

What does it mean to live in-line with the Gospel Moment by Moment?

ABSTRACT THEOLOGY VS GOSPEL REALITY

What does it look like to live as though the Gospel is just abstract theology?

- We read the Bible and develop deep theological and spiritual convictions, but there is either little application or legalism as a result. (John 5:39)
- We can give good advice to others about how to apply the Word to their situations and struggles, but we don't make the time or develop the ability to apply it our own hearts. (Matt. 23:3)
- We know and defend the Word of God, but we lack love for God and others like we did when we first believed. (Rev. 2:4, Isa 1:11-15)
- We pray for God's help in our lives, but we don't actually expect him to answer our prayers or care deeply about the happenings of our lives. (James 1:5-8)
- We get so comfortable in our understanding of the Word and the Gospel that we let false doctrine and sin slip in unnoticed or unrepented of. (Rev. 2:14-15, 20)
- We have a good reputation of being strong, doctrinally sound Christians, but we lack spiritual fervor and vigor. (Revelation 3:1)
- We rest in a false confidence of our ourselves and spiritual state, while God despises our false security and assertions.

Small Group Discussion: *Do you see any of these tendencies in your life right now? If so, which ones? What would you add to this list?*

What does it look like to live as though the Gospel is a reality?

- We have sound doctrine, deep faith in the Christ, and love for all the saints. (Eph. 1:15-17)
- The Gospel message itself shapes our stewardship of the time, talents, and treasures God has given us. (2 Cor. 8:8-15)
- The Gospel message gives us a heavenly hope that transcends the suffering of this life and bears fruit in this life. (Col. 1:5-8, Rev. 2:8-11, 3:7-13)
- We rely on the strength of God, and it helps us to live with endurance and joyful patience. (Col. 1:11)
- We labor with faith, love, and steadfast hope not because we know our hard work will eventually pay off but because of the work of Christ in and among the world. (1 Thes. 1:2-3)
- We are visibly growing in our faith and our love for others is increasing as a result. This is more than just growth in head knowledge and is seen especially when we are in times of difficulty or trials. (2 Thes. 1:3-4)
- We acknowledge our sin and cry out for pardoning grace as well as transforming grace (Mark 9:24, Luke 18:13, 1 John 1:8-10).

Small Group Discussion: *How have you seen the Gospel prove to be a reality in your life? In what ways do you need to grow in this area?*

–We need to preach the Gospel to ourselves daily–

Read and underline things that stand out to you in the following quotes:

"Have you realized that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself? Take those thoughts that come to you the moment you wake up in the morning. You have not originated them but they are talking to you, they bring back the problems of yesterday, etc. Somebody is talking. Who is talking to you? Your self is talking to you. Now this man's treatment [in Psalm 42] was this: instead of allowing this self to talk to him, he starts talking to himself. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" he asks. His soul had been depressing him, crushing him. So he stands up and says, "Self, listen for moment, I will speak to you." - **D. Marty Lloyd Jones**

"To preach the Gospel to yourself, then, means that you continually face up to your own sinfulness and then flee to Jesus through faith in His shed blood and righteous life. It means that you appropriate, again by faith, the fact that Jesus fully satisfied the law of God, that He is your propitiation, and that God's holy wrath is no longer directed toward you....It means that you dwell upon the promise that God has removed your transgressions from you as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12), that He has blotted out your transgressions and remembers your sin no more (Isaiah 43:25). But it means you realize that all these wonderful promises of forgiveness are based upon the atoning death of Jesus Christ." - **Jerry Bridges**

Small Group Discussion: *Do you listen to yourself more than you preach to yourself? Give some examples from your life.*

3 AREAS THAT ARE A STRUGGLE TO PREACH AND BELIEVE THE GOSPEL

→ **We need to preach to ourselves and believe the righteousness of Christ—both in times of righteousness and times of sin:**

Romans 1:16-17 (ESV): 16 For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

Romans 3:21-25 (ESV): 21 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— 22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV): 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

→ **We need to preach to ourselves and believe our identity as children of God:**

Romans 8:15-17 (ESV): 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Galatians 4:4-7 (ESV): 4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

Ephesians 1:4-6 (ESV): 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

→ **We need to preach to ourselves and believe the indwelling power and presence of the Holy Spirit—especially in times of struggle or tribulation:**

Romans 8:10-11 (ESV): 10 But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

John 16:6-7 (ESV): 6 But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. 7 Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.

Romans 5:1-5 (ESV): 5 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

WHY WE MUST PREACH THE GOSPEL TO OURSELVES

Identity: Without the Gospel, we live as orphans, unworthy slaves or entitled snobs.

The Gospel protects our identity by hiding it in Christ. We don't have to earn our keep or look down on others who can't earn theirs.

Obedience: Apart from the Gospel, some of us will only show fearful, timid obedience waiting to be smited for failure, angry rebellious disobedience. This fearful, slavish obedience is due to the impossibility of keeping all of the rules. For others, there will be a self-righteous obedience that fails to keep the rules while claiming to keep them perfectly. This prideful self-confidence causes us to despise God and others by seeking glory from people or despise those who don't praise us.

The Gospel protects our obedience by reminding us that Christ's obedience was given in our place to secure our hope. Every one of our good deeds is empowered by the indwelling Spirit of Christ, and apart from him we could do nothing.

Relationships: Apart from the Gospel our vertical relationship with God is hindered. We run and hide from God as Adam and Eve did in the garden. If we don't hide, we foolishly offer our self-righteous deeds to God as though he wanted our works and sacrifices rather than our hearts (see Isaiah 1). Horizontally, we either look down on others because they're aren't like us or we idolize others because we want to be like them. We are jealous of others because we aren't them. In other words, apart from the Gospel, we simply can't and won't love our neighbor as ourself.

The Gospel protects our relationship with God because we know we didn't earn our place in His presences. Only through Christ can we enjoy a relationship with God. It protects our relationships with others because when we see the grace and power of God in our lives, we can appreciate and celebrate that grace and power in their lives, too.

PERSONAL APPLICATION: Choose the best answer for each question.

Q: When I think about the Gospel, I tend to think of it as:

Very Abstract *Somewhat Abstract* *In Between* *Somewhat Reality* *Very Much a Reality*

Q: I _____ preach the Gospel to myself.

Never *Almost Never* *Sometimes* *Often* *Very Often*

Q: I feel that God views me primarily based on Christ's righteousness rather than my own.

Never *Almost Never* *Sometimes* *Often* *Very Often*

Q: I feel that I am a child of God.

Never *Almost Never* *Sometimes* *Often* *Very Often*

Q: I live with a very real sense of the Spirit's indwelling presence in my life.

Never *Almost Never* *Sometimes* *Often* *Very Often*