

“I am FBC Diana”

The Gospel is Everything!

Intro: The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a story of real human history. Jesus of Nazareth is claimed to have lived, died, and arisen from the dead to live forevermore. This story either is true or it isn't. If it is true, then it is the biggest and most incredible story of all time. God has indeed offered grace to sinners through Jesus Christ. If it is true, then Jesus has real authority over all humanity. If it is true, then this story is vital to everyone everywhere; and it is the story that overrides and trumps every other story. There is good reason to believe that the story is true, and we who trust in this risen Savior await the final consummation of all that He has told us in this marvelous story.

Luke 23:44-24:27

The Death of Jesus

It was now about the sixth hour, and **there was darkness** over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun's light failed.

And **the curtain of the temple was torn in two.**

Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” And having said this he breathed his last.

Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, “Certainly this man was innocent!” And all the crowds that had assembled for this spectacle, when they saw what had taken place, returned home beating their breasts. And all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance watching these things.

Jesus Is Buried

Now there was a man named Joseph, from the Jewish town of Arimathea. He was a member of the council, a good and righteous man, who had not consented to their decision and action; and he was **looking for the kingdom of God**. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down and wrapped it in a linen shroud and laid him in a tomb cut in stone, where no one had ever yet been laid. **It was the day of Preparation, and the Sabbath was beginning.**

The women who had come with him from Galilee followed and saw the tomb and how his body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments. On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

The Resurrection

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. **Remember how he told you**, while he was still in Galilee, that **the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.**"

And they remembered his words, and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, **but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.**

But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home **marveling at what had happened.**

On the Road to Emmaus

That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened.

While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad.

Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?"

And he said to them, "What things?"

And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. **But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.** Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see."

And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?”

And **beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.**

The Gospel is not:

- **an allegory about good versus evil**
- **a moralistic legend, meant only to teach people to love (Aesop’s fables)**
- **a tale of heroism or self-sacrifice that only inspires (Hercules, Odysseus)**

1. The Gospel is a story of real human history.

- *“It was about the sixth hour until the ninth hour” (23:44) and on the “Day of Preparation” before the Sabbath (23:54).*
 - Exact date and time on a real calendar
- The *“curtain of the Temple was torn in two” (23:45).*
 - What Temple? The Jewish Temple!
 - Where? In Jerusalem!
 - The significance of this event is monumental in human history
- *“Jesus” “breathed his last” (23:46).*
 - A man named Jesus died by way of crucifixion.
- A *“centurion”* observed the whole event of Jesus’ death (23:47).
 - What is a centurion? A specific kind of soldier in the Roman army.
 - Who or what is Rome? One of the most well known civilizations in human history.
 - Roman historians corroborate the Gospel’s accounts
- Jesus’ *“acquaintances” “followed him from Galilee”* to the place where He was killed (23:49).
 - Jesus and His friends are noted as having been from “Galilee.”
 - Real places on real historical maps
- A man named *“Joseph,”* who was *“from the Jewish town of Arimathea”* and a member of the Jewish council (23:50), went to *“Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus” (23:52).*

- Again, real people and places... This citation mentions a Roman authority named Pilate.
 - Here too, Roman historians corroborate the story
- Some women who had been followers of Jesus went to the tomb where they had seen Him buried “*on the first day of the week*” or Sunday. They went “*at early dawn,*” “*taking the spices they had prepared*” (24:1).
 - It is noteworthy here to see that the women are coming to the tomb to put spices on Jesus’ dead body.
 - They are in no way anticipating Jesus’ resurrection, and the writer doesn’t try to convince the reader otherwise
- While the women “*were perplexed*” about the absence of Jesus’ body from the tomb, “*two men stood by them in dazzling apparel*” (24:4). And they “*were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground*” (24:5).
 - 2 things are significant here. (1) Women were the first ones to see the empty tomb and to experience the appearance of the ‘dazzling’ men; (2) the ‘dazzling’ men are described this way, though we later are told that they are angels (24:23).
 - A woman’s testimony was not admissible as evidence in court in those days, so appealing to the testimony of some women was not authoritative or compelling. Luke would have only recorded the testimony because it was true, not because it was helpful to the cause.
 - The angelic beings were not woven into the fabric of a well-organized storyline from a human perspective. These characters don’t enter the scene with obvious origins and clear destinations. They are abrupt and terrifying, even while they are the heralds of the wonderful news.
- “*Mary Magdalene,*” “*Joanna and Mary the mother of James*” are all listed specifically as having been part of the group that told the apostles about what they had seen and heard at the tomb (24:10). But, we are told, the disciples/apostles “*did not believe them*” (24:11).
 - Here again we are told that women, specific women, were the messengers. But now there is even more unfavorable truth to be told. The disciples/apostles did not believe!

This line of consideration could continue, but the point is made that the story of the Gospel is a story set in real human history. It either is true or it isn’t, but one cannot simply relegate it to an allegory, fable, or myth.

