Faith Church

STEWARDSHIP OF THE GOSPEL

STEWARDSHIP DEVOTIONAL GUIDE 2026



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Dear Friend of Faith,

For nearly 50 years, Stewardship Month has served as a key part of the Faith Church calendar. Throughout Stewardship Month, we seek to hold our lives up to the light of God's Word to evaluate how we can grow to become more pleasing to God. This year, we are focusing on the Stewardship of the Gospel. All year long, our church has been focusing on our annual theme of "Prioritizing the Gospel." Paul wrote in 1 Thess 2:4, "but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please men, but to please God who tests our hearts." We have been given the precious gift of the gospel, and now we must seek to steward it and speak it accurately to ourselves and those around us.

The four weeks of this devotional will focus on the following four areas, corresponding to the four sermon topics throughout Stewardship Month:

(1) **Counseling Yourself with the Gospel**
(2) **Growing in Your Understanding of the Gospel**
(3) **Living Worthy of the Gospel**
(4) **Proclaiming the Excellencies of the Gospel**

To work through these topics, we have chosen to use our church's 12 gospel memory verses that we set out to memorize corporately this year. Each week, there will be 3 devotions, each one starting with one of our monthly memory verses. For each devotional, we encourage you to read (or recite) the Scripture passage, read the devotion, and write out answers to the listed questions. Our prayer is that you will grow in your love for your Savior, and that as a result, you will look more like him.

In Christ,
Your Pastors

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COUNSELING YOURSELF WITH THE GOSPEL

#1: STANDING ON THE GOSPEL WITH BOLD CONFIDENCE

Scripture: Romans 1:16–17

If you were to start making a list of adjectives to describe yourself, how far down the list would you have to go before you wrote the word, "confident"? Would it even make your list at all? Oftentimes our confidence (or lack of confidence) is tied to our perception of either our own abilities or standing. If we feel we are good at something, we are confident. If we feel we have solid standing in a group of people, we are confident. If we feel like we are missing those qualities, then we can find ourselves feeling tentative or insecure. Self-confidence is fickle and fleeting.

In our memory verse for today, Paul explained the type of confidence that all believers in Christ must have, and why we must have that confidence. Instead of standing in shallow self-confidence, Paul stood unashamed on something far more worthy of his trust: the gospel, which is the message of Christ's death for our sins and resurrection, offering salvation to all who simply have faith in him. Paul boasted in the gospel, adopted the gospel in the deepest parts of his identity, and confidently spoke the gospel to those around him.

Paul gave two reasons why he had such confidence in the gospel. First, the gospel is "the power of God." There is only one message that has the power to give new life to dead hearts. There is only one message that has the power to transform sinful creatures into trophies of grace. There is only one message that will inspire men and women from every nation, tribe, and tongue to sing praises to God for eternity. There is no earthly power that can compete or stand against the gospel's power. The wisdom of worldly "experts" or man-centered "self-help" philosophies can't compare with the life-changing power of the gospel. There is no greater power we can stand on.

The second reason Paul had such confidence is because the gospel reveals God's righteousness. There is a perfect righteousness, or "right-ness," in every part of God's redemptive plan. God's righteous requirement for holiness is satisfied in the life of obedience Jesus lived as a man. God's justice is satisfied in the payment Jesus offered on our behalf, giving his life for ours. Now, as we accept the message of Jesus's death, burial, and resurrection by faith, we receive the same righteous standing before God that Jesus enjoys.

Christian brother or sister, what more reason do you need to live with a bold confidence in your Savior today? When you feel insecure because of your own weaknesses, maybe because you don't know what to say in an evangelistic conversation, remember that your confidence is rooted in the gospel's power, not your own. When you are fearful of what other people are thinking about you, encourage your timid heart to boast in your relationship with Jesus, not in the opinions of man. Our identity is rooted in what Jesus has done for us, and so we stand on the gospel with bold confidence.

QUESTIONS/EXERCISES TO CONSIDER:

1. Where in your life do you see insecurities, fear, or shame? How do those places reveal a desire to put confidence in yourself, rather than your Savior?
2. How does meditating on the power and right-ness of the gospel strengthen your confidence in the gospel, and increase your willingness to speak it boldly to yourself and others?

#2: CENTERING ON THE THINGS OF FIRST IMPORTANCE

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:1–5

Our age is marked by an abundance of information and a frantic pace of trying to keep up. Sports, social media, and streaming platforms immerse us in content. Add to that the stormy pressures we feel in our workplaces, families, and personal struggles, and many times we can feel like we are struggling to stay afloat, grasping for strength and answers.

Paul's words in our memory verse for today provide a lifeline in the middle of the storms and waves. Among all the content we consume, and through all the storms we experience, there is only one message that is of first importance, only one message that anchors our souls. That message is the gospel: the news of Christ's death, burial, resurrection, and appearances to others. Fulfilling the Scriptures, Christ died for our sins. He was buried in a private tomb, not a mass grave, proving he had truly died and people knew where his body was. Then he rose from the grave on the third day, appearing to hundreds of people afterwards to demonstrate his new life and victory over the grave. This was the only message of first importance that Paul delivered, and it's still the only message of first importance today.

Consider the significance of this message for people who believe it. In verse 1, Paul stated that this gospel is the message that we stand in. In other words, this message forms the core of our identity and confidence. Before we are people of a political party, of a certain family, or even of a certain denomination, we are people of the gospel, who stand in the good news of what Jesus has done for us. In verse 2, we are reminded that the gospel is the message by which we are being saved. The trajectory of our lives is determined by the gospel. The gospel's power is in the process of saving us. We've already been saved from sin's penalty, we are in the process of being saved from sin's power, and someday we will be saved from even sin's presence.

All of this is true of us if we "hold fast to the word" (v. 2). Genuine followers of Christ are those who will cling to the gospel until the end. Believer, be encouraged that you don't have to keep up with the never-ending stream of content that the world is pushing at you. There is only one message that defines you and is in the process of saving you. In the middle of the pressures you're experiencing, choose to rely on the power of the gospel. Resist the temptation to drown yourself in distractions and cling to the anchor of your gospel hope. That's the message of first importance.

QUESTIONS/EXERCISES TO CONSIDER:

1. If someone looked at your life (your time, your words, your spending, your thoughts) and wrote down the 5 most important things to you, where would the gospel rank on that list? What would it take to increase the importance of the gospel in your life?

2. How is God currently working in your life through the gospel to transform you, saving you from sin's power? If you are not seeing transformation in your life, reach out to someone in your life for help, a pastor, deacon, or mentor, so that you can experience God's transforming power in your life!

#3: Casting Our Sins on Our Savior

Scripture: Isaiah 53:4–6

One of the beauties of the gospel is that it meets us right where we are. The truths of the gospel are relevant for every circumstance, every struggle of our hearts, and every experience. Today's memory verse meets us in one of the most real, vulnerable places that we all find ourselves: our sinfulness and brokenness.

None of us like to face our sinfulness. It's so much easier for our pride to assume that we're mostly good people, with just occasional lapses of judgment. But when the pressure comes, what comes out of us often shows the true picture of our hearts. The words we speak, the choices we make, the thoughts we think, the things we desire, all too often demonstrate a heart that is deeply infected with selfishness. When God reveals to us the true state of our hearts, we can be overwhelmed, and we try to cover ourselves with defensiveness, blame-shifting, distractions, or just trying harder to "do better."

Isaiah 53:4–6 meets us in this place of shame and brings hope. God knows the waywardness of our hearts, and he doesn't excuse it away like we so often do. Instead, our Savior chose to do something far greater and more loving: he chose to bear our sins. He carried the weight of each of our selfish choices, the penalty for each wayward desire, and the punishment for each idolatrous thought. He chose to carry even the sorrows we experience in this sin-cursed world. The theological term "substitutionary atonement" communicates the beautiful reality that Jesus took our place and carried the weight of God's wrath, so that we might experience forgiveness, healing, and restoration in our relationship with God.

