

Gospel-Shaped Discipleship

Beginning with the Gospel

I. On This Series

1. Its scope
2. Its mode
3. Its rationale
 - (a) LICC's founder – a call to engagement
 - (b) LICC's mission – a vision for discipleship
4. Its tone

II. On the Gospel – Getting it in Focus

III. On the Gospel – Exploring its Dimensions

1. Good news from God
2. Good news about Jesus
3. Good news of salvation
4. Good news for life

For Further Reflection and Discussion

1. What are the components that must go into a definition of the 'gospel' for it to be the gospel?
2. How might such a view of the gospel be supported from Scripture?
3. What is the significance of this understanding of the 'gospel' for a theology of the other dimensions in this series – Scripture, culture, church, and discipleship – and the relationship between these things?
4. Reflect back on all that has been covered. Are there any: (a) things to affirm? (b) thoughts to share? (c) questions to ask? (d) actions to take?

Resources

The following list offers a selection of the resources available on the issues surrounding the definition, nature, and scope of the gospel. Lots of other useful stuff is available online, via journals, blogs, and other pages, if you're prepared to spend some time looking for it; it might be worth doing careful searches for some of the authors and titles mentioned here in order to chase up ongoing discussion.

Darrell Bock, *Recovering the Real Lost Gospel: Reclaiming the Gospel as Good News* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, forthcoming 2010).

Due out in the next few months (though some short excerpts are available on the publisher's website), this looks like it will be a helpful treatment emphasising, like a number of other titles here, the comprehensive scope and transformational impact of the gospel. One of the chapters is titled: 'The Gospel is Rooted in a Unique Action Meeting a Comprehensive Need: The Cross.' I like that.

James V. Brownson et al., *Stormfront: The Good News of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

A critique (from a North American perspective) of how individualism and privatisation of religion have led to truncated versions of the gospel.

Ted A. Campbell, *The Gospel in Christian Traditions* (Oxford: OUP, 2009).

An academic work showing that the same 'basic' gospel laid out in 1 Corinthians 15 is found in different traditions throughout the history of Christian thought.

D.A. Carson, 'What is the Gospel?—Revisited', in Sam Storms and Justin Taylor (eds.), *For the Fame of God's Name: Essays in Honor of John Piper* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010), 147-70, available online at <http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justintaylor/files/2010/10/for_the_fame_of_gods_name.excerpt.pdf>.

A very helpful essay from Don Carson who is keen to emphasise the distinction between the *essence* of the gospel and the *entailments* of the gospel, asking us not to confuse the two. The first part of the essay provides a useful survey of the different 'gospel' words in the New Testament.

Christopher Cocksworth, *Holding Together: Gospel, Church and Spirit – The Essentials of Christian Identity* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2008).

Seeks to 'describe a form of evangelicalism that takes seriously the life of the church and the life of the Spirit and sees them as intrinsic to the life of the gospel'.

John Dickson, *The Best Kept Secret of Christian Mission: Promoting the Gospel with More Than Our Lips* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010).

A truly excellent and highly recommended work, rooted in careful scholarship but written with a light touch, encouraging us to see that we can promote the gospel as much through our everyday *lives* as we can proclaim it with our *lips*. Much of this previously appeared under the title *Promoting the Gospel*, published in 2005, but this is the better version to have.

Greg Gilbert, *What is the Gospel?* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010).

A concise treatment of the gospel in terms of the God to whom we are accountable, humanity as sinful, Christ as God's solution, and humanity's response in repentance and faith.

Chris Green (ed.), *God's Power to Save: One Gospel for a Complex World?* (Apollos, 2006). A helpful collection of essays addressing, among other matters, the vexed issue of whether Paul and Jesus preached different gospels (their answer is 'no', in case you were wondering...).

Jamie A. Grant and Dewi A Hughes (eds.), *Transforming the World? The Gospel and Social Responsibility* (Nottingham: Apollos, 2009).

A collection of essays looking at its chosen topic from the perspectives of Scripture, social ethics, systematic theology and church history, seeking to demonstrate that 'there is no tension between the task of evangelism and the Christian's obligation to care for those in need'.

J.B. Hixson, *Getting the Gospel Wrong: The Evangelical Crisis No One is Talking About* (Xulon Press, 2008).

