we've committed, God sent Jesus to die in our place. When Jesus died on the cross, all the punishment we deserve for living in rebellion to God was poured out on Jesus. Scripture says:

*But He was pierced for our transgressions,
He was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on Him,
and by His wounds we are healed. — Isaiah 53:5 NIV⁴*

Think about this for a moment: we were guilty, but Jesus was punished in our place. In the gospel, we don't see a God who requires us to work our way into heaven or clean ourselves up before He'll love us. Instead, we see a God who provides a perfect substitute and closes the gap of separation that we created. On the cross, we see just how much we deserve to pay for our sins, but equally, we see just how far God is willing to go to reunite us with Himself. The good news of the gospel is:

*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son,
that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have
eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to
condemn the world, but in order that the world might
be saved through Him. Whoever believes in Him is not
condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned
already, because he has not believed in the name of the only
Son of God — John 3:16–18 ESV*

This is the heart of the gospel: Jesus dying in our place to satisfy the wrath of God and provide forgiveness for our sins. But it gets even better. Not only did Jesus die the death we deserved to die, but He physically rose from the grave three days later to demonstrate His power over death and Satan. This is the most important moment in history: the resurrection

of Jesus. In His resurrection, Jesus triumphed over the darkest forces of the universe and conquered our greatest enemies. As Scripture says, “Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” (1 Corinthians 15:54b–55 ESV).

When we place our faith in Jesus, the power of His resurrection fills our hearts, and we are made spiritually alive in Him. To put it simply: Jesus’ resurrection becomes our resurrection. Our hearts come alive through a relationship with God, and we are promised an eternity in heaven with Jesus. In other words, Jesus’ resurrection brings us back into the relationship we were created for: loving union with our heavenly Father. As Jesus and the apostle Paul declared:

I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this? —
John 11:25–26 ESV

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come —
2 Corinthians 5:17 ESV

Truly, this is the best news we could ever hear.

HOW TO RESPOND



As wonderful as this news is, it only becomes a living experience for us if we place our faith in Jesus. This doesn't mean that we simply acknowledge what Jesus has done for us. Even the demons believe that Jesus died and rose from the grave (James 2:19), but they are not saved from their sins and don't experience a loving relationship with God.

Instead, Jesus said we must "repent and believe the good news" (Mark 1:15). This means we must turn from loving our sin ("Repent"), and turn toward Jesus in humble surrender ("Believe"). We must stop trying to earn our way to heaven by being good enough, because the truth is: we never will be. Instead, we must open our hands in surrender, place our faith in Jesus, and receive the love God has for us.

To summarize, the gospel is:

- By Grace Alone: it's nothing we can earn for ourselves. Instead, everything about the gospel is about what God, in His grace, has done for us.
- Through Faith Alone: because we cannot earn our way into heaven. Instead, we simply receive what Christ has done as a free gift of God's grace.
- In Christ Alone: because Jesus is the only one who has dealt with the problem of our sin, there is simply no other way of salvation except through faith in His perfect, finished work.

This is the good news we were made to live for. God created us to find our life in Him through the gospel. If you have not already, we hope you will give serious consideration to trusting in Jesus and experiencing new life in Him.

Having read this, we hope you have a better understanding of what the gospel is, what it means, and how God wants you

to respond. One way you may consider responding is through baptism. The Scriptures reveal that baptism is a picture of the new life we have in Christ and a step of obedience for every Christian. We would love to talk with you about this! If you have any questions or would like to talk with a pastor, please don't hesitate to let us know.

We look forward to walking with you as you respond to the gospel and move forward in a life of faithfulness to Jesus.

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