Brother, when you are feeling conviction over the guilt of a sinful choice, don't ignore it or cover it yourself. Run to your Savior who carried it for you and experience the joy of repentance. Sister, when feelings of shame tempt you towards isolation and despair, don't give in. Believe that Jesus carried your griefs and shame for you, and cast your cares on him today, because he cares for you.

QUESTIONS/EXERCISES TO CONSIDER:

1. Where in your life are you experiencing feelings of shame or guilt? How are you responding those feelings?

2. How does Isaiah 53:4–6 free you from self-centered attempts to ignore or cover your shame?

GROWING IN YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE GOSPEL

#1: Rooting the Gospel in Genesis

Scripture: Genesis 3:15

If somebody were to ask you, "I know the Bible refers to Jesus as the Messiah, but what does that mean? There have been a lot of special people in the world; why is Jesus such a big deal?", what would you say? What is the significance of Jesus coming to be the Messiah, or promised deliverer? One way to grow in your understanding of the gospel is seeing how the whole Bible, including the Old Testament, fits together in one gospel story. Without the grounding of Old Testament promises and expectations, the gospel loses its power and authority.

Today's memory verse, Genesis 3:15, is the first place in the Bible that directly predicts a coming Messiah. The gospel finds its first expression here. Adam and Eve had just listened to the voice of the serpent and rejected the voice of their Creator, and as a result, the curse of sin entered God's good creation. But in the middle of God's righteous judgments, God gave hope. God's greatest curse landed not on mankind, but on the devil. God promised that there would be perpetual conflict between the seed of Satan and the seed of the woman, resulting in a single male descendant who would someday crush the serpent and reverse the curse of sin. But this victory would require pain and death. Think of the image of a man stepping on a venomous snake's head and being bit on his heel. Both blows are killing blows.

Starting with Genesis 3:15, the seed of the woman becomes a thread that weaves through the rest of the Bible. With each generation and each prophet of God, you can almost hear God's people asking, "is this the one? Is this the Messiah who will bring us rest?" (Gen 5:29; 22:18). The genealogies of the Old Testament trace the seed of the woman, testifying to God's promise to one day bring a Messiah. And then, when the time was right, Jesus was born. He promised rest to all who would come to him (Matt 11:28–30). He was opposed by the Pharisees, whom he called the children of the devil (John 8:44). And through his righteous life and death on the cross, Jesus defeated Satan (Matt 4:1–11; Col 2:15). Jesus experienced death on the cross, fulfilling the prophecy of being "bruised" or bit on his heel by the serpent, and in so doing he crushed Satan and provided us with victory.

Glory in your Savior's victory today, and take confidence that your faith is rooted in promises that go all the way back to the first chapters of Genesis. Don't be afraid to be bold in sharing the hope of the Messiah with those around you, because the gospel is the only message that provides true victory and rest.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. How would you explain to someone the ways that the gospel of Jesus connects to Old Testament?

2. Does your life and attitude reflect a belief that Jesus has already won the victory over sin and the devil for you? Ask God to help you live today with contagious joy that flows from thankfulness to your Savior.

#2: Replacing Covenant Curses with Blessing

Scripture: Galatians 3:13–14

Today's Scripture passage beautifully connects several threads of salvation history into a few short statements, especially connecting the covenants of the Bible. In a covenant, there is an agreement between two parties, where both parties promise to fulfill certain obligations towards the other. When both parties fulfill their obligations, there are covenant blessings pronounced. When one or both parties fail to do what they promised, there are covenant curses that come into effect. When God created Adam and Eve, he placed them into a beautiful garden of blessings and gave them instructions, promising that the curse of death would enter the world if they failed to obey. When Adam and Eve sinned, they plunged all of creation into the curse of sin, a covenantal curse we all experience.

