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THE GOSPEL FOR REAL LIFE

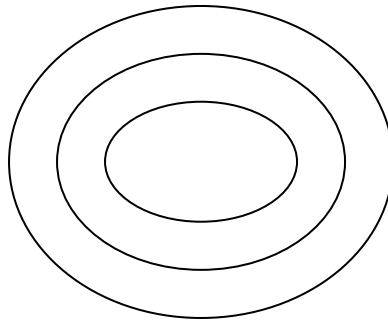
Introduction

- A Recently Asked Question – “What is the greatest, most crying need in the church today?”

Not just a biblical/theological literacy but a *functioning* biblical/theological literacy, *especially a functioning gospel*. I believe a local church is healthy to the degree that: 1) its pastor-teachers are able—accurately, effectively and broadly—to bring the gospel to bear specifically into the real lives of the people; and 2) its people have a deep personal understanding of and a deep personal appreciation for the gospel so as to be able to live in the good of the gospel daily.

One of the greatest challenges, yet one of the most important tasks, of pastoral ministry is to help people *actually see the connections* between the gospel and the thinking and behavior that make up their everyday lives. We know well the centrality of the gospel message but in order for it to have a *functional* centrality it must be *clearly, carefully and consistently* connected to the real issues—issues of thought and conduct—of people’s lives. This kind of ministry is most greatly needed.

I. The Functional Centrality of the Gospel: A Biblical Paradigm



A. The Essential Centrality of the Gospel

- In explicit biblical statements -

I Corinthians 15:3 – “*For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures.*”

B. Doctrinal Implications of the Gospel - “Gospel Truths”

“... *doctrine that conforms to the glorious gospel*” I Timothy 1:10-11

- The idea of “Gospel shaped” doctrine -

- Some examples -

Romans 5:1 – *“Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Romans 8:1 – *“There is, therefore, now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”*

Romans 8:32 – *“He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, with him, graciously give us all things.”*

C. Behavioral Implications of the Gospel - “Gospel Conduct”

“let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel” Philippians 1:27 (cf. Galatians 2:14, Titus 2:1)

- The idea of “Gospel shaped” conduct –

- Some examples -

I Corinthians 6:18-20 – *“Flee from sexual immorality. . . You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.”*

Ephesians 4:32 – *“. . . forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”*

Ephesians 5:25 – *“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.”*

II Corinthians 8:7,9 – *“. . . see that you excel in this act of grace also . . . for you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.”*

Ultimately, *all* Christian behavior should flow out of the gospel.

II. The Functional Centrality of the Gospel: Implications & Opportunities

A. In the Effect of the Gospel in Your Own Life -

B. In the Teaching (and reception of teaching) from God's Word -

C. In Our Caring for One Another -

D. A Gentle Word of Warning –

Conclusion: