



What Is the Gospel? Understanding the Good News of Jesus Christ

Introduction

Many people assume Christianity begins with a command.

“Try harder.”

“Be a better person.”

“Fix your life.”

But the message of Christianity does not begin with advice. It begins with **an announcement**.

The Bible calls this announcement **the Gospel**—the good news of what God has done through Jesus Christ.

In **1 Corinthians 15:1–4**, the Apostle Paul reminds believers of the message that stands at the center of the Christian faith:

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you... by which also you are saved... that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day.”

The Gospel is not a philosophy, a moral code, or a program for self-improvement. It is the proclamation that **Jesus Christ accomplished salvation through His death and resurrection**.

And here is something vital for every Christian to understand: **you never move beyond the Gospel—you only grow deeper into it**.

To understand Christianity rightly, we must first answer one essential question:

What is the Gospel?



The Gospel Is News, Not Advice

When Paul writes in **1 Corinthians 15:1–2**, he says:

“I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you...”

The word *gospel* literally means **good news**.

And news is fundamentally different from advice.

Advice tells you something you must do.

News tells you something that has already happened.

Advice says:

- Improve yourself
- Change your life
- Do better

But news says:

- Something has occurred
- Something has been accomplished

The message of Christianity is not primarily about human effort. It is about **divine accomplishment**.

Sadly, many sermons today focus mostly on life improvement:

- How to succeed
- How to overcome obstacles
- How to reach your potential

While practical wisdom can be helpful, it is not the heart of the Christian message.

The Gospel is not a collection of motivational tips.

The Gospel is **a declaration about Jesus Christ**.

It tells us what God has done in history to save sinners.



The Content of the Gospel

Paul summarizes the Gospel in **1 Corinthians 15:3–4** with remarkable clarity:

“Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures... He was buried... and He rose again the third day.”

The Gospel rests on **three historical events**.

1. Christ died
2. Christ was buried
3. Christ rose again

Notice what Paul emphasizes.

He does not say:

- We prayed
- We fasted
- We obeyed

Instead, he focuses entirely on **what Christ has done**.

Christianity is built on the finished work of Jesus, not on human achievement.

The most important phrase in this passage is:

“Christ died for our sins.”

This tells us why the cross was necessary.

Sin is not merely a list of bad behaviors. At its core, sin is **a condition of separation from God**. Humanity stands guilty before a holy God.

But God did not ignore sin.
He dealt with it through substitution.

The prophet Isaiah foretold this centuries earlier:

“All we like sheep have gone astray... and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” —
Isaiah 53:6

At the cross, Jesus Christ stood in the place of sinners.



He bore the judgment that we deserved.

This is the heart of the Gospel.

The Gospel Is Christ-Centered, Not Man-Centered

The subject of the Gospel is not human potential.
It is **Jesus Christ and His saving work**.

After His resurrection, Jesus explained this truth to His disciples. In **Luke 24:27**, we read:

“Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”

This means the entire Bible ultimately points to Christ.

The Bible is not primarily about:

- David’s courage
- Joseph’s discipline
- Daniel’s prayer life

Those stories can inspire us, but they are not the main message.

The Scriptures reveal **God’s plan of redemption fulfilled in Jesus Christ**.

When preaching or teaching removes Christ and replaces Him with moral principles, the message of the Gospel disappears.

Christianity is not about becoming the hero of your own story.

It is about **the true Hero—Jesus Christ—who saves sinners through His grace**.



The Gospel Deals With Sin Completely

One of the most powerful explanations of the Gospel appears in **2 Corinthians 5:21**:

“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

This verse reveals a profound exchange.

At the cross:

- Our sin was placed on Christ
- God’s judgment fell on Christ
- Christ’s righteousness is given to us

This means the believer’s relationship with God is not based on personal performance but on Christ’s completed work.

Because Jesus bore our judgment, God is no longer counting the believer’s sins against them.

That is why the Apostle Paul can say in **Romans 8:1**:

“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.”

The freedom of the Gospel comes from this truth:

Christ paid the full penalty for sin.

Nothing remains to be added.

The Gospel Is Finished Work

As Jesus hung on the cross, He spoke three powerful words recorded in **John 19:30**:

“It is finished.”

These words declare that the work of redemption was fully completed.

Finished means:

- Nothing needs to be added



- Nothing needs to be repeated
- Nothing needs to be improved

The book of Hebrews reinforces this truth:

“After He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, He sat down at the right hand of God.” — Hebrews 10:12

In the Old Testament, priests stood daily offering sacrifices because the work was never finished.

But Jesus offered **one perfect sacrifice** and then sat down.

Standing meant unfinished work.

Sitting means the work is complete.

The Gospel invites us not to complete Christ’s work, but to **receive what He has already accomplished**.

The Gospel Must Not Be Modified

Because the Gospel is the foundation of Christianity, it must be guarded carefully.

In **Galatians 1:6–8**, Paul warns the church against altering the message.

He writes that if anyone preaches **another gospel**, that message must be rejected.

What does another gospel look like?

It happens whenever something is added to the work of Christ.

For example:

- Jesus plus good works
- Jesus plus religious rituals
- Jesus plus personal effort

But the Gospel is not a partnership between God and humanity.

It is entirely the work of Christ.

Salvation is not:



Jesus + effort.

It is:

Jesus alone.

Law vs Gospel

The Bible clearly distinguishes between the Law and the Gospel.

Paul explains in **Romans 3:20**:

“By the works of the law no flesh will be justified.”

The Law says:

- Do
- Try
- Perform

The Gospel says:

- Done
- Finished
- Paid

The Law reveals sin but cannot remove it.

The Gospel removes sin through the sacrifice of Christ.

The Law demands righteousness.

The Gospel **gives righteousness as a gift.**

This changes how believers relate to God.

We do not obey God in order to earn His acceptance.

We obey because **we have already been accepted in Christ.**



Believer Identity in Christ

Because the Gospel is true, the believer's identity is completely transformed.

Through Christ's work, every Christian is:

- Forgiven
- Justified
- Reconciled to God
- Declared righteous

This means a Christian is not a sinner trying to become righteous.

A Christian is **a saint learning to walk in the righteousness already given in Christ.**

Behavior flows from identity.

Our obedience grows out of the new life we have received through the Gospel.

Key Gospel Truths

The message of the Gospel can be summarized with these essential truths:

- The Gospel is good news about what Christ has done.
- Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures.
- Christ's resurrection proves His victory over sin and death.
- Salvation is based entirely on the finished work of Christ.
- God justifies sinners through faith, not human effort.
- The Gospel gives believers a new identity in Christ.

These truths form the foundation of the Christian faith.

Practical Application

Understanding the Gospel transforms how believers live.

1. We Stop Trying to Earn Salvation



Salvation is received by faith, not achieved through effort. The Christian life begins with trusting what Christ has already accomplished.

2. We Read the Bible Looking for Christ

The Scriptures ultimately reveal Jesus and the redemption He provides. As we read the Bible, we look for how every passage points to Him.

3. Our Relationship With God Is Based on Grace

Prayer becomes fellowship rather than fear. We approach God confidently because Christ has already reconciled us to Him.

4. We Share the Message of Christ

Evangelism is simply telling others the good news of what Jesus has done.

We are not inviting people to improve themselves.

We are inviting them to **trust the Savior who finished the work of redemption.**

Conclusion: Christ Is Our Message

Christianity is not the story of what humanity does for God.

It is the story of what **God has done for humanity through Jesus Christ.**

The Gospel declares that Christ lived the life we could not live, died the death we deserved, and rose again to give us new life.

Because of Him:

- sin is forgiven
- righteousness is given
- reconciliation with God is possible

This is why the church's message must always remain the same.

Not self-improvement.

Not moral advice.

Not religious performance.



Our message is **Jesus Christ and His finished work.**

And that is why, from beginning to end,

Christ is our message.



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