

St Martins C3 – June 12, 2022

Sharing Your Faith – The Gospel

Sermon Notes:

Today we begin a brand-new series called “Sharing Your Faith”, which is focused on helping you to feel confident in sharing your faith.

We start this morning with a simple question:

If you’re sharing the gospel, what things do you need to make sure you cover in the process?

Ultimately, the gospel is the entire Bible. It is the whole story of God’s plan for the redemption of mankind from Genesis to Revelation.

It is not about memorising a couple of clever arguments and persuading someone to agree with them. More often the gospel will be shared in the context of relationship, where it is most at home.

Read Luke 14:25-30

We need to be in the business of making committed disciples, not just converts. We are not trying to just get people saved, we’re trying to help people meet a Jesus they will walk with and serve for all of eternity.

Today, we will explore three core elements of what we need to be saved.

1 – There's a God, but you're not Him

Read Acts 16:25-30

The first part of the Gospel we need to understand is that despite what the advertisements tell you – you are not enough! You cannot be your own God. You cannot save yourself. Like the jailer, you must come to the end of yourself. God is real. He created the universe. He created us to be in a loving and close relationship with Him. He loves us and cares for us more than we can ever dare to believe.

But we have rejected God and His way and have tried to do life our own way.

That's the first core part of the Gospel. When we get there and realise our need like the jailer who, broken and fearful, asks "what must I do to be saved?"

2 – There's a solution, but you gotta believe

Read Acts 16:31-32; 1 Corinthians 15:3-5

How can we be saved? The message to the jailer is that he has to believe in the story of Jesus. Jesus died for our sins and the Old Testament predicted He would, in accordance with God's plan, then He was buried and raised on the third day – also as predicted – then appearing to a great range of witnesses.

Read Romans 5:8-9; John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9; John 14:6

He offers us the opportunity to have our sins forgiven and forgotten. To be spared God's anger for rejecting Him time and time again. There's a solution, and it is the only solution; the only way. To receive it we must exercise faith.

3 – There's a journey, but you're just starting out

When you become a Christian you are just starting, it's not the end of the journey. People need to understand the Gospel is the entry into a new life of service to God. Of following and obeying Him. Of community and service. Of sacrifice and persecution. We do not need to shield people from the realities of walking with God, and we do them a disservice if we do.

Read Acts 16:33-34; Ephesians 2:8-10; Luke 23:39-43

This life that we commit to God is the start of something brand new in our lives. Like the thief on the cross we need to recognise our need, choose to believe and commit whatever we have to God.

This is the message that we are bringing to others, try and bring that message to others this week.

Questions for Connect Groups:

Connect Groups will be using the Life Shared material from Alpha during this series, so there will be no connect group questions in these notes for the next few weeks.

Monday Devotion: Made to Love

Read Genesis 1:26-27 John 4:8, 16

As we consider the good news of the gospel, which we are sharing with others, we see that it is a story that has been developing from the very beginning of time. This week we will track the story of the gospel and man's great need for God.

Mankind was made in the image of God, and just as He is filled with love, so we are most whole when we give love. We also have a need and desire to experience love. This kind of love is seen in part through the beautiful relationships we have in our lives. Romantic relationships. Familial relationships. Friendships. They all express something of the kind of love we all need.

However, none of those relationships comes close to the relationship we are made to have with God. We were created to know God and to be close to Him.

When God first created humanity, they experienced this closeness. They could walk and talk with Him and feel complete fulfillment.

Every person wants to have this relationship, there is something inside of them that is longing for God above all other things in the world.

Consider, the people in your life and how they need God above all other things. If you look closely, you will see that desire in them.

Tuesday Devotion: What Went Wrong?

Read Genesis 3:1-12, 23; Romans 3:23

We were made to experience love and its fullness through a close and personal relationship with God. What went wrong?

In Fraser's message this week, he talked about the first thing that is needed to accept the gospel is to know that there is a God and that it is not you. This was exactly the choice that Adam and Eve faced when tempted by the serpent. He told them they had an opportunity to become like God and it was one they chose not to pass up. They wanted to be like God and took the fruit.

The results were disastrous. Their eyes were opened to their nakedness, and they experienced shame – hiding from God and ultimately being removed from the garden and their close relationship with Him.

The sin of Adam and Eve was not just something that happened a long time ago to two individuals. But it is a pattern that is repeated over and over by all people. We choose to make ourselves the most important person in the world and in so doing we reject God and a relationship with Him. We have a choice between ourselves and God, and we choose ourselves every time.

In doing so, we miss what we most desperately need and move outside of his life – living in death instead.

Wednesday Devotion: Idols

Read Exodus 20:3-6; Colossians 3:5

What do you do when there is something you desperately need, but you can't get it? Most people will try and find something close to that need, even if it is inadequate. Dirty water is consumed when clean water is needed. A piece of cardboard is used when a roof is needed. Idols are worshipped when God is needed.

In Colossians, the apostle Paul is telling his listeners to do away with the things of their earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed. He calls all of these things idols. In other words, they are things we are worshipping when we truly long to worship God.

Worshipping, here, does not mean that we are bowing down to these things, offering sacrifices to them or singing songs as a group to them. What it means is that we are looking to them to fill our deep need for satisfaction that only God meets.

This is what we see in our world today, people looking to things other than God to find satisfaction – people worshipping idols. What they find is that these things might seem like what they need, but they are inadequate to satisfy – if not downright harmful.

Look at those in the world around you who are living without God. Can you see how they are really worshipping idols?

Thursday Devotion: Jesus Brings Us to God

Read Romans 5:6-11, 6:23

So far this week, we have tracked the great need in our lives, the need to know God and His love. Day one - We were made to know the pure love of God. Day two - We choose to make ourselves as God, thus separating us from that love. Day three - We set other things up in God's place, but they don't satisfy us.

The result of this is a profound sense of emptiness. It often includes a fear of judgement because the penalty for rejecting God is to be excluded from His sustaining life, both now and for eternity. We have wronged the most high God, what can we do?

The good news is that it is not up to us alone. While we were still sinners, Jesus came and died for us. Jesus who is in very nature, God. Jesus through whom all things have been made. Jesus who lived a sinless life. Jesus who came as a ransom for many. Jesus whose death took the punishment for our wrongdoing. Jesus whose resurrection proved that He is the King of the Universe.

Now, we have a way to get back to God and experience the fullness of His life. We get to experience that relationship that our souls are most longing for. As you look at the people in your life who don't know God, can you see how this relationship you have found will make a difference to them? It's a message worth celebrating.

Friday Devotion: A New Relationship

Read 1 John 1:8-9, 5:10-15

Seeing that Jesus has made a way for us to come to God is not enough. We must do something.

First, we recognize our great need for Him and see that we are sinners. We see that we have been trying to make ourselves God for too long and have been relying upon idols. This will naturally lead to a place of humble repentance.

We then believe in Jesus, His death and resurrection. When we do this, we are told that we in some way gain Jesus. I think what this means is that we place Jesus in that central part of our lives, in front of any idols or other things that we would look to gain our satisfaction.

And with the Son, we also gain eternal life. Don't misread this verse, eternal life is much more than life after we die (though it is definitely that!). Eternal life is the kind of ongoing life right now that only God can bring.

With Jesus in our life that changes everything about us. It looks like answered prayers and a close relationship with God. Our relationships are transformed, our work takes on new meaning, our moral perspectives change and our care for others and creation has an eternal impact. When we start to see these things happen in our lives, we are truly experiencing the good news for ourselves. It's good news worth sharing.