A highly polemical work whose reading is not helped by being littered with typographical errors, Hixson exposes what he sees as the errors of the *purpose* gospel, the *puzzling* gospel, the *prosperity* gospel, the *pluralistic* gospel, and the *performance* gospel. The book is part of an ongoing debate, particularly prominent in some parts of the church in the USA, between advocates of 'lordship salvation' and 'free grace theology'.

Michael Horton, *Christless Christianity: The Alternative Gospel of the American Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2008), and *The Gospel-Driven Life: Being Good News People in a Bad News World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2009).

Two books which provide a bracing call for our lives and churches to be shaped by the gospel in terms of God's initiative in salvation. Much of this is too bracing even for some of Horton's 'friends': see the lengthy critical review (of *Christless Christianity*) by John Frame at <http://www.frame-poythress.org/frame_articles/2009Horton.htm>.

Lausanne Movement Homepage, <<http://www.lausanne.org/>>.

See especially the documents, 'The Whole Church Taking the Whole Gospel to the Whole World' at <<http://www.lausanne.org/documents/twg-three-wholes.html>>, and *For the Lord We Love* at <http://www.lausanne.org/documents/didasko/Didasko_FTLWL.pdf>.

Tim Keller, 'The Gospel and the Poor', *Themelios* 33.3 (2008), 8-22, <<http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/publications/33-3/the-gospel-and-the-poor>>.

A characteristically thoughtful exploration of the relationship between gospel proclamation and ministry to the poor, where (1) evangelism is distinct, (2) evangelism is more basic than ministry to the poor, (3) but ministry to the poor is inseparably connected to evangelism, where (4) inseparable does not mean a rigid, temporal order.

Timothy Keller, *Gospel in Life: Grace Changes Everything* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010).

An excellent eight-session course for groups, supported by a DVD and Study Guide, showing how the gospel is lived out in the whole of life – in our heart, in our communities, and in the world.

Andreas J. Köstenberger and Michael J. Kruger, *The Heresy of Orthodoxy: How Contemporary Culture's Fascination with Diversity Has Reshaped Our Understanding of Early Christianity* (Nottingham: Apollos, 2010).

This is now the best place to go to for a serious and helpful treatment of issues surrounding the origins of the New Testament, the development and textual transmission of the New Testament manuscripts, and all the arguments that still get dragged out in discussions of Dan Brown's *Da Vinci Code*.

Brian D. McLaren, *A New Kind of Christianity: Ten Questions That Are Transforming the Faith* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2010), esp. 181-210 (on 'The Gospel Question'). Provocative, as ever, with the pages cited devoted to the gospel.

Paul McGlasson, *God the Redeemer: A Theology of the Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993).

Helpful, with a strong focus on God himself, warning against *underinterpreting* as well as *overinterpreting* the gospel.

Will Metzger, *Tell the Truth: The Whole Gospel to the Whole Person by Whole People. A Training Manual on the Message and Methods of God-Centered Witnessing*, 3rd edn. (Downers Grove: IVP, 2002).

A significant and long-standing work on evangelism, currently in its third edition.

Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (London: SPCK, 1989).

A classic discussion of how the gospel relates to secular, humanist, pluralist culture.

Chris Seay, *The Gospel According to Jesus* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2010).

Just received my copy this week! Seems to take its cue from a view of 'righteousness' being 'restorative justice', seeing the gospel through that prism.

Richard Stearns, *The Hole in Our Gospel: What Does God Expect of Us? The Answer That Changed My Life and Might Just Change the World* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2009).

Written by the President of World Vision U.S., this is pitched as a challenge for those of us who follow Christ to seek 'a new world order... hallmarked by compassion, justice, and proclamation of the good news'. Has caused controversy, as a number of respondents think there's a 'hole' in Stearns' understanding of the gospel.

Mack Stiles, *Marks of the Messenger: Knowing, Living and Speaking the Gospel* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2010).

A theologically conservative treatment of evangelism.

Christopher J.H. Wright, *The Mission of God's People: A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission*, *Biblical Theology for Life* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010).

In line with his previous works on this topic, here is a theology of mission which starts in Genesis 1 rather than Acts 1, seeking to give a comprehensive reply to the question, Who are we, and what are we here on earth for, as God's people?

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