



The Gospel – Good News in ALL of Life

Week 1: What is the Gospel?

Series Big Idea: Growing in “Gospel Fluency” is learning how the gospel of Jesus Christ transforms your identity and reshapes the very rhythms of your life. It is about becoming so familiar with the gospel that it flows out of your *life* and *words* in normal, yet extraordinary ways.

When the gospel increasingly informs our life, perspectives and priorities, we *become* good news to everyone; we become a living proclamation and display of the God we love and his kingdom. And that’s... Good News!

Message Big Idea: The Gospel is not just a list of historic facts, that when believed and “confessed” secure us a pass on our sin and a place in heaven. The Good News is that Jesus’ life, death and resurrection speak into and transform every area of our lives—today. And every day.

Understanding what we have received from God because of Jesus, and what God now says is true of us, is powerful...and really good news!

Scripture: Colossians 2:6-10, *“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness... For in Christ you have been brought to fullness.”*

Takeaway: All the promises for us in Christ are already true! We don’t have to earn them little by little. God is working out the fruit of these truths and our identity (that’s sanctification and discipleship) as we move from unbelief to belief in the Gospel in more and more areas of our lives.

Preparation: Go through Week 1 of the Gospel Primer together in a group. Pay close attention to the questions, answers and fears or “push backs” from your group related to

the material and ideas presented this week. Prearrange 1-3 cool stories or short testimonies from folks in your congregation / community that you'll have them share during your message. Have them share a cool takeaway or impact from going through the Gospel Primer last week.

Note: You may wish to play the *Week 1 Video: What is the Gospel* “bumper” as you walk out to give this message. It can serve as a ‘hook’ and reminder for where you are going in this message.



Introduction: You may have heard the gospel talked about, preached, evangelized or otherwise proclaimed as a list of historical facts about Jesus that happened over 2000 years ago. Things like...Jesus is God's own son and was born of a virgin mother...lived a perfect and sinless life and exchanged his life in place of our lives on a cross. Showing that God, his Father had accepted this grand exchange of his son's life in place of ours, Jesus was risen from the dead and is now seated at the right hand of his Father.

And we've been told that if we believe this is true, then in faith, our sins will be forgiven and we won't go to hell...and someday we'll spend eternity in heaven with Jesus.

Now these are all pretty much true facts about Jesus, and it's all amazing!... but as we saw together this past week, as we went through our first week of *the Gospel Primer* together, the Gospel is so much bigger and more immediate—more *now*—than that.

I love this quote by author and theologian Tim Keller: “The gospel is that God himself has come to rescue and renew creation (that includes us) in and through the work of Jesus Christ on our behalf.”

WOW, That is Good News (that's what the word 'gospel' means) and it's not only good news about our sin problem—our need for a rescue and about our eternity—that's for sure true for all of us...but the gospel is also really, really good news for this life, today, here and now.

And its as we move from unbelief to belief concerning the gospel in more and more areas of our lives, that we will experience this good news for ourselves...daily, increasingly.

That is not only good news for us Christians, but its also very good news for everyone you know. And it is beautiful and attractive to others when we live out of this gospel reality.

>> One of the goals and hopes we have for us as a community in the weeks ahead is that we will increasingly create a culture where it is normal to speak the gospel to each other regularly—naturally.

Every sin, fear or issue that stands in the way of our faithfulness to God's design and Jesus' commands is ultimately a gospel issue. Since all sin is the outcome of unbelief in God, we can learn to apply the truth about him and the Good News to every area of our lives. To do this, we will have to learn to trust God and others with the messiness of our lives.

Stories / Testimonies: Invite the people that you pre-arranged to share stories of how the content from the past week going through the Gospel Primer in their community impacted them...what was a big takeaway or release for them?

Continue on: Today I want to did a little deeper into one part of something we saw in our first week in *the Gospel Primer* together...I want to highlight some pretty good news about what is now true of us if we are in Christ that will be foundational as we move forward growing in our Gospel Fluency—which is the ability to see, speak, live and enjoy the Gospel in every area of life.

I want more of that! How 'bout you? Ok...

Illustration: Tell a short story from your life about a time when you traded one thing of lesser value to someone for something of greater value. i.e. baseball cards, an old car, *(you may choose to use this illustration as an opener.)*

Now, here is some good news that you may have heard or read before this week, but it can tend to get stuck on our 'doctrine' shelf and not be experienced for the amazing gospel truth that it is...

As I go through each of these with you, be thinking about how different your life might be if you really believed these things—not at an intellectual level—but in your heart, in your bones.

Because of the perfect life, sacrificial death and eternal resurrection of Jesus we are:

- *Completely saved from the penalty of our sin, given eternal life with God*
– ***That's Salvation.***
- *Declared righteous (right with God) because of Jesus perfect life exchanged for ours*
– ***That's Justification.*** (2 Corinthians 5:21)
- *Children, fully loved and accepted by our Father, made part of his forever family*
– ***That's Adoption.*** (Ephesians 1:5)
- *Given a whole new life and identity by the Holy Spirit who now lives inside of us*
– ***That's Sanctification.*** (Ephesians 3:16-18)

➔ Now let's walk and talk through the implications of all of this for our daily lives:

Because of the gospel we...

Do not have to live with guilt or shame over our past sins—or present areas of our life that God is still working on. We have been given a totally new life in Christ! Therefore, we can extend forgiveness and grace to others with great courage and flexibility.

That's Salvation... today!

Work out a few more of the practical implications of this gospel truth and how it will affect your church community as everyone moves more into believing this is true.

Either do this through asking questions and letting your folks respond, a personal illustration from your life, or list a few ways this would start to look and affect your people in the context you live.

Because of the gospel we...

Do not need to control others' opinions of us or try to impress God with our spirituality since the Father now sees Jesus' perfect life and status when he looks at us. Therefore, we can live with deep humility, yet much gratitude, confidence and joy...

That's Justification... now!

Work out a few more of the practical implications of this gospel truth and how it will affect your church community as everyone moves more into believing this is true.

Either do this through asking questions and letting your folks respond, a personal illustration from your life, or list a few ways this would start to look and affect your people in the context you live.

Because of the gospel we...

*Have nothing to earn since we're already fully loved, approved and valued by our Father. Therefore, we can love and serve all people, even our enemies, with no strings attached... ***That's our Adoption now...****

Work out a few more of the practical implications of this gospel truth and how it will affect your church community as everyone moves more into believing this is true.

Either do this through asking questions and letting your folks respond, a personal illustration from your life, or list a few ways this would start to look and affect your people in the context you live.

Because of the gospel we...

*Do not need to look to anything else for identity and purpose since we have been reborn by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we can re-orient our whole lives around the mission of Jesus to make disciples – ***That's Sanctification...now and ongoing!****

Work out a few more of the practical implications of this gospel truth and how it will affect your church community as everyone moves more into believing this is true.

Either do this through asking questions and letting your folks respond, a personal illustration from your life, or list a few ways this would start to look and affect your people in the context you live.

