**THE GOSPEL WE PREACH**

**Chapter One**

**WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?**

The word "gospel" within the body of Christ (the church) refers to "Good news". The word is used also for the first four books of the New Testament Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. These are the four "gospel" but the word is precisely for the central doctrine of the Christian faith concerning Jesus namely his death, burial and resurrection.

Paul clearly states that the gospel that he preached is that Jesus died according to the scriptures, was buried, and rose again according to the scriptures.

That Jesus Christ died to pay the penalty for our sin so that we might become the children of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

The gospel is the application and implication of advantageous position of the suffering, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

"The Gospel" is the total sum of the saving truth as God has communicated it to lost humanity as it is revealed in the person of His son and in the Holy Scriptures.

The central truth of the gospel is that God has provided a way of salvation for men through the gift of his son to the world. He suffered as a sacrifice for sin, overcame death, and now offers a share in His triumph to all who will accept it.

The gospel is good news because it is a gift of God, not something that must be earned by penance or by self-improvement.

The gospel is the greatest good news that humanity will ever hear and the greatest news that lost creation is waiting to hear. Consider this story: A man went to farm, leaving his lovely wife and children behind. As he left the house, both him and his household hoped to see each other by the end of the day when he is through with his work and in the farm and return home in the evening.

While in the farm, around midday, a band of kidnappers invaded his farm and took him hostage. When he went to their camp in the thick forest where they kept their victims he saw many other people that have stayed there for years, some even for decades. Those that were there before him told of how impossible it is for anyone who has come here to regain freedom. He need not argue with them because their long stay in the hostage camp is enough evidence to convince him that there is no hope for him.

They also went further to tell him of some failed rescue attempts in the past. Nobody is powerful enough to break into the camp and liberate the captive of the powerful gang. In fact, in the region, they are known as the most powerful and what it means is that if you are kidnapped by them, you have been sentenced to a lifetime of bondage and slavery and there is no hope of ever getting out.

The farmer misses his household, his beautiful wife and his lovely children. That alone is enough reason to be sad and to mourn but his situation is even further complicated by the none existence of any hope of escape from his bondage. To imagine that he will be there for life and never know again what it means to be a free man pierces his heart constantly with pains and sighs of anguish constantly escapes his weary lips.

But one day it happened that those band of kidnappers went out for another catch, all of them went out while making sure that the place where their captives are kept was securely locked from the main entrance.

As they went about their hunt for new set of victims to kidnap, they ran into a much more powerful militia group who engaged them in a fierce battle, conquered them all and went straight to their camp where their captives are kept.

When they (the liberating force) got to the gate of the camp of bondage, they broke it down and leveled the fences around it. They couldn’t stay longer because they have other places to go to but they saw a few men around and announced to them that the power holding everybody in that camp has been defeated and that the work required for the freedom of all that are trapped inside has been done.

They further charged them to go inside the camp, and announce to all that cares to listed that they have been set free. Everybody can now go back home and live a free life again.

Imagine you carrying this wonderful news to that man that has been separated from the family he loves for years, not just the separation but also the fact that there was no possibility of escape him.

That message to that prisoner and every other prisoner telling them of the finished work, already done for their freedom and they way towards escape is the gospel. Isn’t that message a good news? Is it not worth celebrating?

The gospel is the good news to tell man that the required work for his freedom from sin is done and is finished and shows him the way towards freedom and that way is Jesus Christ.

**FEATURES OF THE GOSPEL**

We will consider a few Bible references below from which we can derive the necessary ingredients that must be available before we can say that what we have is a gospel. (1Cor. 15:1-4, 1Pet. 2:21-25, 1John 1:1-5).

**(**1Cor. 15:1-4**) Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand,   
2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.**

**3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,   
4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,**

**(**1Pet. 2:21-25**) For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:**

**22 “Who committed no sin,  
Nor was deceit found in His mouth”;**

**23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;   
24 who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.   
25 For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.**

**(**1John 1:1-5**) That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—   
2 the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—   
3 that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.   
4 And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.**

1. **Jesus must be the center or the focal point of the gospel**:

There was no gospel before Jesus came. The gospel exists as a result of the coming of Jesus and the price he paid for our salvation. If it doesn’t talk about Jesus or lead to Jesus, then it must be something else but definitely not the gospel.

