

3. How do we live fully alive?

17 This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, "It is through faith that a righteous person has life."

- Romans 1:17 NLT

8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- - Ephesians 2:8 NIV

When we read Romans 1:17 it is easy to think that my faith gives me life. However, that puts the emphasis on my faith and my ability to believe. It is Jesus' faithfulness to us, that strengthens our faith in Him. As we see in Eph 2:8, even our faith is a gift of God. And it is through that faith in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus that we are saved by God's grace.

How do you feel knowing that even your faith is a gift from God? Is it a relief not to fear that your faith is inadequate? Does it feel too easy? Do you wish you could earn your way rather than receiving it as a gift?

It can be overwhelming to realize all that God has done to give us life. It is true that we are undeserving. But that didn't stop God's love from making a way. Our Heavenly Father loves us, and longs to give us good gifts. He Himself is our greatest gift and living our lives with and for Him gives us a life that is joyful, full and abundant.

10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. - John 10:10 NIV

WRAP-UP

The gospel is the good news that God's kingdom has come near in Jesus Christ, and through his life, death, resurrection, and enthronement, Jesus is declared Lord, a new humanity is created, and the power of sin and death no longer have the last word. In Him we can live fully alive.

MEMORY VERSE

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. - Romans 6:23 NIV

Challenge-

If you feel yourself being pulled towards other people or ideas claiming to be Good News, pause and recalibrate your life on the Good News of Jesus through prayer, worship and the study of God's word.

The Gospel of Jesus Cultivating Discipleship

INTRODUCTION

At the core of who we are at New Life is a deep conviction that we can be fully alive in Jesus. This abundant life is brought about by receiving the Gospel and following "The Way of Jesus". But the Good News of the Gospel isn't about what Jesus can do for us; it is about who Jesus is. The Gospel is a declaration that Christ's birth, death, resurrection and enthronement has changed the world.

Ice Breaker

What was it that convinced you that you needed Jesus as your Savior? Was it an event in your life; an individual who explained God's plan of salvation; a sermon that moved you; or something else?

Key Passage

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. 17 For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed-- a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith." - Romans 1:16-17 NIV

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. We need a Savior

For most of us who follow Jesus, there came a point in our lives when we realized that we were sinners in need of a Savior. It didn't matter if you were in a dire situation and had never stepped foot in a church, or if you were raised in a Christian home and spent many hours each week in church services. At some point you realized that your best was not good enough to make you right with God. You may even have heard Romans 3:23. But let's look at the surrounding verses for a little context.

22 This righteousness [of God] is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. 25 God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood--to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished
- Romans 3:22-25 NIV

Paul wrote these words to the church in Rome. Though they were primarily Gentiles (non-Jewish), there were likely many who were Jewish converts to the Christian faith as well. The challenge was to overcome the belief that by our own efforts, we can be made acceptable, or righteous, in God's sight. Not even thru the observance of religious laws and practices (nor by birthright), can we be sufficiently righteous apart from Jesus' atonement.

Verse 23 tells us that we all start in the same condition. What is it that is common to everyone, no matter how they have lived their lives? God's standard of righteousness¹ exceeds anything we can attain on our own, because of our sinful nature. As you read these verses, what role do you see faith² plays in attaining righteousness and what role does grace³ have? As you read verse 25, what do you discover about God's nature and attributes?

1 Righteousness (dikaiosynē) - integrity, virtue, purity of life, rightness, correctness of thinking feeling, and acting

2 Faith (pistis) - moral conviction, especially reliance upon Christ for salvation

3 Grace (charis) - the merciful kindness of God

By His very nature God is righteous, just, good, loving, pure, true and so much more. We cannot come into His presence in a sinful state because sin cannot coexist with God. But through Jesus' loving and sacrificial gift He offers us His righteousness and access to eternal life with God.

2. What The Gospel Means

The Gospel, *euangelion* in the Greek, is often translated as Good News. When we hear that there is Good News we naturally might ask, "What's in it for me?" But the Gospel is about who Jesus is, not what you can get from Him. The Good News is that we have a loving God who came to live among us as a perfect human being, then sacrificed Himself and conquered sin and death so that we could be rescued and live an abundant and eternal life.

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- Romans 1:16-17 NIV

19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength 20 he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,
- Ephesians 1:19-20 NIV

Paul says the Gospel is the power that saves the world (Rom 1:16). How was God's power demonstrated in Ephesians 1:19-20? Verse 19 says this power is for us who believe. How do you think God might use that power in your life? Is there perhaps a lost family member, a relationship, a dream or a ministry that needs God's power to breathe life into it? Pause to pray that God's power would be effective in that situation.

14 For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility 15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace,
- Ephesians 2:14-15 ESV

12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.
- 1 Corinthians 12:12 ESV

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
- Galatians 3:28 ESV

In Rom 1:16 Paul includes both the Jew and the Gentile among those who are saved by the power of the Gospel. Throughout the New Testament we find that we are one in Christ with other believers.

What do you see as some of the most difficult barriers to overcome in unifying the body of Christ? (Socio-economic, gender, political, ethnicity) Describe what a church would look like that had unity without requiring uniformity?