

Humanity and Salvation

Introduction

The difference between good advice and good news

The gospel is not good advice about how we can improve our situation

The gospel is good news about what God has done for us

The Passages

I. Who We Are

Statement of Faith, point 8: “We believe that man was created in the image of God, but that he sinned and consequently experienced physical death and spiritual death. As a result, all people are born with a sinful nature and are eternally lost apart from the atoning work of Jesus Christ on the cross and the work of God’s grace in drawing them to faith in Christ.”

A. Creation

1. Created in God’s image (Gen 1:27)

Creatures who possess god-like qualities intended for relationship with Him

2. Created to rule over God’s good creation (Gen 1:28)

Role: rule, take care of God’s creation as God’s representatives

Demonstrate his wisdom, justice, joy, love, etc in the creation

Fill God’s earth with God’s image

B. The Fall

1. The Nature of the Fall: ingratitude, distrust, and independence

Gen 2:16-17, 3:1-6

1) Ingratitude: focusing on God’s one prohibition/rule

2) Distrust: what kind of God would keep good things from his people?

3) Independence: You can go your own way and be like God

2. The Effects of the Fall: shame and pain, hiding and blaming

Gen 3:7-13

1) Shame, guilt, fear

2) covering up/hiding from God and each other

3) blaming each other and blaming God

C. Humanity’s Situation: Broken Image Bearers

1. Our relational problem: enemies of God (Ro 3:23, Ro 1:18)

a. our sin: Romans 3:23

b. God’s holy wrath against our sin: Romans 1:18

c. There is nothing we can do to fix this relational problem

We can never be good enough for God’s holiness

2. Our internal problem: sinful nature (Ro 1:24-31, Eph 2:1-3)

a. “All human beings are born with a sinful nature”: Romans 5:12

“total depravity”: every part of our lives has been infected with sin

b. God has “handed us over” to our sins: Romans 1:24-31

We are slaves to sinful nature, spiritually dead: Ephesians 2:1-3

- c. There is nothing we can do to fix this internal problem
Spiritually dead people can't fix themselves

II. What God Has Done on Our Behalf

A. God's Relentless Pursuit of Us

Summary of the gospel: it's all the work of God

- 1) God has done FOR us what we can't do for ourselves by sending his Son and reconciling us to Himself
- 2) God has done IN us what we can't do for ourselves by sending his Spirit and re-creating us from the inside out

1. God sends His Son to reconcile us to Himself

Statement of Faith, point 9: "We believe that Jesus Christ died for our sin as a substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who believe in Him are declared righteous on the basis of His shed blood. This salvation is not a result of any human effort or merit."

2 Corinthians 5:18-21

--"one died for all": "Jesus Christ died for our sin as a substitutionary sacrifice":
one died for all

--"God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us"

our sin transferred to Christ and God expresses his holy wrath on cross

--"so that in him we might become the righteousness of God"

God not counting our sins against us because counting them against Christ

--"all of this is from God"

This is all God's doing, not ours

--"This salvation is not a result of any human effort or merit."

Ephesians 2:8-9: a sheer gift of God's grace

2. God sends His Spirit to recreate us in His Son's image

Statement of Faith, point 10: "We believe that all who by God's grace put their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are born again by the Holy Spirit, who baptizes them into the Body of Christ as children of God. While all Christians still have a sinful nature, God is in the process of transforming believers into the likeness of His Son by the indwelling of His Spirit."

a. The Spirit's first role is to draw us to faith in Christ (Jn 6:44, Jn 3:3-8)

-on our own, we will not accept the gospel, so the Spirit woos us and draws us to faith

-The Holy Spirit is both the cause and the effect of our faith

b. The Spirit's second role is to make us more and more like Jesus

-2 Cor 3:17-18

-So the Spirit is restoring the image of God in us, by transforming us into the true image of God, Jesus Christ

3. Eternal life

Statement of Faith, point 11: “We believe in the bodily resurrection of all people for judgment. Believers will be judged but will be saved on the basis of Christ’s righteousness to enjoy eternal life with God. Unbelievers will be judged and sentenced to eternal punishment apart from God.”

- a. Believers will spend eternity fulfilling the role God originally intended:
Ruling over His new creation as His perfect image bearers
- b. Unbelievers will suffer “eternal punishment”

Conclusion

I. Our response to this good news should be to receive it, embrace it, and celebrate it
Reverse the Fall: move to gratitude, trust, and surrender

II. Gratitude, trust, and surrender to what God has done for us in Christ

Embracing the truth that Christ has done everything I need to be right with God

I am completely forgiven, accepted, loved by God solely because of Christ

I find my sense of value, worth, and identity solely in Christ

Imagine how that would transform:

1. our relationship with God:
2. our relationship with other people
3. our relationship with our work, success, etc

III. Gratitude, trust, and surrender to what God is doing in us through His Spirit

Surrendering ourselves to the Spirit: “Your will be done, I’m open to you”

Inviting him into every area of our lives

Giving over everything we have to Him

When we fully surrender to Christ and the Spirit we will begin to be those image bearers God intended, sent out into this world to reflect His image

Discussion Questions

1. Opening questions: What struck you most about the sermon/the passage? What surprised you? What confused you? What did you disagree with?
2. Genesis 1:27-28 describes God creating humanity as his image bearers who are to rule over his creation as his representatives. Is that role and purpose still relevant today? If so, how does that change the way you think about your life and purpose?
3. Based on the story of the Fall in Genesis 2:16-17, 3:1-6, it was suggested that the pattern leading to sin was ingratitude leading to distrust leading to independence. Do you agree? How would you articulate the specific dynamics of the temptation?
4. In Sunday’s sermon the gospel was summarized as follows: “1) God has done FOR us what we can’t do for ourselves by sending his Son and reconciling us to Himself and 2)

God has done IN us what we can't do for ourselves by sending his Spirit and re-creating us from the inside out." How does that description differ from how you've thought about and/or articulated the gospel in the past? What has it added or what has it left out?

5. Based on passages such as John 3:3-8 and John 6:44, discuss the following statement: the Holy Spirit is both the cause and the effect of our faith.

6. Discuss the meaning and practical application of Galatians 3:3.