

## “Art of Conversation” Week 4

### “Sharing The Gospel” Introduction

During these past few weeks, we have been exploring how to engage people in meaningful conversations. So far, we have discussed **1) asking thoughtful questions** **2) sharing the stories of God’s work in our own lives** and **3) wondering with others as we are led by the Spirit**. Tonight, we bring this conversation to a conclusion by talking about sharing the gospel itself.

While many of us may know the basic content of the gospel, we may not have much experience in actually sharing it in a way that is succinct, understandable, and resonates with our own personal experience of God’s grace in our lives. So tonight we’ll be reminding ourselves of what the gospel is, and we’ll be practicing how to share the gospel with each other.

We’ll start by exploring the various ways the gospel is presented in Scripture. Scripture uses several metaphors/images to explain the good news. There are some key components to every metaphor for salvation:

- 1) The grace of God in sending his Son,**
- 2) The necessity of the cross to deal with our sin, and**
- 3) The response of faith as the way we experience salvation.**

With that being said, each image captures a particular aspect of the gospel and has its own “feel” to it. The hope is that one of these metaphors/images particularly resonates with you and becomes the most helpful way for you personally as you share the gospel with others.

\*\* As an aside, we had considered having a night where we talk about how to engage some of the tough relevant cultural topics of our time that may come up in spiritual conversations (such as relativism, sexual identity, romance and marriage, race, the damage the church has done, etc.) but it felt like too much to bite off in an evening. For a helpful overview on some of those issues, we refer you to **“A Practical Guide to Culture,”** written by Brett Kunkle, who is a member of Grace.

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## Group: Soaking in the Gospel

Take some time as a group walking through the following images for salvation presented in Scripture. Read these out loud together (go around and have each person read one of the images along with the related Scripture verses).

### **1. Adoption into God’s Family**

*But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law. God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children. And because we[b] are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, “Abba, Father.”[ Now you are no longer a slave but God’s own child. And since you are his child, God has made you his heir. (Galatians 4:4-7)*

### **2. Relational Reconciliation with God**

*This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people’s sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. So we are Christ’s ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, “Come back to God!” For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin,[a] so that we could be made right with God through Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:17-21)*

### **3. A Sacrificial Substitute that Brings Forgiveness**

*Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins! But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God’s paths to follow our own. Yet the LORD laid on him the sins of us all. (Isaiah 53:4-6)*

*For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:21)*

### **4. Justified in God’s Courtroom**

*But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace,*

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*freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. (Romans 3:21-24)*

*Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory. (Romans 5:1-2)*

## **5. Cancellation of Debt**

*You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. (Colossians 2:13-14)*

## **6. Union with Christ**

*My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not treat the grace of God as meaningless. For if keeping the law could make us right with God, then there was no need for Christ to die. (Galatians 2:20-21)*

*Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand. Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory. (Colossians 3:1-4)*

## **7. From Spiritual Death to Spiritual Life**

*You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. (Colossians 2:13-14)*

*But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. It is only by God's grace that you have been saved! (Ephesians 2:4-5)*

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## **8. From Bondage to Freedom**

*Before the way of faith in Christ was available to us, we were placed under guard by the law. We were kept in protective custody, so to speak, until the way of faith was revealed. Let me put it another way. The law was our guardian until Christ came; it protected us until we could be made right with God through faith. And now that the way of faith has come, we no longer need the law as our guardian. (Galatians 3:23-25)*

*So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law... For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love. (Galatians 5:1, 13)*

## **9. From Trying to Trusting**

*God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. (Ephesians 2:8-10)*

*When people work, their wages are not a gift, but something they have earned. But people are counted as righteous, not because of their work, but because of their faith in God who forgives sinners. (Romans 4:4-5)*

## Solo Reflection (5 min)

Hopefully, reading through these, you get a glimpse of the richness and fullness of the gospel in all its various facets. Now spend some time alone, silently taking these in again. As you do that consider these questions:

- Is there one metaphor that particularly resonates with you? If so, why?
- Is there another metaphor for salvation not mentioned above that is particularly helpful for you?

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## Solo Reflection (5-10 min)

Now we're going to take some time putting the gospel into our own words. Imagine if you had a minute or two to share the gospel with someone in a simple and understandable way. How would you do that in a way that would feel natural and personal to you? What specific language would you use?

To answer that, start with the metaphor/image of salvation that most resonated with you, and use that as the focus of your articulation of the gospel. If there is another metaphor that was not mentioned above that works better for you, feel free to use that instead.

It might be helpful to think of a specific person with whom you'd like to share the gospel and how you might do that with him/her. **Or** it might be helpful to think about yourself and how that gospel metaphor is deeply embedded in your own story.

Whatever your approach, here's a helpful basic structure that might help you:

- **Creation:** *what God originally intended for us*
- **Fall:** *what went wrong*
- **Redemption:** *how God has made things right in Jesus*

There are a variety of ways to do this, but the idea is to practice articulating the gospel in a way that is natural and fitting for you.

In the space below, begin to work out how you would articulate the gospel in your own words and in a way that resonates with you personally:

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## Small Group Discussion (10-15 min)

We are going to take a few minutes to remind each other of the gospel, using our own words. Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, *“I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand.”* (1 Corinthians 15:1)

Break up into groups of twos or threes. Each one of you take a minute or two to remind the other of the gospel by sharing the gospel in your own words (if you want, you can simply share what you wrote during the solo time). We acknowledge this might be a challenging exercise. You've only had a few minutes to think about this, so you're not going to have some perfectly articulated explanation, but rather something that might feel a bit half-baked. That's perfectly ok! Give yourself and each other the freedom to be in process with this. The point is simply to remind each other of the gospel, and to work on sharing it in ways that are most natural for you. The only way to do that is to practice.

After each person in the group has had a chance to share, debrief the experience.

- How did you experience this exercise? Was it challenging? What it encouraging?
- What did you appreciate most from the other person's description of the gospel?

## Group Concluding Prayer (15-20 min)

Spend some time praying for each other along these lines: As we conclude these workshops on spiritual conversations, how can we best be praying for you?

## Leader Notes

### “Art of Conversation” Week 4

#### Gather & Welcome

Welcome to the last week of the “Art of Conversation” workshops. Transition into the reading of the intro anyway you see fit.

#### Read Tonight's Intro

Read out loud for the group and answer the group discussion questions.

#### Group: Read Scriptures

Soak in the Gospel by having each member of the group read a Gospel image. The easiest way to do this is by going around in a circle. All scriptures are in NLT.

#### Solo Reflection (5 Min)

Read outloud the solo instructions and give the group 5 minutes.

#### Whole Group Discussion (10-15 Min)

As a large group, go around and share your answers to the solo reflection questions.

#### Solo Reflection (5 -10 Min)

Read outloud the instructions for the solo time as a group. Please note that there are two distinct approaches they could take: Sharing the gospel with a particular person in mind, or sharing the gospel in the context of their own story - connecting it to the image that most spoke to them.

#### Small Group Discussion (10-15 Min)

Break into 2-3's and read the instructions in the packet. Then practice sharing the gospel. As a leader give them permission to not be perfect in this section. The important part of this exercise is practice and the fruit of this exercise is encouragement.

#### Close the Evening & Pray (15-20)

Spend some time praying for each other along these lines: As we conclude these workshops on spiritual conversations, how can we best be praying for you?