

Discipleship Class 101: The Gospel

It is important to fully understand the gospel in order to appreciate what has taken place in our lives but also to give us the right expectation. As we start off in our journey of Faith this is the best place to begin.

Colossians 2:6 (NIV)

In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world--just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God's grace.

God's Plan: God created us for relationship. He created us to experience His love & guidance, but also for us to know the joy of loving Him back and the joy of His leading.

John 10:10 (NLT) *"The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life."*

Jeremiah 29:11 (NKJV) *"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope."*

Man's Problem: Although God created us for relationship each of us has gone our own way and sinned against God. Because of God's holiness and man's sinfulness there has been a rift in our relationship.

Isaiah 53:6 (NLT) *"All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own."*

Isaiah 59:2 (NKJV) *"But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His ^[a]face from you so that He does not hear."*

Romans 3:23 (NIV) *"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God..."*

Romans 6:23 (NASB) *"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

- **Death:** The bad news is that not only are we separated from God because of our sin but that the wages of sin are leading us to death. This means that slowly and slowly sin is continually pulling us away from God to the point of no return; when we die without having reconciled to God then we experience eternal separation from God. This is what is meant by death in Romans 6:23.
- **We cannot bridge the gap on our own:** Not only is sin pulling us farther and farther away from God, we have no way of bridging the gap with God on our own.
 - **Isaiah 64:6,** *"All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away."*
 - **John 14:6,** *"Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*

God's Solution: God in his infinite mercy has created a bridge for us back to Him, through the greatest sacrifice possible. The death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus paid for every one of our sins through the shedding of His blood and death on the cross; *“For without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness”* (Hebrews 9:22).

1st Timothy 2:5-6 (NIV) *“For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time.”*

Romans 5:8 (NIV) *“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*

1 Peter 3:18 (NLT) *“Christ suffered for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners to bring you safely home to God. He suffered physical death, but he was raised to life in the Spirit.”*

Man's Response: The good news (Gospel) is that Jesus has done all the heavy lifting. He stepped down from heaven, became a sinless man and painfully died for us on the cross. By His death and resurrection Jesus ensured that God's Holy Justice was met and we can now be justified (found not guilty) before God, but each one of us must individually choose this free gift of Jesus Christ. *“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Romans 6:23, NLT)

John 5:24 (NIV) *“Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.”*

John 1:12-13 (NIV) *“Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.”*

Romans 10:9-11 (NIV) *“If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.¹¹ As Scripture says, “Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame.”*

Having heard the gospel (good news), understood it and been convicted by it, one can simply respond with a prayer to this great invitation of crossing over to God through Jesus Christ. The prayer simply acknowledges the above points:

“Dear Father, thank you for loving me and wanting a relationship with me. I confess that I am a sinner and I can never be good enough in my own strength. I thank you Jesus for dying on the cross for my sins and ask that you please cleanse me from all unrighteousness. I put my trust in you as the Son of God who died for my sins and rose again on the third day. Please make me a child of God today and help me to follow in your ways all my days. Thank you for saving me. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.”