

Session Eight: The Gospel Changes Everything

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[0:00] Hello and welcome back to Gospel Growth.

Again, I'm Brian Hart, and we're closing out this very first unit in this Gospel Growth series, looking at how disciples get the gospel. So we've talked about what the gospel is, and we've traced out the big story of the gospel, redemption, and restoration.

And we've zoomed in on the cross of Jesus, which is really the center of the gospel, God choosing to die for us. Because of the cross, we've been forgiven and set free.

Now, as we end this first module, we want to consider, what do we do with this? Like, the gospel is something to believe, surely, but also the gospel should change us, and it should affect how we live. Truly, the gospel changes everything. Remember, the gospels are not the ABCs of Christianity. They're not just the basics that you have to learn when you come in, and then you can get on to the good stuff.

[1:12] No, the gospel is the A to Z. It's the whole thing. Romans 12.1, Paul says, I appeal to you, therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Jesus was the ultimate sacrifice for us. That's the good news of the gospel is that he died to us. He died for us on the cross. Our response can only be to respond and to give to him because he has given so much to us, to die to our selfish ambitions, to live a life of joyful surrender to him.

I mean, if somebody gave you, like, let's just say somebody just out of nowhere gave you a billion dollars. Somebody just showed up and just blessed you. Would you not, for the rest of your life, try to live in a way that honored that person?

And not out of a sense of earning something, but gratitude. We respond to the gospel in gratitude. It should affect everything we do because of how grateful we are.

In light of his mercy, we present everything to him in worship, not just in one moment, you know, as a response to an altar call, but with a whole life laid down.

[2:27] So the gospel causes us, Jesus said, if we want to follow him, that we have to pick up our cross and carry it. We have to follow him by carrying, he carried some heavy burdens for us.

We will need to do the same for him. And because we're so grateful to him for what he's done, we say, yes, we are willing to pick up our cross and offer ourselves as a living sacrifice.

We're going to look at just a few spheres of life and ask whether or not the gospel is informing how we live in those areas. Because sometimes we can keep the gospel in a box and we don't let it affect every area of our life.

Maybe it's just something that we talk about at church rather than something that we're grappling with every day. So we're going to look at just a few things. We're going to look at personal life, family life, and work life. All of these areas and in every other area as well.

But all of these areas should be transformed by the gospel because it transforms everything. So first, the gospel transforms our personal life. The gospel should, if you believe the gospel, it should really have a big effect on just your day-to-day existence.

[3:36] It should drive a personal life of devotion. It should transform shame into radical transparency and open repentance. It should transform fear into intimacy.

And it should change alienation from God into access to the Father that we take advantage of on a daily basis. Romans 8 verses 14 to 15 say, For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 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. Father. So because of the gospel, we come to God as sons and daughters.

So we're no longer slaves to sin. There should be no more fear. The Bible says that the perfect love, the love of God drives out fear. But now what we have is a shameless, vulnerable relationship with God.

So because our sins have been forgiven, every time we ask what Jesus did on the cross, that moment of atonement of Jesus, of him giving his body as a sacrifice for us, the effects of that are applied every time we ask for forgiveness.

[4:54] So there is no longer any need to hide like Adam and Eve did back in Genesis. That's what they did when they sinned. They hid from God. We don't have to do that anymore. We can simply repent, knowing every time we will be received.

And so I want you to consider, is there a habit of confession and repentance in your life? Like when you sin, what do you do with it? Because if we don't, if we're not willing to confess, if we can't bring it into the open, if we're too ashamed or embarrassed or we want to hide it, then we have to ask the question, to what degree are we really living in light of the gospel?

Are we really responding to it? Because a heart that knows it's forgiven can confess without any fear. Our forgiveness has already been purchased. Our sin can come out of the dark and we can bring it into the light of God's love and mercy.

We can come to God knowing exactly how he'll receive us because he's already told us. We can't undo. On the worst day of your life, friends, on the worst day, you cannot undo what Jesus did on the cross.

We can come to him with confidence every time. There are no barriers. So that's a new behavior that's been created by the gospel, a lifestyle of devotion, of freedom, of prayer, of coming to the Lord and talking with him, of being honest with him, of being intimate with him, being totally shameless even when we sin.