Colossians 2:6-10, *“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness... For in Christ you have been brought to fullness.”*

NOTE: Highlight the part of this scripture that says, “You have been brought to fullness.” This gospel reality is true for us now...not someday or after we change enough stuff in our lives...

The foundation of a gospel-centered, missional life is the decision to offer to God *our* plans for our life in exchange for his plans. We can now allow the truth about who God is, what he has done, and our new identity in Christ, to inform all of life.

That is true salvation in action! And that is Gospel good news!

Next Week: Heads up! This next week we’ll be going through Week 2 of the Gospel Primer together, and when we get back here on Sunday, we’ll also look at The Story of God and how your life is a part of this BIG eternal story...

Play video bumper: Week 2–The Story of God

Closing thoughts and prayer.



The Gospel – Good News in ALL of Life

Week 2: The Story of God

Series Big Idea: Growing in “Gospel Fluency” is learning how the gospel of Jesus Christ transforms your identity and reshapes the very rhythms of your life. It is about becoming so familiar with the gospel that it flows out of your *life* and *words* in normal, yet extraordinary ways.

When the gospel increasingly informs our life, perspectives and priorities, we *become* good news to everyone; we become a living proclamation and display of the God we love and his kingdom. And that’s... Good News!

Message Big Idea: The Story of God is still being written and God has a role for all of us in this ongoing, eternal Story! Our true identity is rooted in who God is, and what he is like. We have been given Identity, Authority and Privilege. When we live out of that truth—displaying what is true of us because it is true of him—this is our greatest act of worship!

Scripture: Genesis 1:26-28, “God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, to be like us, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

Takeaway: What we believe about God and what he is like will ultimately determine what we believe about ourselves and how life works...in everything.

Preparation: Go through Week 2 of the *Gospel Primer* together in a group. Pay close attention to the questions, answers and fears or “push backs” from your group related to the material and ideas presented this week. Prearrange 1-3 cool stories or short testimonies from folks in your congregation / community that you’ll have them share during your message. Have them share a cool takeaway or impact from going through the *Gospel Primer* last week.

Note: You may wish to play the *Week 2 Video: The Story of God* “bumper” as you walk out to give this message. It can serve as a ‘hook’ and reminder for where you are going in this message. This sermon outline is a bit shorter in length to allow for the 8-minute Story video (or reading of the narrative) and to allow ample time for dialogue.



Introduction: We live in story, and all of us have been shaped by a dominant story. Is the story that most shapes your life and identity THE story of God that is told throughout the Bible? Or is it a story from your culture, dysfunctional background or a stack of lies that makes up the primary narrative of your life? What we believe about God and what he is like will ultimately determine what we believe about *ourselves* and how life works.

Part of our growing gospel fluency comes from a clear understanding of the overarching Story found throughout all of scripture and our ability to simply, yet powerfully, relate this story to circumstances in our life and the lives of others. We can better learn to find our place in the Story and see how our lives intersect with God’s big story.

Video Insert: Let’s watch this 8-minute summary of the entire Story of God presented by the author of the Gospel Primer, Caesar Kalinowski... and as you watch and listen, look for yourself in this story...

Show this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ofdl-wkqx1w>

(Alternatively you could read the short narrative found in the *Gospel Primer* section 2.2)

Question(s) to ask: What sticks out to you after hearing this short summary narrative of The Story of God? What do we learn about God? Where did you find yourself in this Story? Do you think most people you know have heard and understood this basic yet powerful story? How do you think most people view the Bible?

(You may want to combine this with, or work this out in the pre-arranged interviews that follows.)

Stories / Testimonies: Invite the people that you pre-arranged to share stories of how the content from the past week going through the Gospel Primer in their community impacted them...what was a big takeaway or release for them?

Continue on: I think the most important thing about any of us is that we were created in the image of God. Crazy really... And God called that “very good!”

God said, “*Let us make man, both male and female, in our image to be like us.*”

Adam and Eve did not have to *do* anything to earn or prove their identity, they were created this way, in God’s image, to be like him, and God declared them very good.

Every human being you have ever laid eyes on (including yourself in the mirror) has been created in God’s image. Even though our sin and rebellion has marred or blurred that image, it never gets completely covered up, destroyed or removed. **It does not depend on us to obtain or maintain God’s image in us, it is his job and desire.** That is why he sent Jesus. To save and restore us—and ultimately all things—back to the way he created them to be.

So that’s the first big takeaway I want to be sure we all leave with today: you were created in the image of a God who always does what is good, right and perfect. That is where your true identity comes from.

Next, Genesis 1 continues on... “Let us make mankind in our image, to be like us, **so** that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

There is a purpose for why we were created in God's image and share his identity: God has shared his authority with us humans and we've been given rule and authority over his creation. How are we doing at caring for God's creation these days...? It's not that we HAVE to care for the creation (BTW, that includes all other humans) but that we GET to care for God's amazing creation! Have you ever really thought about that?

So... we share God's **identity** and we see here that we share his **authority**.

Did you know that you had such authority?

Let's move on... we heard in the Story that daily God would come and walk with Adam and Eve in the garden, in the cool of the day.

God came to *them* to walk with and hang out with Adam and Eve. What an amazing privilege! Can you imagine it?! Hanging out daily with God?

Illustration: Give an illustration from your own life connected to how often you spend time with God and in what ways? Is it in formal "prayer times" or do you ever just "hang out" with God and LISTEN to him?

Identity. That's ours now and it comes from God himself. *Created in his image...*

Authority. You have that too and it comes from God—he's given it to you. How are you doing at managing this authority?

Privilege. We have the privilege of hanging out and talking with God, daily, as often as we choose. And he is the one who pursues that relationship and he also desires to spend time with you.

One last bit of really good news here I want to point out before we wrap up today: Check this out, in Genesis 3 as the Story continues with Adam and Eve...right after they were deceived by the serpent" and chose to disobey God, eating from the fruit that God had warned them not to eat...

"The eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves..."

Here's the part I want to make sure we don't miss:

⁸ Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the Lord God called to the man, “**Where are you?**”

You see, it can be easy to think that our Identity, Authority and Privilege is all determined by or somehow maintained by us. By our perfect obedience or sinless life.

But the Gospel good news here today, and every day is that even after Adam and Eve rebelled against God and his authority, God goes looking for them, he is still pursuing the relationship. “Where are you?”

- Their **identity**, created in God's image did not stop.
- God's call and command for the humans to care for creation did not pass away. They still have that **authority**.
- And their **privilege** of hanging out with God did not cease.

In fact, He went looking for them. Calling out, “Where are you?”

God is still calling out to all of us today—regardless of our past record or performance, Where are you? He desires a daily, close and open relationship of trust.

I want more of that today. How about you?

Next Week: Heads up! This next week we'll be going through Week 3 of the *Gospel Primer* together, and when we get back here on Sunday, we'll also look at *Your Gospel Story* and how you can tell your story in a way that mirrors the bigger Story of God we just looked at.

Play video bumper: Week 3—Your Gospel Story

Closing thoughts and prayer.