When God gave the Law of Moses to the people of Israel, he again gave stipulations on how the people were to honor him and live consistently with his holiness. With that covenant came both blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience: "it shall come about, if you do not obey the Lord your God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you" (Deut 28:15). The people of Israel failed to uphold God's covenant, and they too fell underneath covenant curses.

Then Jesus came into the world. He came to not to abolish God's covenants but to fulfill them (Matt 5:17). He perfectly fulfilled all of God's righteous requirements for his people. And even though he did not deserve covenant curses, he still chose to bear the curse for us. The manner of Jesus's death, crucifixion on a cross, was not accidental, but proof that Jesus took the curse of the covenant for us. Paul quoted Deut 21:23, "he who is hanged is accursed of God," demonstrating that Jesus truly was cursed on our behalf.

As a result, we no longer sit underneath the curses that we deserve. Instead, through Christ, we get to experience the blessings of another covenant, the covenant God made with Abraham, where he promised that through one of Abraham's descendants God would bless the whole world (Gen 12:1–3). We know that we are included in God's family and recipients of the blessing because we have received the down payment of the Spirit by faith. So rejoice today, because your relationship with God through Christ is a fulfillment of the promises he made throughout history to save his people from the curse and bless them forever.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. God is committed to blessing his people in Christ. How does that truth help you in whatever trials or suffering God has allowed in your life right now?

2. Where in your life do you still act as though you are under the condemnation and curse of the Law, rather than the freedom and blessing of grace? How can you demonstrate thankfulness today for the Spirit's indwelling of you?

#3: Understanding How a Righteous God "Righteouses" the Unrighteous

Scripture: Romans 3:23–26

Our Scripture passage today is part of a paragraph that some theologians have described as the most important paragraph in the Bible. Read it again, starting in verse 21 to get the whole paragraph all the way through verse 26.

This paragraph is all about righteousness. The same root word which means "to justify" or "to declare righteous," occurs in noun, verb, or adjective form seven times in verses 21–26. This paragraph answers the most fundamental question of human history: how can a righteous God be reconciled to unrighteous people and still be righteous? In other words, how can God be in a right relationship with sinners without compromising his justice?

Romans 3:21–26 answers that question. The gospel demonstrates God's righteousness by providing salvation through faith in Jesus. Every person, including both Jews and Greeks, is a sinner and falls short of God's glory. God the Father provided his own Son, Jesus Christ, to be the propitiation for our sins. The word "propitiation" means that Jesus satisfied God's wrath for our sins through his death on the cross. There is no more wrath left for those in Christ, because Jesus took it all! And now, through faith in him, sinners can be justified, or legally declared "righteous" before God. Because of the cross work of Jesus, God is absolutely just and right to forgive sinners in this way and declare them to be righteous before him.

One way to paraphrase this paragraph would be this: "Our righteous God can make righteous the unrighteous through faith in Jesus and maintain his own righteousness as he does so."

As sinners, our biggest need is to be brought back into a right relationship with our Creator. We cannot find true peace, joy, purpose, and flourishing apart from a vibrant relationship with God. Through Christ, God has made a way for sinners like you and me to be brought back into fellowship with him. Sometimes, in our self-pity and shame, we can be tempted to believe that the gospel is too good to be true, or that God can't really look with favor upon us because of how sinful we are. Today's passage reminds us that God can absolutely declare sinners like us to be legally righteous and in good standing before him, and that it is just for him to do so. We can confidently draw near to God day by day not because of our own goodness, but because of Christ.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Where are you tempted to doubt that God accepts and welcomes you, that his posture towards you is one of grace? How does today's passage encourage you of the "rightness" of God's acceptance of sinners through Christ?
2. Jesus has purchased for you the most precious gift you could receive: access to fellowship and right standing with God. How does your life need to change to prioritize and value your relationship with God more than anything else?

