

# Salvation & The Gospel

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## Introduction: Why it Matters

For many people, terms like “salvation” and “gospel” are familiar and may even sound comforting—but often their depth is overlooked. At **Love Church**, these aren’t just religious words; they represent the most important truths you’ll ever encounter.

**Salvation** means **rescue**—it’s the act of God delivering us from sin, shame, brokenness, and spiritual death. According to Scripture, it happens purely by grace through faith, not by anything we do.

So, what is **sin**?

- Sin is more than mistakes—it’s **rebellion against God**, a missing of the mark of who He created us to be.
- It includes **wrong thoughts, words, attitudes, actions**, and even **failures to act**—all of which fall short of God’s perfect standard.
- Scripture teaches that **all have sinned**, and the consequence of sin is death (Romans 3:23; 6:23).
- The deeper problem isn’t just what we do—it’s what we are: sinful by nature, separated from God until rescued by grace.

So when we talk about rescue, we’re talking about **being saved from sin’s power, penalty, and presence**.

The **gospel**, or “good news,” is the story of who Jesus is, what He did, and how He brings restoration. It’s not about church rituals or trying harder—it’s about a relational rescue mission:

- Jesus lived a perfect life in our place,
- died on the cross for our sins,
- rose again to conquer death,
- and offers new life to everyone who trusts in Him.

### | Why This Changes Everything

- We’re not saved by trying harder—we’re rescued by Jesus.
- Salvation isn’t just forgiveness—it’s being brought home into relationship with God.
- We’re not just forgiven—we’re transformed from the inside out.
- It’s a journey, not a one-time event—led by grace and empowered by the Spirit.

At **Love Church**, we want everyone to know: this isn’t religion. It’s an invitation—to be known, forgiven, and shaped by Jesus.

# Section 2: The Gospel Explained Biblically —

## The Four Questions

To help people truly understand the gospel, **Love Church** often uses a simple, clear framework called **The Four**—based on timeless biblical truths and inviting practical reflection:

### 1. God Loves You

- **Truth:** God created you and loves you deeply and unconditionally (Genesis 1:27; John 3:16).
- **Why it matters:** You're not an accident—you matter to the Creator. Your value isn't based on performance; it's based on His love.

### 2. Sin Separates You

- **Truth:** Sin is not just what we do wrong—it's our rebellion against God's design (Romans 3:23; Isaiah 59:2).
- **Why it matters:** Sin breaks our relationship with God and leaves us spiritually dead. We can't undo it ourselves.

### 3. Jesus Rescues You

- **Truth:** In love, God became a human in Jesus, died on the cross for our sins, rose again, and offers new life to everyone who trusts Him (1 Peter 3:18; Romans 5:8).
- **Why it matters:** The rescue isn't about our performance—it's about His finished work. No religious checklist. Just grace.

### 4. Will You Trust Jesus?

- **Truth:** The gospel turns from message to transformation when you respond in faith—confessing sin, trusting Jesus, and following Him (Ephesians 2:8–9; Matthew 7:7).
- **Why it matters:** Faith isn't about believing hard—it's about trusting Someone who already believed for us. It's a step forward into relationship.

### How to Share This Simply

Many churches use this exact flow:

### 1. God loves → 2. Sin separates → 3. Jesus rescues → 4. Trust Jesus

This clear framework has biblical roots and is easy to remember. It opens space for hearts to respond—not out of guilt, but out of hope.

# Section 3: The Power of a Changed Life

The gospel isn't just something we believe—it's someone we trust. Jesus changes us from the inside out, and that transformation is the clearest proof of His power at work in our lives.

## 1. Biblical Transformations: From Darkness to Purpose

The Bible is filled with dramatic life changes:

- **Saul to Paul** – A fierce persecutor becomes the gospel's greatest apostle. His transformation was so real that he wrote, "I no longer live, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20).
- **Nicodemus** – A religious leader draws near to Jesus at night and emerges as a believer (John 3). What started in darkness ended in newfound hope.
- **David** – A king's broken, repentant heart led him to write Psalms of both guilt and grace. His story reminds us holiness is found in honest honesty.

These transformations show the gospel conquers sin, renews hearts, restores relationships, and reverses destinies.

## 2. Modern Real Stories: Testimonies of Change

### Pastor Matt's Journey

I grew up in church but had only a surface-level faith (which wasn't faith at all) knowing about God without truly knowing Him. After a difficult breakup, I found myself at a music festival in San Diego. There, I heard a speaker who was born without arms or legs. Despite his physical limitations, he radiated the love and joy of Christ in every moment. I heard his story about real, authentic faith. His life—though missing limbs—overflowed with purpose and presence. Something shifted within me. The power of the Holy Spirit felt undeniable. In that moment, I didn't just believe intellectually—I gave your life to Jesus. I encountered Jesus—not religion—and everything changed.

