

What is the Gospel? (Part 1)

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[0:00] I think we're going to continue something I started a few weeks ago and then we'll have a break again in it and we'll get back to it some of you picked up a copy of this book by Mark Dever the gospel and personal evangelism there's still a few copies out there on the table if you didn't get one I'm asking just one that you take just one per family but most of what I'm going to be sharing with you on Sunday nights or the Sunday nights that I get to do something we'll have the Colorado bunch here next Sunday so I'll not be preaching we'll not be here next Sunday so but we'll get back to it okay and then we're going to Ukraine let's see what else is happening but I want us to kind of walk through what Mark Dever has presented in his book I think he's done an excellent job really of giving us a good foundation good instructions on the gospel and on evangelism and remember that I said that I've named this series the gospel on the goal that's on the go rather that's not his title that's my own little quirky title because what I'm wanting to do is apply this or make us to make us or make us consider the gospel and the presentation of the gospel consider it a more personal responsibility rather than a church program we need a church program we'll continue to do that and facilitate that but to consider the gospel and evangelism is something that we do personally we're going to have a program and that's good and that's good and that program you know people will meet and go to specific places but every day and throughout the week we have people everywhere around this town and so we can take advantage of that and share the gospel in multiple different ways and ultimately I'm going to share with you just how you can do that in multiple different ways but we're kind of walking through this book to see some of the basic things that we need to know and the first thing is well the first thing was why we looked at that last week why evangelize why should we we looked at some excuses why we don't and we probably could name a few of our own now what we want to consider tonight is what what is the gospel you say well that's a no-brainer everybody knows that everybody knows that do they do we know what the gospel is and we're going to be and are challenged as believers to when we have the opportunity and sometimes obviously we need to look for opportunities and make opportunities we're challenged to share the gospel to evangelize well just what is it we're sharing and this kind of taking a couple of a couple of a couple of a couple of nights to cover all of this not only what mark dever has in his book but some other that I want to share with you but this is what we want to consider tonight what is the gospel the first place I think we need to go is to consider some of the key words that are used in scripture two words particularly there are more there are actually four words we could look at but we're going to focus on the two primary words used to convey the idea of the gospel quote gospel in fact these two words are in a number of places one more than the other

translated in our English text as gospel gospel so it's pretty important to understand what these words mean and so I want to spend a little time on that these two words and pardon the Greek up there but that's pronounced kerugma sometimes it's pronounced kerigma you've you may have heard the word kerigma and this word is translated in some places in the Bible as gospel or good news it is more generally used in scripture to refer to the actual proclamation of it and the substance of what is being proclaimed but kerugma is a very important word in the New Testament and very important in our understanding about what the gospel is just what it really is and what does kerugma mean well it means the proclamation it refers to the proclamation issued by an official herald you need to understand this about uh about evangelism our sharing and proclaiming of the gospel that there is a there is a rich tradition uh or secular uh rather tradition that moves right in very well into christianity into the new testament and it is the idea of a herald now in one sense in a very narrow sense specific sense that's what i am i am a herald a herald uh of the gospel or a herald that has a message to to give and it's the herald's job is to proclaim the message given to him by the king and to be a faithful herald then we are proclaiming the truth of god's word unapologetically and

we have no authority to change it we have no authority not to speak it the herald is duty bound by his office to take the message of the king uh to the people and so kerugma has that in its origin so that's what it means the proclamation issued by an official herald the new testament like i've just said borrows that term from the secular world and we could put it all together this way official heralds in the greek that's the karuks that's the herald preach the official heralds preach that's keruso you've heard that word keruso the proclaiming so the karuks is proclaims he preaches he shares that he that's the keruso god's divine and authoritative message that's the kerugma so all three of those words have the same root and the whole process uh is is one flow of activity from the one who is called to be the herald the karuks to what he preaches or or to the proclaiming of it keruso to the actual substance of the message itself and that's the kerugma now you might be tempted uh to think that uh this all applies to guys like me that the herald is the preacher and that's what he's supposed to do he's supposed to stand behind the sacred desk on sundays or whenever we gather and and uh you know he's the karuks the official herald of the great king god and uh you know he's the supreme monarch and he's given the karuks

