



PART 2 - INTRODUCTION
THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE GOSPEL
BY RANDY MURPHY

**“I am more sinful and flawed
than I ever dared believe.
I am more accepted and loved
than I ever dared hope.”¹**

Tim Keller

God's Call to Obedience

INTRODUCTION: IMPLICATIONS OF THE GOSPEL

INTRO

Introduction to Part Two: The Gospel and Our Relationship to the Fall

In *Part One: The Gospel and Our Relationship With Others*, you learned how to forgive those who have sinned against you and how to seek forgiveness from God and others. This is necessary because of sin which is a result of the Fall. However, this is just the beginning of the work that God wants to do in you. If you do not address the heart issues behind the behaviors that are sinful and hurtful to God and others, you will continue to interact in ways that are damaging to your relationships.

In *Part Two: The Gospel and Our Relationship to the Fall*, you will look at the heart issues that motivate your sinful behavior. You will begin to identify the unbelief and pride that are behind your desire and demand to control your world on your terms. The cross provides the freedom from the penalty and power of sin; the resurrection provides “new life” manifested through living a surrendered life in Christ.

The Fall of man was devastating and all encompassing. All mankind, since Adam, is born in sin and therefore, is totally depraved. Instead of worshipping the Creator, man arrogantly worships himself. The result is that he doesn't live the life he was originally designed to live and he doesn't live in the world in which he was originally designed to live.

“ SIN MARS THE IMAGE OF GOD IN US; WE NO LONGER REFLECT THE PERFECTION GOD CREATED US TO REFLECT. BECAUSE OF SIN, THINGS SIMPLY AREN'T THE WAY THEY WERE ORIGINALLY MEANT TO BE. THE STORY OF THE HUMAN RACE, AS PRESENTED IN THE BIBLE, IS THE STORY OF GOD FIXING BROKEN PEOPLE LIVING IN A BROKEN WORLD. IT IS THE STORY OF GOD'S VICTORY OVER THE MANY RESULTS OF SIN IN THE WORLD ² ...NOT ONLY DO WE AS SINNERS LACK ANY SPIRITUAL GOOD IN OURSELVES, BUT WE ALSO LACK THE ABILITY TO DO ANYTHING THAT WILL IN ITSELF PLEASE GOD, AND WE LACK THE ABILITY TO COME TO GOD IN OUR OWN STRENGTH. EVERY PART OF OUR BEING IS AFFECTED BY SIN – OUR INTELLECTS, OUR EMOTIONS AND DESIRES, OUR HEARTS, OUR GOALS AND MOTIVES, AND EVEN OUR PHYSICAL BODIES.” ³

WAYNE GRUDEM

Because of the Fall, you and your world are a mess. That is why you so desperately need the Gospel! Because of the Fall you have a distorted view of yourself and a distorted view of God. At the core of your heart is unbelief in God: His character, His commands and His promises. Instead, you choose to believe in self and Satan. The gospel message corrects all of those erroneous beliefs by showing that:

- I am a sinner who deserves the wrath of God – He is Holy, I am not.
- I have a new relationship with Christ – He is in charge, I am not.

- I live with a new purpose – I live to please Him, not myself.
- I live for a new goal – I live for His glory, not my own.

The gospel is all about the reality of who God is: you need to right-size your view of God: He is big – you are small; He is God – you are not!!

The gospel exposes the desperate state you were in and reveals God's plan to redeem you from this mess. To keep the big picture of the gospel in focus you must keep the different aspects of redemption in balance. Tim Keller expresses this balance in three realities:

- The gospel is the good news of gracious acceptance.
- The gospel is the good news of changed lives.
- The gospel is the good news of the new world coming. ⁴

Understanding the reality of each of these is crucial in living as a true follower of Christ. The gospel is about a changed life; it is about becoming a disciple not just a convert. This starts with a changed relationship with Christ and His body, the church.

Once alienated from God, you are now graciously accepted.

“ 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

- You were once enemies deserving of God's wrath, but now you are loved and accepted!!

