

Gospel Theology - Mini Course

5-Chapter Gospel

We've talked about how the Gospel applies to all areas of life, but sometimes that can still feel a bit abstract. How do I practically and tangibly apply the gospel to every area of my life? And do you really mean every area, or are you just talking about the BIG things in life? "The gospel is for the BIG things, but not the small details of my life."

When I say all areas, I mean ALL areas of our lives. This lesson will help you to better understand and apply, with a practical tool, the gospel to every area of your life.

We need to remember the Gospel is a story and like most stories we read, the Gospel has chapters to it. Right now there is a very harmful gospel that is out there in the world. Perhaps you've heard it.

2-Chapter Gospel

It's a 2-chapter gospel. It says the world is dying, it's going to hell, it's bad, so we just need to save people and liberate them. This 2 Chapter Gospel causes Christians to think their salvation is merely a train ticket to heaven, and that's it. What you do while you wait for the train doesn't matter.

The problem with this is you can't really build sound theologies around it. I mean, how do we build a doctrine for work or for marriage? Work is bad, marriage is bad, we just need to be rescued?! I don't think so. 2 Chapter Gospel, it's not very helpful.

4-Chapter Gospel

The 4-chapter gospel is one I'm sure you all have heard; Creation, Fall, Redemption, Restoration.

Let's take the theology of work. God created work in creation, it's a good thing. Adam had a job, a great job. Then the fall messed it all up, but then in Jesus Christ's redemptive work, it's repurposed work. It can be something beautiful and one day in the new heavens and new earth, work will be fully restored. Pretty cool right?

Now as helpful as that is, God's gospel renewing work is either jammed into the redemption part or jammed into the restoration part, so what's more helpful is to think about the story as a 5-chapter gospel.

5-Chapter Gospel

Let's go back to Theology of Work again. God created work, the fall messed it up, Jesus in his life, death, and resurrection began to change everything and inaugurated his Kingdom and right now he is renewing us by the power of the Holy Spirit in work, in family, in everything, and one day is going to make everything the way it's supposed to be when he restores the new heavens new earth.

Let's look at this Renewal chapter a bit deeper.

Why is it helpful to have the Renewal chapter separate from Redemption and Restoration?

It helps apply the gospel to our spiritual growth. We can apply the gospel practically to specific areas of our life in the present.

What's really amazing, is we begin to see and understand that we are an object of God's renewing work, but also, we are an agent of his renewing work.

Object of Renewal / Agent of Renewal

That's what theology teaches us. Because God saved us and is renewing us in all areas of our life; work, relationships, marriage, ministry, everything, because he's renewing us, we are also an agent of renewal in all things.

What areas of your life could you be an agent of God's renewing work?

Let's go back to work once more. Most people think work is bad, or of the world, or perhaps it's a "secular" thing. Work isn't as valuable as serving God. When the church preaches that, work becomes just a hard, horrible thing.

What happens about their belief in work if they believe the 5-chapter gospel?

It becomes ministry. Work becomes a way of worshipping God. You become invited into the gospel story as an object of renewal and an agent of renewal in the exact place God has called you to be.

Gospel story matters. It activates, it liberates, it changes the narrative, and it transforms.

Think about this. God is telling his story, He is changing the world, and he's going to use you as agents to help tell that story. He's going to shape you, change you, encourage you, and use you to advance his Kingdom purposes in your area.

Think about the epic stories we have in our culture, movies, etc. Why do they appeal to us? We want to be superman, we want to be special. These stories grab us because they have meaning and we want to be a part of that.

We're part of a much greater story. We're part of being more than superman. You are an adopted child of your Father in heaven. You are a son or daughter of the Almighty King of Kings. You're in his Kingdom of Light. You are his Ambassador of reconciliation of the world. He has plucked you out of darkness and you not only get to represent him, you're his friend, and he is actually inside of you by the Holy Spirit. And he has given you power by the Gospel and the Holy Spirit to do whatever He has called you to do.

The Kingdom of darkness cannot hold you back. You're safe and secure in Him. And He is going to take broken little you to tell His story that transformed the world. You are an agent of renewal in your city, not at the cost of being an object of Renewal, you are both. Isn't that good news?! Isn't that greater than any other story ever told? That God is going to tell His cosmic story of His Son saving the world through you! That's what you've been called to. You get to herald that Gospel. You get to teach and preach that gospel. You get to disciple people into that Gospel. You couldn't have more profoundness to your story and significance in the world.

Where do you sense the spirit leading you to be an agent of change for God's Kingdom?

5-Chapter Gospel

1. Creation: They shouldn't have a sense of need; all needs are met
2. Fall: government, their employer, some authority figure
3. Redemption: Money, promotions, opportunity, materialism, investments, education
4. Renewal
5. Re-creation: All needs will be met