



## Who? What? How?

### Week 3

## We Are an Evangelical Church

**Today's Goal:** *to ask Jesus to make us a church where hearts are supernaturally transformed, so that we grow in our confidence in God's word, and we learn to apply the gospel to every area of life.*

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes....—Romans 1:16*

*And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus....—Colossians 3:17*

**For Discussion:** When do you hear the word "evangelical"? Who uses it, and in what contexts? What do they mean by it?

### Background:

- Clarification
  - "Evangelical" is often confused with "evangelistic."
  - An "evangelistic" church would be committed to sharing the gospel so that many people could become followers of Jesus. All "evangelical" churches should be "evangelistic," but the two words don't mean the same thing.
- Historical background
  - Greek: *euangelion* = "gospel, good news"
  - German: *evangelische* = a synonym for Protestant; for many, this means "Lutheran"
- Contemporary culture
  - "Evangelical" is often associated with a particular voting bloc, a particular way of bringing Christian commitments to bear on politics.
  - This means that for many people the word has taken on negative connotations of a certain kind of (narrow-minded) posture in "the culture wars."

***Loving our community to life by pursuing gospel restoration***



**Significance for Intown:** when we say that we are an “evangelical” church, we mean...

- That we believe the human heart needs to be supernaturally transformed by divine grace.
- That we adopt a posture of confidence in Scripture.
- That the Scriptural gospel should be applied to all of life with a spirit of vitality, urgency, compassion, and cultural engagement.

**The Human Heart: Three Options**

<i>Humanism</i>	<i>Sacramentalism</i>	<i>Supernaturalism</i>
The human heart is fundamentally good; any needed transformation can be accomplished by human effort, with the support of community, tradition, or divine assistance/inspiration.	The human heart is alienated from God and can experience true goodness only as a result of his grace. People receive this grace from the Church, through its sacraments and traditions.	The human heart is alienated from God and can experience true goodness only as a result of his grace. People receive this grace as a gift of the Holy Spirit, who uses the good news (gospel, <i>euangelion</i> ) about Jesus to transform our hearts.

**Scripture: Two Postures**

<i>Skepticism</i>	<i>Confidence</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perhaps we can know our experience of God, but it’s hard to be sure that we could ever know God himself</li> <li>• The Bible is authoritative as a record of one tradition’s experience of God</li> <li>• The Bible is a reliable source of spiritual truth, though this is mixed with many historical errors, legends, and “culture-bound” concepts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We can have direct knowledge of God because he has revealed himself in human language and in human history</li> <li>• The Bible is a supernaturally-inspired record of what God has spoken, truthful in all that it affirms</li> <li>• God’s power is sufficient to guarantee that his truth has not been corrupted by the limitations of its human authors</li> <li>• The cultural specificity of the Bible does not prevent its speaking authoritatively to all times, places, and cultures; we can distinguish culturally-specific <i>applications</i> from <i>principles</i> that transcend cultural differences</li> </ul>

*Loving our community to life by pursuing gospel restoration*

### Contemporary Christianity: Three Movements

Approach to:	<i>Progressivism</i>	<i>Fundamentalism</i>	<i>Evangelicalism</i>
The human heart: humanism, sacramentalism, or supernaturalism?			
Scripture: Skepticism or confidence?			
Approach to culture: engagement or separation? compassion or suspicion?			

Indeed, every doctrine of the law, every command, every promise, **always** points to Christ. We are, therefore, to apply **all** its parts to Him.

John Calvin, commenting on Romans 10:4