

**“Reframing the Gospel” - 2 Peter 1:3-11**  
**Pastor Burt Garwood – September 10, 2017**

Imagine if you had never seen a stop sign before. You’re going along and you see the sign. So you stop. Now what? If nobody has told you how this sign works, you might wonder what it’s for. What am I supposed to stop doing? How long am I supposed to stop? Can I go?

- The sign by itself doesn’t communicate love. It doesn’t tell you that it was placed there for your well-being...to protect you.
- Someone has to teach you the meaning of the stop sign. But once you hear the full story and know the full meaning, you come to appreciate stop signs.

Sadly, the message of Christianity looks like a stop sign to many.

- Unless someone takes the time to explain the message fully, people will only see God as judge. “Stop doing this, stop doing that.” Let’s reframe the gospel message so that you can communicate it more clearly to others.

What is the gospel? Gospel means “good news”.

- Simply put: Our God, Jesus, came down from heaven, took on human flesh and lived a perfectly sinless life and died on the cross to pay the death penalty for us.
- We make it simpler: Jesus died for your sins. But there is so much more depth to the gospel than just this simple phrase. Because there is more to the story before his death. And there is more to life for us after his resurrection.
- The gospel encompasses the following: Creation – Fall – Redemption – Restoration
- Our Father-God, our Creator, created Adam and Eve in his own image. And God breathed his Spirit into them and they came to life. That is the beginning of the gospel.
- When we simplify the gospel message to “Adam and Eve sinned, so Jesus died for our sins”, it has a tendency to take us away from the fact that God originally created us in his image and that we were holy.
- When we make it too simple, it can actually cloud things. God becomes only a judge. And humans were originally sinful.
- But if you start the gospel story in the beginning, it changes how we view God and how we view humanity. God created us in his image. Adam and Eve were perfect and sinless and holy.

When we start at the beginning, it changes how we view God.

- He isn’t out to get us when we sin. He’s passionately pursuing us to restore us.
- The full gospel is that God is working to get us back to Eden. This is redemption and restoration. It is God re-creating in us.

Do we do a good job communicating this to our co-workers, neighbors and friends?

- To most people, God is the stop sign. He is a judge out to catch us when we do wrong.
- People don’t have a first reaction that God is passionately pursuing them to bring them back, to redeem and restore them.
- Our message sometimes sounds more like this: “You are messed up and need to be fixed.” This way of delivering the message isn’t connecting with our current culture.

People like to talk about spiritual things. People like to think they are essentially good.

- Taking them back to the beginning, to show them that Adam and Eve were created in God’s image, that they were perfect, holy and sinless, helps them to reconnect to God’s original creation.
- What would a conversation look like if it started with, “You have God stuff in you. You have a spiritual DNA originally given to you by God.”
- Not that you are a god. But that you were originally created in the beginning for eternity to be with God. And that in Christ, you are a son or daughter of God. This was lost, in sin...but God is offering it to us...it’s ours for the taking.
- That’s much better than, “You’re going to hell if you don’t clean up your act.”
- READ: Psalm 139:13-18 & Colossians 1:27

Let’s talk about a second fuller picture of the gospel:

- We talk a lot about Jesus dying on the cross for our sins. But it doesn’t end there. We journey with Jesus through the empty tomb. Jesus rises from the dead fully alive. And his body bears the scars to prove it. Jesus’ death was only part of the mission. His rising from the dead is what completed his mission.
- Through the tomb, our wounds become scars...a testimony to where Jesus has healed us. And these scars become object lessons in telling our story of redemption to others.

The old evangelism question was: “If you were to die tonight, where would you go?”

- But that question only addresses our future death someday. What about living life now?
- Here’s a new question that gives you purpose for your life lived to its fullest now: “If you knew you had twenty years to live, what kind of life would you want to live?”
- Answering the first question is more like making sure your ticket is punched to enter heaven. Which is clearly important. It’s a life or death spent in eternity question. But it doesn’t answer how we live life now. And who we live for...for self...or for God.
- Answering the new question gives you the opportunity to live God’s redemptive story through your life so that others can be connected to Jesus as well.
- Helping others answer the new question gets them to connect the full gospel from Creation to the Fall, to Redemption to Restoration. READ: 2 Peter 1:3-4.
- “You have God stuff in you. Did you know that you can awaken it? That when it comes alive, that you can live life fully for him with a purpose and passion that you never thought existed?”
- Jesus answered the new question in this way: “Follow me.” READ: Mark 1:14-15. Jesus came to tell people that God’s kingdom had arrived on earth. That it wasn’t just for a future reunion with God in heaven. But that God is with them. NOW.
- Creation – Fall – Redemption – Restoration. The Gospel reframed.