



PART 1 - INTRODUCTION
THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL
BY RANDY MURPHY

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God's Call to Obedience

INTRODUCTION: THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

INTRO

Introduction to Part One: The Gospel and Our Relationship With Others

You are about to embark on a great journey in discovering how to bring glory to God by developing a life of growing obedience. God's call on the believer is first and foremost to follow Christ, which produces a changed life: a changed relationship with Christ, a changed relationship with His Body, a changed relationship with others and therefore a changed purpose in this world.

In Part One of *God's Call to Obedience*, you will explore the implications of the gospel and your relationships with others. Sin has messed up some, if not many of your relationships. Through the gospel, God desires to reconcile those relationships to their intended design to reveal His life-transforming power. The greatest commandments of all are to "love God and love others." Love is to be the hallmark of the follower of Christ. The sin which permeates relationships has made loving others difficult. You will be sinned against by others until the day *they* die – you need a way to deal with *their* sin. You will sin against others until the day that *you* die – you need a way to deal with *your* sin!! Christ through the cross has provided all that is necessary to deal with all of this sin!

Living out the reality of a personal relationship with Christ in a way that puts Him on display is directly determined by your view of God and your view of the gospel. Any sin in your life, anything that hinders your growth in Christ and any sinful response to difficult situations, is a result of a wrong view of God or failure to live out the implications of the gospel.

God is on a mission to reveal Himself and that mission is accomplished, in part, through the gospel. The "gospel" is often described as the good news of how to go to heaven instead of going to hell, which is a key result. But the gospel involves a much bigger story than just how it impacts you personally. This story involves creation, the Fall, redemption and ultimately restoration.

Creation:

The gospel story begins with **creation**. God created a universe out of nothing by the power of His word. This included the heavens and the earth and all that is within it.

- Creation does not speak audibly in words but its message goes out to the ends of the earth, making the reality of God clearly visible to all. (cf. Rom. 1:18-20)
- God specifically created man in His own image to further reveal Himself and then gave him the task of tending this creation.
- Man was designed not only to reflect God's character, but also to interact with Him and the rest of creation in love and harmony.

“For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.”
Col. 1:16,17 NASB

The Fall:

This harmony was greatly dismantled by the **Fall**. Given the ability to choose, Adam chose to disobey God and strive to have life on his own terms. He intended to establish himself as his own god, defying God's authority. All generations since Adam have inherited this sinful nature and therefore, are separated from their Creator. Man now, in his natural state, is a sinner who:

- Rebels against God from birth (Is. 48:8b; Ps. 51:5; 53:1-3; 58:3)
- Breaks God's commands continually (Rom. 3:23)
- Does not want to submit to God's authority (Rom. 5:10a)
- Desires to control his own life (Is. 53:6)
- Does not want to deny himself and follow Jesus (Luke 9:23)
- Seeks to please God on his own terms (Rom. 3:11; Prov. 16:25)
- Deserves eternal punishment (Rom. 6:23)

The harmony with God and His creation was broken – death, both spiritually and physically, was put into motion. The impact is comprehensive, alienating man from the very One for whom he was created. He is left in a hopeless state, incapable of doing anything to fix this plight. (Rom. 5:5-10)

Redemption:

Even in this tragic tale of sin entering and remaining in the world, God refuses to give up on His creation and kingdom. God in His great mercy and grace provides helpless sinners the way for **redemption**.

God's justice is perfect. Therefore, He demands punishment for man's violation of His Holy Law, which is sin. (Deut. 32:4; Ezek. 18:4)

God's love is perfect. Therefore, He created a plan to save sinful man from the punishment of hell. (Eph. 2:4-5; John 3:16)

- He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, who is God, to become a man. (John 1:1; John 1:14)
- Christ lived a perfect life. (Heb. 5:9)

- Christ died an agonizing death on a cross taking man's sin upon himself.
 - To take God's wrathful punishment for man's sin (Is. 53:5)
 - To complete the work needed to save the sinner from hell (John 19:30)
- Christ offers His completed sacrifice as a free gift to undeserving sinners. (Rom. 6:23)

God's promise in Christ is to give eternal life in heaven to all who receive His gift. (John 14:2)

- Man must respond in faith, trusting only in Christ for his salvation.
- He must not depend on his good life or his good deeds as a means to gain favor or eternal life with God. (Eph. 2:8-9)
- He must realize that Christ's sacrificial death and glorious resurrection provided everything needed for his salvation. (1 Pet. 3:18a)

Man is made repentant by the work of God's Spirit. (Acts 11:18)

- The Holy Spirit gives man a willingness to let God control his life. (Rom. 8:13-14)
- The Holy Spirit gives man a willingness to turn away from his sin and to obey God. (John 14:15-17)

“But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior.”
TITUS 3:4-6

God seals the believer's eternal salvation with His Holy Spirit, who is God Himself living inside the Christian. (Eph. 1:13-14)

Man's response of faith to the provision of Christ restores relationship with God, his creator, and places him as a member of His body, the church.

This is the heart of the gospel – the result of redemption:

- man who was once dead, is now alive.
- man who was once condemned, is now accepted in the Beloved.
- man who was alienated from God, is adopted as His child.

- man who was in bondage to sin, is now free.
- man who was isolated and alone is now part of His body, the church.
- man who lived for himself, now lives for God.
- man who was hopeless now has hope.

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

1 PET. 2:9-10 NASB

Restoration:

But the story of redemption does not end with us!

- God’s plan is much bigger - it involves the **restoration** of all things back to their created purpose. (Col. 1:19-22)
- God’s salvation does not stop with humankind.
- God’s plan embraces His whole creation.

“HUMAN SIN SPREADS BROKENNESS AND DESTRUCTION TO THE WHOLE CREATION INCLUDING PLANTS AND ANIMALS, BUT GOD’S SALVATION WILL RESTORE PEACE AND WHOLENESS TO ALL LIVING THINGS. IF WE IGNORE THIS EMPHASIS IN SCRIPTURE OUR VIEW OF SALVATION IS TOO NARROW.”¹

CRAIG G. BARTHOLOMEW AND MICHAEL W. GOHEEN

The hope for the future is to be in the presence of God, unhindered by the flesh and sin, giving Him glory and praise for all eternity. Finally free from the devastating results of sin and the ongoing heartache of living in a fallen world, we are restored to the relationship with God, which He intended in the original creation.

Part One: The Gospel and Our Relationship With Others is designed to help you begin relating to others, especially the difficult people in your life, the way God intended. Embracing the gospel gives you the resources and ability to relate to others according to God’s design. When you practice loving others biblically by forgiving, forbearing and admonishing one another and by putting on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, you glorify Him. The story of the gospel is being lived out and His mission is being accomplished!!