a message to caruso to preach and the substance of it is the kerugma but that's that's just only part of it in scripture you'll have this word applied not only to those who have been called to be elders or pastors or preachers and teachers but the people in general the people uh of the church uh are called upon to preach uh to proclaim the kerygma uh karugma uh which is the gospel second first corinthians 15 1 to 4 is perhaps the standard text uh where where you you find this um let me just turn to it real quickly you should know this passage very familiar and it also introduces uh another word that we're going to look at next in fact let me read it to you moreover brethren i declare to you this is paul writing i declare to you the what the gospel now that's not kerugma we'll get to that here in just a minute that's a different word which i preached that's caruso i preached it to you which also you received and in which you stand by which also you are saved so what he's saying is what i've preached to you caruso this gospel uh very important because it is what you received and you stand upon it and by it you're saved so this this is the gospel if you hold fast that word which i preached to you unless you believed in vain that means if you didn't really believe for i deliver to you first of all that which i also receive that christ and here the here's the kerygma of the church christ died for our sins according to the scriptures now paul's not intending to flesh all of this out and give all the particulars we we know what the particulars are when he says that christ died for our sins according to the scripture then we know he's talking about the cross talking about calvary we're talking about uh the shedding uh christ shedding his own blood at at the cross and all that that means so christ died for our sins and i've pointed this out i think a number of times but that word for is so incredibly important and it means in our place he died in our place in our behalf for our sins he had no sin it's our sins and he took our place at the cross so here's the kerygma of the church that christ died for our sins just like the bible said according to scriptures and that he was buried and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures and there you have the the the kerygma of the church the basic elements the basic points of the gospel christ died was buried and was raised from the dead on the third day according to the scriptures now did they have the gospel that gospel before christ died i think back think back to when the angel visited the shepherds who were out there in their fields tending their flocks by night you know and you know that story and and uh the angel said to the shepherds good news that's gospel and what was it was it christ died for your sins it was raised from the dead no that wasn't the message that he gave because jesus had not done that yet he was going to do that to to to give us the full gospel the full accomplishment of what the angel said to the

shepherds there in the fields he said basically good news peace you now have has the peace has come what you've been looking for and yearning for and the answer for everything it's finally come and it's peace peace peace with god that's the ultimate end that's the accomplishment of the gospel is peace reconciliation with god we have been enemies and we've been we we have been separated from him and long ago it was foretold that the one would come to make reconciliation to make peace and i've got good news he's come and then jesus died upon the cross and now we have the full gospel we hear about the full gospel you know sometimes our pentecostal friends they want to call themselves uh you know the full gospel people they've got the full gospel and what they mean is something different than what i mean we have the full gospel in that we're new testament believers christ has come but he's also died and he was raised from the dead and there is the kerygma of the church it's good news good news in fact if you go further in that passage in first corinthians 15 i think paul gives uh um uh not in the same words uh such as the word peace but he

goes on remember to say he says in that he was buried in that he was seen verse five by cephas then by the twelve after that he was seen by over 500 brethren at once of whom the greater part remained to the present but some had fallen asleep after that he was seen by james then by all the apostles then last of all he was seen by me also as by one born out of due season for i'm the least of the apostles for for who am not worthy to be called an apostle because i persecuted the church but by the grace of god i am what i am now paul i think the implication there is that he'd received the gospel and he is what he is i am what i am by the grace of god that's the result of receiving the kerygma of of of receiving the truth of christ who died for our sins was raised from the dead and and uh and by his grace we're we're changed we are renewed we are who we are because of the grace of god because of the gospel now the other word is yungelion that's how that's pronounced it is from this word that we get our word evangelism or evangel and it even more than the word kerygma yungelion is is usually translated good news or gospel in some versions of the bible good news gospel there there's synonyms gospel means good news yungelion is uh often translated that way originally the word meant a reward for good news or glad tidings so it was used in a secular sense in the the origin of the word it was used in that sense a reward for good news or glad tidings but eventually that definition gave way to the simplified meaning just simplified meaning good news they shortened it down and so when a person used the word yungelion uh they were saying good news now that crossed over into the gospel the bible writers under the inspiration of the holy spirit uh employed these common words secular words like kerygma and yungelion and those applied to uh to christianity and so it came to mean good news and