The Gospel is not:

- a story about you
- a story dependent upon your response
- an encouragement to live a better life
- a promise that your struggles are all behind you

The disciples made this mistake:

- They said, “*we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel*” (24:21).
 - They were looking for an earthly redeemer to restore an earthly kingdom.
 - They were hoping for someone to help them have a better life now
 - They wanted a Messiah who would make them and their nation the focus of the world
- Jesus called them “*foolish*” and pointed them to what He had been trying to tell them all along (24:25-27).

2. The Gospel is a story about Jesus – He is the substitute for sinners under God’s wrath and the supplier of eternal peace, joy and hope.

- Jesus is the substitute for sinners under God’s wrath
 - Luke 23:44-46 – “44 It was now about the sixth hour, and **there was darkness** over the whole land until the ninth hour, 45 while the sun’s light failed. And **the curtain of the temple was torn in two**. 46 Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” And having said this he breathed his last.”
 - Mark 15:33-34 – “33 And when the sixth hour (noon – measuring from 6am / sunrise) had come, **there was darkness over the whole land** until the ninth hour. 34 And at the ninth hour (3pm) Jesus cried with a loud voice, “*Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?*” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”
 - Darkness is a sign of God’s justice and His judgment
 - God’s presence at Mt. Sinai was indicated with “*thick darkness*,” among other things (Ex. 21:20; Deut. 4:11).
 - God’s judgment against disobedience is described as “*bringing darkness*” (Jer. 13:16).
 - “*Darkness*” is the status of those who are without God’s grace (John 3:19; 1 Pet. 2:9).

- Hell itself is symbolized by tremendous “*darkness*” (Matt. 8:12; 2 Pet. 2:4).
- Jesus’ “*Loud Cry*” upon the cross:
 - Matthew says, “*Jesus cried out with a loud voice...*” (Matt. 27:50)
 - Mark uses a similar expression to Matthew, “*Jesus uttered a loud cry...*” (Mark 15:37).
 - Luke says, “*Jesus called out with a loud voice, ‘Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.’*” (Luke 23:46)
 - John says, “*Jesus said, ‘It is finished.’*” (John 19:30)
 - *Tetelestai* – “I end, I finish, I pay”
 - This term connotes the ideas of consummation, completion, and full extension.
 - Paid in Full!
- Jesus is the supplier of eternal peace, joy and hope.
 - PEACE
 - John 14:27 – Jesus said, “*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.*”
 - Ephesians 2:17 – “*And [Jesus] came and preached peace to you who were far off...*”
 - Colossians 3:15 – “*And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body.*”
 - Philippians 4:7 – “*The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*”
 - JOY
 - Romans 14:17 – “*For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*”
 - Romans 15:13 – “*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him.*”
 - Galatians 5:22-23 – “*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...*”

- HOPE

- 1 Peter 1:21 – “Through [Christ] you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your *faith* and *hope* are in God”
- Titus 2:13 – “We wait for the *blessed hope*--the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ”
- Acts 24:14-15 – Standing before Governor Felix at Caesarea, the Apostle Paul said, “this I confess to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets, *having a hope in God*, which these men themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust.”

Jesus is the only one who actually takes care of sin! God demands perfect righteousness and punishes sin without exception. Jesus is the perfect substitute for sinners – offering both a sacrifice for sin and the perfect righteousness that God demands.

The Peace Jesus brings is peace unlike the world gives and peace that transcends circumstances.

The Joy He gives is right in the midst of adversity and suffering.

The Hope He provides is an eternal hope, and not merely a momentary rescue from worldly difficulties.

The Gospel is not:

- It is not a secondary issue
- It is not a therapeutic tool to be used merely to make you feel better about yourself
- It is not focused upon you – your value, your contributions, or your perspective

3. The Gospel is everything – It changes everything – and God is the focus!

- Luke 24:27 – “*And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.*”
 - Jesus is the point of the entire OT
 - The OT does not offer some other way to be righteous before God

- The OT does not simply show us how godly men and women are supposed to live (in fact most every hero of the OT is a perfect example of what NOT to do)
- The purpose of the OT was always to point to the Promise Keeping God of history – and His ultimate Redeemer
- Jesus is the point of the whole Bible
 - The Bible isn't an instructional book for success
 - The Bible isn't a lucky charm or book of spells
 - The Bible isn't a 'good book' or simply one among many
 - The Bible is God's holy Word, His self-disclosure, His unimaginable revelation; and Jesus is the apex of it all.
- Jesus is the point of Church
 - Church isn't something you *do* (either regularly or occasionally)
 - Church isn't some place you *go*
 - Church isn't an *activity* that you may or may not add to your busy schedule of many life activities
 - Church is the local expression of Jesus' activity on earth. It is the local body to which Christians belong, the Gospel-centered Community in which every member is shaped into the image of Christ, and it is the only God-instituted method of living the Christian life.
- Jesus is the point of life itself
 - Life is not about living as long as you can
 - Life is not a time for collecting the most stuff
 - Life is not about being healthy, comfortable, or happy
 - The purpose of life is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever, and the only way that a sinner can do that is by and through the person and work of Christ.

Have you lived a life of perfect obedience to God?

Have you glorified God – worshiped, honored, and obeyed Him – every moment?

Have you looked to God alone for pleasure, contentment, joy, and satisfaction?

No? Well, the Gospel is everything! It changes everything!