

The Content, Method and Attitude for Sharing the Gospel

The word Gospel is literally translated to mean good news. The good news is all that God did, but it is also all of who God is, according to the Holy Bible. Therefore, *the Gospel is the story of God and how people get to be a part of it.*

This training tool walks through what is in the Gospel ([CONTENT](#)), the different ways to share it ([METHOD](#)), and the heart we must have to do so effectively ([ATTITUDE](#)).

A. The Core Message: Gospel Content

At Need Him Global, everything we do is centered on the goal of sharing the good news of the Gospel and giving an opportunity for the hearer of that news to respond to it. We know from Romans 10:14-17 that people must hear the good news in order to believe and to understand the proper response. Something else that we can see in this text is that it is possible for someone to hear the good news but not obey the gospel (an improper and perilous response). Therefore, we need to be as clear and complete as we possibly can in sharing the Gospel, and we must not stray away from what the Gospel is.

Here is where we can run into a dilemma. What is the Gospel? Many people say it is very simple; others, that it is complex. You will hear that God is the Gospel, or Grace is the Gospel, or that the specific Gospel can be found in this or that particular text of Scripture. There are incomplete gospels and even false gospels, which we read about in Scripture itself (1 Timothy, 2 Peter, Jude). Usually Christians, especially those trying to evangelize, define the Gospel as the way that people can get saved or believing in the work of Jesus Christ. Others define the Gospel as the overarching narrative of God through creation, the fall, redemption, and restoration. Since the Gospel is of first importance (1 Cor. 15:3), we must get it right.

This means that the Gospel is something that we are continually learning about and being given understanding of before and after we embrace salvation. Believers and non-believers alike have continual need for hearing the good news of the Gospel. As a volunteer for Need Him Global, you are doing the work of evangelism, sharing this good news. However, there is so much to this news and you need to discern what are the essential pieces of it that you must share, what pieces are of greatest benefit to the hearer, and what pieces will be disclosed at a later time through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Imagine this scenario: You are a reporter in the midst of a plague affecting the entire world. You have discovered that there is a doctor who has the cure for the disease running rampant against humankind. This cure also provides for immunity against the disease. The doctor has sent you out to make people aware that he has always had this cure, although it had been rejected previously, and that he is freely offering it to anyone who recognizes the peril of the plague and wants to be healed and protected from it. The plague is very dangerous and fast acting, and unfortunately, it brings the kind of disease that deceives the victim, sometimes manifesting symptoms and sometimes showing nothing at all, like a widespread unavoidable cancer.

If you were in this scenario as this reporter, you don't personally have any ability or knowledge that can bring healing to those you encounter. However, because you have experienced and been affected by the cure, you want to tell all the details you can so that the people who hear can believe and pursue getting the cure. You can see that there are some pieces of news from the doctor that you absolutely must share with those that you encounter because their lives are at stake, and there are other pieces of news that are not as essential or urgent. The rest, you tell according to the benefit of the person with whom you end up talking.

In this case, the essential things to communicate are that there is a plague, even though some are not aware, that it is deadly, and that there is a cure that only this doctor has. These things are necessary and time-sensitive for the hearer to know. Now, it might also be good to tell the hearer the symptoms and the gravity of the disease or the benefits of the cure. It might help for you as the reporter to tell your own experience with the doctor, or to share the stories of those you have encountered, those who have died without the cure, or lived with it. There is also a larger history at play that is significant and noteworthy- perhaps a corrupt government that wants to keep the cure from the people, or how the doctor had been working on the cure before the disease even existed. What you tell as a reporter, again, is what is essential. You decide what fits the moment based on the person you are talking with, the condition in which that person is in, what will benefit them the most, what questions they are asking you, the amount of time you have, and other variables. You can see that this happens naturally in conversations where we tell someone, "I have some good news!" That person usually asks, "What happened?" and then, "How did it happen?" Lastly, we usually talk with that person about how the news we have shared pertains to them personally.

Below, we would like to offer two complementary perspectives on the Gospel, that combined, give us a good picture of what the complete Gospel is. The first perspective is a micro-level perspective of the Gospel. It is the "What happened?" and the theological implications for humankind.

The second perspective is a macro-level perspective of the Gospel. It is the "How did it happen?" sharing the overarching story of God's creation, its corruption, and His reconciliation. From the holistic perspective of both of these combined, we hope this helps you think about how to share the good news with others.

I. Micro-view: The Good News - What happened?

Christ died for our sins and He rose from the dead and only through faith that His death is the full payment for our sins and that His resurrection is the guarantee that we will be raised to eternal life after death can we be reconciled to the Father.

