

III. Three Bags and Choices

III. Target and Bullseye

1 Corinthians 15: 1-5

Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the Gospel I preached to you, which you have received and on which you have taken your stand. By this Gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

For what I received I pass on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the twelve.”

The goal of this study is to clarify the Gospel in our hearts and minds so it leads

to transformation in every part of our lives.

- For some, this study will serve as a reminder to you of the importance of the Gospel and how central it must be in all areas of your life.
- For some, this study will reveal to you that you’ve never truly been saved, never believed the Gospel, and you will come to a decision point of faith or unbelief.

INTRODUCTION: UNDERSTANDING the GOSPEL

I. WHAT IS the “GOSPEL?”

- The word “gospel” literally means “good news.” The Greek word (*euaggelion*) appears 93 times in the Bible, exclusively in the New Testament. From that word, we derive our English words *evangelist* and *evangelical*.
- In a general, broad sense, the Gospel is the whole of the Bible, telling us of God’s story of redemption and salvation for us.
- In a more specific, narrow sense (and the way we will understand it throughout this study), the Gospel is the “good news” is that God loves us and has made a way through the Lord Jesus Christ for us to know Him and have relationship with Him.

II. WHY DO WE NEED TO STUDY THE GOSPEL? SIX BIBLICAL REASONS

#1: We need to study the gospel to understand HOW we can KNOW God and build our identity in Him.

- ✓ The gospel is the fundamental building block of our foundation for life.
 - Understanding the Gospel is the ultimate key to understanding the identity of God Himself.

- ✓ The Gospel allows us to discover who God is through the revelation of His son, Jesus Christ; then, the Holy Spirit begins to reveal to us who we are IN CHRIST.

“The Bible says that our real problem is that every one of us is building our identity on something besides Jesus.”— Tim Keller

III. Identity Video Clip- “Who Am I?”

- Lack of Identity=confusion, darkness, bad choices, broken relationship with God and with others
“We don’t know where we fit in. We allow our worth and self-esteem to be determined by WHAT WE DO and WHAT OTHERS THINK and NOT BY WHO WE ARE IN CHRIST.”
- Only by knowing WHO GOD IS can we know WHO WE ARE!
 - **“We are created in His image and have the gift of free will.”**
 - THEREFORE, our true identity (who we ARE and who we CAN BE are found ONLY in relationship to GOD.
 - There is WORTH and VALUE in our IDENTITY in CHRIST. Therefore, there is WORTH and VALUE in our lives.

#2: We need to study the gospel to understand what it means to be reconciled with God resulting in true forgiveness, peace, joy, and the promise of eternal life.

“Focusing on our new relationship with God transforms our obsessive need for other people’s approval. Our attention is, instead, CAPTIVATED BY THE PROMISE OF NEW LIFE IN CHRIST.....We understand the importance of facing ourselves honestly and placing our confidence in the person of Jesus Christ.

#3: We need to study the gospel to understand and accept that our past is forgiven.

Acts 10:43

All the prophets testify about Him (Jesus) that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness in His name.

Psalms 103:10-12

He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him.

#4: We need to study the Gospel to have assurance and confidence in our future inheritance.

1 John 5:13

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know you have eternal life.

- ✓ Many times, a Christian wrestles and struggles with assurance in his or her salvation because there is no conviction or clarity about the Gospel itself. Thus, the more clarity and understanding of the Gospel we gain, the greater assurance and confidence begins to take place in our lives.

Titus 3:4-7

But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

- ✓ The Gospel teaches us that we can't do anything in our own power to save ourselves from sin through morality, good works, or obedience; therefore, we can't do anything on our own to keep ourselves saved either.
- ✓ The belief that "I needed Jesus to save me but now it is up to me to keep myself saved" is unbiblical, an offense to the cross, and leads to daily guilt and condemnation in a person's life. A true follower of Jesus cannot lose salvation.... what we never gained in the first place. We persevere until the end through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone.
- ✓ "Once saved, always saved" doesn't grant us the freedom to abuse God's grace and live however we want in sin and rebellion and think "Oh, I'm saved so it's no big deal."

1 Peter 1:3-5

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy, He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

- ✓ Thus, the promise of eternal life in heaven and all we will inherit forever is a gift of God's grace that we don't earn or deserve.

2 Timothy 1:12

That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day."

#5: We need to study the gospel to understand how to love God and how to how to love others.

Matthew 22:37-39

³⁷ *Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. The second is like it. Love your neighbor as yourself."*

John 13:34

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

- ✓ The basis of a Christian's love for others is the love received in Jesus Christ.
- ✓ We can never truly love others sacrificially and unconditionally until we first understand and receive the sacrificial, unconditional love that God has shown to us in Jesus Christ.

1 Timothy 1: 5

The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

#6: We need to study the gospel so that we have a true understanding of who God is, what He says, and how to grow in our faith in the present.

“Those of us in the church don’t usually deny the gospel. But we do tend to forget it quite a bit. For many of us, the gospel functions solely as the entry rite into Christianity; it is the prayer we pray to begin our relationship with Jesus; the diving board off of which we jump into the pool of the “real” Christian life.

The gospel, however, is not just the diving board off of which we jump into the pool of Christianity; *it is the pool itself*. It is not only the way we begin in Christ; it is the way we grow in Christ. As one pastor puts it, the gospel is not just the ABCs of Christianity, but it is the A-Z. All of the Christian life flows from the good news of what Jesus has done.

That’s why *growth in Christ is never going beyond the gospel, but going deeper into the gospel*. The purest waters from the spring of life are found by digging deeper, not wider, into the gospel well.”

- J.D.Greear

An important part of building a firm foundation for a new identity in Christ involves learning to look at ALL PARTS of our lives through the “lens” of our relationship with God and His Word.

III. Worldview Video Clip

A “worldview” refers to a comprehensive conception of the world from a specific standpoint. A “Christian worldview,” then, is a comprehensive conception of the world from a Christian standpoint. An individual’s worldview is his “big picture,” a harmony of all his beliefs about the world. It is his way of understanding reality. One’s worldview is the basis for making daily decisions and is therefore extremely important.

An apple sitting on a table is seen by several people. A botanist looking at the apple classifies it. An artist sees a still-life and draws it. A grocer sees an asset and inventories it. A child sees lunch and eats it. How we look at any situation is influenced by how we look at the world at large. Every worldview, Christian and non-Christian, deals with at least these three questions:

- 1) Where did we come from? (and why are we here?)
- 2) What is wrong with the world?
- 3) How can we fix it?