

# The Great Giveaway

*A course in promoting the gospel*

## 07 Telling Jesus' Story

### 1. WHAT IS 'THE GOSPEL'?

- If someone were to ask you to explain what 'the gospel' is, what would you say? What *is* 'the gospel'?<sup>1</sup>

*The letters of the New Testament contain a number of 'gospel' summaries, where the content of 'the gospel' is made explicit.*

- Look up the following passages:

Romans 1:2-4; 1 Corinthians 15:1-5; 2 Timothy 2:8

- What do you notice about all these gospel summaries; what do they have in common? **They are all about Jesus – his birth, death, resurrection and appearances. In fact each of these 'creeds' is a 'plot summary' of the accounts of Jesus' life found in the Gospels.**

*Now read Acts 10:34-43 and 13:16-39. These are examples of what the apostles preached when they preached 'the gospel'.*

- What do these 'sermons' have in common with the gospel summaries above? **They fill them in in more detail; each of them retell Jesus' birth, miracles, teaching, arrest, death, resurrection, and appearances.**
- What is different about them? **They explain the significance of the events surrounding Jesus' life, death and resurrection; they emphasise Christ's kingship/messiahship and the offer of forgiveness. In other words they speak of Jesus as Saviour and Lord – these two themes are core to the New Testament's understanding of 'the gospel'.**

*Drawing together the threads of our study so far, 'the gospel' is:*

A retelling of the events of Jesus' life.....	(the <b>structure</b> of the gospel)
which focuses on his death and resurrection.....	(the <b>heart</b> of the gospel)
and shows him to be God's Saviour & Lord.....	(the <b>significance</b> of the gospel)

**\* Ask people if they have any questions.**

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<sup>1</sup> In the ancient world, 'gospel' was an important word corresponding pretty closely to the modern media term, 'news-flash'. It referred to an announcement about highly significant events (often good, sometimes bad). The first Christians adopted this word to refer to the highly significant events surrounding God's salvation through Jesus. They had the world's most important 'news-flash'.

## 2. THE GOSPEL IN TWO WORDS – A GOSPEL OUTLINE

*Hand out to each group member the two pages entitled 'The gospel in two words' and 'Appendix Two: the gospel in two words'. These come from The Great Giveaway and can be found following this page.*

*NB. Make sure you have enough time to do Exercises 1 -3 properly.*

**Once you have completed the Exercises spend some time discussing how this series of studies on promoting the gospel has been helpful (or not, as the case may be!). Please record people's comments and bring them along to our next Home Group Leaders meeting.**

## 2) THE GOSPEL IN TWO WORDS

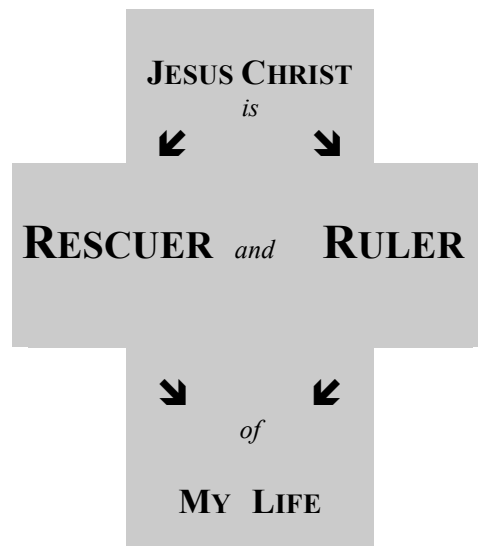
The following gospel outline builds upon this material and upon the Gospel Bites method. It focuses on the life of Jesus, while integrating the important truths about sin, judgment, atonement, grace, faith and repentance. The outline is based on the meaning of the Lord's two names, *Jesus Christ*.

'**Jesus**' ('God rescues') points to his work as God's **RESCUER**, one half of the gospel message.

'**Christ**' ('anointed one') points to his status as God's **RULER**, the other half of the gospel message.

These twin themes of 'rescue' and 'rule' (Saviour and Lord) contained in Jesus' two names provide a convenient, accurate and easy-to-remember framework for retelling the events of Jesus' life, especially those of his death and resurrection.

In a few minutes we will learn a full outline of this model but for now, simply acquaint yourself with the simple diagram outline below as the leader offers an example of "The Gospel in Two Words" based on the full outline in appendix two.



