

The Gospel of Jesus Christ

By Peter Gray

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is Good News. It is not bad news followed by good news, or even worse, bad news followed by the possibility of good news if only you can get your act together. It is Good News from start to finish.

The Gospel does not begin with how bad we are, it begins with how good God is. It begins with the eternal purpose of the Gracious God as stated by Paul in Ephesians 1, and what He has made of you, me and the whole human race in Jesus Christ. The question, "Where were you before the world was created?" is answered, "You were in the Father's thoughts. He chose you, hand picked you, for adoption into His family." [\[1\]](#)

The radical nature of the Gospel and what makes it such Good News, is not simply that our inclusion in the Divine life is God's plan, as good as that is. But what makes it so Good is that not only is this God's plan, but God's plan has been passionately fulfilled in Jesus Christ. It's not up to us to make this happen. We are too valuable to God for Him to leave it up to us, He took it upon Himself and did it in us, with us and for us. God wanted it to happen and He made it happen!

How did God do this? He sent His Son. He sent the Son not just to die in our place, but to live in our place. In the Incarnation, God became human, but He did not turn Himself into a man in such a way that He ceased to be God. Instead, He assumed humanity, in a way that means He incorporated humanity into His existing divine life. In Jesus Christ, God and man co-exist. God and man are united and reconciled. As Jesus Christ is fully God and fully human in one person, then what else can we encounter in Jesus Christ but the complete reconciliation of humanity with God? The most important thing in all the world, in the Bible or out of it, is something that God has done – forever, finally done. And it is this; the reconciliation of God and humanity. (Forsyth, 1965: 64)

The truth of your life is that you are not lost. The truth is that you were lost but you have been found by God the Father Almighty in His Son Jesus Christ. That is who you are. "You are not abandoned, alone or rejected. You have been claimed, accepted and embraced by the Father in His Son." (Kruger, 1997: 11)

In Jesus Christ, your failures and wrongness, your guilt and shame, your alienation, have been destroyed on the cross. All the blackness has been forgiven, wiped out, put to death. It is done, finished, gone forever. He has put an end to everything that separates us from His Father and from sharing in His life. (Kruger, 1997: 11)

Jesus Christ has achieved the eternal purpose of the Father of our adoption by coming to earth as one of us, and not only dying in our place (as crucial as that is), but also living in our place. Jesus Christ is both God come to us and us come to God. He is God relating to us and at the same time He is man responding to God, perfectly. He is the God who speaks and the man who listens. He is the God who commands and the man who obeys. He is the God worthy of worship and the man who worships. He is both the asking God and the answering man.

The centre of the Gospel is not our religious experience, not our faith or repentance or decision....but a unique relationship between Jesus and the Father; a unique relationship that we have been drawn into. (Torrance, 1996: 19)

There is a command for us to respond to the God who loves us so profoundly, but it is not a challenge for us to make a commitment to God, nor is it a demand that we love God in return (in our strength). The Bible asks us to put our faith in the commitment He has made to us. Our faith or hope must not be in our commitment to God, but in His to us. Jesus Christ has made the perfect response, the perfect act of obedience and the perfect act of faith, and He did this in our place and in our name, doing for us what we were not able to do for ourselves. *“Our response in faith and obedience is a response to the Response already made for us by Christ...”* (Torrance, 1981: 141). [\[2\]](#)

As the world has been united with Christ and shares in the Divine life, the last judgement will therefore be one of acceptance in the beloved, Jesus Christ, not one of condemnation. Jesus will hand you to the Father and say ‘Here is your child; what do you think of him?’ And the Father will say, ‘Wonderful! Exactly what I had in mind all along.’ (Capon, 1993: 73)

Though it seems to be a strange choice, you are free to deny what God has made of you in Christ, yet this choice does not change the reality of who you are. Paradoxically, even in your denial, you are unable to depart from God, because He holds you in an act of eternal love that will not let you go. (Torrance, 1949: 317).

In short, the Gospel is the news that God loves you, has always loved you and will always love you. It is the hilariously Good News that God wants you to be in His family, a participant in the Divine life, yet not only this (but wait there’s more!); it is that God has made it happen. God wanted you and He came and got you. He searched you out, hoisted you up on His shoulders and carried you Home. You are a sharer in the very life of God whether you know it or not. The truth of the Gospel is that God could have made a world without you and me, but that such a world would be incomplete for Him. God wanted you and me just the way we are, simply because this is the you and this is the me that He has always loved. (Powell, 1984: 97)

[\[1\]](#) EPH 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. 4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will-- 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

[\[2\]](#) “He was the Word of God brought to bear upon man, but He was also man hearing that Word, answering it, trusting it, living by it – by faith. He was the great Believer – vicariously believing in our place and in our name.” (Torrance, 1960: 233)

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This vision of the Gospel of Jesus Christ has been a long time in the making for me. My vision of God has undergone a staggering alteration and I owe a debt of gratitude to the people who have re-shaped my thinking. The understanding of God and of Jesus Christ that is portrayed in this short essay and elsewhere on this website, is a product of reading James and Tom Torrance and Robert Capon, and I graciously thank those men for their tireless efforts to proclaim the Gospel.

In particular, I would like to especially thank three men who have influenced and guided my theological and personal growth beyond calculation. These are men whom I have had the profound privilege of not only reading or hearing their thought, but of becoming friends with and entering into dialogue with. So, a very special thankyou and debt of gratitude goes to, David McGregor, John Powell S.J. and Baxter Kruger. The work that you guys have done in your areas is first class, and your influence will be felt by generations to come.

Thankyou all, very, very much.

Peter Gray.
