

## **THE GOSPEL IS GOOD NEWS!**

*(NHCC HOME GROUP AND DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS – SEPTEMBER 9, 2018)*

**Icebreaker:** When is the last time you got some really GOOD news? What was your good news? Did you share it with anyone? Who did you share it with? How did it make you feel to share your good news? How did people respond?

**READ THE BIBLE TOGETHER:** Today's main Bible passage is I Corinthians 15:1-11.

**“SCARY” STUFF:** People frequently express feelings of inadequacy and even fear when we encourage them to be evangelistic in their relationships with family members and friends.

**EVANGELISM ...** What is the first thought or emotion that comes to mind when you hear the word “evangelism”?

How do you respond when your church announces it is doing a sermon series or class to “teach you to be more evangelistic?” Are you more or less likely to show up and invite friends for a series on “evangelism” or on God's grace? Why so?

Do you think of yourself as an “evangelist”? If not, what prevents you from thinking of yourself as an evangelist?

What does it mean to be an “evangelical” church?

**THE GOSPEL ...** What is the first thought or emotion that comes to your mind when you hear the word “gospel”?

What is a “full gospel” church?

What is the relationship between “the gospel” and “evangelism”?

**“GOOD” STUFF:** That last question was a trick question (sorry)! There is no meaningful difference between “evangelism” and the “gospel.” The word “gospel” in your Bible is translated from an original New Testament (Greek) word which can be spelled with English characters as “EUANGELION”. Euangelion literally means “good news.” The English words evangelism, evangelist and evangelical all come from that Greek word that simply means “good news.” The word “gospel” is also an old fashioned English word that is translated from the Greek euangelion. Many modern English translations use the phrase “good news” instead of “the gospel”.

The *good news* is this: Jesus loves us so much that he gave his life to pay the price for our sins so we can be forgiven and go to live with him in heaven. What is scary about that?

With that background, let's return to our earlier questions: What should it really mean to be an *evangelical* church and a *full gospel* church?

How would being an “evangelical” church (in the true and original sense of the word) express itself in our worship services? In our teaching? In our ministries? How good are we at expressing the *good news* in all aspects of what we do as a church?

**Dig into today's Bible passage** (I Corinthians 15:1-11). Skim through all of I Corinthians 15. What are two or three **BIG IDEAS** you see expressed in this chapter of the Bible? How are those big ideas related to one another?

Focus on I Corinthians 15:3-5 -- *“For what I received **I passed on** to you as of **first importance**: that **Christ died for our sins** according to the Scriptures,<sup>4</sup> that **he was buried**, that he was **raised on the third day** according to the Scriptures,<sup>5</sup> and that **he appeared** to Cephas, and then to the Twelve...”*

What was it that Paul **“passed on”** to followers of Jesus in the city of Corinth? How did he pass it on to them? How does that relate to our “witnessing” to others?

What is of **“first importance”**? Why is it of **first** importance? How are we doing as individuals and a church when it comes to “keeping first things first” in our lives?

What **three things** about Jesus does Paul place at the very heart of the gospel?

How can the **death** of Jesus be “good news”?

What makes the life and death of Jesus different from every other person who ever lived? (Hint: See Romans 3:23, Hebrews 4:15 and Romans 6:23).

What does it mean that “Christ died for **OUR** sins”? Why did Jesus die? Who did he die for? Did that include any really bad people? See Romans 5:8.

What does it mean that Christ died for **YOUR** sins?

Ponder: What kind of death did Jesus die? Why such a horrific death?

How is the fact that Jesus gave his life **FOR** you similar to (and different from) any other person giving his or her life for another?

Why does Paul also include the fact that Jesus was **buried for three days** in the heart of the gospel message?

Why does Paul include **the resurrection** of Jesus in the heart of the gospel?

Why does Paul emphasize that Jesus made **personal appearances** to friends (Peter and the apostles), family members (James) and followers (more than 500 at one time) after his resurrection?

How do we personally accept the benefit of the gospel message and become true followers of Christ? (See I Corinthians 15:11 and Romans 1:16). Have you personally believed the gospel and received the benefit of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus?

Who can you share the good news with this week? What is a simple way you can do that?