LIVING WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL

#1: Serving in Lowliness Like Our Savior

Scripture: Mark 10:45

The gospel reshapes every part of our lives, including our values and ambitions. In the fuller context of today's passage, Jesus was giving his disciples a lesson about the values of his kingdom, especially what it means to be "great" in Jesus's eyes. James and John had just asked Jesus if they could secure specific positions of honor and glory over the other disciples by sitting at his right and left in his kingdom. When the other disciples heard about James's and John's request, they were upset, because they wanted the same kind of honor and glory themselves! Go back and read verses 41–45 to see Jesus's full response.

Jesus's kingdom flips the script on the way the world thinks about "greatness" and "position." In the world, both in Jesus's day and today, people naturally jockey for status and honor. People desire to be great in the eyes of others, and they use any status, authority, or power they have to belittle others and exalt themselves. We all tend to act this way. Anytime we want to win an argument with our spouses, we are seeking greatness in the eyes of others. Anytime we tell a little white lie, we are seeking greatness in the eyes of others. Anytime we seek out the beautiful, popular, or powerful people and avoid those we think are lesser, we are seeking greatness in the eyes of others. If none of these hit the mark, just consider times when you feel like someone "hurt your feelings." Our feelings can't get hurt by others; it's our pride that gets hurt when we long to be viewed a certain way in the eyes of others.

Jesus's values are different. Notice that he doesn't rebuke the disciples for wanting to be "great;" the desire for greatness itself is not a bad thing. But Jesus has a radically different definition of what "greatness" looks like. To be "great," you must serve. To be the first, you must humble yourself by becoming the lowliest.

Jesus didn't just teach these values; he embodied them. The gospel itself is the story of the Son of God coming to serve others, not to lord his position over them. Jesus's sacrificial service took him all the way to the cross, where he gave his life so that we might be free. That is the model of true greatness and the path to true exaltation. As we see the beauty of Jesus's death for us, it changes our hearts so that we value the same things he does. We aspire to be lowly and serve those around us sacrificially, following the example of our Savior, so that we might be great in God's eyes.

QUESTIONS/EXERCISES TO CONSIDER:

1. What is one way you can humble yourself and serve someone today (a coworker, a spouse, a child, etc.)?

2. How does Jesus's example of sacrificial service challenge you to change the way you think about greatness in your own life and values?

#2: Identifying with Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrected Life

Scripture: Galatians 2:20

When a person places their faith and trust in Christ to save them, something profound happens. God unites us with Christ. In our passage today, Paul explained some of the daily implications of our union with Christ. We have been united with Jesus's crucifixion and with his resurrection life. These two realities shape our identity as Christians, and they must shape the way we live each day.

According to Paul, Jesus wasn't the only one who died on Calvary's cross. If you have placed your faith in him, you died too! Specifically, your old self was crucified with Christ on the cross so that you might be freed from sin (Rom 6:6). As a follower of Christ, here is one fundamental aspect of your identity: "dead to sin." You still have a sinful nature within you, but your sinful desires and thoughts don't have to control you anymore. You are dead to sin, because your old self was crucified with Christ on the cross.

It can be easy to become callous to our old ways of living. "Jesus has already saved me, so why is my sin that big of a deal?" Allow the imagery of crucifixion to help you see the true nature of your old self. When you consider the bleeding hands of the old self, nailed to the cross, connect that to your hands whenever they build up your own kingdom rather than God's. Gaze upon the crown of thorns piercing the head of the old self, and recognize the hateful, bitter thought you just had towards your spouse. Force yourself to look at the tortured, unrecognizable face of the old self, and then evaluate every lustful glance you've taken towards something that doesn't belong to you.

Believer, you no longer have to live for yourself and for your sinful desires, and that's because, praise be to God, your old self died with Christ. Now the task of the believer is to daily choose to live for righteousness rather than sin, because believers are dead to sin and freed from it.