The teaching of a gospel message should have at it’s core the person of Jesus.

1. **The gospel must agree and align with the revealed word of God in the scriptures**:

In the book of first letter of Apostle Paul to the Corinthians that we read above, we see a repeated mention of “according to the Scriptures”. It wasn’t a mistake, it was deliberate.

The teaching or preaching of the gospel must have it’s source and reference as the Scriptures because in the Scriptures is contained the entirety of the Father’s plan for the salvation of man.

The Scriptures/Bible is our compass that leads and guides us to ensure that we don’t fall into the dangerous extremes of heresy and self-satisfying doctrines that have no power to save.

1. **The gospel demands faith(believing)**:

One of the major struggle of a fallen man that is separated from God and a hindrance to his freedom is the effort to appeal to human reason and logic. For the gospel to be effective, it must require from the the hearers the expression of faith in the received word of hope and good news.

For he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Heb. 11:6)

1. **The gospel saves**:

The reason for the gospel is for the salvation of mankind and it is capable of doing exactly that which God intended it for.

The power of the gospel to save is one of it’s unique identity. Nothing else can do that. A mind may be enlightened by academic work and studies but it is only the gospel that has the power and the capacity to pluck men from the highway of eternity in hell into eternal life with the Father.

The gospel is the greatest force needed to change the hearts of men. When the gospel is constantly preached, it is natural that lives will be transformed effortlessly because it saves.

1. **The gospel is delivered to the preacher**:

God is the source of the gospel through the ministry of the Holy Spirit and Jesus is the subject and the center of it. A man that is disconnected from God cannot speak for God or teach his will or plan for the liberation of dying souls. Since the gospel is delivered to the preacher, it doesn’t come on his/her own terms or conditions.

It is not a case of “what I like is what I preach” rather it is “what I received, what was delivered to me is what I preach”

If a man is the originator of what he teaches or preaches, then that is not the gospel because the gospel must be delivered to the preacher by God through the Spirit. It is only a message thus received that can have the capacity to save lives and the audacity to confront darkness and dispel it.

1. **The gospel must carry the signature of Calvary**:

The greatest problem of man is sin. If the sin problem is dealt with, every other thing will fall into place.

It was at Calvary, by shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ, the price for the remission of the sins of men was duly and fully paid. And without shedding of blood there is no remission (Heb. 9:22).

The gospel carries this message that the required blood sacrifice for washing away sin has been offered at the cross of Calvary.

1. **The gospel must say that it is finished:**

The true gospel message must refer to the required work for the salvation of man as already done and dusted and not something that is yet to be done in the future. It is finished (Jn 19:30).

No more work is left to be done, no more sacrifice or covenant is required in order for salvation to be attained. The work done at Calvary by the sinless Lamb of God was a thorough and complete work.

1. **The gospel brings full joy to those that receive it in faith**:

… that your joy may be full. How can one hear the greatest good news that the entire creation will ever hear and not be moved into praise that springs from a heart full of joy and rejoicing.

There is nothing about the gospel that should not cause the heart of believers to leap for joy. For even if it convicts us of wrong, it does not stop there. It goes further to show us the way forward, the way of escape. It announces to us that our team (Team Jesus) has won and ours to identify with him in faith and claim the victory! Alleluia. Glory to our kind and benevolent Father the architect of this wonderful plan of salvation.

**Chapter Two**

**WHAT IS NOT GOSPEL?**

**Religion**

Religion is a serious cankerworm that has eaten deeply into the fabric of modern day believers.

A lot of people think that religion saves. They think that being a member of a particular church, attendance of church services, adherence to their church doctrines, payment of a certain amount of money can grant them salvation.

The truth is, salvation cannot be found in churches, the only place salvation can be found is in Christ Jesus.