The Gospel – Good News in ALL of Life

Week 3: Your Gospel Story

Series Big Idea: Growing in “Gospel Fluency” is learning how the gospel of Jesus Christ transforms your identity and reshapes the very rhythms of your life. It is about becoming so familiar with the gospel that it flows out of your *life* and *words* in normal, yet extraordinary ways.

When the gospel increasingly informs our life, perspectives and priorities, we *become* good news to everyone; we become a living proclamation and display of the God we love and his kingdom. And that’s... Good News!

Message Big Idea: Deep down inside, even if we can’t explain it, we all yearn to be connected to a BIGGER story, to have our lives make a difference and be connected to something more. That is because our lives are all actually part of a much, much larger story. And there is ONE dominant Story that all of our stories will ultimately find their place in and finally be complete because of...God’s Story.

Scripture: Psalm 139:13-16 “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”

Hebrews 12:2 “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.”

Takeaway: The Story of God answers big questions in our life, very importantly it tells us who we are, whose we are, and what we are here for. And how we tell **our own** personal story should also help others begin to look to God and his Story for those same answers in their life. **God is the HERO of every story!**

Preparation: Go through Week 3 of the Gospel Primer together in a group. Pay close attention to the questions, answers and fears or “push backs” from your group related to the material and ideas presented this week.

Prearrange 1-3 people who can share their “My Gospel Story” following the pattern they learned in the *Primer* last week: Creation, Fall, Redemption, Restoration. Pre-listen or read these to be sure they are following the pattern and that they are not too long!

Plan enough time to do these—this will be powerful!

Note: You may wish to play the *Week 3 Video: Your Gospel Story* “bumper” as you walk out to give this message. It can serve as a ‘hook’ and reminder for where you are going in this message.



Introduction: **Last week we looked at the Story of God.** And how His Story comes before, finishes, corrects and ultimately makes sense of all other stories. And we talked deeply about our Identity, Authority and Privilege as God’s people.

This week, together in our groups, we looked at how our individual, personal stories all follow the same pattern as the overarching Story of God: Every part of our story, and everyone else’s, is actually a reflection of the God big Story. That is how God has designed things. Our life story, and all of the little pieces that make it up, actually follow the same pattern found in God’s story throughout the Bible:

CREATION → FALL → REDEMPTION → RESTORATION

Your story, my story...her story, his story...your neighbor's and your boss's story... all follow this same pattern, Creation, Fall, Redemption, Restoration.

Stories / Testimonies: Invite the people that you pre-arranged to share their stories they created this past week going through the *Gospel Primer* in their community. (3-5 mins. each) **You may want to have slides on screen that follow along as they tell their story and their stories move from the “Creation” part to the “Fall” part to the “Redemption” part of their story etc.** Explain to your people that this is what you're doing so they can listen and watch how these “testimonies” actually retell the Story of God.

➔ **Applaud like crazy after each story is shared!**

Question to ask: “Did you notice something here... who was the hero of [person's name] story?” Do this for each personal Gospel Story shared. Point out the parts of that person's story that highlight what God has done and is doing in their life.

Illustration: Give an illustration from your own life or use Caesar's from the *Primer*...

“I grew up going to Sunday School pretty much every week of my young life. Our teachers told us amazing stories from the Bible, all of them ending with a nice moral like:

“If you had faith like David you could slay any “giant” in your own life too!”

Or, *“So kids, If you are obedient like Noah, God will protect you from all the bad stuff in your life too...”*

Not only did they often miss the overall point of the stories, but God is *always* the hero!

The way we read scripture, understand the Gospel and our perspective on our faith and Christianity can be very, very man-centered...me centered. And that is why we have often heard stories from the Bible turned into morality lessons where the messed up and needy humans in the story end up being the hero and a model that we should strive to be like...

And the subtle, or not so subtle message ends up being: You can perform or act in such a way as to save yourself and ultimately be the hero (and savior) of your own story.

That is scary and that is ANTI the true Gospel!

Check this out...

[Expound on these verses, or others, in any way you need.]

Psalm 139:13-16

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

Wow! Who created your inmost being...who knit you together in your mother's womb? Who has ordained—or pre-written into the Story— your entire life before it ever began?

God! He is the hero of your story!

Ephesians 2:10

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Who's workmanship and beautiful art creation are we? And again, who has prepared the good works that we will get to do in this life?

God is the hero of your story!

Colossians 3:12

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Who chose us as his people? God did!

Acts 17: 27-28

“God did [all of] this so that [we] would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. ²⁸ ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’”

Ok, amazing! In God, in Christ, we LIVE and MOVE and have our BEING—our identity!

Are you catching this? It makes me want to re-read all of scripture through this lens of Creation, Fall, Redemption, Restoration and observe how God alone is always and forever the hero...the creator, the pursuer, the redeemer the restorer of all people places and things.

All right...one more verse...this is so good! ☺

Hebrews 12:2 “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.”

Jesus authored **your** story and your faith...and he's still at work perfecting it. Perfecting you. **He has not given up telling HIS STORY through your life and YOUR STORY!**

And I've already said it today, but every part of your story, and everyone else's, is actually a reflection of this amazing God and his story! That is how God has designed things. Talk about authority and privilege!

Let me close today by reading some of the Apostle Paul's words...don't worry about reading along...just let this all wash over you as I read it:

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

That's beautiful! That's powerful. And it is all true for us, today. Now...as a family, as this church. Individually and collectively.

If you feel like your story is far from God's story or what he has for you and your life, there is good news: God is pursuing you. And pursuing all the good, bad, broken, hurting and growing parts of your story. He loves you and wants you to know that today! He longs to take what he has created (you) and the broken, fallen parts and redeem and restore them. And guess what? He is already at work doing that...

[Expand as appropriate for your setting.]

Next Week: Heads up! This next week we'll be going through Week 4 of the *Gospel Primer* together in community, and when we get back here on Sunday, we'll also look at how we can grow in our *Gospel Listening*... this is the process of listening to other's stories in a way that you can hear where the Good News of the Gospel is missing and a way to speak the truth in love.

Play video bumper: Week 4–Gospel Listening

Closing thoughts and prayer.



The Gospel – Good News in ALL of Life

Week 4: Gospel Listening

Series Big Idea: Growing in “Gospel Fluency” is learning how the gospel of Jesus Christ transforms your identity and reshapes the very rhythms of your life. It is about becoming so familiar with the gospel that it flows out of your *life* and *words* in normal, yet extraordinary ways.

When the gospel increasingly informs our life, perspectives and priorities, we *become* good news to everyone; we become a living proclamation and display of the God we love and his kingdom. And that’s... Good News!

Message Big Idea: Just like our personal stories follow the patterns and themes found in The Story of God, so does everyone else’s. Even the smaller stories that make up their everyday life...stuff from work, parenting, a trip to the mall or vacation stories--all follow the same pattern of *Creation, Fall, Redemption, Re-Creation*.

These stories—the big life stories and the smaller stories that make up our lives and relationships—all offer an immediate and powerful way to listen for opportunities to speak good news into a person’s life and circumstance.