You have also been united with Christ's resurrection life. Because of his great love for us, Christ gave himself up to death so that we might live in him. Now that we are his, Christ chooses to dwell in us. We have received new spiritual life and the down-payment of the indwelling Holy Spirit who strengthens and empowers us. Here is a second fundamental aspect of your identity: "alive in Christ." The same power that rose Jesus from the dead now lives in us to transform us into the image of our Savior. We enjoy our newness of life by abiding and remaining in his love, because apart from him, we can do nothing (John 15:4–10).

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. If you really believed that you were dead to sin in all areas of your life, what would be different? How would your attitude and actions change in your struggle against the old self?

2. Read John 15:4–10. How should your identity as being "alive in Christ" shape the way you view spiritual growth in your life? How can you grow in your active dependence on Christ's strength, Christ's words, and Christ's love?

#3: Adopting God's Heart to Save the Lost

Scripture: 1 Timothy 2:3–6

In order to understand the beauty of today's memory verse, we're going to first look at Isaiah 59 together. I would encourage you to read through it.

All of us, just like the people of Israel, face the same problem. There is one God in the heavens, the Holy One, who created us to know him and love him. He wants us to be in fellowship with himself. Yet each of us has rebelled, and as Isaiah said, "your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God" (Isaiah 59:2). Our biggest need is not for personal happiness, a close relationship with a significant other, or health. Our biggest need is to be brought back into a right relationship with our God, for a mediator to stand in the gap between us and God. When God looked at the people of Israel, "he saw that there was no man, and was astonished that there was no one to intercede" (59:16a). There was no mediator for God's people, no one who could bridge the gap.

But what no mere man could do, God promised to do himself. "His own arm brought salvation to him" (Isaiah 59:16b). "A Redeemer will come to Zion," (Isaiah 59:20). Since there was no man to mediate, God's heart to save his people led him to become a man. God took on human flesh and became the mediator himself. Back in our passage for today, Paul stated in verse 5, "there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." The second person of the Trinity, Jesus, took on a human nature so that he could bridge the gap between God and man. Now today, God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." God desires all men to come to Jesus as the only mediator so that they would be reconciled back to their Creator. There is no other way of salvation; there is no other mediator.

As you consider the beauty of God's heart, consider whether you have the same heart for the lost that God has. God wants sinners to be saved, and he wants it so much that he became the mediator who would give his life as a ransom for all. Do you desire the salvation of those around you that much? Does your heart long to see people trust Jesus as their Savior and be reconciled back to God? Living worthy of the gospel extends beyond our actions and words. The gospel must penetrate all the way down to our hearts, so that we learn to love the same things God loves, including desiring all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. As you consider evangelism in your own life, in what ways are you still ruled by the fear of man or the accomplishment of a "duty" rather than a genuine desire to see others reconciled to God?

2. If someone were to examine your prayer life, would they come to the conclusion that you desire to see people around you believe in Jesus? How might your prayer life need to change?

PROCLAIMING THE EXCELLENCIES OF THE GOSPEL

#1: Appealing Based on the Promise of the Gospel

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:20–21

Each day when we wake up, we often think, "what will I do today?" We rehearse our responsibilities and tasks that we know we must accomplish. Some of them are pleasant. Some of them are mundane. Perhaps many are burdensome. To get through the day, we then often look past our tasks to the evening or weekend, putting our hope in a time when we can get to do something more enjoyable. When we can see where we place our hope, we can discern our functional purpose for which we are living. We naturally live for experiences of personal enjoyment, pleasure, ease or comfort.

The recipients of the apostle Paul's communication in 2 Corinthians were questioning if the apostle Paul and his gospel ministry to them were legitimate. After all, if the apostle Paul had truly been from God, why was he suffering so much? Why wasn't Paul more eloquent and refined, and successful? He seemed to be plagued by trial, hardship, persecution, and rejection. God wants us to enjoy life, doesn't he? Perhaps then, because Paul was suffering so much, Paul and his ministry was not truly of God.

