

Gospel, Evangelism and Missions

By Keith E. Eitel

Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, participants will take the following assignments.

Assignment One

Read John 3:16. Prepare to share your answers to the following questions: Do you think saying this single verse is the “gospel in a nutshell” can be justified? Why or why not?

Assignment Two

Read 2 Timothy 4:1–2. To *preach* means “to speak, explain, or tell.” The *word* is the message Paul spent his life telling. Prepare to share your answer to the following question: In this passage, why is Paul saying the good news is the most urgent of all messages?

Assignment Three

Read Luke 24:45–48. Prepare to share your answer to the following question: How is the content of the gospel linked here to Christ’s commissioning disciples and sending them on mission?

Scripture to Memorize

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 2 Corinthians 5:20

Session Goal

Consistent with God’s Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit—by the end of this session, disciples will be able to define the content of the biblical gospel, practice the spiritual discipline of active personal evangelism, and engage with God’s mission through various missions efforts.

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It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

Disciples on a recent mission trip to Jaipur, India, gave this report: "We saw spiritually lost people who were hungry and shivering from the cold while trying to sleep in the street. Seeing their plight, our plan changed. We arranged food sacks, blankets, and gospel tracks in Hindi and Urdu. As they slept, we draped them with blankets, placed the food sacks nearby, and prayed for their salvation.

"Three Muslim men saw this and came saying, 'This Jesus, who moved you to love these people, is who we want to save our lives too.' This was the start of hearts opening to the gospel in that time and place."

Can you love people enough to meet their physical needs while you love their souls? Our ultimate aim is eternal. Social assistance without eternity in view is shortsighted.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1–11 out loud.

Studying the Passage

This passage explains the gospel. It seems simple, yet it is more complex than it may appear. To investigate this, we begin with an outline of this passage. Here the apostle Paul states the gospel succinctly and elaborates on its content and how it impacted him and others.

The gospel has power for salvation because it is tied directly to the resurrection of Christ (v. 1). The arrangement below looks first at the gospel's content (vv. 3–4), then eyewitness testimony of others regarding the truth of the message preached (vv. 5–6), and finally the only reasonable human response in light of the truth of the gospel (vv. 1–2).

Corinth was a city full of religious images, idols, and philosophies. People could believe anything that gave them pleasure. They could even make up truth if they wanted to. Paul contradicted that notion by explaining that the message he preached was anchored in the undeniable, historical fact of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. He invited hearers to investigate the facts and find the gospel true.

Verse 3. first importance. Paul prioritized the gospel in what he said to the Corinthians. That gospel was the thing Paul rushed to say to them. He did not want them to be distracted or miss his message. The gospel's content succinctly defined by Paul had three core truths with profound significance. Each truth is anchored in history for all to check and see that God is telling the truth.

Verses 3–4. Christ died . . . was buried. The Greek verb tense refers to completed action. There is no question that Christ's death happened. People who knew Him took Him off the cross and placed Him in the tomb. Paul added that it was death with a purpose. **Christ died for our sins.** That means all of us essentially placed Him on the cross. As a hymn says, "He could have called ten thousand angels" to defend Him, but He did not do that. Jesus, the only one who is blameless, died for the ungodly world. That is true love.

Verses 3–4. according to the Scriptures. Paul then gave more historic proof, showing Christ's death was something predicted centuries before and now fulfilled. As one example of such prophecies, Isaiah 53:5–11 clearly predicted how Jesus would die as the willing sacrifice

for all of humanity. Yet there is even more good news. **He was raised on the third day.** The Greek verb shifts here to celebrate the fact that the resurrection means He is still alive. Immanuel, God with us, lives today!

Assignment One Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now share answers to the following questions: Do you think saying this single verse is the “gospel in a nutshell” can be justified?

Discussion Questions

Most people believe what they want to believe, usually to justify whatever they want to do, no matter how sinful. In light of that, what is the significance of the gospel Paul proclaimed that was anchored in historical fact? Does it matter today?

On Your Own

In the space below, write a brief prayer. If you are being truthful, tell Him you have confidence in the truth of the gospel. Invite Him to take that confidence and turn it into boldness to declare that He is risen!

Studying the Passage

Verses 5. Cephas. Simon Peter (see Luke 24:34) was the first of the band of original disciples to see the resurrected Lord. **the twelve.** One man could perhaps hallucinate that he saw a corpse that came to life, but Jesus also appeared to the other disciples.

Verse 6. five hundred brothers at one time. Almost no one could believe that more than five hundred people would share a mass hallucination. Paul included himself in the list of those who were eyewitnesses of the resurrected Christ (v. 8). Paul emphasized that this was not some sort of myth because many of the witnesses were still alive at that time. They could verify the forensic evidence that they were eyewitnesses to a living corpse, the proof of the truth of the gospel, revealing victory over sin and death.

Assignment Two Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now share an answer to the following question: In 2 Timothy 4:1–2, why is Paul saying the good news is the most urgent of all messages?

Discussion Question

What can we expect when we proclaim that there is only one way to God when speaking to others, especially if they are secularists, Muslims, Buddhists, or Hindus?

On Your Own

In the space below, list something that intimidates you about sharing your faith. Then pray specifically that the Holy Spirit will empower you to do what you may feel you cannot do yourself.

Studying the Passage

Verse 1. gospel I preached. Paul lived life fully absorbed with communicating the gospel. *Preached* means “proclaimed or heralded.” The gospel is the message the Corinthians “received” and now “stand” in. Their reception was genuine, and that was why the gospel sustained them in the swirl of multiple and often contrary truth claims. We live in such times again, surrounded by competing truth claims.

Assignment Three Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now share an answer to the following question: In Luke 24:45–48, how is the content of the gospel linked to Christ’s commissioning disciples and sending them on mission?

Discussion Question

If the Corinthians received Paul’s message, Jew and Gentile alike, do you think that means many more are willing to hear today than we sometimes assume?

On Your Own

In the space below list ways, especially verbal ones, you can proclaim the gospel to those you know and to others worldwide.

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven. Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit reveals to you below and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Prayer

7 minutes

At Home: Nail It Down

Do a web search of the term “unreached people group.” Answer these questions:

1. What does it mean to be “unreached”?
2. What do you think about someone living where they likely have little or no access to the gospel? Can distance be something other than physical—perhaps social or linguistic?
3. Do these circumstances imply action on the part of believers who possess knowledge of the good news?
4. Do you believe Christ intends for disciples to show compassion and to address intense human suffering and other needs? Do you believe Christ intends for disciples to address human needs but then never make reference to Him or the gospel? Do you believe Christ intends for disciples to present the gospel to those with intense suffering and needs while never seeking to meet those needs?
5. Based on your answers to the questions above, what commitments are you willing to make now?

Ask the Holy Spirit to set your life toward Christ’s purposes in order to live your one life for His glory by giving yourself away for the eternal blessing of others.

Follow up Question

What are you sensing Jesus is calling you to be and to do for a lifetime in order to glorify Him?

The Making Disciples curriculum is a gift from Southwestern Seminary to those who, for the glory of the Father and in the power of the Spirit, will spend a lifetime embracing the full supremacy of the Son, responding to His kingly reign in all of life, inviting Christ to live His life through them, and joining Him in making disciples among all peoples.