Scripture: Proverbs 1:5 “Let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance.”

Takeaway: The gospel addresses all of life, and when we practice Spirit empowered *Gospel Listening* we can grow in our ability to address others circumstances from a true gospel perspective.

Preparation: Go through Week 4 of the *Gospel Primer* together in a group. Pay close attention to the questions, answers and fears or “push backs” from your group related to the material and ideas presented this week.

Prearrange 1-3 cool stories or short testimonies from folks in your congregation / community that you’ll have them share during your message. Have them share a cool takeaway or impact from going through the *Gospel Primer* last week.

Note: You may wish to play the *Week 4 Video: Gospel Listening* “bumper” as you walk out to give this message. It can serve as a ‘hook’ and reminder for where you are going in this message.



Introduction: Ask the person or persons sitting next to you, if you know them, if you’re a good listener...and ask them to rate you on a scale of 1-10 how good a listener you are. Then you do the same for them. **Go ahead, do it quickly...**

How’d that go... Anyone fighting yet...or crying? ☺

Question to ask: Why do you think that most of us are such poor listeners?
(*Have fun with this question...*)

Illustration: Give a funny illustration from your own life about not listening well... to your spouse, parents, a friend, your kids and the results of that poor listening.

Last week we looked at how all of our life stories fall into the same pattern as God’s big story found in scripture; Creation, Fall, Redemption, Restoration.

This week, together in our groups, we looked at how the Gospel addresses all of life, and when we practice *Gospel Listening* we can grow in our ability to address others circumstances from a gospel perspective. We can put on new “gospel filtered ears”, if you will...

But most of us, as we just found out, are not always the best listeners. It's a good thing that we are not the hero of this ultimate story... let's look at what an amazing listener God is as we dip in to just a few examples from scripture.

Notice God's/Jesus' posture when dealing with people and how it reveals his heart and theirs.

Questions from God...

[Expound on these as you see fit...or not.]

“Where are you?” (Genesis 3:9) — *God pursues Adam after he has sinned.*

“Who has made man's mouth?” (Exodus 4:11) — *God addresses Moses' fear to speak on His behalf.*

“Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation?” (Job 38:4) — *God reminds Job about the limits of his knowledge and God's greatness.*

“Who is like Me?” (Isaiah 44:7) — *God declares his greatness to Israel.*

“Who do you say that I am?” (Mark 8:29) — *Jesus seeks his disciples thoughts about his true identity.*

“Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” (Matthew 12:48) — *Jesus clarifies who his true family is.*

“What do you want me to do for you?” (Matthew 20:32) — *Jesus responds to a man in need.*

God asks a lot of questions and listens to the people's response.

This is pretty convicting on my parenting and relational skills!

Question to ask: Why do you think that our Father God and his son Jesus ask questions and are such good listeners?

- What does that teach us about God's heart and desires?
- What does God seem to be focused on in these examples?

Stories / Testimonies: Invite the people that you pre-arranged to share stories of how the content from the past week going through the *Gospel Primer* in their community impacted them...what was a big takeaway or release for them?

- What conversations did they have this week where they employed their new "Gospel Listening" skills? What did they learn?

The Gospel is good news... and it is always Good News in context.

A generic gospel presentation that relies on a list of historical facts and focuses primarily on another person's actions, while trying to move them to "say the prayer", misses the point.

➔ Learning to look for the sin behind the sin, or the unbelief behind the attitude is a big part of growing in *Gospel Listening* and our overall gospel fluency.

As a reminder from some of what we learned this week in our groups:

Here are some sample questions that can be used to get at the heart motives behind a person's words and actions.

- Why is this so important to you?
- Why is this upsetting you?
- How would God's view of you change if this did/didn't change or work out?
- Who is *ultimately* responsible for this in your world?
- How's that working for you?
- Are you finding deep satisfaction from this thing or person?
- What if that goes away?
- Do you find ultimate satisfaction in life from your relationship with God?

Remember, having the same **heart posture** as Jesus when asking questions and listening to other's responses is key!

To do this consistently and effectively we need to be in partnership with the Holy Spirit.

Gospel Listening is real-time partnering with the Holy Spirit, asking him to give you wisdom and insight into what is really going on in a person's heart. Sometimes we can only guess at what is really going on under the surface, but the Spirit knows the hearts of everyone perfectly.

[Expand as appropriate for your setting.]

Next Week: Heads up! This next week we'll be going through Week 5 of the *Gospel Primer* together in community, and when we get back here on Sunday, we'll also dig deeper into the *Four Eternal Truths* about God that will forever change the way you look at sin in your life and others. This is powerful!

Play video bumper: Week 5–Four Eternal Truths

Closing thoughts and prayer.



The Gospel – Good News in ALL of Life

Week 5: Four Eternal Truths

Series Big Idea: Growing in “Gospel Fluency” is learning how the gospel of Jesus Christ transforms your identity and reshapes the very rhythms of your life. It is about becoming so familiar with the gospel that it flows out of your *life* and *words* in normal, yet extraordinary ways.

When the gospel increasingly informs our life, perspectives and priorities, we *become* good news to everyone; we become a living proclamation and display of the God we love and his kingdom. And that’s... Good News!

Message Big Idea: Not many Christians think of themselves as “unbelievers.” We normally use the term to describe people who are “seekers” or not-yet disciples of Jesus. But there are many things about God that we actually *do not* believe. Often there is a large gap between what we say we believe in our head, and what we truly believe in our heart. This is what is behind all sin.

Scripture: “They exchanged the truth about God for a lie...” Romans 1:25

“Everything that does not come from faith is sin.” Romans 14:23

Takeaway: Moving from unbelief to belief about what is true of God is a big part of gospel fluency, discipleship and the way out from sinful thoughts, actions or emotions.

Preparation: Go through Week 5 of the *Gospel Primer* together in a group. Pay close attention to the questions, answers and fears or “push backs” from your group related to the material and ideas presented this week. This is a powerful week!

P rearrange 1-3 cool stories or short testimonies from folks in your congregation / community that you'll have them share during your message. Have them share a cool takeaway or impact from going through the *Gospel Primer* last week.

Note: You may wish to play the *Week 5 Video: Four Eternal Truths* as a “bumper” when you walk out to give this message. It can serve as a ‘hook’ and reminder for where you are going in this message.



Introduction: Read 2 Corinthians 5:17 “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

Ok, wait a minute...If we are now new creations, where does sin come from? Why do we still sin even after we have acknowledged something as sin, and perhaps, repented of it over and over?

Author Tim Chester put's it this way,

“Sinful acts always have their origin in some form of unbelief—behind every sin is a lie. The root of all our behavior and emotions is the heart, what it trusts and what it treasures. People are given over to sinful desires because ‘they exchanged the truth of God for a lie’”

The Bible puts it in similar terms:

“They exchanged the truth about God for a lie...” Romans 1:25

“Everything that does not come from faith is sin.” Romans 14:23

Another word for faith is belief, and these verses suggest that all sin comes from not believing what is true about God. Typically people want to blame their sin on their circumstances...