[6:22] And all of that is begun by the gospel, but it's cultivated through a life of disciplines that, you know, we live out in our day-to-day experience as we respond properly to the gospel.

We are not, like you are not, God does not love you. You are not saved by nor loved according to how much you pray. God loved you before you were ever born.

There's nothing you can do to make him love you more than he does right now. But if we truly believe that, if we believe the truth of the gospel and we believe that God loves us, then we will pray.

We will use this amazing access that we have. Why would we not? The gospel also drives us to pursue holiness and purity in our personal lives.

1 Corinthians 6 says, flee sexual immorality. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own.

[7:21] You were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. This isn't merely just some good advice. This is calling you and I, Paul is calling you and I to live properly in relation to the good news of what Jesus has done for us.

We have been bought with a price. You are not your own. You know, as Americans, we love the idea of being free. And for a lot of people, freedom means autonomy. Autonomy is not a gift. It's terrifying.

No one wants to be an orphan. No one wants to be alone in the world. Paul is saying, you have a gift. You have a father. You are no longer your own. You belong to him. So live like it. Honor him in your body.

Because in your body, that's where his spirit lives. And so we want to put away any kind of sin or any kind of behavior that would dishonor him. Why would we dishonor him after what he has done for us?

The gospel changes us. So there's a personal level to how we respond to the gospel. But there's also, there's other spheres of our life that are transformed by the gospel.

[8:28] The gospel transforms our family life. So it's not just about us individually, but it's how we relate to our family members. The Bible has a lot to say about the relationship of the gospel to the way that we love one another.

And it includes even within marriage. So I'm just going to use this as an example of how the gospel informs family life. Ephesians 5.22, Paul says, wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord. Now, this doesn't say submit to your husband because he is the Lord or that he's anything like the Lord. Actually, he's not. Submit to him as you would to the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words,

respect and honor your husband, not because he deserves it, but because of the grace and love shown to you by Jesus.

Because of what he's done to you and done for you, you can treat your husband with love and respect that would truly nourish him and make your marriage relationship thrive.

You don't have to, in other words, this is not saying to women, you have to wait for your husband to ascend to some height of being like the perfect dream husband. And that's when you can really start to respect and honor him.

[9:35] No, because Jesus died for you when you didn't deserve it. You can follow your husband and you can respect him and love him even when you think he doesn't deserve it. And this isn't one-sided.

Paul goes on to say, husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. Husbands are told to love and cherish their wives not because they always deserve it, not because your wife is always making you feel good about yourself or because she's always sweet and kind or because she's always beautiful.

No, love your wives because you have been so loved by Jesus. He died for you. He loved you when you didn't deserve it. And so you can do that for your wife even when you think she doesn't deserve it.

See, when those feelings of love fade and falter, when we don't feel like showing love, we can look at the cross and remember the reality that if Jesus only died for the sweet and the kind and the most beautiful, the ones who responded to him the best, then he wouldn't have died for anyone. When we are rooted and grounded in the gospel and we are remembering on a daily basis what Christ has done for us, we are able to do the same for others.

[10:49] We can love and forgive our family members even in dark moments, even in moments where it's hard. And not only that, we have the power to repent. The gospel tells us that our sin was so bad, Jesus had to literally die for it.

So if we believe that, we won't have such a hard time confessing our faults to our family members. We'll spend less time being defensive and more time admitting, man, I'm messed up in this thing. I'm a sinner. I'm broken every day. I need the grace of Jesus and I need him to forgive me and I need my family members to forgive me. So the gospel humbles us, should make us very, very gracious, very gracious with our family members, very slow to get angry, very quick to ask for forgiveness, very quick to forgive.

The marriage relationship is one in particular that requires constant application of grace and the receiving of God's love and appreciating the power of the gospel.

But that's not true just for marriage. It's all our relationships with family and friends. They should all be shaped by what we believe. So do we have patience with our kids? Man, in order to have patience with your children, you are going to have to daily be remembering that God is patient with you.

[12:04] To forgive your parents who've let you down in countless ways, you're going to have to remember that God has forgiven you when you have let him down. And so there's the personal sort of sphere.

