

INTRODUCTION

1. For the next couple of weeks we are going to take a detailed look at the doctrine of salvation.
2. And this morning I want to begin with talking about “The Gospel.”
3. You hear that term a lot but what does it mean?
4. Is it believing some facts about Jesus or is it more?
5. Does it make any demands on your life?

6. What is true faith?
7. What is repentance?
8. These are a few of the things I want to talk about this morning.
9. But first, let's ask...

LESSON

I. What is the Gospel?

We hear the term “gospel” a lot and someone may have asked if you know what the gospel is. So let's start there by asking “what is it?”

First let's start with...

A. Its Definition

1. The English word “gospel” comes from the Anglo-Saxon (old English) *godspell* denoting “glad tidings” or “good news.”¹
2. In Greek, this is the word euangelion which also means “good news”²
3. It occurs 76 times in the New Testament
4. It has that prefix eu-, which comes into English in a variety of words.

¹ Chamblin, J. Knox. “[Gospel.](#)” *Baker encyclopedia of the Bible* 1988 : 892. Print.

² Lust, Johan, Erik Eynikel, and Katrin Hauspie. [A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint : Revised Edition](#) 2003 : n. pag. Print.

- a) We talk about euphonics or euphonious music, which refers to something that sounds good.
- b) We talk about a eulogy, which is a good word pronounced about someone at his funeral service.
- c) The prefix eu- refers to something good or pleasant.
- d) The word angelos or angelion is the word for “message.”
- e) Angels are messengers, and an angelos is one who delivers a message.

f) So euangelion refers to a “good message.”

5. It's used in Luke 2:10 for a message of “good tidings” which was given by angels to shepherds when they announced the birth of Jesus. 10 Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. 11 For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.” 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: 14 “Glory to God in the highest, and on

earth peace, goodwill toward men!”

6. εὐαγγέλιον then is a technical term for the message about Christ.³

R.C. Sproul says, “The gospel is called the ‘good news’ because it addresses the most serious problem that you and I have as human beings, and that problem is simply this: God is holy and He is just, and I’m not. And at the end of my life, I’m going to stand before a just and holy God, and I’ll be judged. And I’ll be judged either on the basis of my own righteousness—or lack of it—or the righteousness of another. The good news of the gospel is that Jesus lived a life of perfect righteousness, of perfect obedience to God, not for

³ Balz, Horst Robert, and Gerhard Schneider. Exegetical dictionary of the New Testament 1990– : 70. Print.

His own well being but for His people. He has done for me what I couldn't possibly do for myself. But not only has He lived that life of perfect obedience, He offered Himself as a perfect sacrifice to satisfy the justice and the righteousness of God.”⁴

7. We hear euangelion in:

a) Mark 1:14-15 (NKJV) Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, 15 and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

⁴ <https://www.ligonier.org/blog/what-is-the-gospel/>

- b) Mark 8:35 (NKJV) Jesus said,
“For whoever desires to save his
life will lose it, but whoever loses
his life for My sake and the
gospel's will save it.”
- c) Probably the verse you're most
familiar with is Romans 1:16
(NKJV) For I am not ashamed of
the gospel of Christ, for it is the
power of God to salvation for
everyone who believes, for the
Jew first and also for the Greek.

Now you probably already noticed the term
“gospel” is joined with other terms to
identify further what it means.

Notice...

B. Its Terms

It's called...

1. The Gospel of salvation in Ephesians 1:13-14 (NKJV) In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.
2. The Gospel of the grace of God in Acts 20:24 (NKJV) But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may

finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

3. The Gospel of peace in Ephesians 6:15 (NKJV) and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace.
4. The Gospel of Jesus Christ in Romans 1:16 (NKJV) For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

Euangelion is rich in both the Old and New Testament.

Notice...

C. It's Occurrence

1. In the Old Testament

There, the basic meaning of the term gospel was simply an announcement of a good message.

- a) If a doctor came to examine a sick person and afterward declared that the problem was nothing serious, that was gospel or good news.
- b) In ancient days when soldiers went out to battle, people waited breathlessly for a report from the battlefield about the outcome.

Once the outcome was known, marathon runners dashed back to give the report.

That is why Isaiah wrote, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news” (Isa. 52:7).

The watchman in the watchtower would look as far as the eye could see into the distance.

Finally, he would see the dust moving as the runner sped back to the city to give the report of the battle.

The watchmen were trained to tell by the way the runner’s legs

were churning whether the news was good or bad.

If the runner was doing the survival shuffle, it indicated a grim report, but if his legs were flying and the dust was kicking up, that meant good news.

That is the concept of gospel in its most rudimentary sense.

2. In the New Testament

When we come to the New Testament, we find three distinct ways in which the term gospel is used:

a) First, we have four books in the New Testament that we call Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These books are biographical portraits of Jesus. Gospel in this sense describes a particular form of literature.

b) During the earthly ministry of Jesus, the term gospel was linked not particularly with the person of Jesus but with the kingdom of God.

John the Baptist is introduced as one who comes preaching the gospel, and his message is “repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” (Matt. 3:2).