I got angry because the guy cut me off in traffic... I started to worry all the time because my husband lost his job... I yelled at the kids because they weren't obeying me... But the reality is that our circumstances merely reveal what is already in our hearts.

[Optional personal illustration here.]

Our struggles reveal our hearts.

This heart level perspective is a radical view of sin and repentance. But this perspective is also a very helpful view of sanctification and transformation because it clearly shows us the way out.

Most of us think that the way to stop sinning is to change our behavior. However, if behind every sin is a lie about God, then what really needs to change is what I am believing in my heart.

This week as we went through the *Gospel Primer* together, we had our minds (and hearts) blown a little by what is called **The 4 G's**.

Let's quickly remind ourselves of these four life-changing truths about God, that when not fully believed, lead to every human sin:

God is Great

God is Glorious

God is Good

God is Gracious

Ok, you're thinking, "*I already believe these truths...*", but if you are anything like me, when I first heard or read these "4 G's" I was at once drawn to one or two of these in my soul. Some things the Holy Spirit immediately began to tap on...

There is much more that could be said about God than is covered by these four truths, but they've given us a powerful diagnostic tool for addressing most of the sins and negative emotions that we struggle with.

So what does it mean to “believe”?

According to the Bible, our hearts are far more than just a muscle in our chests pumping blood throughout our bodies.

The word “heart” occurs over 850 times in the Bible.

Our heart...makes decisions, it feels emotion, it can be deceived, it desires things, it lusts, it thinks and reasons.

The word “heart” is the word the Bible uses to describe the real you, the very center of your being. The heart includes your mind, emotions, and will. It is not less than any one of those things; it is more.

Romans 10:9-10

If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. **For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified**, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

Do you believe with your head? No. Ultimately you believe in your heart, the deepest part of who you are; your mind, your emotions and your will.

Question to ask: “Where in your experience have you believed one thing in your head, but acted out of a different heart motive, belief or perception?”

➔ So even though many/most of us went through this material on the 4 Gs in the *Gospel Primer* this week, it is so powerful, that I want to take a few minutes revisit these and take a closer, deeper look at the lies we believe, some of the evidence that this is true, and how the truth about God can set us free from sin in each of these areas.

*By the way... the author of the *Gospel Primer*, Caesar Kalinowski, wants us to know that these amazing 4 Gs come from his friend and author, Tim Chester.

Here we go...each of these 4 Gs has a corresponding statement to help guide our hearts:

God is Great...so I don't have to be in control

We may know (and even say we believe) that God is in control of all things—that he is sovereign—but then we are filled with worry and anxiety about many of the details of our lives. It's as if we're saying, "I know in my *head* that God is in control, but I don't really believe in my *heart* that God is in control...or maybe he needs my help. Therefore, I must work to control certain people or situations in my life." Ouch.

But if I truly believe that God is great, that he is large and in charge of EVERYTHING in life, then I can rest and repent of stressing out over people, circumstances or my futures.

God is Glorious...so I don't have to fear others

One common reason we sin is that we crave the approval of others or fear their rejection or disapproval. We 'need' the acceptance of a parent, boss, friend, spouse etc. so we are controlled by them and their opinion of us. The Bible's term for this is 'fear of man'.

"Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe"
[Proverbs 29:25]

The answer to fear of man is fear of God. We need a bigger, better, more glorious view of God. The word glory means "weighty," as in "a person of importance, a weighty person." God should be the "weightiest" person in our lives. Imagine Jesus standing next to the person you most fear or seek approval from in your life. Who is more glorious? Remember, the most glorious one in the universe loves you and laid his life down to have you in a relationship with him and he is crazy about you!

God is Good...So I don't have to look elsewhere for my satisfaction

God created humanity "needy". He gave us continual reminders of our need for him and his ongoing provision: hunger, thirst, exhaustion, need for love, relationship and intimacy. None of these can be fulfilled from within ourselves. We were designed to need God.

When we look for fulfillment and satisfaction for these needs elsewhere in life, we become bitter and complaining because people and things eventually fail to deeply satisfy our souls in the way we were created.

Instead of seeking ultimate satisfaction from food, drink, exercise, sleep, sex, or relationships, we need to trust the only One who can truly satisfy our needy hearts. Jesus came to satisfy the hunger of our souls, to give us rest, to live in an intimate and loving relationship with us. Jesus is the better fulfillment for our every need.

God is Gracious...so I don't have to prove myself (to my self...to others...to God)

We can spend our life trying to prove ourselves worthy, valuable or right. I want to prove to myself that I am good enough or desirable. We strive to impress others and constantly seek their validation and approval.

Ultimately, we try to live in ways that God will be impressed with so that he will bless us or be happy with us.

The grace of God is so simple to understand and yet so hard to grasp. We seem to be hard-wired to think we must do something to make God look and act favorably towards us. But while we were still sinners, he sent his son Jesus to die in our place—the ultimate act of his grace toward us. When we really believe in our hearts that God is gracious we will stop trying to prove ourselves and earn his love.

[Expand as appropriate.]

I want this to go deep into our hearts together...let's not forget these.

Many people have found it *super* helpful to have a copy of the 4G's up on their refrigerator or taped to the bathroom mirror. Some folks have made small copy of it printed out that to keep in your wallet or purse.

You can get a nice, professionally designed flyer/poster of the 4Gs, along with their corresponding statements, for free... just go to: **123lifeschool.com/4G**

(put this web address on screen or in your bulletin if possible)

[You may find it fun and effective to stop here, ask your folks all together to take out their smart phones and grab this free copy of the 4Gs right now!]

Next Week: Next week we'll be going through Week 6 of the *Gospel Primer* together in community, and when we get back here on Sunday, we'll take a look at our ever-expanding Gospel through *Two Lenses*.

Play video bumper: Week 6—Two Lenses

Closing thoughts and prayer.



The Gospel – Good News in ALL of Life

Week 6: Two Lenses

Series Big Idea: Growing in “Gospel Fluency” is learning how the gospel of Jesus Christ transforms your identity and reshapes the very rhythms of your life. It is about becoming so familiar with the gospel that it flows out of your *life* and *words* in normal, yet extraordinary ways.

When the gospel increasingly informs our life, perspectives and priorities, we *become* good news to everyone; we become a living proclamation and display of the God we love and his kingdom. And that’s... Good News!

Message Big Idea: It is when we grasp and wrestle with the *Two Lenses* of Gospel Power and Gospel Purpose that we have a gospel that places our salvation squarely on the work of Jesus on the Cross *and* sends us out to be his body, his family of redemption and restoration in the world.

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:17-19 “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation... *And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.*”

Ephesians 2:10 “*For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*”

Takeaway: The gospel is not just about my individual happiness or God’s plan for my life; It is about God’s plan for the world!

Preparation: Go through Week 6 of the *Gospel Primer* together in a group. Pay close attention to the questions, answers and fears or “push backs” from your group related to the material and ideas presented this week. This is a powerful week!