There's the family sphere. But what about your work life? What does that have to do with the gospel? Well, the gospel transforms how and why we work. Many of us view our jobs as necessary evils, just something we have to do to, you know, get through the day, pay the bills so we can go on to what's really important.

Or we might even see our jobs as kind of like we idolize it. We are obsessed with climbing some kind of ladder and we want to make it towards the top, whether that means wealth or success or fame.

But if the gospel is true, then our work is neat. We should neither complain about our work nor should we obsess about it and idolize it. It's not just something to sort of just get through with our heads down.

And it's not a way to get rich and powerful and famous. In fact, what the Bible says is that our work becomes a way to respond to the gospel. Ephesians 6, 7 says that in our work, we should be rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man.

[13:16] So our work is an act of worship before the Lord. We can work hard because ultimately, if we have a job, that job is a gift. And how we do everything tells a story about what we believe about our God and what he's given us.

We know that God has a plan for our lives, for our whole lives. And that includes the 9 to 5. That includes the places of employment and the work that we do.

The gospel actually dignifies our work. Just as Jesus spent his whole life bringing healing to others and showing compassion and having a servant's heart.

So we can do the same thing. We can live our lives looking for opportunities to bless others in our work. And encounter people with the love of Jesus. With the same servant heart. That means if you work for someone.

If you have maybe even a boss. Your supervisor. Someone that you don't appreciate or you think is disrespectful. You can do what Jesus did. You can look. Jesus loved his enemies.

[14 : 16] Jesus blessed his enemies. We were once his enemies. And so again, even in our workplace, we can do for others what God has done for us. We can look for ways to bless. We are a resurrection people.

We go into the world. Even into our workplaces with the gospel. With this promise of what's coming. This view of life that's been totally transformed. And that means that no encounter that we have is an accident.

Every person that you bump into. There's an opportunity to bless. Your co-worker isn't just someone you have to deal with. He or she is someone who can encounter the gospel through their relationship with you.

Outside of the gospel, the mission of our lives is to suck up as much pleasure as we can from weekends and vacation. Or make as much money as we can so we can retire and have the good life in the twilight years.

Those are all small dreams. In the light of the gospel, every single thing we do, nothing is mundane anymore. Everything you do has the opportunity to tell the story of the gospel and to bear witness to the love of God.

[15 : 23] We can stop complaining about the people we have to work with and the work that we have to do. And we can start praying for those people. And praying that our work would make God look as good as he really is. When the gospel gets a hold of us, we can ask, God, how can you leverage my life for the sake of your kingdom?

If we want to live in these radical ways and family and work and church, we need to constantly return to the gospel at the center. We need to see that it's at the center and we have to put it at the center of our lives on a daily basis.

Because the gospel is the fuel for a life that glorifies God. 1 Corinthians 11.26 says, For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Do you ever wonder what the communion meal is all about? Or why, you know, at our church we take it every single week. Why do we do that? Because it forces us to keep the gospel at the center. At the table, when we come to this meal, we come to the broken body and the shed blood of Jesus. The blood that has been shed for the forgiveness of sins. We eat it and we drink it and we encounter again anew the love and sacrifice of Jesus. We let it nourish us.

[16 : 36] There's a reason that we don't just say these things. We actually eat something and drink something. Jesus said his body is true food and his blood is true drink. In other words, the gospel, the presence of Jesus that we interact with by the power of the Holy Spirit.

But these things we're hungry for. Our soul is desperate for them. So we eat and we drink. The sacrificial love of Jesus Christ for undeserving sinners.

That is the meal we need and we never stop needing it. And if we're going to go into the world and we're going to offer this to somebody else, we have to keep feasting on it ourselves.

And then from that place of gospel encounter, we can actually go and we can bless people. We can make disciples. We can proclaim the death, the love, and the power of Jesus until Jesus returns. So as you meet in your discussion groups, I encourage you to think about these things. Does your life proclaim the death of Jesus, the victory that he has over sin and over the grave?

[17 : 40] Do you see your personal life and your family life and your work life, all these spheres where the gospel actually has transformed those things? And if your personal life or family life or work life doesn't look any different than someone who's not a Christian, than someone who doesn't even believe the gospel, why is that?

And what can you do? How could you bring the gospel to bear on those spheres so that they are totally transformed?