it's often translated that way the euangelion refers to basically refers to the historical facts concerning jesus and their collective significance for fallen humanity in fact we could say and rightly say that the gospel begins with jesus begins with jesus begins with his name the name jesus not just any jesus there were a number of jesus's jesus as of course who lived in jesus day there's only one jesus of nazareth jesus who was the son of god the messiah the one uh to die upon the cross and the euangelion refers to all the historical events concerning him that's why when we when we often preach through the new testament we often just call that all that gospel in a larger sense we can call all of the bible the gospel because all of the bible is about jesus even though the name jesus does not appear in the old testament he is there certainly references to the messiah uh is in the old testament but we can go all the way back to genesis and we find jesus there in fact jesus himself said to the pharisees remember he said search the scriptures for in them you think you have eternal life but they are they that speak of me that is all the scripture the old testament speaks of jesus and so in that sense in that broadest sense the whole of the bible is the gospel it's the good news it's the good news in that god has a plan and he's working out that plan and that plan has come to pass now he still has more to do but the fulfillment of redemption has been accomplished in that plan and speaking of that plan revealing that plan started all the way back with the very first chapter of the bible all right so the euangelion refers to the historical events concerning jesus but not just that not just a history lesson but the collective significance for fallen humanity that's why it's good news and it's only in jesus so the gospel begins with jesus who begins with his name it's good news it is the good news the evangel of the church that's what the euangelion is what is the euangelion the gospel mark dever in his book i don't know if you've had a chance to read it yet i would encourage you to do that very small book wouldn't take very long to read it he really dwells more on what the gospel is not and we'll get to that here in just a minute but woven in his response to what it is not he certainly gives us plenty of information about what it is but i want to be maybe a little bit more specific about what the gospel is what is the gospel in the sense of of um its its essence it's what it accomplishes its its power and how it should be responded to and then next time we'll look at some of the basic elements of the gospel message itself even reducing it down to some very key verses of scripture that you can share with someone uh who who's lost and uh so we'll get to that eventually but what is the gospel first of all it is a story it is a story the gospel is a story remember it's historical events we're not just talking about a concept

[20 : 18] i'm just talking about a pure doctrine per se some point of theology it's a story because remember the gospel begins with jesus begins with his name and he was a real person all right prophesied uh to come all throughout the old testament did come in the new testament he's a real person and so it's his story you might not write all this down but i want to pick this apart a little bit the story of jesus it's the story of jesus and his love the story of the virgin birth of the son of god his holy life culminating in his atoning death on which god the father placed his stamp of approval by raising him from the dead his ascension into heaven and i don't know about the word session there i

may have put a type typo there seated at the right hand of god maybe that's what it is tom thank you you know me too well the outpouring by him of the holy spirit upon his church now those are all the elements of the story see not just simply i'm not just talking about his his story some of the stories that we're studying as we're moving our way through luke some of the events in his life all those uh uh are part of the story and they they add uh foundation to these basic elements they prove stand as testimonies to these basic elements of the story it's the story of jesus his love for you for us for sinners the story of the virgin birth that's how it all began he was virgin born as the son of god he's the son of god very son of god his holy life culminating in his atoning death he couldn't have a whole an atoning death if his life was not holy perfect sinless spotless and his atoning death that's the cross where he went to the cross as a substitute i believe in the substitutionary death of the lord jesus christ as a substitute for you for me there upon the cross his atoning death on which god the father placed his stamp of approval by raising him up from the dead that's how we know that the cross was acceptable to god the father that his sacrifice was not rejected it was accepted and so we can that's good news we can take heart in that and we know it that be the case because he was raised from the dead his ascension into heaven and seated at the right hand of god that's where his position is now and the bible goes on to tell us that he ever lives to make intercession for us he's interceding for us the outpouring by him this is a gift to the church this is part of the gospel too the gospel story of the holy spirit upon his church upon you upon me upon his church so it's a story second it's a doctrine the gospel is a doctrine it didn't mean to say that it's a story and not a doctrine it's a story but it's also a doctrine god's interpretation of that story and that's what doctrine is we have the story the events that took place and god is the one who interprets the significance of the story the meaning of the story particularly the doctrine of christ's divine person and that of his and of his vicarious atoning work

that's the cross so it is a doctrine and there's a whole lot in the doctrine of of of the gospel the the euangelion it is also an invitation the gospel is the euangelion is an invitation by its very nature it's proclaimed and it is proclaimed to be responded to and it is god's sincere offer of salvation to all to whom the gospel comes is proclaimed sincere sincere offer to repent and believe in order that you may have life it's an invitation when you share the gospel with someone a friend a family member you don't have to stop and wonder well i wonder if this friend of mine is one of god's elect you don't have to worry about that anybody here know who the elect are no it's amazing how they show up every time the gospel is shared it's a sincere offer and you are offering it to all those to whom the gospel comes whether you share it the preacher shares it someone hears it on the radio picks up a Gideon Bible in a motel room and looks at the front cover and there's a plan of salvation or however it may come it's a sincere offer of salvation to all to whom the gospel comes to repent and believe in order that you may have life it's an invitation it's a promise the gospel is a promise