(Matt. 1:21) **And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”**

If you must be saved, you must be saved by Jesus Christ. There is no other way towards salvation. He is the only and one savior.

(Acts 4:12) **Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”**

One damaging consequences of religion is that it doesn't give or impart life, it merely tends to keep people bound with the doctrines of a particular church, more especially for some material and monetary gains. It is only through Christ, not religion that one can secure eternal life.

(John 3:3) **Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born [[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3%3A3&version=NKJV" \l "fen-NKJV-26124a" \o "See footnote a)]again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”**

Instances abound in the Bible of men that were religious but they weren't saved until they truly received and confessed Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior.

In the above verse that we just considered (John 3:3), Nicodemus was religious but wasn't saved, Cornelius was religious but wasn't saved, he gave alms, prayed and fasted but he wasn't saved (Acts 10:22). The same applied to Paul before his true conversion and separation of religiosity (Phil. 3:4-9)

**4 though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so:   
5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee;   
6 concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.**

**7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.   
8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ   
9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;**

If religion can save us (going to church, reading the Bible, praying, giving alms and the rest) then it means that the death of Jesus Christ was in vain. If religion can save us, why then did Christ die? Calvary was unnecessary if religion can save. There is only one savior, not religion, the man called Christ.

**Morality**:

Some people think they are saved because they live a good life. They rely on their morality, living uprightly to save them.

Morality, living uprightly cannot grant man salvation. If it does, Christ would not have died because it would be possible for man to work out his won salvation.

All our righteousness, pious living and others are filthy rags.

(Isaiah 64:6) **But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.**

(Rom 3:10) **As it is written:**

**“There is none righteous, no, not one;**

(Rom 3:23) **for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,**

All have sinned and therefore all need a savior. Christ did not come for the self-righteous, he came for the sinners.

(Luke 5:32) **I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”**

If you think you are justified by the works of your hand, by the way you live and behave, then know that Jesus Christ did not come or die for you since his purpose of coming was to bring wholeness to those that are not healthy (sinners) ***When Jesus heard that, He said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.*** (Matt. 9:12).

Morality has never and will never save any man. Peter cried, "I am a sinful man, O Lord". Job exclaimed, "I am vile". Isaiah said, "Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips". These men were the best, the most moral and upright of their days but when they saw the Lord, they saw themselves.

You might say you don't steal, you don't fornicate, you don't drink, but if God is to flash His spotless torchlight in your heart, won't He find corruption, unforgiveness, vileness, pollution and the rest? All these constitute sin.

Our morality cannot save us (Paul lived a good life, Nicodemus and Cornelius did the same) but their moral lifestyle didn't save them, only Christ did.

Our morality is like filthy rags before God and would not sustain us in this life. Our righteousness should be in Christ. We have no righteousness of our own, we are sinners and nothing at all. The only thing that qualifies for righteous living is Christ.

**Works**

Many people also think they are saved by their works. They practice penance and self denial. They give alms and say prayers. They visit the sick and imprisoned and perform numerous pilgrimages and afflict their bodies and thus they expect to get to heaven.

The work "for" salvation, whereas God tells them to work "out" their salvation. Salvation must become yours effortlessly before you can begin to work it out. You must first receive Christ and be saved. You must get salvation if you are to work it out. There is nothing you can do about your salvation, it has already been worked by God in Christ Jesus.

Salvation is an eternal gift of God, (Rom 6:23). When you pay and work for a gift, it ceases to become one because you have purchased it with your own human power. A gift is free and so is salvation. You and I does not have what it takes to pay for the forgiveness of our sins to get us salvation. We are bankrupt, we are poor, we are incapacitated, just life the prodigal son in the gospel according to Luke. Salvation is without money and without price, it cannot be bought.

It is the death and the blood of Jesus that can avail a man of righteousness, not the blood of any animal or even human being. Jesus paid it all on the cross so that we accept him as our sin-bearer, our savior.

(Eph. 2:8-9)

(Titus 3:5)

(Rom. 4:5-6)

Nothing you have done on your human effort can save you and grant you eternal life. It is Christ and Christ alone who saves. Just come to him, and rely on His finished work on Calvary, trust Him this moment and be saved from eternal doom to come.

