

## The Gospel:

### *Simple:*

The Gospel is the good news that Jesus Christ, the Righteous One, died for our sins and rose again, eternally triumphant over all His enemies, so that there is now no condemnation for those who believe, but only everlasting joy to be shared with God in heaven. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4; 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10; 1 Peter 3:18; John 3:16; Romans 3:23, 6:23)

### *Explained:*

The gospel is the good news about what Jesus Christ has done to reconcile sinners to God. Here's the whole story:

1. The one and only God, who is holy, made us in His image to know Him (Gen. 1:26-28).
2. But we sinned and cut ourselves off from Him (Gen. 3; Rom. 3:23).
3. In His great love, God sent His Son Jesus to come as king and rescue His people from their enemies—most significantly their own sin (Ps. 2; Luke 1:67-79).
4. Jesus established His kingdom by acting as both a mediating priest and a priestly sacrifice—He lived a perfect life and died on the cross, thus fulfilling the law Himself and taking on Himself the punishment for the sins of many (Mark 10:45; John 1:14; Heb. 7:26; Rom. 3:21-26, 5:12-21); then He rose again from the dead, showing that God accepted His sacrifice and that God's wrath against us had been exhausted (Acts 2:24, Rom. 4:25).
5. He now calls us to repent of our sins and trust in Christ alone for our forgiveness (Acts 17:30, John 1:12). If we repent of our sins and trust in Christ, we are born again into a new life, an eternal life with God (John 3:16).

Now that's good news.

A good way to summarize this good news is to biblically unpack the words God, Man, Christ, Response.

1. **God.** God is the creator of all things (Gen. 1:1). He is perfectly holy, worthy of all worship, and will punish sin (1 John 1:5, Rev. 4:11, Rom. 2:5-8).
2. **Man.** All people, though created good, have become sinful by nature (Gen. 1:26-28, Ps. 51:5, Rom. 3:23). From birth, all people are alienated from God, hostile to God, and subject to the wrath of God (Eph. 2:1-3).
3. **Christ.** Jesus Christ, who is fully God and fully man, lived a sinless life, died on the cross to bear God's wrath in the place of all who would believe in Him, and rose from the grave in order to give His people eternal life (John 1:1, 1 Tim. 2:5, Heb. 7:26, Rom. 3:21-26, 2 Cor. 5:21, 1 Cor. 15:20-22).
4. **Response.** God calls everyone everywhere to repent of their sins and trust in Christ in order to be saved (Mark 1:15, Acts 20:21, Rom. 10:9-10).

The great reformer Martin Luther rightly said that, as sinners, we are prone to pursue a relationship with God in one of two ways. The first is religion/spirituality and the second is the gospel. The two are antithetical in every way.

Religion says that if we obey God He will love us. The gospel says that it is because God has loved us through Jesus that we can obey.

Religion says that the world is filled with good people and bad people. The gospel says that the world is filled with bad people who are either repentant or unrepentant.

Religion says that you should trust in what you do as a good moral person. The gospel says that you should trust in the perfectly sinless life of Jesus because He alone is the only good and truly moral person who will ever live.

The goal of religion is to get from God such things as health, wealth, insight, power, and control. The goal of the gospel is not the gifts God gives, but rather God as the gift given to us by grace.

Religion is about what I have to do. The gospel is about what I get to do. Religion sees hardship in life as punishment from God. The gospel sees hardship in life as sanctifying affliction that reminds us of Jesus' sufferings and is used by God in love to make us more like Jesus. Religion is about me. The gospel is about Jesus.

Religion leads to an uncertainty about my standing before God because I never know if I have done enough to please God. The gospel leads to a certainty about my standing before God because of the finished work of Jesus on my behalf on the cross.

Religion ends in either pride (because I think I am better than other people) or despair (because I continually fall short of God's commands). The gospel ends in humble and confident joy because of the power of Jesus at work for me, in me, through me, and sometimes in spite of me.