

# Understanding the Gospel Better

*John 3:16-21*

## INTRODUCTION

Many of us have been in church all of our lives, and truth be told, many of us have little knowledge of the message we say we proclaim. When we share the Gospel, if we are one of the few that do, we tend to hit the high points where we focus on a person praying a prayer to invite Jesus into their heart so they can be assured that Heaven is their after-life destination, but really go into very little about why this Gospel they are receiving is such good news. Many people receive this “Gospel” more out of dread than out of delight.

### **John Stott**

All around us we see Christians and churches relaxing their grasp on the gospel, fumbling it, and in danger of letting it drop from their hands altogether.

This morning I want us to consider a little deeper the message we preach so that in turn we better understand the God of the Gospel and just why we call it Good News. We preach He is love, but how many of us live in the inner man the reality of such love. We preach grace, that it is not by works, yet, we ourselves aren't very gracious to others. We preach the Gospel is the truth, not just a truth or one of many, but the truth of the whole world, but how many of us never really take this truth very serious in the details of our lives. We are all guilty of this at some point or the other, and it is good as we begin this year to renew our minds on just what our message is and what kind of God is behind this message we call the good news.

### **Martin Lloyd-Jones**

The glory of the gospel is that when the church is absolutely different from the world, she invariably attracts it.

Like I spoke of last week that when we simply convey the Gospel message through our lips and through our lives with sincerity and reality, the Gospel attracts. We no longer have to depend on the gimmicks but can truly depend on God to draw those in need.

Being Christian is not about becoming a better person, a pagan can do that. It is about becoming a new person. The Gospel isn't about making bad people good, but about making dead people live!

## *John 3:16-21*

“For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world that He might condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. Anyone who believes in Him is not condemned, but anyone who does not believe is already condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the One and Only Son of God.

“This, then, is the judgment: The light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil. For everyone who practices wicked things hates the light and avoids it, so that his deeds may not be exposed. But anyone who lives by the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be shown to be accomplished by God.”

# I. The Mission (16)

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## **Dr. David Gooding of Oxford University**

Humans are the only bit of creation in which God could become. God created humans as image-bearers because He knew at one point in human history He would have to become one of us to save us.

## **Matthew Henry**

By the light of nature we see God as a God above us, by the light of the law we see Him as a God against us, but by the light of the gospel we see Him as Emmanuel, God with us.

## **1 John 2:2**

He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

## **1 John 4:10**

In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

## **Romans 3:21-26**

But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

## **2 Peter 3:9**

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

## **Revelation 21:5**

He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!"

## II. The Motive (16-18)

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### *1 John 4:7-8*

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

### **C.S. Lewis**

There are two kinds of people: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, 'All right, then, have it your way.'

### *Psalm 98*

Sing a new song to the LORD,  
for He has performed wonders;  
His right hand and holy arm  
have won Him victory.  
The LORD has made His victory known;  
He has revealed His righteousness  
in the sight of the nations.  
He has remembered His love  
and faithfulness to the house of Israel;  
all the ends of the earth  
have seen our God's victory.  
Shout to the LORD, all the earth;  
be jubilant, shout for joy, and sing.  
Sing to the LORD with the lyre,  
with the lyre and melodious song.  
With trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn  
shout triumphantly  
in the presence of the LORD, our King.  
Let the sea and all that fills it,  
the world and those who live in it, resound.  
Let the rivers clap their hands;  
let the mountains shout together for joy  
before the LORD,  
for He is coming to judge the earth.  
He will judge the world righteously  
and the peoples fairly.

### III. The Message (19-21)

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#### **Josh McDowell**

Wherever Jesus has been proclaimed, we see lives change for the good, nations change for the better, thieves become honest, alcoholics become sober, hateful individuals become channels of love, unjust persons embrace justice.

#### **N.T. Wright**

“Learning to live as a Christian is learning to live as a renewed human being, anticipating the eventual new creation in and with a world which is still longing and groaning for that final redemption.”

### CONCLUSION

#### **Alexander MacLaren**

The gospel is not speculation but fact. It is truth, because it is the record of a Person who is the Truth.

#### **Tim Keller**

The Christian Gospel is that I am so flawed that Jesus had to die for me, yet I am so loved and valued that Jesus was glad to die for me. This leads to deep humility and deep confidence at the same time. It undermines both swaggering and sniveling. I cannot feel superior to anyone, and yet I have nothing to prove to anyone. I do not think more of myself or less of myself. Instead, I think of myself less.