1 Corinthians 15:1-8 Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.

We see that this perspective on the Gospel shows us how the work of God applies to man. This passage tells us the following:

1. It is by the gospel that we are saved
2. Christ lived and died
3. He died for our sins
4. He died according to the Scriptures
5. He was buried
6. He was raised on the third day
7. He appeared to a number of persons

The above summary is a basic answer to the question, "What happened?" It is the good news that while we were dead in our transgressions and sins Christ died for us to pay the price for those sins. The main elements of this gospel perspective include: sin, death, substitutionary atonement, and faith.

Sin

From the entirety of Scripture, we can see that man is not born into a state of neutrality, but is by nature, a hostile and willing enemy of God. Man's heart and mind are darkened and dulled such that the fleeting pleasures of sin are more alluring than the eternal joy of our Creator. Man is utterly rebellious, unable and unwilling to save himself.

Death

How does God deal with the rebellion of His creation? Genesis 2:17 says "but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it *you will surely die.*" Man and his wife and all subsequent generations are subjected to the curse of death. This is not only physical death, but also spiritual death in which they are estranged from the heavenly Father. This spiritual death points toward hell - the absence of all of the goodness of the Lord with an eternity of suffering for the sins against an infinitely holy God.

Substitutionary Atonement (Substitution)

The wages of sin is death. The Bible says someone has to pay the penalty, which accompanies our transgression in order to be forgiven. Man should pay that price but is incapable as a sinner. God alone can pay that price and did so through the death of Jesus Christ. The Son of God became sin and bore the wrath of His Father on our behalf. He became our substitution, dying *for our sins, in our place*. He did not deserve to die but He willingly became obedient to the payment required that we might be reconciled to Him.

Faith

In order to prevent human boasting, and gain all glory in salvation, God established only one way to gain entry into His presence. Through faith alone may we enter into the family of our Lord. By grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. Ephesians 2:8-9

II. The macro-view: Good News: How did it happen?

God orchestrated the creation, redemption, and restoration of man and the reconciling of all things to Himself for His glory.

Ephesians 1:6-10: In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

This second perspective on the Gospel is where we pull back to see that since before time, God purposed to rightfully glorify Himself through the history of the earth and mankind. These scriptures show us that the Gospel is God's plan and he has always been at work to unite all things in Him through Jesus Christ. We see this plan unfolding by looking at history:

God

The story begins with God, who has always been. He has always existed, and He has always existed exactly as He is now. If it seems confusing, it's because He's beyond what anyone can fully comprehend.

Creation

In the beginning, God spoke and everything came into existence. By His command, the entire universe was created and filled with a dramatic display of galaxies, stars, and planets. This includes earth and the perfect garden of paradise called Eden. Of all the beauty He created, the masterpiece was a man and a woman. God made Adam and Eve in His image to reflect Him. They were created with the grand purpose of worshipping Him by loving Him, serving Him, and enjoying a perfect relationship with Him. By God's design, all of creation was in harmony and was exactly the way it was supposed to be. During this time there was no pain, suffering, sickness, or death. There was complete love, acceptance, and intimacy between God and man and throughout creation. But something tragic happened: The Fall.

Disobedience

Adam and Eve were far from being equal to God, yet He lovingly placed them in charge of all He had created in Eden. He gave them the freedom to make decisions and govern the earth with one rule: Not to eat fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. A fallen angel named Satan wanted to overthrow God, so he took the form of a serpent and lied to Adam and Eve. He deceived them into thinking God was not good and did not have their best interest in mind. As a result, they knowingly disobeyed God. In rebellion to what God commanded, Adam and Eve ate the fruit and decided they knew better than God as to what was right and wrong.

Consequence

The consequences of their actions were devastating! Like a virus, sin entered into all of creation and into the hearts of Adam and Eve. Sin, suffering, and pain were passed down from generation to generation; all of creation was distorted from its original design. We have all read or heard the stories of war, poverty, disease, greed, and scandals that plague our world today. Those are all a result of sin. We see that sin is not just something that became part of the human experience, but part of the human condition. An honest glance into our hearts reveals the truth: we are all guilty of

sin. Everyone has sinned and the ultimate consequence, even worse than physical death, is the eternal separation from a loving God.

Promise Made

God removed Adam and Eve from Eden as a result of their sin but left them with a promise of rescue and hope. He promised them one of their descendants would someday rescue mankind from sin. Over the next centuries, God prepared the way for this person who would become the Savior of the world. Exact details of His birth, life, and death were recorded in multiple books of the Old Testament many centuries before His coming. In fact, the whole Bible ultimately points to this one person as the focal point of all human history. His purpose in coming was “to seek and save what was lost” (Luke 19:10).