God's promise of life everlasting to all who trust for salvation trust him for salvation left him out trust him for salvation or trust for salvation in the divine Christ and his redeeming work Acts 16 31 and they said believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved you and your household that sounds like a promise you remember the occasion there the jailer remember suddenly the prison doors are open he's about to take his own life because his prisoners have escaped or so he thought and what happened you remember we're still here don't worry about it and then he was convicted in his own heart and the Lord did that of course and he said what must I do to be saved and the answer is believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved you and your household it's a promise it's a promise it is an appeal that sounds very much like invitation but it adds a little bit more to it

God's urgent and loving appeal to sinners to accept to receive his offer and to comply with his invitation God pleads with them 2 Corinthians 5 20 therefore we are ambassadors for Christ God making his appeal through us isn't that amazing that as his children as his church God is making his appeal to sinners through us and so here's here again what Paul says God making his appeal through us we implore you on behalf of Christ be reconciled to God it means repent place your faith in him be reconciled to him there's another indication of the ultimate word for the gospel for salvation is peace with God so he makes his appeal it is an appeal it is a demand the euangelion is a demand

God's demand that people believe on Christ here and at this point law and gospel come together what happened there sorry about that I didn't even touch it I'm afraid I do huh maybe it's here aha okay I'm a computer expert gospel becomes law have you ever thought of that it becomes law a law to be obeyed people are to obey we're to obey the gospel when the Jews asked Jesus what shall

we do that we might work the works of God he replied this is the work of God that you believe on him whom he hath sent

[29:35] John 6:28-29 the gospel is a demand the gospel is a command God's command God's command that those who trust in Christ as savior also gratefully serve him as king of their lives I think a lot of believers have missed that misunderstood that you can call it lordship salvation if you want to whatever term but you know when God commands it's his command that not only that we trust him as lord and savior but we serve him submit to him he's the king of our lives and it's not an appendix to the evangel the gospel but an integral part of it we can't separate this part of it and we ought to expect it when someone walks down this aisle here and gives testimony that

I'm born again I'm born again child of God we baptize them as a church we ought to expect them then ought to expect to see then a life of service to the lord love for the lord obedience and submission to the lord baptism is one of the first steps of obedience upon conversion so it's not an appendix some just add on to the evangel you know a lot of times you'll have a book that has an appendix in it and how many times do you read it you know that's if I have time and want to read it I'll read it it's not just an appendix to it to the gospel it's an integral part of it and so in the great commission Christ instructed his disciples to teach men to teach people to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded that's the gospel that's the great commission believing in Christ and obeying him are not two acts but two phases of one act that's how we ought to consider this trusting Christ as savior and acknowledging him as lord those two things are inseparable it's not that you're going to one day get around to that part of it they are inseparable they are two phases of the same act of conversion what the gospel is not

I thought about putting that first and then I decided no I'll talk about what it is and then we're going to talk more about what it is in relation to the actual substance of it next time but what the gospel is not the good news or gospel is not simply that we are okay and we know that don't we it's not that we're just okay actually we're sinful we're not okay clearly and we ought to approach the presentation the proclamation of the gospel whether it's one on one or in some small group or whether we're having just a casual conversation about salvation with someone we ought to approach it here first the problem is sin the problem is we're not okay far from it

Romans 3:23 that's a good place to begin if you use the Roman road and I'm going to give you a you know easy way to use the Roman road what we call the Roman road in sharing the gospel but there's the beginning point Romans 3:23 what does it say for all have sinned and fall short come short depends on what translation you memorize fall short of the glory of God all have sinned does that leave anybody out not anybody all have sinned and come short of the glory of God we have and we can pick that verse apart we've missed the mark that's the idea behind the word hamartia missed the mark it's an archery term you've heard this before you can get as close to the bullseye maybe closer than anybody else but you still have missed it that's what God is saying about all of humanity we've missed the mark we've come short of the glory of God we are all all of us in rebellion to God and to his perfect law and as such we sin against a holy