Prearrange 1-3 cool stories or short testimonies from folks in your congregation / community that you'll have share during your message. Have them share a cool takeaway or impact from going through the *Gospel Primer* last week—specifically if they naturally tend to lean toward the *Power* of the gospel or the *Purpose* of the gospel in their perspective and experience. (*You may not have time for this as this message may be a little longer.*)

Note: You may wish to play the *Week 6 Video: Two Lenses* as a “bumper” when you walk out to give this message. It can serve as a ‘hook’ and reminder for where you are going in this message.



Introduction: I've always wondered why as Christians we seem to think our spiritual life is ultimately something to be lived as a solo, private exercise? Can you hear it in the ways we talk about our faith?

“I made a personal decision for Christ...”

“In my personal relationship with God...”

“In my personal prayer life...”

Partly this comes from believing in a gospel that is primarily focused on—well, *me*.

Me getting saved...

Me getting forgiven...

Me finding peace...

Me avoiding hell...

Me going to heaven...

Me, my, mine!

Question to ask: Why do you think that we so often and easily make the gospel so much about “ME”?

Back in the 1950's when 3D movies were first introduced, the visual effects were not that stunning. They were more novel than awe-inspiring. In recent years we have seen a big improvement in 3D technology, but without wearing those nerdy glasses and viewing the film through both special lenses simultaneously, the picture is distorted and not what the director had in mind.

The gospel can be like that in some ways too.

This week in the *Gospel Primer* we looked at two perspectives of the gospel—two “lenses” that give us needed perspectives in order to fully understand the **Power** and the **Purpose** of the gospel in its richest form.

Let's quickly review this first lens, looking at the Gospel *thematically*, and then I want us to really dig deeper into the second lens ...

[Don't spend more than 5-6 mins. on this review of the first lens.]

Ok: **Thematically**

When we look through this lens we understand *how* the gospel saves us.

God —eternal, all powerful, creator of everything

Sin —humanity has all chosen self-rule over obedience, in relationship, to God; the penalty for sin is death

Jesus —God incarnate came to die as a substitute for the penalty of humanity's sins

Faith —by faith in what Jesus did, not by any effort of our own, we are saved from our sins

In this case, the good news is that God is completely aware of our sin problem, and in and through the work of Jesus Christ, accepts us AND re-creates us by the power of his Spirit. This is where we see the Power of the gospel...

Illustration: Tell a little bit of how/when in your own life you heard this first perspective on the gospel—the Power that saves—and what you did with it and how it changed you.

***I am more broken and sinful than I ever dared believe, and at the same time
I am more loved and accepted than I ever dared hope, because of Jesus.***

–Tim Keller

Now we come to the second lens...this is where we come to understand the *Purpose of the gospel* and why we were ever created and why Jesus came to save us and send us out on mission. I want to spend most of our time today on this second lens.

Let's look at the gospel through the lens of a story...this should sound familiar to us all by now...

Creation → Fall → Redemption → Restoration [put this on screen if possible]

Explain: God is the creator of all things and always does what is good, right and perfect. He created humans in his image. To be like him...then he sent them out telling them to be fruitful and multiply—multiply what God is like—his image—his glory in the world.

But all humans, starting with Adam and Eve and everyone since have all rebelled against his and believed they could create a self apart from God. Magnify their own image in the world. The results and penalty of this is ultimately death and separation from God.

But there is good news!

God sent his own son, Jesus, who never rebelled or sinned against his Father God. He sent him to *redeem* us. To redeem is to trade something of greater value for something of lesser value... Jesus came and exchanged his perfect sinless life in place of our own.

When we put our hope in Jesus, and what he has done for us, we are transformed and a process of restoration inside and out begins.

Eventually the whole world will be restored and renewed to the way God originally created it to be.

Rebellion, death, decay, injustice, and suffering will one day all be removed.

(Revelation 21)

→ Follow the storyline...The purpose of the gospel is ultimately about RESTORATION!

**The Gospel is not just about my individual happiness or God's plan for my life.
It is about God's plan for the world.**

Powerful stuff! And this is at the heart of God's eternal purposes in the world.

Jesus helped us clarify the **Purpose of the gospel** by giving us his mission:

Matthew 28: Go and Make Disciples in all the world.

Every nation, neighborhood, nook and cranny.

Question to ask: So why do you think that making disciples is God's plan for the restoration of all things?

[Have fun with this and let your people give several answers...gently steering them toward:]

Cities/Cultures/Nations are restored... as the gospel restores the hearts of people.

- Families are restored as the people in those families are saved and restored.
- Neighborhoods are restored when the families in them become disciples of Jesus and live a Kingdom lifestyle and have Kingdom priorities.
- Cities are forever changed and transformed and restored as neighborhoods and all the pillars of society (education, politics, healthcare, business etc.) are restored back to the way God designed them to be!

When this happens...when disciples of Jesus fill the families, neighborhoods, cities and nations... little by little earth...**and this is the point— The Earth is filled with God's Glory!**

Psalm 72:19 “Praise be to his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory.”

Note: To glorify is to manifest the hidden excellence and worth of an object.

Now watch this...!

Jesus declared, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). Paul writes that "He is the image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15)

Hebrews 1:3 “The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact imprint of his nature, sustaining all things by his powerful word.

➔ ➔ Jesus is the Glory of God !

**The Purpose of the Gospel is that the whole world would be filled with Jesus!
Jesus is the glory of God and Jesus alone brings restoration!**

Look at Psalm 72:19 again: “Praise be to his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory.”

As disciples fill the earth...education, media, government, homes, then people can begin to see the “glory” of God in Christ in us.

The Apostle Paul called this the “mystery revealed”, that God would one day fill the world with his glory and he would do it through people!

[Expand as appropriate if desired and you have time.]

Stories / Testimonies: Invite the people that you pre-arranged to share stories of how the content from the past week going through the *Gospel Primer* in their community impacted them...specifically if they naturally tend to lean toward the *Power* of the gospel or the *Purpose* of the gospel. (*You may not have time for this as this message may be a little longer.*)

A quick word of caution:

It is when we grasp and wrestle with both perspectives, both lenses, that we have a gospel that both places our salvation squarely on the work of Jesus on the Cross *and* sends us out to be his body, his family of redemption and restoration in the world. It is when the world both hears the good news and witnesses a demonstration of restoration that they are most inclined to believe. This is a BIG Gospel!

2 Corinthians 5:17-19 “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the **ministry** of reconciliation (restoration): that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the **message** of reconciliation.”

When we repent of our sin and receive the new life, that Jesus has offered us, we begin a journey of restoration inside and out. And not just for us—but for the entire world! We are now called to both proclaim the good news and demonstrate it.

What a privilege!

Next Week: Next week we'll be going through Week 7 of the *Gospel Primer* together in community, and when we get back here on Sunday, we'll be digging deeper into our *Gospel Identity*...how God now sees us and what he says is true of us.

Play video bumper: Week 7–Gospel Identity

Closing thoughts and prayer.