Promise Kept

Jesus, who was with God from the beginning, became human over 2,000 years ago, fulfilling all the predictions in the Old Testament and keeping the promise of a Savior. Jesus’ birth was miraculous since His mother was a virgin. His life was unique in that He never sinned. And His death was a sacrifice that rescued us from sin and Satan. He willingly, obediently, and sufficiently died an agonizing death on a cross for the sins of all mankind in the greatest display of mercy and grace the world has ever known. The perfectly innocent died to rescue the hopelessly guilty. He took the place on a cross rightfully meant for us, to pay for the past and future sins we’ve committed against God.

But the grave couldn’t hold Jesus. Three days later, Jesus emerged from His tomb, fulfilling His earthly mission to defeat sin by dying on the cross and to defeat death by rising from the dead - just as God promised. Forty days later He returned to Heaven where He reigns as the rightful King. But the story doesn’t end there.

The Restoration

God has also promised He will make all things new when His son returns to earth again. The new heaven and new earth will be completely free of sin and selfishness - a place of perfect friendship with God, others, and all creation. No more shattering earthquakes, devastating tsunamis, or violent storms will plague the earth. No more pain, broken hearts, sickness, or death to trouble us. Everything will be restored to the way it was meant to be. The new earth will once again be the perfect home God intended for His creation. God’s original purpose will flourish, as those who trust in Him will enter into the grand purpose of worshipping Him, serving Him, and enjoying relationship with Him forever. The most wonderful part of this new world is that we will be with God forever experiencing complete joy. We will be restored to a perfect relationship with the One who created, loved, and died for us.

III. Combining Both Perspectives

We must find a way to combine both of these perspectives. The “What happened?” makes little sense without the overarching narrative of God’s creative and redemptive work. The “Why did it happen?” makes little sense without describing the means of redemption – a substitute Savior who has incarnated into the story as Redeemer. In fact, you can easily see that both perspectives necessarily overlap each other, both containing parts of the other. We must see both perspectives without neglecting one or the other. In combining these two perspectives into one comprehensive statement, we might say the following:

The gospel is the historical narrative of the triune God orchestrating the reconciliation and redemption of a broken creation to the Father and each other thru the life, death, resurrection and future return of the Son by the power of the Spirit for God's glory.

Again, we want to emphasize how important it is to know the complete Gospel. It is God's truth and we want every seeker to hear it but we also know we may have to share portions depending on time. You won't know which tools you will need or when you will need them, so it is important to constantly grow in our knowledge, understanding, and belief of the full Gospel.

What does this news mean for us and for the hearer?

The Gospel is not just a sequence of steps (say, the "Four Spiritual Laws" or the "Six Biblical Truths" of Quest for Joy). Those are essential but what makes the Gospel "good news" is that it connects a person with the "unsearchable riches of Christ." There is nothing in itself that makes "forgiveness of sins" good news. Whether being forgiven is good news depends on what it leads to. You could walk out of a courtroom innocent of a crime and get killed on the street. Forgiveness may or may not lead to joy.

Forgiveness of sins is good news because it removes obstacles to the only lasting, all-satisfying source of joy: Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is not merely the means of our rescue from damnation; he is the goal of our salvation. He is not merely the rope that pulls us from the threatening waves; he is the solid beach under our feet, and the air in our lungs, and the beat of our heart, and the warm sun on our skin, and the song in our ears, and the arms of our beloved.

Therefore, to believe the Gospel is not only to receive the awesome truths that the big picture offers but believing the Gospel is also to treasure Jesus Christ as your unsearchable riches. The beauty of the Gospel is that it brings a person into an everlasting and ever-increasing relationship of love and joy with Jesus Christ.

The words Jesus will speak when we come to heaven are: "Enter into the joy of your Master" (Matthew 25:21). The prayer He prayed for us ended on this note: "Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory" (John 17:24). The glory He wants us to see is "the immeasurable riches of [God's] grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:7).

The superlatives "unsearchable" and "immeasurable" mean that there will be no end to our discovery and enjoyment. There will be no boredom. Every day will bring forth new and stunning things about Christ that will cause yesterday's wonder to be seen in new light. This means that not only will there be new sights of glory everyday but the accumulated glory will become more glorious with every new revelation.

What makes the Gospel the good news is that the everlasting and ever-increasing joy of God himself is ours freely and eternally by faith in Jesus Christ and all that he did and does for us.