**NOTE:** This outline is not meant to provide a strict set of words that must be delivered in one monologue. It is intended to provide an easy-to-remember framework by which you can retell the news about Jesus **in your own words**, at whatever pace is appropriate for your situation. Remember, conversations usually have lots of interaction. Be open to this. It may be that your listener has questions (or disagreements) about sin, judgment, forgiveness or the historicity of the story about Jesus. In this case, it is appropriate to stop and discuss the issues before moving to the next points.

### EXERCISE

1. In small groups, or one to one, carefully read the full outline in appendix two on page 30.
2. Take turns outlining the full gospel **in your own words** using the model you've just learnt. You may use the diagram outline as a prompt if you wish.
3. Once you've done this, try it again, this time integrating your own story of faith (how you came to believe these things) and/or a 'gospel bite' or two into the gospel outline.

## APPENDIX TWO: The gospel in two words

<i>Introduce</i>	<p><u>Step 1.</u> <b>JESUS CHRIST</b></p> <p>Christianity is not primarily about obeying rules or rituals. It’s actually about responding to a person, Jesus Christ. In fact, all you need to know to become a Christian is contained in his two names: ‘Jesus’ and ‘Christ’. Let me explain ... <b>(Steps 2 and 3 can be done in reverse order if you prefer)</b></p>	
<i>Explain</i>	<p><u>Step 2.</u> <b>‘RESCUER’</b> <b>through his life and death</b></p> <p>Most of our names have some meaning. For example, my name, _____ means _____ . The name ‘Jesus’ simply means ‘God rescues’, and it captures one of the two main themes of his life. He insisted that people had neglected their Maker and mistreated one another and so deserved to be condemned by God. He insisted also that he had been sent by God to save, or rescue, us from that judgment.</p>	<p><u>Step 3.</u> <b>‘RULER’</b> <b>through his life and resurrection</b></p> <p>Jesus’ second name, ‘Christ’, captures the second half of the Christian faith. The word ‘Christ’ is not a surname. It is a title, like ‘Prime Minister’ or ‘King’, only far more prestigious. The ‘Christ’ was to be God’s appointed leader of humanity, the one who would speak and act on God’s behalf, and at the end of history even decide the eternal verdict of every individual. In other words, Jesus was not only God’s ‘rescuer’, he was God’s Ruler.</p>
<i>Describe</i>	<p>Jesus displayed his role as God’s Rescuer throughout his whole life. He sought out the religious and unreligious alike and offered them forgiveness or rescue from God’s judgement <i>[At this point, any number of stories from Jesus’ life, or ‘Gospel Bites’, illustrating his rescue or forgiveness could be told].</i></p> <p>Most importantly, Jesus’ rescue mission was accomplished when he died on the cross. At that moment, he took the punishment we deserve, so that we could be forgiven. <i>[At this point, an aspect of your own story of faith which relates to forgiveness could be told.]</i></p>	<p>Jesus displayed his authority as God’s Ruler throughout his whole life. The things he said and did were glimpses of this authority. <i>[At this point, any number of stories from Jesus’ life, or ‘Gospel Bites’, illustrating his authority as the Christ could be told.]</i></p> <p>Nowhere was his authority more visible than when he was raised to life again. This was God’s statement to the world that Jesus, and no one else, was his appointed ruler. <i>[At this point, an aspect of your own story of faith which relates to Christ’s leadership of you could be told.]</i></p> <p>The words ‘Jesus’ &amp; ‘Christ’ also help us to understand how to become a Christian ...</p>
<i>Challenge</i>	<p><b>MY LIFE</b></p>	
	<p><u>Step 4.</u> If Jesus is God’s Rescuer – the one who lived and died so we could escape God’s punishment – it makes sense to ask for that rescue.</p> <p>A swimmer caught in a rip doesn’t simply paddle silently. S/he yells out, “HELP!” In the same way, the Christian life can begin with the simple request: “Dear God, I know that I deserve your punishment but because of Jesus, your Rescuer, please forgive me!”</p>	<p><u>Step 5.</u> If Christ is God’s Ruler – the rightful director and judge of our lives – it makes sense to entrust ourselves to his leadership.</p> <p>Following a brilliant and inspiring leader (in sport, or politics) is a joy and an honour. Following Christ is the greatest joy and honour a man or a woman can experience. Take up this opportunity and say: “Dear God, I entrust myself to the leadership of Christ.”</p>

