

Presenting the Biblical Gospel

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Pastor Matt Black

Midweek Service

I Peter 3:15

Discipleship: Every midweek service, we will have a time of basic discipleship before our message that will help us in our walk with God, and in evangelism.

Q. What is the first commandment of God's moral Law?

A. *Thou shalt have no other gods before me (Exodus 20:3).*

Introduction: Let's open our Bibles tonight to the book of 1 Peter. I Peter 3 and verse 15. The title of tonight's message is "Presenting the Biblical Gospel."

I Peter 3:15

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.

If you had five minutes with a person, how would you present the Gospel? Do you know what the Gospel is? Are you ready to give an *answer* of the hope that is in you? The word "answer" here is apologia (apologia), which means to give a defense for what you believe, or to present a reasoned statement or argument. We get our word "Apologist" from this word. An apologist defends an argument. Could you do that? Are you ready always to give a reasoned defense for your faith in Christ?

It is clear that our friends and family NEED that kind of a messenger to bring them the Gospel, and to clearly define and defend their only hope of salvation to them. This is made even more obvious by some recent answers given by lost people when asked, "What happens when we die?"

Here are some actual comments from people when questioned about this. "What happens when we die?"

- "I'm not going to worry about what happens later."
- "I would like to believe we all go off to a better place."
- "Hopefully we come back."
- "When you die, that's it!"

How would you answer all of these false reasonings?

I want to give you a picture of the Gospel from Isaiah 6. Here you have a person who breaks down in humble repentance because he sees who God is. The Gospel is nothing less than what Isaiah experienced. The Gospel is faith in who God is (Holy, Righteous, Just) and repentance of who I am (wicked, law-breaker, criminal).

I. Are you ready to DEFINE the Gospel? Do you know what the Message of the Gospel is? What is it? What does it promise? We know that the word Gospel means "good news," so that tells us that there are facts and a message involved. It is objective. The Biblical Gospel offers righteousness. How do we get it?

A. Faith: The Gospel is propositional. We must have faith in something. This is why it matters not if it makes you feel good, or how many stars you see, or what experience you have. The Gospel is believing the Good News. News is by nature *propositional*. News means that there are certain facts to be believed. It is something objective.

1. We must teach God's Holiness (Moral Law, Ten Commandments). Think of Isaiah. He heard the angels saying "Holy, Holy, Holy." This is God's message to all of us.

2. We must teach Man's Destiny and Depravity.

- Man's Destiny

Psalm 96:13

Before the LORD: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.

Hebrews 9:27

And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

Romans 14:10

But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:10

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad.

- Man's Depravity
- A State of Wickedness

Psalm 14:2-3

The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, *and* seek God. They are all gone aside, they are *all* together become filthy: *there is* none that doeth good, no, not one.

Ecclesiastes 7:20

For *there is* not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.

- A state of War! Man is at war with God!

Isaiah 57:21

There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.

- A state that leaves them Without Hope! They cannot save themselves. Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us that salvation is a free gift of God, not earned by our self-righteous works.

Romans 3 tells us that we are not seeking God by nature, so man is in a hopeless state apart from God!

Because man is dead in his trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1), we must give them the Law of God to wake them up!

Romans 7:7

What shall we say then? *Is* the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

3. We must teach the Substitutionary Atonement also called imputation.

Romans 5:6-8

6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

Romans 4:21-5:1

And [Abraham] being fully persuaded that, what he [God] had promised, he was able also to perform. 22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; 24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; 25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

- B. Repentance: How did Jesus preach the Gospel? He said:

Mark 1:15

And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

Ezekiel 18:30-31

Repent, and turn *yourselves* from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. 31 Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed...

- The Gospel is proactive. "Repent" Repentance is the fruit of faith. It believes! It trembles! It obeys!

Luke 18:13

And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as *his* eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

A.W. Tozer said, "Plain horse sense ought to tell us that anything that makes no change in the man who professes it makes no difference to God either, and it is an easily observable fact that for countless numbers of persons the change from no-faith to faith makes no actual difference in the life...Any professed faith in Christ as personal Saviour that does not bring the life under plenary obedience to Christ as lord is inadequate and must betray its victim at the last....The man that believes will obey; failure to obey is convincing proof that there is not true faith present."¹

¹ John MacArthur, *Faith Works* (Word: Dallas, 1993), 322.

- The Gospel is painful. “death” “cross” “die like wheat” “Obedience is the inevitable manifestation of saving faith.”²

1 Thessalonians 1:9

For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;

Now that we have seen the message that we are to bring, let’s look at three popular false gospels—I call them “Happiness gospels.” They are mutants—that is they sound similar to the Biblical Gospel, but they are laced with poison. These are found everywhere in every church and in every heart. They are a compromise of the true Gospel that we just articulated.

II. Are you ready to DEFEND the Gospel against false teachers? The Mutants of the Biblical Gospel

Jude v.3 “I...exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”

A. The Easy-Believism gospel. DEMONIC FAITH

Essentially it is intellectual. This gospel has all the promises of the Biblical Gospel, but without the demands of repentance. This is only half of the Biblical Gospel. It is faith without repentance. It is as James says, faith without the fruit of repentance in the life. It falsely salves the conscience. This gospel is more of an intellectual assent (demonic faith) to the facts of the true Gospel, with only assent required. This false gospel produces false converts. They show up in a variety of ways.

We speak of those in politics as being ideologically conservative or liberal. Being a Christian is not simply a good ideology—a good way of thinking. I believe this intellectually. Or I believe Jesus died for my sin. I assent that it has happened. Or I think the Lord’s prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Sermon on the Mount are good ways of living.

- I assent to it. I did it—I said the prayer—I did that. Come on—leave me alone now. There is no depth to it at all. This is the “Easy Gospel.”

B. The Emotional gospel. SUPERFICIAL FAITH. This gospel promises to make you feel good. Well, I’m a Christian because Jesus makes me feel good. I love to praise the Lord, because it makes me happy. The motive here is: Feelings or Emotions.

Example: Witnessing in Jiffy Lube.

C. The Prosperity gospel. EMPTY FAITH. This gospel promises to take away all your problems and give you a “wonderful life.

² Ibid, 61.

III. Are you ready to DELIVER the Gospel? The Management of the Gospel, that is how are we to present the Gospel to the lost?

I Peter 3:15

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.

- A. Consecrate yourself to this task. "sanctify the Lord God in your hearts..."
- B. Create Opportunities.
 - 1. Entails training. Be ready "always"
 - 2. Entails talking. Make opportunities! "Every man that asketh"
 - This entails trust, friendship confidence.
 - It doesn't take long to establish this!
- C. Control our Attitude.
 - 1. We must have a Gentle approach "Meekness"
 - 2. We must have a Genuine approach "Fear" or respect

Conclusion: Are you able and ready to confront the lost and defend your faith? Are you willing to commit this area of your life to the Lord? Will you seek training from this church in the area of evangelism? Let's be ready to give an answer!