The Right Response to the News

We have now seen two perspectives on the Gospel and how, when combined, they equip us as evangelists to help seekers understand why the Gospel is good news. The good news requires and evokes a response from the hearer. For those who respond appropriately to the Gospel, God has provided reconciliation and redemption through His plan for the fullness of time. The proper response to this Gospel is two-fold: faith and repentance. These are not two distinct responses, but rather two views of the same response.

Imagine standing on a beach with your back to the sea. In turning around, you only turn once, but there are two ways to describe it. You could say that you turned toward the ocean, or you could say that you turned away from the beach. In the same way, faith and repentance are akin to two ways of describing the same turn. Faith is turning toward God while repentance is changing how you view God and live in light of that. God has provided everything that is necessary for your reconciliation, redemption and restoration. He has done so throughout history, culminating in the person and work of Jesus Christ. As we are sharing the good news we are imploring the hearer to turn to Him and trust in Him.

Just like the reporter in the metaphor we gave earlier, we have been given good news to share. Our news is much weightier and much grander than any other piece of news past, present, or future. Because of this greatness, it is necessary that we know all that we can about our story. We also have to understand what is so good about our news and how seekers should be encouraged to respond to it. The next section will provide some practical steps and tools for how to share the good news of the Gospel.

B. Sharing the Gospel: [METHOD](#)

Teachers, pastors, evangelists, theologians, researchers, and writers of all sorts have invested a great deal of time in trying to discern which method of sharing the Gospel is the most effective to use. We have found that many methods are beneficial depending on the situation. We value that our diverse population of volunteers have a variety of methods that they are comfortable using and that they work hard to discern which method is the best to use with each seeker. Many of our volunteers wouldn't even call what they do a "method;" they just follow the Holy Spirit's leading in the moment. Being sensitive to God's Spirit is, of course, the best thing that one can do when evangelizing, but we know also God is also pleased with order, practice, and good planning. Therefore, we do well in thinking strategically about being God-centered in our sharing of the Gospel. It might seem somehow silly to think that sharing the Gospel would be anything other than God-centered, but if you examine evangelism from a historical perspective you will find many methods used in the past and present that are not.

There are four concepts we can use to move toward God-centered sharing:

- I. Grow yourself in the Gospel
- II. Discern the needs of the seeker
- III. Always share the essentials
- IV. Show the connection between the seeker's story and the Gospel story

I. Growing in the Gospel

We should all grow our personal knowledge and understanding of the full story and implications of the Gospel. The Holy Spirit has a strange affinity for the trained mind. The more prepared we are, the more the Spirit is able to work through us. The flip side is the more the Spirit uses us the more ready we become.

Luke 6:45 says that *"The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks."*

The only treasure of the heart that allows a person to do good is Jesus. This text shows us that, as believers and evangelists treasuring Jesus, he will be seen and glorified when we speak. If we find ourselves struggling with knowing what to say to a nonbeliever in attempts to share the Gospel, let us make Christ an ever-increasing and real treasure so that our mouths might speak out of that abundance. Part of this is knowing God's Word and increasing our familiarity with the Bible. We suggest you read Psalm 119 to be reminded of why we should know Scripture and what happens to us and others when we do so. When we treasure Christ and commit Scripture to our memories, and to our hearts, we begin to see the fullness and the implications of the Gospel. This then allows us to see how we can apply the Gospel to any person's situation as we evangelize.

II. Discern the needs of the seeker

When interacting with a seeker you should listen, ask questions, assess, and share the Gospel according to the needs you discern through the Holy Spirit. In the example of the reporter given earlier in this manual, you could see that there were necessary things the reporter needed to share and there were other things that he could share in order to benefit the listener, though they were less essential or urgent to know. We need to discern this same thing when sharing the Gospel. Even before we begin to share, we need to take time to listen, ask questions, and discern what is the most helpful information to share. We remember Paul and how he wrote, *"To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some"* (1 Cor. 9:20-22).

When Paul administered the Gospel, though he shared the same Gospel with all, he did not have the same script for each person. Instead he preached to the Jews in a way that could be understood by them and to every other group in a way that was most easily understood by them. The truth of his message did not change but his presentation style and approach did.

III. Always share the essentials

Even with all of these variations of Gospel presentations, the Apostle Paul maintained the essentials of presenting the Gospel. He wrote, *"For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve"* (1 Cor. 15:3-5). As we discussed earlier, the essentials of the Gospel are:

- Our *sin*
- The *death* of Christ on the cross to pay for those sins
- The *resurrection* of Christ to provide life everlasting for those who follow Him
- The offer of the free gift of *salvation* to all that can't be earned

IV. Show connection between the seeker and the Gospel

Use the information the person is giving you to transition the conversation into different aspects of the Gospel. Our conversations with seekers must include the essentials of the Gospel, but after we have spent some time discerning the situation of the seeker, we are able to also see how other parts of the Gospel connect with their story. We want to follow Paul's example of being flexible in our approach and using what is relevant to the seeker to help them make the connection to the saving Gospel message.