### The Power of Real Encounter

My story exemplifies how Jesus meets us in the ordinary or unexpected places—with an invitation to deeper faith:

- **Familiarity became encounter:** Church became a relationship.
- **Brokenness met Jesus:** A festival became a turning point.
- **Accessibility met authority:** A man without limbs became a vessel of God's power.

## 3. Ongoing Change: It's a Journey, Not a Moment

Transformation isn't always dramatic in one day. Often, it's:

- Small, daily choices to trust Christ
- Gradual heart renewal through Scripture and community
- Patient vulnerability that leads to deeper freedom

As Tim Keller explains:

“The gospel isn't an aspect of your life—it is your life.”

True transformation—whether sudden or gradual—always begins with seeing more of Jesus and believing more in Him.

#### 4. Why We Emphasize Life Change

- It moves faith from concept to connection: knowing God becomes experiencing God.
- It honors God's work in ordinary people, not just spiritual elites.
- It helps us share the gospel with credibility: our stories testify to the truth.

Rather than just talking religion, we celebrate **real transformation**—because Jesus child of sinners, and **ordinary people don't stay ordinary when they meet Him.**

# Section 4: Living Out the Gospel— Justification & Sanctification in Action

Salvation is more than a moment—it's both a rescue and a lifelong transformation. At **Love Church**, we celebrate both the instant rescue and the ongoing renewal. These two truths define the Christian journey:

## | Justification: Declared Righteous at the Moment of Faith

The moment someone trusts in Jesus, they're justified:

- Their guilt is removed, and they're declared righteous before God—pure and accepted.
- This is a one-time legal act, not based on performance, but on the perfect work of Christ imputed to them.
- At that moment, they move from separation to position: they're now in right standing—fully loved and fully accepted.

## | Sanctification: Becoming More Like Jesus Over Time

But it doesn't stop there. Justification begins the relationship—sanctification grows it:

- It's a daily process of being set apart and shaped by the Holy Spirit.
- Our thoughts, actions, habits, and relationships begin to reflect Christ more and more.
- This is an ongoing heart journey—from grace to growth, from forgiveness to transformation.

## | How It Works at Love Church

1. **We Celebrate the Moment.** At salvation, we rejoice! A life is rescued, sin is forgiven, and a believer is justified.
2. **We Grow Together in Community.** Spiritual growth happens best in community. We encourage small groups, accountability, mentorship, and ongoing discipleship—tools that fuel sanctification.
3. **We Serve and Mobilize.** God uses our gifts as part of our growth. Serving others, using our talents, and living missionally reflects how we're being transformed.
4. **We Return to the Gospel Daily.** Justification isn't forgotten after conversion—it's remembered. We live by grace every day and depend on Jesus again and again.

## | Why This Matters

- Someone might be justified but still immature—sanctification helps us grow in faithfulness and love.
- Someone might pursue holiness but never understand grace—justification keeps us rooted in God's unconditional love.
- Both truths are essential—**we are saved by Jesus (justification), and we are being shaped by Him (sanctification).**

### | A Gentle Reminder

- **Justification** = The moment I'm forgiven, adopted, and declared righteous.
- **Sanctification** = The journey of becoming ever more like Jesus by His Spirit.

Together, they form the heartbeat of genuine gospel life.

# Section 5: Final Encouragement & Invitation

As we close this journey through the gospel, remember that salvation is both a moment and a movement. It's not just the beginning—it's the beginning of a journey with Jesus that lasts a lifetime and extends into eternity.

## What Now?

- **If you've never trusted Jesus, today is a day to take the step.** Trust Him to forgive your sin (justification) and begin shaping your life by His Spirit (sanctification).
- **If you've already surrendered, keep walking.** Celebrate the moment, but keep pursuing a deeper, daily experience of transformation.
- **If you're unsure where you fall, we're here to walk with you**—not to demand, but to support and guide you.

## A Simple Prayer You Can Pray

"Jesus, I'm so grateful for your rescue. I believe you died for my sins and rose again. I trust you today and invite you to lead me. Please shape my heart, change my life, and guide my future. Amen."

## Keep Growing: Recommended Resources

Enhance your journey with these trusted books on sanctification:

- **"Devoted to God"** by Sinclair Ferguson
- **"Holiness"** by J.C. Ryle
- **"The Explicit Gospel"** by Matt Chandler
- **"Gospel"** by J.D. Greear

## You Don't Have to Walk Alone

**Love Church** is here for you:

- Join a **Love Group** to live out the gospel together.
- Attend our Essentials **class** to find support, accountability, and spiritual growth.
- Let us **pray for you**, counsel with you, and celebrate your first step of faith or the next step in your journey.

## Final Word

We're not offering religion. We're offering relationship with Jesus. The gospel brings:

- **Justification:** You are forgiven, accepted, and secure in Jesus.
- **Sanctification:** You are being transformed into His likeness every day.
- **Glorification is coming**—when Jesus returns, every tear will be wiped away.

Your story isn't over—it's just beginning. And better yet, you're not walking it alone.