“ JESUS LIVED THE LIFE WE SHOULD LIVE. HE ALSO PAID THE PENALTY WE OWE FOR THE REBELLIOUS LIFE WE DO LIVE. HE DID THIS IN OUR PLACE (Is. 53:4-10; 2 COR. 5:21; MARK 10:45). WE ARE NOT RECONCILED TO GOD THROUGH OUR EFFORTS AND RECORD, AS IN ALL OTHER RELIGIONS, BUT THROUGH HIS EFFORTS AND RECORD.” ⁵

TIM KELLER

- You can do nothing to earn God's grace or continue to receive His favor.

The Christian life is a relationship that produces greater obedience -not a life of obedience that produces greater relationship.

- You have a changed relationship with God, which should produce a changed relationship with others.
- You have been shown God's mercy and grace, which should encourage you to show mercy and grace to others.
- You have received God's unconditional love, which should produce a greater love for God and His people.

Once dead in your sin, you now have a changed life (Eph. 2:4-7; 1 Cor. 6:9-11)

God did not save you to leave you the way you were!! You are now freed from the power of sin to live a life that pleases Him and serves others. To show your love for Him you can now choose to obey Him, laying aside the "old self."

“ in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.”

EPH. 4:22-24 NASB

- You are a new creation in Christ.

You have been given not only a new nature and disposition, but also a new heart that is free from the power of sin and capable of living to please Him.

- You have a new identity.

As a follower of Christ you now live for a different kingdom. You are to become like Him and to walk in a manner worthy of your calling.

- You now desire to show your love for Him through a life of growing obedience.

The gospel is, therefore, radically different from religion. Religion operates on the principle: ‘I obey, therefore I am accepted.’ The gospel operates on the principle: ‘I am accepted through Christ, therefore I obey.’⁶ --Tim Keller

Religion encourages a “performance-oriented” approach which produces people who are self-righteous and arrogant because they:

- are informed but not transformed. (1 Cor. 8:1)
- have changed behavior but do not have a changed heart. (Luke 18:11-14)
- live by a formula rather than by faith. (Matt. 7:21)

Keller goes on to say, “Change does not happen through ‘trying harder’ but only through encountering the radical grace of God.”⁵ You must come to see that Christianity is not fundamentally an invitation to get more religious – it is an invitation to be in a daily relationship with God based on His grace demonstrated to us through Christ’s atoning death on the cross!!

Once living with no hope, you now have the hope of a new world coming.

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.”

Titus 2:11-14 NASB

As you grow in your grace-based relationship with God and grow in your love-based relationship with Christ, you become light to a dark world. You live with the hope of a new world coming and are part of reflecting that hope as you engage in the world around you.

- You live with the knowledge that God is in the process of reconciling all things back to Himself. (Col. 1:20)
- You live as “aliens” in this world. (1 Pet. 2:11)
- You live with the hope of a “new heaven and new earth” that restores God’s original design to a perfect relationship with Him, glorifying Him forever!! (Titus 2:11-14)

In the meantime you are to be engaging in your world in a way that demonstrates the reality of your new life in Christ. This involves interacting in our culture with justice and mercy.

“He has told you, O man, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice,
to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?”
MICAH 6:8 NASB

As you live out the gospel daily and allow the Spirit of God to change you from the inside out, you can begin to experience God’s design for life and relationships. The gospel specifically addresses the impact of the Fall on your thinking, motivation and behaviors in a way that can be transformed to produce in you the very character of Christ. You need to be reminded daily of the core of the gospel:

I am more sinful and flawed than I ever dared believe. I am more accepted and loved than I ever dared hope. ⁷--Tim Keller

Through the grace of God the gospel provides what is necessary to live an obedient life motivated out of your love for Christ...

- You have a new relationship with Christ and His Body – you are graciously accepted, forgiven and loved.
- You have a changed life – the power of the resurrection lives in you to transform you.
- You have a new mission – to know Him and make Him known.

Part Two: The Gospel and Our Relationship to the Fall is designed to help you identify the specific ways the Fall has impacted you and the specific patterns of unbelief that are keeping you from living an obedient, surrendered life. You will start by discovering your sinful patterns of self-protection that have become your normal way of relating to life. As you begin to understand the root causes of your sinful behaviors, you can respond with confession in repentance through the life transforming power of the gospel.