God this is so important in conveying the message now it's not the warm fuzzy part maybe that's why we would tend to skip this part but we need to make very clear that sin is not just simply some infraction of a code or law it is something that has been done against a holy God our sin offends him is an affront to him we've sinned against a holy God there is where we're not okay we are all sinful and because of that we deserve punishment there's the second step usually in the Roman road approach to sharing the gospel Romans 6:23 for the wages of sin are death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord and so it's the first part of that that we're really focusing on at this point all have sinned and come short of the glory of God we've missed the mark we're in deep trouble with God and the wages of that sin is death and we understand that's eternal death it's serious business we're not okay see the gospel is not you're just okay you just need to realize it it's not a well I won't name any personalities preacher personalities today there are a number of them out there that for them you know in their preaching you don't need to worry about sin you just need to focus on on who you really are and could be you know but we're not okay and we're hopelessly damaged there isn't any way to fix it apart from

[36:16] Jesus Christ we are sinful we deserve his punishment and we're depraved depraved I mean no matter how hard we may try we continually break God's law I'm not talking about the unsaved person okay I'm not talking about you and me hopefully but left to ourselves we can't help ourselves what does depraved mean just does it mean utterly sinful that's usually what we think of

when we hear the word depraved we think we're right now maybe picturing somebody we know or some particular personality just headlong into sin just utterly corrupt and sinful you know the worst of sinners depraved depraved depraved really technically means in fact I really would prefer the word unable unable totally unable to save ourselves totally unable to say no to sin we are depraved and so no matter how hard we try a lot of people try very hard we continue to break

God's law what the gospel is not the good news the gospel is not simply that God is love there's some who just simply you know only want that kind of a message that God is love we just need to discover that and then we'll be saved we'll certainly feel better about ourselves God is love right yes he is he's a whole lot of other things he's much much more than that if we settle for an understanding that God is love alone then we tend to settle for God being emotionally manipulated in his love just loving God and so you know he you know he understands and I can just appeal to his love the Bible also says that God is spirit that he is holy that he is perfect he is all of these things the good news is not simply that

Jesus Christ wants to be our friend Jesus is not a therapist you know he didn't come to pat us on the back as our buddy now he is a counselor we're talking about though what the unsaved person needs what the gospel is to the unsaved it is not that Jesus Christ just wants to be your friend he just wants you know let's just shake and be good friends our sins rather are serious business he had to die and sacrifice his life in order to save your life my life this is serious business we've got the unsaved person has come to grips with that reality he is our redeemer he took on our sins as his own and suffered in our place he's not just simply our friend he's our savior and I would add to that he's our lord good news is not simply that we should live rightly this is a big one this is the last of the

I think four here in this list and it is perhaps the most significant one it's not just simply that we should live rightly a lot of people are trying to live right live morally Christianity is not simply doing right avoiding wrong living morally somehow making our world a better place you know we've got to be you know ecologically minded and we've got to save the planet because you know this is our heaven really Christianity is not moralism should we live morally absolutely but Christianity is not moralism I've heard it said and I think it's so right that's what we were saved from moralism that is trying to gain acceptance favor from God by our way we live the things we say no to and the things we say yes to and really ordering our lives after some very moral pattern and we become very self righteous in that way that's what we need to be saved from

Christianity is about submitting ourselves to a pure perfect and holy God repenting of our sins and relying on the power of God instead of our own power living rightly will still fall short of God's approval you can be moral but you will never ever gain God's approval by moral living remember we go back to Romans 3 23 all have sinned and come short fall short of the glory of God I don't care how moral a person becomes there is always going to be that barrier between that person and God that they cannot break and that barrier is sin sin morality will not remove that barrier morality will not reconcile you with

[42 : 43] God it is the goodness of the Lord Jesus Christ the righteousness of Christ that is imputed in your life that salvation that makes you acceptable before God we must repent and believe not work and perform this is that's what the good news is trusting in and relying on Christ's power to cover our sins not our good works to give us and we're trusting him relying upon him to give us power that we just don't have and never can have that's that's really the at the heart of the meaning of depraved totally unable we don't have the power in ourselves so we are trusting in him relying upon Christ his power to cover our sins to give us the power that we need that we don't have in ourselves that's real life changing that's faith that's salvation and that's the good news you