The Gospel – Good News in ALL of Life

Week 7: Gospel Identity

Series Big Idea: Growing in “Gospel Fluency” is learning how the gospel of Jesus Christ transforms your identity and reshapes the very rhythms of your life. It is about becoming so familiar with the gospel that it flows out of your *life* and *words* in normal, yet extraordinary ways.

When the gospel increasingly informs our life, perspectives and priorities, we *become* good news to everyone; we become a living proclamation and display of the God we love and his kingdom. And that’s... Good News!

Message Big Idea: Created in God’s own image (three in one), our Gospel Identity is: We are a family of missionary servants, sent as disciples who make disciples. This has great implications for our lives and ministry as we live out of our true identity.

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 6:18 *“And, I will be a **Father** to you, and you will be my **sons and daughters**, says the Lord Almighty.”*

Hebrews 2:11 *“Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same **family**. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.”*

Takeaway: We are now part of God’s family here on Earth; It is part of our restored Gospel Identity. This comes with great authority and privilege. Together, our families and our church best show the world what our heavenly Dad is like.

Preparation: Go through Week 7 of the *Gospel Primer* together in a group. Pay close attention to the questions, answers and fears or “push backs” from your group related to the material and ideas presented this week. This is a powerful week!

Prearrange 1-3 cool stories or short testimonies from folks in your congregation / community that you'll have share during your message. Have them share a cool takeaway or impact from going through the *Gospel Primer* last week. In what ways have they begun to more fully live out of their Gospel Identity?

Note: You may wish to play the *Week 7 Video: Gospel Identity* as a “bumper” when you walk out to give this message. It can serve as a ‘hook’ and reminder for where you are going in this message.



Introduction / Illustration: Tell a story from your life connected to your family, your last name, your heritage and feeling a part of something special, important and bigger than your self.

Continue... We saw last week that the reason for our salvation was to make us disciples of Jesus who make more disciples... filling *all things* with the glory of God. Filling the world with Jesus. We are being re-created into a fuller, richer representation of the image of God, our true identity. So cool!

Today I want to quickly remind us of our true gospel identity, but then I want us to really focus on one aspect that I think will have immediate and profound impact on us as a church/community.

This will be a refresher for those of us who went through Week 7 of the *Gospel Primer* together...

The Bible teaches that if we are in Christ, the gospel has made us part of a **family of missionary servants, sent as disciples who make disciples**.

This is who we are. **This is our *gospel identity***. And it flows right out of the Trinity:

The more we understand and believe this to be true, the more our lives will be transformed. And the more peace, joy and purpose we will find in life.

When Jesus gave us the privilege and call to make disciples and baptize them (Matthew 28:19), he was inviting us to help people find a new identity.

To become a Christian is to enter into a relationship with God as our Father, to find a new **family**, both eternally and right now!

Following the example of Jesus, the Son, we live as **servants** in the world. As he served, we too now serve.

Jesus sent his disciples into the world, promising that the Holy Spirit would lead them. We now have the same Spirit living within us, sending us as **missionaries** into every context of life.

He said, “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” Our identity in Christ makes us a **family of missionary servants**, sent as disciples who make disciples.

This new identity has HUGE IMPLICATIONS for how we will now live.

Stories / Testimonies: Invite the people that you pre-arranged to share stories of how the content from the past week going through the *Gospel Primer* in their community impacted them...what was a big takeaway or release for them? In what ways have they begun to more fully live out of their Gospel Identity?

Continue...Now let’s spend a little time digging out even more of the implications of the truth that the Church is a **Family**.

God has always desired a people—an earthly family—who would live in such a way that the world would see and know what he is truly like. This was his hope for the people of Israel. He walked with them for thousands of years, providing for their needs, showing them his love and protection, and sending them out to do the same with and for others.

But the people rejected God and chose to live only for themselves, treating the other nations as outsiders. Separating themselves from the “unclean,” they chose to live primarily with those who were most like them, rejecting those they did not want to associate with. They were more concerned with preserving *their image* than God’s image, focusing more on their priorities than on God’s glory.

Now the church is God’s family, his “Plan A” for loving the world. Because we have been so radically and sacrificially loved as his children, it is our privilege to proactively, generously care for the needs of one another both physically and spiritually.

This life we now live as God’s family is not a burden; it is a privilege. It is not that we *have* to live this way. **We get to.** Sharing life together, centered on the gospel, is the closest thing this side of heaven to walking with Jesus in the flesh. And as we do, we show the world the heart of our heavenly Daddy.

[Edit this next section to best fit your context and people.]

If you compared your picture of a healthy family to your average experience of church, would the two be significantly different?

What does a healthy, loving family look like? How does it “feel,” and what are the basic functions and relational bonds? How often do the members see each other, hang out, eat, work, and play together?

[This is a good place to allow some dialogue to happen.]

Let’s compare this to most of our experiences of church. Does the church function more like a weekly meeting, business, or institution? What is your motivation for “going to church”? Is it to support one another and display what God is like to a waiting world, or is to “check the box” and meet some spiritual obligation or cultural expectation?

Ultimately, it is not the things we *do* that make us a family, but rather the stuff we care about, display, and participate in because we *get to*—because of who we are together.

We know this to be the case, because many of us have seen or been a part of families that *do* a lot of things together and yet have little love, genuine affection, or concern for one another.

The things we choose to do out of love and deference to one another are what bind us together and create a family.

Questions to ask: What shifts in your heart as you begin to believe that God has given you a family—his family—to walk through all of life with?

What are some ways that we as God’s kids, as [church name] can *together* (in community) treat those that are far from “Dad” like part of this family?

[Expand as appropriate if desired and you have time.]

Imagine that you’ve been living in your house for a few years, going about your busy life: working, raising a family, going to school—all the normal stuff of life that keeps us focused on—well, ourselves. What would you do if all of a sudden you realized your own father, sister, or brother was alone—in terrible need—and had been living right next door?

(Maybe they are, and you never noticed.)

Who does the Bible say is in “our family”? Is it just Christians, or in a sense, is it really everyone?

I guess the answer to the question of who you will treat like family is best answered by asking, would you treat Jesus like a member of your own family? Jesus told his disciples a parable one day to help them grasp the reality of how he sees everyone and how he hopes his followers will see and treat others.

“I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me... Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these *brothers* and *sisters* of mine, you did for me.” (Matt. 25:35–40) Jesus was not talking about just treating other Christians this way...there weren’t any yet!

I see it like this: We have some brothers and sisters out there who are estranged from Dad. They don’t trust him and stopped coming to holiday meals and family functions long ago. They are having a hard time believing that Dad really loves them. But he does, enough that he sent his Son, our own Brother, to rescue and save them. It cost him his life, but that’s how much Dad and his Son love them and want them restored to a full and wonderful life in this family.

So let’s stop worrying about who’s in or who’s out, saved or unsaved. Let’s treat *everyone* like family—the way God does.

God is in the adoption business. He wants you and everyone else in his family. He says, I’ve got some pretty weird kids—but you’ll grow to love them.