In the Scripture reading for today, Paul explained his purpose (which is our purpose as well). The apostle Paul stated that he is an ambassador for Christ. In other words, Paul viewed himself as a representative of Jesus living in a foreign land, representing Christ's character and message to those around him. In fact, Paul was urgently "begging" individuals to do something. This begging urgency demonstrated that there is something greater at stake than a lack of enjoyment in life. Our greatest need in life is not for personal enjoyment but for reconciliation to God. In his great love, God made a way for reconciliation, a way that many theologians call "the great exchange." God made Christ to be "sin"—Christ bore the penalty of our sin—so that we could become Christ's righteousness and be made right with God. John Stott captures the great exchange in this way: "For the essence of sin is man substituting himself for God, while the essence of salvation is God substituting himself for man."

Now believers have the glorious and joy-filled purpose of being ambassadors for Christ, appealing to the world to see the beauty of the gospel and to accept the great exchange of Christ's righteousness for our sin. When we get up in the morning, because of the great exchange that changes our purpose, our first thought should be, "How might I be an ambassador for God in my tasks and responsibilities today?" In this mission, there is lasting joy even in suffering, and deep purpose even if the day is filled with mundane and burdensome toil.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. At the end of the day, how do you decide if you were successful and had a good day? What does that answer reveal about the functional purpose you live for each day?
2. How should the great exchange change in 2 Cor 5:21 change your purpose?
3. What steps will you take this holiday season to live for in light of the great exchange?

#2: Rejoicing in the Simplicity of the Gospel

Scripture: Romans 10:9–10

In all other world religions, "salvation" or "goodness" comes as you learn from experts how to master some kind of skill or knowledge. Buddhists strive for nirvana by defeating all greed, hatred, and ignorance in their lives. Catholics seek to maintain a justified position before God by going to their priests and performing the sacraments. Even atheists seek to prove they are good people through following the teaching of experts and doing good to other people.

Contrast those ideas with the beauty of the simplicity of the gospel. The verse right before our passage today, Romans 10:8, explains that the word of faith we preach is near to us. The gospel is not hard to understand or hidden with sages on a mountaintop. It is simple and clear.

Verse 9 contains the essentials of the gospel, the word of faith that we preach. First, you must confess Jesus is Lord, meaning you believe that Jesus truly is God, Yahweh, the covenant-keeping God of the Old Testament. Second, you must truly believe that Jesus died for your sin on the cross and was raised to life, securing the only way for you to be made right with God. That's it! That's the summary of what is required to become a Christian. Verse 10 repeats what takes place in conversion. Placing genuine faith in Christ in our hearts results in our justification, or God declaring us to be righteous. At the same moment, declaring with our mouths the Lordship of Christ results in our salvation. Genuine faith in Christ as our Savior and Lord will change us, evidenced first by our willingness to confess him with our mouth.

There is the simplicity of the gospel, the word of faith that we preach. Christianity is not like so many other religions that dangle a carrot on a string in front of people to motivate effort and study. "If you keep learning and trying, maybe someday you will understand and get there!" The Christian gospel is plain and simple and near to us.

Consider two applications. First, rejoice that you already know all that you need in order to be in a right relationship with God today. God will continue to grow you in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus, and we will learn of the depths of his love for us for all eternity. But that growth comes because we have our relationship with God, not in order to gain a relationship with him. Second, be emboldened to share the gospel with someone in your life this week. The gospel is not far off or complicated. It is simple. "And how will they hear without a preacher? … So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ" (Rom 10:14, 17).

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Go stand in front of your mirror and practice sharing the gospel with someone. Can you capture the simple essentials of the gospel in 60 seconds or less?

2. Paul chose to highlight two doctrines as central to the gospel: the Lordship of Christ, and Christ's death on the cross and resurrection. Why are those two doctrines essential to the gospel?

#3: Embracing the Free Gift of the Gospel

Scripture: Ephesians 2:8–10

The gospel is counter-cultural and offensive. Our world screams a message of self-worth and self-sufficiency: "Look inside yourself for answers! Discover who you are and be true to yourself! Don't let anybody tell you that you don't deserve the best!" Our flesh doesn't need to be told that twice! We naturally long to boast in ourselves, in our worthiness, in our goodness, and in our strength.

