

SERMON SERIES: *Starting Point*

SERMON TITLE: *Good News*

SCRIPTURE: 1 Corinthians 15.1-11

DATE: 9.12.21

BIG IDEA:

The Gospel is the starting point for living a life of purpose.

1. What is the Gospel?

A. Meaning of gospel in the Apostle Paul's day

- The Gospel literally means “good announcement.” It was used in Paul’s day to announce that an emperor had won a great victory on a far away battlefield which secured his peace and established his authority. Heralds would be sent all over the emperor's kingdom to announce the good news that their king was victorious and all over the conquered territory to announce to the conquered people that a new king was in charge. The Gospel was national news, royal news. Think of news outlets announcing Japan's surrender and the end of World War II.

B. The Gospel that Paul was herald of

- Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day all in accordance with the Scriptures and then was seen by hundreds of people including over 500 at one time.
- In Paul's Gospel regarding Jesus Christ, the opponent Jesus had won a great victory over was sin.

2. Why is the Gospel good news?

A. Sin is humanity's greatest enemy

- What is sin?
 - Sin is the breaking of God's law.
- How did Jesus sum up God's law?
 - You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.
 - You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

- Sin is a failure to love God supremely and to love your neighbor in the same way that you love yourself.
- We have all chosen to love many things more than God. For some, it is their career. For others it is achievement, or human approval, or wealth, or power, or children, or a spouse, or a religion, or a political cause or a sport.
 - When we disconnect ourselves from God, our life starts to break down and satisfaction, significance, and security continually allude us.
 - [Romans 1:21](#) states that our thinking becomes futile and our hearts become darkened.
 - [Romans 1:29-32](#) goes on to tell us that once our vertical relationship with God is damaged our horizontal relationships with others become damaged as well. Broken people do broken things.
 - In place of love for others, we covet what others have and hate them for having it. We gossip. We boast. We lie and cheat. We don't forgive. We don't extend mercy. We demand our way and become infuriated when we don't get it. We justify our wrong behavior. We treat people as objects by having sex with them without any long term commitment to them. We seek to be served instead of being a servant and the list goes on.
 - *First we practice sin, then defend it, then boast of it. Sin is first our burden, then our custom, then our delight, then our excellency.*-Thomas Manton
 - [Romans 1](#) repeatedly tells us that the wrath of God against people that reject him and hurt others is that he allows them to walk down the path that they are on and experience the destructive consequences.
- [1 Corinthians 15:23](#) tells us that Christ is going to return and those who are in Christ will be resurrected and then the end of the world as we know it will come by God putting an end to all of his enemies, even death itself, and the result will be that God will be "all in all." What happens to the person that has chosen for a lifetime to persist on the path of rejecting God and hurting others? God's wrath and justice will fall on them. What will it look like? God will once again give them over to experience the destructive consequences of the path that they have chosen but this time they will bear the full weight of their choice. Passages like [Matthew 13](#) and [Revelation 20](#) tell us that God will forever quarantine persistent rebels away from him and his new world in a place that the Bible calls Hell and they will experience the full isolation, emptiness, and disintegration of their choice to be separated from him.

- *There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, "Thy will be done," and those to whom God says, in the end, "Thy will be done." All that are in Hell, choose it. Without that self-choice there could be no Hell. No soul that seriously and constantly desires joy will ever miss it. Those who seek find. Those who knock it is opened."*-C.S. Lewis
- Every indication that Scripture gives us is that the person in Hell is so far gone in their pride, self absorption, and narcissism that although they are miserable, they remain unrepentant.
 - See Jesus's parable of the rich man and the beggar Lazarus in [Luke 16](#).
- We might think our crumbling mood is bad now, can you imagine it in 400 years? What about 15,000 years? We might think our pride is bad now but what about 60,000 years from now? The same goes for our selfishness, our lust, our discontentment, our greed, etc. Oh the hideous monsters we will become apart from God.

B. Those who receive and stand in the Gospel of Christ share in Christ's victory over sin.

- The last thing that God wants is for someone to be on the path of destruction that leads to Hell. [Ezekiel 33:11](#), [1 Timothy 2:3-4](#)
- God, out of his mercy, sends a deliverer to intervene...to intercept all of us who are caught in the downward spiral of sin before it becomes full blown and lands us in Hell.
 - Through Christ, God mercifully provides a way for us to be brought back into fellowship with him as our life source that doesn't compromise his justice.
 - Jesus pays for our sins so that God's justice is satisfied and we don't have to pay and offers us his perfect performance record so that when we receive it in faith, we can be reconciled to God and treated by God as if we perfectly loved God and the people he has made.
 - When we are reconciled to God and he treats us as if we did everything that Jesus did, we get the royal treatment that stops us on sin's destructive path.
 - A new heart that loves God and desires to please him and that truly desires to love others
 - A new ability to speak to and listen to God and discern his will.
 - A new friend, the Holy Spirit, that empowers us to live the Christian life.
 - A new family, the church, that provides us with the support and challenge we need to grow in our faith.

- A new promise that everything we experience in this life, even our sufferings, God will use for our ultimate good.
- New provision...God will make sure all of our needs are supplied.
- A new peace...with all of our sin...past, present, and future....paid for and forgiven, we no longer have to fear death or Christ's return to administer justice.
- A new joy as you begin to reach your full potential as a person.
- A new hope...we have a guaranteed spot in God's new world where evil will be no more, in a resurrected body that will never again be susceptible to sin and death.

3. Why does the Gospel have to be our starting point if we are going to live a life of purpose?

A. We don't need a few minor tweaks but a whole new life!

- Jesus and Nicodemus [John 3](#)

B. Grace motivates us

- If God labored so greatly in Christ to first love us, how can we not greatly labor to love him and his image bearers?
- Grace gives us the humility to not look down at others and to love them well.
 - Where do we find the motivation to be patient with others? In the Gospel that declares God was patient with us.
 - Where do we find the motivation to forgive when someone mistreats us? In the Gospel that declares we deeply mistreated God but he forgave us.
 - Where do we find humility that doesn't look down on others? In the Gospel that says we were such a train wreck it took the death of the sinless Son of God to save us.
 - Where do we find the motivation to be generous to others with our resources? In the Gospel that says that although Jesus was rich, he made himself poor in order to make us rich.
 - Where do we find energy to serve people who don't look, think, or act like us? In the Gospel that says even when we didn't look, think, or act like Jesus, he came to serve us.
 - Where do we find motivation to risk our lives to help others? In the Gospel that says Jesus didn't just risk his life but gave his life to help us.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How was the Greek word that we translate “gospel” used in Paul’s day?
2. What is the concise rendering of the Gospel of Jesus Christ that Paul gives to start 1 Corinthians 15?
3. How would you define sin?
4. What makes sin the greatest enemy of the human race?
5. How would you describe the downward spiral of sin? What did that downward spiral look like in your life?
6. What do you make of Thomas Manton’s quote?
7. How is the wrath of God currently being revealed against sinners?
8. How will the wrath of God be revealed against sinners at Christ’s return?
9. What do you make of C.S. Lewis’s quote?
10. How is Hell completely fair?
11. Why will people be so miserable in Hell?
12. How is Hell good news for those in Christ?
13. How does God intercept those in the downward spiral of sin that leads to Hell?
14. How does God’s grace provide us with power and motivation to obey the two great commandments?