Next Week: Next week we’ll be going through our final week—Week 8 of the *Gospel Primer* together in community, and when we get back here on Sunday, we’ll be digging deeper into the normal *Gospel Rhythms* that fill our lives...and maybe we just never noticed them.

Play video bumper: Week 8—Gospel Rhythms

Closing thoughts and prayer.



The Gospel – Good News in ALL of Life

Week 8: Gospel Rhythms

Series Big Idea: Growing in “Gospel Fluency” is learning how the gospel of Jesus Christ transforms your identity and reshapes the very rhythms of your life. It is about becoming so familiar with the gospel that it flows out of your *life* and *words* in normal, yet extraordinary ways.

When the gospel increasingly informs our life, perspectives and priorities, we *become* good news to everyone; we become a living proclamation and display of the God we love and his kingdom. And that’s... Good News!

Message Big Idea: Discipleship and mission does not need to be a big, long, new list of activities that we need to jam into our already busy schedules, it’s really a matter of noticing the rhythms of life that we already live in and shifting from thinking “additional” to being more “intentional” with all of life.

Scripture: Ephesians 5:15-16 *“Be very careful, then, how you live —not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.”*

Luke 9:24 *“For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for Me will save it.”*

Takeaway: You only have one life to live. If you try to live your ‘American Dream’ version of life and God’s version of life at the same time it will never work. This is what leads many to burnout and frustration in their Christian life.

Preparation: Go through Week 8 of the *Gospel Primer* together in a group. Pay close attention to the questions, answers and fears or “push backs” from your group related to the material and ideas presented this week.

P rearrange 1-3 cool stories or short testimonies from folks in your congregation / community that you'll have share during your message. Have them share a cool takeaway or impact from going through the *Gospel Primer* last week. Or in light of their overall experience of growing in the Gospel over the last 8 weeks together in community going through the Gospel Primer.

➔ Plan to end this week's sermon with a celebration! Have food, drinks fun!

Note: You may wish to play the *Week 8 Video: Gospel Rhythms* as a "bumper" when you walk out to give this message. It can serve as a 'hook' and reminder for where you are going in this message.



Introduction: Over the past several weeks we have learned a lot about the gospel, how it affects all of life and even how to begin to listen to others and speak the good news into their lives.

But if you're like me, at times I have a hard time effectively translating what I am learning about God and the gospel into everyday life. How do I more consistently live out my gospel identity (a family of missionary servants) at home, at work and in my community?

It's normal to feel some tension related to living on mission; you have been living in certain patterns for years and it isn't always immediately clear how to live this out in the day-to-day.

This week in the *Gospel Primer* we learned that the secret to living out of our gospel identity in every area of life is by shifting our thinking from "additional" to "intentional".

Discipleship and mission does not need to be a big, long, new list of activities that we need to jam into our already busy schedules, it's really a matter of noticing the rhythms of life that we already live in and shifting from thinking "additional" to being more "intentional" with all of life.

Ephesians 5:15-16 *Be very careful, then, how you live —not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.*

You only have one life to live. If you try to live your 'American Dream' version of life and God's version of life at the same time it will never work. This is what leads many to burnout and frustration in their Christian life.

God has given us natural reminders—ways of engaging our new identity in the everyday rhythms of life. Once we notice them, it is hard not to see all of life filled with great opportunities for God's mission.

Here are six **rhythms of life** that are happening in every context and culture. We're learning that these "rhythms" (all of which are a picture of the gospel) can give us handles, and serve as training wheels to see all the normal stuff of life as easy opportunities to live out our gospel identity and invite others into this life.

In many ways you are already living in these rhythms and may not have noticed. Let's quickly review these 6 Gospel Rhythms and see which of them we are already living in and which you are most drawn to...or afraid of ☺

A question or two follows each of the 6 rhythms to use for dialogue. Use them as it fits for you; or save time for more stories/testimonies from your folks connected to this week's topic or in light of their overall experience of growing in the Gospel over the last 8 weeks together in community going through the Gospel Primer.

[Expound each of these as appropriate, if desired, and you have time.]

Know the Story

Everyone has a story to tell (or many); we are a story-formed people. Make it a habit to get to know the stories of the people in your life and community. They are dying to tell you! Help others see how their stories intersect and mirror God's story. In order to grow in this ability you will need to get more and more familiar with the The Story of God.

Question(s) to ask: Who's stories do you need to get to know better in your life and neighborhood? Who do you need/want to get together with to share The Story of God?

Listen

God is waiting to talk with us. Set aside regular times to just *listen* to God. Try having times of prayer where all you do is listen for the voice of God to speak, resisting the urge to give God your to-do list. Regularly practice listening '*backward*' by spending time in God's Word. And actively listen '*forward*' to hear what God is saying to you today through his Spirit and through your community.

Question(s) to ask: In what ways could you begin to cultivate the rhythm of *listening forward* to God through times of quiet and solitude? How would the relationships in your life change if you spoke only what you heard God first speaking to you?

Celebrate

Gather throughout the week with your community to share stories and celebrate all that God is doing in and amongst you. Invite others to these celebrations as a way of displaying God's extravagant blessings. Bring the Gospel to every party you attend!

Question(s) to ask: How could celebrations be infused with good news that serves as a demonstration of what Jesus is truly like? Who should participate in these celebrations?

Bless

Intentionally bless others through words, gifts or actions. God desires that all nations—all people—would be blessed through Jesus. Seek God's direction for who he would have you tangibly bless each week.

Question(s) to ask: Do you feel like God has blessed you in your life? What has God given you in life that he may be waiting to use to bless others with and show his love uniquely through you? Who can you bless today...tomorrow...next week?

Eat – Regularly eat meals with others as a reminder of our common need for God and his faithfulness to provide both physically and spiritually. Start by consistently having at least one meal each week with a sojourner—a not-yet-believer—enjoying the meal with you.

Question(s) to ask: When you think about beginning to live in a rhythm of eating with others, what challenges do you see? What fears arise in your heart?

ReCreate – Take time each week to rest, play, create and restore beauty in ways that display the Gospel, resting in Jesus' completed work on our behalf. Cultivate this Gospel rhythm of rest and create—*ReCreate*—in your life. This is truly what it means to “keep the sabbath”.

Question(s) to ask: What are the most restful and restorative activities in your life? Could they become a rhythm or pattern? In what ways are these restorative things a picture of the way God originally created the world and people to be?

Stories / Testimonies: Time to celebrate! Invite the people that you pre-arranged to share stories of how the content impacted them from the past week going through the *Gospel Primer* in their community...*or in light of their overall experience of growing in the Gospel over the last 8 weeks together in community going through the Gospel Primer.*

Make this a time of real celebration together as a community...as a Family!

Share your personal reflections of the last 8 weeks and how the Holy Spirit has been speaking to you and your family and community group.

Challenge folks to keep going...this is just the beginning of growing in their Gospel Fluency. The more they speak the Good News, the more they experience the truth of their true gospel identity, authority and privilege, the richer, fuller and more attractive their lives will be.

Closing thoughts and prayer.