When we ourselves have grown up in the Gospel, it is easy to see how everything in human life relates back to our innate need for God as the only true satisfier of our being. As evangelists, we must learn the art of relating, rerouting, and transitioning all topics back to God and the good news of the Gospel. We are able to do that by remembering the "How did it happen?" part of our good news, this includes the history of creation. For instance, many seekers have questions about relationship problems, health issues, death, war, sin, abuse, and other similar topics. Our challenge is to share the good news, and how we are all in need of the Christ, but this alone may not answer the seeker's questions about why bad things happen. What does answer it is connecting the seeker personally to the truth about creation. The truth about how God created everything good but man's sin created brokenness in the world making room for war, death, violence, and other negative things to enter. When these kinds of questions come up, we do not have to leave them unanswered and forsake them by only offering a cookie-cutter presentation of the Gospel essentials that does not connect with the topic at hand. As Christians, we have the very best and most accurate answers to all of these questions because we have the true Word of God. We should work the Gospel essentials into responses to these questions based on the story of God's creation and the result of sin.

Other seekers may ask questions about homosexuality, addiction, pre-marital sex, alcohol, love, or other ways we follow our sinful desires. Once again, we should show them love but not shy away from relying on scripture to respond. God is the owner of everything and, therefore, is the only one who can rightfully set how things should be done or used. He rightfully sets the law and only He can determine right from wrong. His perfect design and plan for us is designed from love and not to make life hard or difficult.

We can also share about how all things serve to show God's glory and His character. We can talk about how it is good to seek pleasure and joy but only in so much as it is within God's word. Being a believer and follower of Jesus Christ is incredible because God provides the answers to all things. Through the word of God made flesh (Jesus) we can be reconciled to God. Through the word of God in the Scriptures we are able to reconcile the questions of humanity to truth.

C. A Gospel Heart: **ATTITUDE**

A true evangelical attitude starts with a loving heart prepared to engage whatever brokenness comes in the course of the conversation. The issue will occasionally be something you never expected and have no experience with in your own life. The way we prepare ourselves for this challenge is through **prayer**. We encourage prayer before every volunteer session. Prayer often occurs during and after the conversation. The beauty of evangelism is that the Holy Spirit is in charge and each seeker is somewhere in their spiritual journey. It may be the first step and very rough or it could be the step when God allows you to be a part of that person accepting Jesus as their savior. No matter where the conversation falls on that spectrum, you should start in prayer simply asking for the peace, patience and love to share the Gospel. The words will come and the results are out of your control.

Real communication and a connection take place through **listening**. There is a natural excitement to wanting to share the Gospel. Unfortunately, we can at times let this trick us into thinking this is just another conversation like the last one you just had. Every person is different and his/her circumstances are different. The Gospel message does not change but how we make it relevant to each seeker is dependent on us listening and learning what is truly happening with every person.

One way to learn more about a seeker and make them feel you care is to **ask questions**. This involves thinking about what information may unlock the real trouble that this person is dealing with as well as thinking about how to transition into the Gospel. An example is when a seeker shares all the problems and issues they are dealing with and how life has gone wrong. One simple question that can transition the conversation is to ask ...“What is your relationship like with Jesus?” This tells us a lot about where this person stands spiritually and how to proceed.

A critical element of successful evangelism is to **do everything with love**. Many people expect us to be judgmental and unforgiving. In fact, they may even be convinced that is how God and all Christians operate. We want you to go into each conversation with the idea that your example may be the only true Christian experience they will ever encounter so leave them overwhelmed by your love, patience and understanding. Where appropriate, reminding seekers that we are all sinners, and that God loves all of us despite that, allows others to see that you are humble and not trying to act superior in any way. Get into the habit of saying “we” instead of “you”.

Many people you talk with will acknowledge or ask about sinful behavior. We are not here to condemn or judge but we **do not endorse any sinful behavior**. It is helpful to admit your own sin. It is also important to help others recognize God loves us and Jesus died for us despite our sin. However, it is best to comment on sinful behavior using the Bible as the basis for categorizing the behavior as sinful. In this way, it is not you making a personal determination as to what constitutes sin, but rather the Word of God telling us that certain activities are not good for us and are sinful.

No matter how awkward a conversation may start, you never know when you may meet someone that is open to a change of heart and the truth of the Gospel. **Do not be discouraged** if the conversation does not go as you planned or wish. Be faithful and trust that the Holy Spirit is always at work.