



SHARING JESUS

*How to Tell the Best News in the
World*

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Christians are people of *hospitality*; welcoming people into the family of God. At the heart of this is sharing the good news of Jesus Christ, or, "the gospel."

PART 1: WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

There is a word that Christians often say but rarely define: the word "gospel." What exactly do we mean by it? In the Bible, the word used for "gospel" simply means "good news." This Greek word, *euangelion*, is not unique to the Bible, but is used in many places to proclaim all sorts of news that was considered "good." For example, we have ancient writings celebrating the "good news" (or "gospel") of Caesar Augustus after he had just won a great battle. Often, this word was used to announce the fact that a ruler had just won a battle, and their kingdom was therefore advancing.

This context helps us make sense of what's happening when we see Jesus preaching the good news, or gospel:

Later on, after John was arrested, Jesus went into Galilee, where he preached God's Good News. "The time promised by God has come at last!" he announced. "The Kingdom of God is near! Repent of your sins and believe the Good News!" (Mk. 1:14-15 NLT)

In other words, Jesus is proclaiming the fact that God's kingdom is advancing, so we'd all better get in line with it! The battle is being won, with the decisive victory being the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

With this in mind, perhaps we can attempt a simple definition of the gospel:

The gospel is the good news that God's kingdom has come through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, who now rules over all. Therefore, we can be forgiven for our rebellion and enjoy a life with God in His kingdom.

Now that's good news!

PART 2: SHARING THE GOSPEL

Now that we have a sense of what the gospel is, we should ask, "how do we share this good news with others?" That's what we do with good news: we share it. If we don't, then it would appear we don't think it's particularly "good."

The first thing to understand is that nothing beats your own story. There's no comparison for having your own transforming relationship with Jesus to share with others. Even in the Bible, we see the power of personal stories to transform lives (see Luke 8:39).

Nevertheless, it helps to have a good framework to use. Consider these four statements that you can use to help people understand God: God loves you, sin causes death, Jesus gives life, and live for Jesus. Let's explore these more in-depth.

1. God loves you.

Romans 8:38 says, "And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love."

One of the most important things we can understand is that God loves us more than we can imagine. As this verse makes clear, God will stop at nothing to show us this love.

2. Sin causes death.

Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord."

The problem is that we are broken. That brokenness is called "sin." We all try to do God's job, and in doing that, we rebel against him. This separates us from God forever, and it causes eternal death in our souls. The good news is that...

3. Jesus brings life.

Ephesians 2:4–5 says, "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!)"

Not because of anything we've done, and not because we deserve it—but purely because of God's unfathomable love—he provided a way for our sin problem to be cured. Jesus did it by sacrificing his own life for you, and when God raised him from the dead, that meant that when we decide to make Jesus our master, sin and death will no longer have victory in our lives, not only in this life, but in the next!

4. Live for Jesus.

2 Cor. 5:15 says, "He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them."

The key to receiving this new life is that we no longer live for ourselves, but for Jesus! It's God's upside-down sort of way. To have an abundant life, we must give it away! Sounds crazy, but it's true. Jesus offers life to us, and all we have to do is surrender to him.

THE PRACTICE

Challenge yourself to memorize the titles of these four steps, along with the scripture reference that goes with it (not necessarily the entire verse, just the reference). More often than you might realize, this exact framework can really help someone understand the gospel. But, in many contexts and conversations, you'll make the words your own. Get very familiar with these steps so you can riff on them easily as the Spirit leads.