Gospel grace flies directly in the face of self-sufficiency. Self-sufficiency declares, "I am everything I need, I have everything I need, and I deserve everything I need." Gospel grace says to us, "you are so imperfect and weak, you have so many needs, and you don't deserve all that I will lovingly choose to give you." Contrary to what some believe, grace doesn't sweep sin under the rug. In fact, go back and read all of Ephesians 2:1–10 to see how Paul talked about man's sinful condition and need for grace. Grace acknowledges how badly a person has failed and offers to bless anyway, despite their unworthiness.

Our passage for today so clearly shows how the entirety of our salvation in Christ is a gracious gift of God. Look carefully at verse 8: "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." What is the pronoun "that" referring to? What specifically is not from ourselves, but is God's gift? Paul's referring generally to the whole previous clause, the entirety of our salvation! The grace that rescues us, the faith that we exercise, and everything else can be summarized as being the gift of God, not from ourselves. In a culture of self-sufficiency, we are to be people of utter dependency, celebrating God's gifts of grace, faith, and salvation.

Paul then gave two results of this grace-based salvation in verses 9–10. First, God designed salvation this way so that no man can boast in themselves. When we understand salvation rightly, we understand that God gets all the glory. Second, God saved us so that we would be transformed by grace and walk in good works as a result of our salvation.

So brothers and sisters, put away all boasting in yourself that your flesh longs for. Daily embrace your dependence on God's grace, and let his grace motivate you to walk in good works. Ask for God's help today to grow to be a more godly husband, wife, teacher, employee, or parent, knowing you can't do it yourself. Let the freeness of the gift of salvation free you to pursue holiness from a motivation of love, not duty. And when God blesses you with spiritual growth, even today, turn it back to him in praise, worshipping God for the glory of his grace in your life.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Where do you see a desire for boasting in your own life? What makes you feel important and valuable? Where do you compare yourself with others?

2. How does the freeness of the gospel lead to worship and genuine good works in the Christian's life?

WINTER EVENTS @ FAITH CHURCH

NOVEMBER

20 & 21 Taste of Christmas (Women's Event)* 6:30pm

22 Stewardship Celebration* 5:00pm

*these two ticketed events are held at the Tippecanoe County Fairgrounds

DECEMBER

6 Christmas Worship Concert @ Faith West ..... 9:30 & 11:00am

11–13 Living Nativity ..... 6:30 – 8:30pm

12 Christmas for Everyone Distribution Day @ Faith West 8:45am-1:30pm

12 Christmas for Everyone Distribution Day @ Faith North 7:45am-3:30pm

13 Christmas Worship Concert @ Faith East ..... 8:00, 9:30 & 11:00am

18–20 Living Nativity ..... 6:30 – 8:30pm

20 Christmas Worship Concert @ Faith North ..... 8:00, 9:30 & 11:00am

24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service @ Faith East ..... 5:00 & 8:00pm

24 Service for Families with Children @ Faith East (age 4 – 5th grade) 5:00pm

24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service @ Faith West 6:00pm

24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service @ Faith North 7:00pm



Faith Church

STEWARDSHIP CELEBRATION

November 22 at 5:00 PM

Celebrating the Gospel

Tickets are free and available online at

faithlafayette.org/stewardship

This event is held at the Tippecanoe County Fairgrounds Event Center.

faith
CHURCH

Faith Church - East Campus
5526 St. Rd. 26 East, Lafayette

Faith Church - North Campus
2000 Elmwood Ave., Lafayette

Faith Church - West Campus
1920 Northwestern Ave., West Lafayette

En Español

Servicios de alabanza y predicación cada domingo a las 11:00 a.m.
Nos reunimos en el segundo piso del Northend Community Center

Estudio y compañerismo en grupo pequeño cada miércoles a las 6:30 p.m.

Para mayor información en español llamar: 765-404-8408

765-448-1986

faithlafayette.org/church