

The Functional Centrality of the Gospel

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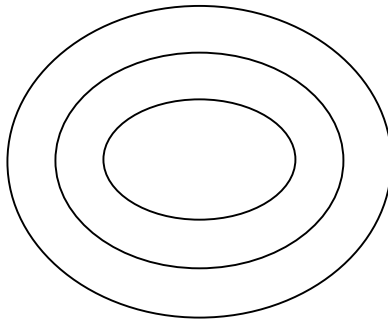
Introduction

- “What is the greatest, most crying need in the church today?”

Not just a biblical/theological literacy but a *functioning* biblical/theological literacy, *especially a functioning gospel*. I believe a local church is healthy to the degree that: 1) its pastor-teachers are able—accurately, effectively and broadly—to bring the gospel to bear specifically into the real lives of the people; and 2) its people have a deep personal understanding of and a deep personal appreciation for the gospel so as to be able to live in the good of the gospel daily.

One of the greatest challenges, yet one of the most important tasks, of pastoral ministry is to help people *actually see the connections* between the gospel and the thinking and behavior that make up their everyday lives. We know well the centrality of the gospel message but in order for it to have a *functional* centrality it must be *clearly, carefully* and *consistently* connected to the real issues—issues of thought and conduct—of people’s lives. This kind of ministry is most greatly needed.

I. The Functional Centrality of the Gospel: A Biblical Paradigm



A. The Essential Centrality of the Gospel

- In explicit biblical statements -

I Corinthians 15:3 –

B. Doctrinal Implications of the Gospel - “Gospel Truths”

I Timothy 1:10-11

- The idea of “Gospel shaped” doctrine -

➤ Some examples -

Romans 5:1 –

Romans 8:1 –

Romans 8:32 –

C. Behavioral Implications of the Gospel - “Gospel Conduct”

Philippians 1:27 (cf. Galatians 2:14, Titus 2:1)

➤ The idea of “Gospel shaped” conduct –

➤ Some examples -

I Corinthians 6:18-20

Ephesians 4:32

Ephesians 5:25

II Corinthians 8:7,9

II. The Functional Centrality of the Gospel: Implications & Opportunities

A. In the Effect of the Gospel in Your Own Life -

B. In the Teaching (and reception of teaching) from God’s Word -

C. In Pastoral Care and the Giving of Counsel -

D. A Gentle Word of Warning -