

# COVENANT MEMBERSHIP

## UNDERSTANDING THE GOSPEL

The gospel is not easily summed up in a phrase or two. It *is* a simple message and yet it has been over-simplified and over-humanized. The effect is twofold: First, many believing themselves to be Christians do not understand the true gospel and will hear, "I never knew you" on that final day. Second, many believers are not daily appropriating the gospel to life and are undernourished, unprepared for hardship, and weak in the face of temptation.

### 1. Common misunderstandings:

- a. The gospel is simply the plan for how people get to heaven.
- b. The gospel is God's plan to resolve people's problems (the *therapeutic* gospel) or to provide abundance now (the *prosperity* gospel).
- c. Obedience or implications of the gospel are made necessary to the gospel (legalism).
- d. Salvation has nothing to do with obedience ("free grace").

### 2. Proper understanding:

- a. The gospel is the storyline of the entire Bible though it is not explicit everywhere (the gospel is always the subject).

The O.T. preaches the gospel (e.g. 2 Timothy 3:14-15; Galatians 3:8).

Jesus preached the gospel pre-crucifixion/resurrection (Matthew 4:23; Mark 1:14-15).

- b. The gospel is for unbelievers and believers alike.  
Paul preached the gospel to the believing Romans (Romans 1:15; cf. v 8).
- c. The gospel is God's plan to redeem His people out of slavery to sin, rescuing them from condemnation, and restoring them to right relationship.
- d. Obedience is not the gospel, but the gospel cannot be disconnected from obedience!

3. Salvation: what is it really?
  - a. Salvation is deliverance from the curse of sin (cf. Galatians 3:10-13).
  - b. Salvation is the restoration of all things (cf. Titus 2:11-14; Rev. 21:1-6).
4. Key gospel truths:
  - a. God is holy and righteous (cf. Isaiah 6; Psalm 24:3-4; Matt. 5:48).
  - b. We are sinful and rebellious at heart (cf. Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:23)
  - c. Jesus is the only answer and our only hope for salvation (cf. John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 John 2:1-2).
  - d. Our response is humble repentance and sincere faith (Mark 1:14-15; Acts 2:38; Romans 10:8-10).
5. The gospel is what informs and shapes us (cf. Philippians 1:27).
  - a. Embracing personal brokenness is essential for receiving gospel graces.  
Psalm 34:18; 51:17; Isaiah 57:15; Matthew 5:3; 1 Peter 5:5-6
  - b. All Christian conduct flows out of gospel truths.  
Matthew 18:23-35; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13
  - c. We need to continue to preach the gospel to ourselves and each other.  
Psalm 119:49-56; 1 Thessalonians 4:18
6. What do we mean by “Declaring and Displaying the Gospel Together”?
  - a. We have it as our goal to declare the true gospel of Christ to all.
  - b. We have it as our goal to live in a manner that displays the truth and power of the gospel now.
  - c. We have it as our goal to do this together because this is God’s design.