**Commandments**

A lot of people think they are saved because they keep the commandments. Jesus said, "None of you keeps the law". Remember, if you keep the whole laws/commandments and become guilty of others, you would as well be described as a sinner and He said to them, "whosoever shall keep the whole lay and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all".

Observance of commandments cannot offer us salvation because, no man can be able to keep to all the commandments. Even if someone turns a new leaf and decided to keep and observe all commandments, he would still need to answer for his past sins except he allows Christ to do it for him.

Christ is the only man that has never broken the commandments. He was sinless, he kept the law perfectly. It was of his blameless ways of observing the law that qualifies him to be used as a Lamb for the atonement of our sins.

Reformation of character does not also impart life because it only address the outer being or part of a man rather than the inside. Christ paid for all our sins, made the necessary atonement for us and set us free from the curse of the law. It's all about Christ, not the adherence to commandments.

Our Lord Jesus Christ took you sin, bore it in His own body on the cross, and now he offers you His life – eternal life.

No man is justified by laws (Gal. 3:2, 2:16-21), (Rom. 20-8). Dearly beloved of God, the law/commandments do not and cannot save the soul of any man, nor can the deeds (works) of his virtue do it. It was Jesus Christ, the gift of God, he bled, he died, so that the soul of any man who believe in him will be saved.

**Ordinances**

Many people think that they are saved by what they call the sacraments or ordinances of the church such as baptism and Lord's super.

The thief on the cross was not baptized, neither did he partake in the Lord's super. All that granted him eternal life was a sincere confession and belief in the saving grace of Jesus. A few drops of water sprinkled on you at you infant age, signifying membership into the body of Christ cannot save you because it was done when you could not account for the reason of what you were doing then.

We are baptized because we are saved, not to be saved just like we unite with the church and partake of the communion, not in order to be saved, but because we have been saved.

Christians, not sinners are baptized and Christians, not sinners partake of the Lord's super.

Baptism signifies our membership into the body of Christ after we have believed in Him. It is meant to provide a change of heart and departure from old things. But what happens after a person who has been baptized still remains as he was? The crux of the matter is that baptism cannot save, it is only Jesus Christ that can provide or give a change of life. Church ordinances do not change, we are saved by Christ and Christ alone.

**Chapter Three**

**THE GOSPEL THAT JESUS PREACHED**

**Chapter Four**

**THE GOSPEL THE EARLY CHURCH PREACHED**

**Chapter Five**

**THE PLAN OF THE FATHER**

**Christ the only way**

We have established that religion, works, ordinances and the rest cannot save a man.

There is only one who can save and that one is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the way, the only path and access to the father (John 14:16).

It is all about Jesus and not religion, not works, not morality. Christ, the Son of God is the one and only savior. He is the way, not your church, Moses, your doctrine, Buddha, Priest, Pastor, Pope and others. All these cannot give you life.

The Bible is very clear on this position in the book of (Acts 4:12) "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name given under heaven given to man by which they can be saved except by the name of Jesus".

No church, no individual or any other thing can save you. You will not go to heaven because you joined the church. Religion cannot save your guilty soul. You will have to be converted, just like anybody else and accept the one who died to make you whole.

You will not also go to heaven because you do your best, work and pray, efforts and the rest. They are in vain.

The only guarantee to heaven is that you need to know and accept that you need a savior that would grant you eternal life and that person in not any other person rather than Jesus. He died that we might have life. He purchased our redemption for us on the cross of Calvary. If you would invite him today in your life, he will come and dwell in you and change your life for better.

**What you must do**

It would be unwise to think that since God has provided salvation, there is nothing for you to do. Salvation has been provided, but you must accept it. It is your duty to allow Him into your life as your personal Lord and savior. As many that have received him, he gave them the power to become the sons of God (John 1:12). Life is a product of decision and so also is your salvation. We need to decide now to receive Him.

**Chapter Six**

**WOMEN MINISTRY**