- c) Jesus did the same in his parables, proclaiming, “the kingdom of God is like”

On the lips of Jesus, the gospel was about the dramatic moment in history when, through the long-awaited Messiah, the kingdom of God had broken through in time and space.

The good news was the good news of the kingdom.

- d) By the time the epistles were written, particularly the Pauline epistles, the term gospel had taken on a new shade of understanding. It had become the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Gospel had a clear content to it.

At the heart of this gospel was the announcement of who Jesus was and what he had accomplished in his lifetime.

D. It's Content

1. It's the gospel of Jesus Christ
2. It focus' on His death, burial and resurrection (1 Cor.15)

II. Does the Gospel Make Any Demands?

A. The True Gospel is a Call to Self Denial

1. Matthew 16:24-25 (NKJV) Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If

anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

2. Luke 9:23 (NKJV) Then He said to them all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.

B. The True Gospel is a Call to Repentance

Repentance is a critical element of conversion, but do not dismiss it as simply another word for believing.

The Greek word for “repentance” is metanoia, from meta, “after” and noeō, “to understand.”

Literally it means “afterthought” or “change of mind,” but biblically its meaning does not stop there.

As metanoia is used in the New Testament, it always speaks of a change of purpose, and specifically a turning from sin.

In the sense Jesus used it, repentance calls for a repudiation of the old life and a turning to God for salvation.⁵

Geerhardus Vos wrote: “Our Lord’s idea of repentance is as profound and

⁵ MacArthur, John F., Jr. The Gospel according to Jesus: What Does Jesus Mean When He Says “Follow Me.” Electronic ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Academic and Professional Books, Zondervan Pub. House, 2000. Print.

comprehensive as his conception of righteousness. Of the three words that are used in the Greek Gospels to describe the process, one emphasizes the emotional element of regret, sorrow over the past evil course of life, *metamélomai*; Matt. 21:29–32; a second expresses reversal of the entire mental attitude, *metanoéō*, Matt. 12:41; Luke 11:32; 15:7, 10; the third denotes a change in the direction of life, one goal being substituted for another, *epistréphomai*; Matt. 13:15 (and parallels); Luke 17:4; 22:32.

Repentance is not limited to any single faculty of the mind: it engages the entire man, intellect, will and affections....

Again, in the new life which follows repentance the absolute supremacy of God is the controlling principle. He who

repents turns away from the service of mammon and self to the service of God.”⁶

1. Paul describes the repentance of the Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 (NKJV) For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, 10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.
2. This is what Paul told the Lyconians after he healed a man and they wanted to worship him - Acts

⁶ Geerhardus Vos, *The Kingdom of God and the Church* (Nutley, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1972), 92–93. MacArthur, John F., Jr. [*The Gospel according to Jesus: What Does Jesus Mean When He Says “Follow Me.”*](#) Electronic ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Academic and Professional Books, Zondervan Pub. House, 2000. Print.

14:14-15 (NKJV) But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude, crying out 15 and saying, “Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them.

3. Jesus Jesus called for 5 of the 7 churches in Revelation to repent: Ephesus (2:5), Pergamos (2:16), Thyatira (2:21, 25), Sardis (3:3), Laodicea (3:19)

4. Peter called for repentance at Pentecost - Acts 2:38 (NKJV) Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

C. The True Gospel is a Call to True Faith

Thomas Watson said, “Faith and repentance are two wings by which we fly to heaven...In Adam we all suffered shipwreck, and repentance is the only plank left us after shipwreck to swim to heaven.”

1. The meaning of John 3:16 (cf. 2:23-24)

“Though they believed in Jesus, Jesus did not believe in them. He had no faith in their faith.”⁷

2. Romans 4:20-25 (NKJV) He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, 21 and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. 22 And therefore “it was accounted to him for righteousness.” 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, 24 but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.

⁷ MacArthur, John F. The MacArthur Study Bible: John 2:24-25.

Marvin Vincent says the idea is to be “filled with conviction.”⁸

It is translated “fully convinced” (NKJV, ESV) and “fully persuaded.” (NIV)

Abram’s faith was truly astounding. For some forty years before it was fulfilled, Abram believed God’s promise to give him an heir.⁹

Applying these two words to the gospel, what does it mean to truly believe? It means to be “committed,” “fully convinced” of the truth of the gospel, of who Jesus is and of His atoning work.

⁸ Vincent, Marvin R. *Vincent’s Word Studies*.

⁹ MacArthur, John F., Jr. *Romans†*. Vol. 1. Chicago: Moody Press, 1991. Print. *MacArthur New Testament Commentary*.

CONCLUSION

1. The Gospel is under attack today.
2. It's being redefined.
3. And what it's being redefined as is not the gospel, it's easy believism.
4. A gospel that does not call sinners to repentance is no gospel at all.
5. Jesus is the heart of the Gospel.
6. It's about Him.
7. He gave His life for us because of our sins.

8. He died on a horrible cross, spent 3 days in the grave but rose for our justification.

9. Have you committed your life to Him.

10. If not, I call you to turn to Him today.

11. Let's pray.