

What is the Gospel?
1 Corinthians 15:1-5

I. Why are you here today?

A. Reasons people come to Grand Marais

1. Recreation/Entertainment
2. Renewal and appreciation for natural and man-made beauty
3. Hide
 - a. From work and stress
 - b. From society at large

B. Reason you are here

1. God has orchestrated your life and the entire course of human history to have you here at this moment to hear a message of the good He has done and wants to do in your life!
2. You are here because God wants you to hear the good news of Jesus Christ, what many people know as “the gospel.”

C. Three Questions

1. What is the gospel?
2. Why is it important?
3. What should you do about it?

II. What is the Gospel?

A. Paul reviews the gospel

1. Christ died for our sins
2. Christ was buried
3. Christ was raised on the third day
4. Christ appeared

B. Christ died for our sins

1. What is Paul telling us? How is this good news, that Christ died for us?
2. Christ died
 - a. There once was a small village suffering from the effects of a severe drought. Food was scarce and the members of the tribe were beginning to steal from each other in order to survive.
 - b. The headman knew that thievery would be the death of the tribe, so he issued a law saying the next person caught stealing would be taken to the center of the village, tied to a pole and publicly whipped.
 - c. The next day, sure enough, a thief was caught. Everyone turned up to see who it was and to witness the punishment.
 - d. To everyone’s shock, the thief turned out to be the chief’s own mother. She was as desperate and hungry as everyone else, and though she hadn’t taken much, she was still guilty of stealing and breaking the law.
 - e. What was he going to do? He was a good chieftain, and could not justly ignore the law he had made the day before. He had to be just.
 - f. But this was his mother. She was old and frail; the whipping could

- very well kill her. And he loved her. How could he cause her to suffer? What he should do? Which should win: love or justice?
- g. Well, here's what he does: He orders that her wrists be tied to the pole so the whipping can begin. And he calls the punisher to step forward, whip in hand.
 - h. But before he gives the order, he steps in between his mother and the punisher. He stretches his broad shoulders across her frail back and with her body completely protected underneath his own, he orders that the punishment be carried out.
 - i. As the cords of the whip fall, they fall on him, and he absorbs the full brunt of her penalty. In that act he was both just, in carrying out the penalty, and loving, by suffering it himself.
3. For our sins
- a. That is what Jesus did for us. We are all guilty of sin, of breaking God's laws.
 - b. Sin
 - (1) God created each of us to know Him, to love Him, and to be like Him.
 - (a) Unfortunately, we have all abandoned God.
 - (b) The Bible tells us that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God
 - (2) A sin consists of doing, saying, thinking, or imagining anything that is not in perfect conformity with the mind and law of God.
 - (a) "Sin is the slightest outward or inward departure from absolute mathematical parallelism with God's revealed will and character constitutes a sin, and at once makes us guilty in God's sight."
 - (b) Anything that does not fit into who God is or what God wills is sin. And every sin, no matter how small it might appear to us, every sin is a departure from God's personal character and will for us, produces guilt in us, and generates punishment for us.
 - (3) "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" means that every single one of us fails to be as good in heart and action as God created us to be and fails to do the good God created us to do."
 - (4) When we are not what God created us to be, and when we do the wrong thing or fail to do the right thing, that is sin.
 - c. What's the big deal?
 - (1) In Romans 3:23 we read that sin, like breaking the law, earns a penalty and God is just.
 - (a) The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.

- (b) The penalty must be paid.
- (c) In the sight of God, every human being stands guilty of sin, subject to judgment, and in need of a Savior
 - i) No exceptions for “moral goodness”
 - ii) No exceptions for human effort
 - iii) No exceptions for patent denial
- (2) But it’s also clear that God loves us (John 3:16-17). He wants good things for us. He doesn’t want us to be punished.
- (3) So here’s what He did.
 - (a) He declared us guilty and ordered that the penalty be paid.
 - (b) Then He came to earth, became a man, the man Jesus Christ, and died on a cross for each of us.
- (4) When Jesus was being crucified, He stepped in between us, who are guilty, and God the Father, who deserves and demands justice.
 - (a) We, like the old woman who broke the law, have sinned and broken God’s law and stand guilty before Him.
 - (b) But, like the chieftain in the story, He absorbed the blows of our punishment so we wouldn’t have to.
 - (c) The question now is, what will we do about this amazing act of love on God’s part?

III. What now?

A. GPS

1. Recalculating: Make U Turn
2. Repent: Acknowledge sin and turn from it

B. Believe

1. Trust God to act in love and accept Christ’s death on your behalf
2. If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness
 - a. You can leave your guilt and your shame this morning and leave here with a new life. You can be a new person. Jesus said, “Anyone who comes to me I will in no way cast out.”
 - b. Today,
 - (1) God will forgive your sins against Him and come into your life with forgiveness and joy and peace and a desire for all the good He has in mind for you.
 - (2) You can be find your purpose in life.
 - (3) You can take up the life you were created for
 - (4) By faith in Jesus Christ, you can begin to be what you were meant to be, to do what you were meant to do.
3. Will you believe and put you faith in Jesus today?
 - a. Will you believe that God who created you, took on human flesh to

- live like you and die on your behalf?
- b. Will you entrust your life to one who loves you so much He died for you, taking upon Himself the pain of punishment and death your sin deserves?

C. Commit

1. Come follow me.
2. Faith over Niagara Falls
 - a. A famous tightrope walker strung a wire from one side of the Niagara Falls to the other.
 - (1) A crowd gathered to watch him attempt this deadly walk.
 - (2) The silent tension turned to cheers as they watched him walk out, turn and come back.
 - (3) He asked the crowd, “How many believe that I can walk to the other side and back while pushing a wheelbarrow?”
 - (a) They shouted, “We believe, we believe!”
 - (b) The tightropewalker did in fact walk out and back with a wheelbarrow.
 - (c) Upon his return, he asked, “Who believes I could push a man in this wheelbarrow while walking out and back on the wire?”
 - i) Again the crowd responded with enthusiastic affirmation.
 - ii) “Very well, then,” he asked, “Who would like to get in?” The crowd fell silent.
 - b. Trusting Christ is not simply assenting to the facts of the gospel message. There is a decision that implies actually getting into the wheelbarrow.

D. Be baptized

1. Symbolically expressing our commitment to faith in Jesus and obedience to His teaching by identifying with death, burial, and resurrection.
 - a. Death
 - b. Burial
 - c. Resurrection to new life
2. Peter: Repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins

E. God gives faith

1. God is giving someone here the faith to believe this gospel.
2. The Bible tells us that we are “saved through faith and that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God.”
3. God is giving faith to believe and the question is, Are you in the crowd or in the wheelbarrow?