

The Glory of God in the Gospel of God, What is the Gospel? Selected Text, Preached @ Harambee Church by Pastor Michael Gunn on May 25th, 2008

“...Many true and precious aspects of the gospel can be affirmed, and yet the final and greatest good of the gospel be missed. The manifold glories of the gospel are beautiful. But that is just the point. If the overarching beauty is not seen, namely the beauty of the glory of Christ, then the aim of the gospel is not attained...Until the gospel events of Good Friday and Easter and the gospel promises of justification and eternal life lead you to behold and embrace God Himself as your highest joy, you have not embraced the gospel of God.”

John Piper

*“Fear not, for behold, I bring you **“Good News”** (The Gospel) of a **great joy** that will be **for all the people**. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a **Savior**, who is **Christ the Lord.**”*

Luke 2:10-11

Intro:

Is Christ the joy of your salvation, or is salvation itself that which gives you joy? Would you be happy with a Christless afterlife as long as you were free from pain and suffering?

What the Gospel is not:

1. The Gospel is Not Therapy
2. The Gospel is Not Law/Moralism
3. The Gospel is Not “Self Discovery”
4. The Gospel is Not “Enlightenment”
5. The Gospel is Not Social Restructuring/Nationalism

The Gospel is God’s “Good News” of His in-breaking into human culture in order to justify and save His people (Through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ), and establish His kingdom/Lordship (Through the establishment of His Church) to the glory of His name.

From the Head...

The gospel is God’s story, which begins in Genesis one and ends in Revelation twenty-two. The gospel is God’s “Good News” that is made manifest through His **Creation** (God creates to demonstrate His glory (**Isaiah 43:7**), out of the pleasure of His will. God’s mandate to His people is to create a culture that reflects His glory.), **The Fall** into Sin, (Which is man’s decision to rebel against God’s will and create his own self-glorifying culture. Subsequently all humanity/culture is broken and eternally separated from God because God is just, and cannot tolerate injustice in any form. While this is true, man still maintains a faint image of God, which is why man can and often does some wonderful things, but they are incapable of saving themselves **Ephesians 2:1-9**), **Re-Creation** (Which is brought forth in Christ’s work on the cross on our behalf so that we could be re-established in relationship to God through Christ, so that the wrath of God could be removed from our head (**John 3:36; Romans 1:18; Galatians 3:10; 5:9**), and we could be established in His righteousness (**Romans 3:25; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18**). This act (Atonement) is the “Good News” that our King had come, and He had delivered His People from their bondage (Both physically and spiritually). Sin was forgiven, righteousness was imputed and death would be overcome! This was the message of the “*Gospel of the Kingdom*” (**Matthew 4:23; 9:35; 24:14; Mark 1:14-15**). God’s kingdom on earth was inaugurated during Christ’s first coming, and given to the church to proclaim and demonstrate (**Matthew 6:10**), and then will be experienced fully at the **Consummation** (Which is Christ’s second coming, where He promises to reestablish his perfect rule on earth as it is in heaven **2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1-5**).

The Goal of the Gospel is God

The gospel is first and foremost about God, not us. The greatness of the gospel is that it “*Might bring us to God*” (**1 Peter 3:18**), which is the goal of the gospel; God! To this John Piper writes, “Even when we get there (To God), *it is God Himself who will satisfy our souls forever. Everything else in the gospel is meant to display God’s glory and remove every obstacle in Him (Such as wrath) and in us (Such as our rebellion).*”¹ Getting eternal life and a get out of hell card is not the essence of the gospel, God’s work for our salvation is to the praise of His glory (**Isaiah 43:24; 49:3; Jeremiah 13:11; Ezekiel 36:22-32; Ephesians 1:6, 12, 14**). The goal of the gospel is not our personal transformation, moral renewal or therapeutic healing. This may be an affect of the gospel, but it is not the gospel. The gospel is God’s real, historical story that ends in His glory for a promise He kept.

¹ John Piper, *God is the Gospel*, pg. 42

The **Motivation** for the Gospel is Love

Love is not the gospel! The gospel is not to “*Love God and love others.*” However love is the motivator of the gospel, and it is a result of the gospel affects in a believer’s life. This obviously begins with God’s love for us (**John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 8:29, 39; 1 John 3:1; 4:7, 10**), and then extends through us to others (**Matthew 22:37-39; 2 Corinthians 5:14; 1 John 2:9-11; 4:11**).

The **Result** of the Gospel is Salvation

Our salvation comes from believing the gospel (**Romans 1:16**), but the experience of our salvation is an affect of the gospel not the gospel itself. The effects demonstrate the power of the gospel, which include His miracles and outworking of the gospel into every area of human existence (Healing, help for the poor, liberty for captives, peace, eternal life, global missions, and the all-satisfying vision of the Glory of God). Jesus’ miracles and healings and work among the poor was an announcement (Of “Good News”) that there was a new King in town, and things were going to change (See **Matthew 4:23; Luke 4:18**). I believe that the gospel believed is what saves us from God’s wrath and a real hell, but I also believe that the bible tells us that we will be resurrected with Christ with a real body to live in a real “New” Heaven and “New” Earth, so that we will praise Him, and give Him glory, and be fully satisfied with that relationship as we were created to do in the first place.

... to the Heart

The gospel is a clear story with a trajectory to all the nations! We can no longer see the gospel as our own personal relationship with Jesus without connecting it (And ourselves) to it’s larger goal, the glory of God to people groups everywhere (See **Matthew 24:14**). Harambee therefore will function as a mission post, and a portal to South Seattle, and the world, as we continue to train each of you to be missionaries in the context we are called.

Welcome people (& guests), remind us of:

1. **Who we are:** (Harambee exists to know and worship God by enjoying Him and joining Him in His mission to take His whole story, to the whole person, in the whole world, equipping those that respond to do God's will and enjoy Him forever.)

2. **Why we're gathering** (corporately worship & be equipped for ministry/mission then scatter as worshipping missionaries)

3. **What's going on** (men, women, youth, Harambee groups)

4. **Where to go for more info** (kiosk, spring flyer, website: harambeechurch.com, e-mail announcements)

5. **Anything major coming up** given by service coordinator (**Body Life meeting Next Monday!**).