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The Gospel

What is a priority?

Simply put, *its the most important thing in a category.*

-The Bible tells us that there is an event that changed everything – and as a result, the whole world is actually a different place – the Bible calls this event "THE Good News" or "The Gospel"

In our passage today – Paul used the language of “passing on what was of first importance” – in other words: “here’s the priority, Church!”

sad news - that 65% say that Evangelism is not and has not been a priority for their congregations over the last several years.

-Many people are still paralyzed by the mention of evangelism in the church because they equated with a soapbox preacher or a bullhorn on a city corner.

-Within the same article it is noted that “relationships form the best foundation for evangelism.”

So I want to give you one tool today as we start - it's actually a mimetic device, a memory tool, as well as something that you could actually share with someone if you're trying to help them understand what the good news of Jesus is.

3 Circles Tool

<https://youtu.be/NYU-a2wIbxc>

What is the gospel?

Which part of the tool was the gospel?

Defining the Gospel:

The gospel literally means - the Good news, or the happy announcement

The gospel is first and foremost - **The Christ Event** - by the Christ event I mean the whole story of Jesus from his announcement to Mary to his resurrection and ascension.

The good news is after all NEWS! Something has happened, as a result of which, the whole world is changed forever.

It can be simplified down into about 8 parts - Theologian Matthew Bates presents an excellent description of the gospel and salvation in his book *Salvation by Allegiance Alone*

Events

1. The eternal Son of God took on flesh in the virgin's womb (as the Scriptures foretold)
2. He brought the kingdom of God near us
3. He died according to the scriptures
4. He was bodily buried
5. He was bodily raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures
6. He appeared to many
7. He ascended to the right hand of God
8. He is coming again as judge

But That's not the whole story: the good news has God's POWER in it, God draws out a response from everybody who hears this news.

The way somebody responds brings about the **effects** of the gospel in their life.

When then someone hears the gospel, they encounter Christ, they encounter the power of God on display - Paul says as much in Romans 1 - the gospel is the power of God

- When God draws out a response of faith (that is of trust and surrender) the effects of the gospel are forgiveness of sin, adoption into the family of God, a new life and a new purpose that person. Ultimately leading to eternal life
- but when a heart is hard, the gospel draws out a response of rejection - the person moves further away from God, still carrying the burden of their sin, and still living alone in the world, without God and his family. Ultimately leading to eternal death and separation from God and his New creation.

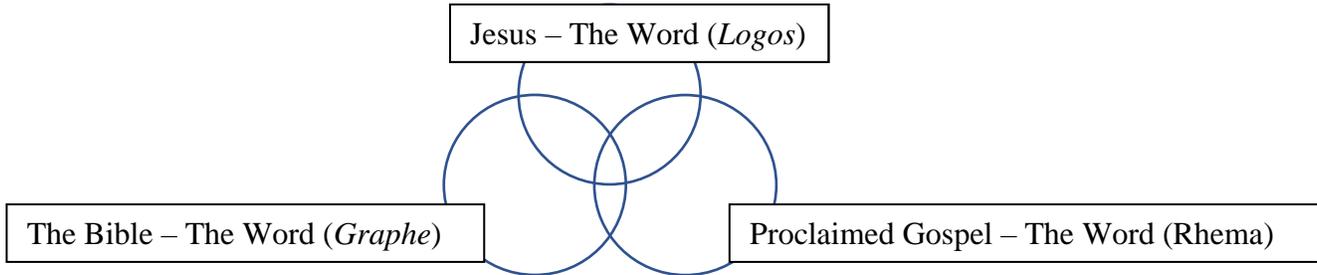
-effects of the gospel include the language of turning from sin, forgiveness, God declaring you are Good and right, being made new, and being transformed day by day. (words like justification, Regeneration, and Sanctification are the theological words that describe what I'm saying here.)

Why is it the priority?

Like we've already said - the Gospel is the announcement that something has happened, and as a result, the whole world is different.

According to the Apostle Paul - the main thing, the thing of first importance is **The Gospel**
But the gospel is the story about **the Main PERSON, Jesus the Messiah**
But there is more - the story about JESUS is actually the climactic moment to the long story of God's story of working with Humans **BIBLE**

THE “MAIN THING:”



Jesus - The LIVING EMBODIED WORD of God - the top of the top - the main person

Anything else at the top other than God revealed in Christ Jesus is idolatry
The primary definition of the Word of God is JESUS

The Proclamation - The Word is the active Power of God - the Gospel. - Romans 1:16 "for I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God..."

1 Cor 1:18 For the **word of** the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the **power of** God.

The Bible - The way that the Living Word, Jesus, meets us. The way we know what the proclaimed word, the gospel, is to be. The Word of God enlived by his Spirit.

So the best way to answer the question – the “Main Thing” is THE WORD OF GOD –
Primarily Jesus himself, and at the same time, the proclamation of the “word”, and the Bible

How do we preach it?

-So this leads us to the question how do we actually go about proclaiming this this?

well let's take a lead from Paul here who begins our passage today with the words "Now I would remind you"

-I would say to you that you must be reminded regularly of this story of Jesus Christ

1. if you haven't read one or all of the gospel accounts a while I strongly urge you to read a gospel account - make a plan to do it this week or over the course of a couple weeks if you need to
2. notice that Paul said that these things happened in accordance with the scriptures - by that he means the entire Old Testament - again I strongly encourage you to get into the Old Testament in your reading or in your audio Bible listening - most of you have audio bibles because you have access to the Internet... go to BibleGateway.com- [Audio Bibles](#) and listen to any of about 25 different translations and recordings of the Bible all for free whenever you want.

- a. if you aren't quite sure how to begin I would say if you like reading story then start with genesis and exodus
- b. -if you like reading shorter excerpts pithy sayings, get into "the book of psalms" - it is all songs and poems some of which are very short some of which are a couple pages long at the very most .

The Spirit of God will speak through the scriptures to challenge, encourage and transform you. Read with others if you find you are getting bogged down! Communal reading is often better than solo reading.

3. Last of all I encourage you to familiarize yourself with a simple tool like the three circles.
 - a. the three circles puts Christ at the centre of the story

Jesus after all left his disciples with these words as he ascended to sit at the right hand of God in heaven :

18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

who do you preach to you?

Anyone! from any nation, from any culture, or subculture.

- remember as we scatter and go to new places this summer, what is of first importance
- Christ Jesus - the good news about who he is and what he is done
- go and tell the story and let God bring out the response from the people you share it with
- pray for soft hearts, pray for submission and repentance instead of rejection and running
- don't be afraid to tell HIS story to someone this summer.