

Series: 3 Circles	Reference: Multiple	Title: The Gospel	Date: 11.06.22
Website Writeup: Today we talk about the 3 rd circle in our 3 Circle model, the Gospel, which allows us to recover & pursue God's design for our lives & help others do the same.			

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Today we talk about the 3rd circle, the gospel which allows us to recover & pursue God's design for our lives & help others do the same.

Let's take a few moments & pray right now for those you know who are far from God. Those you have been praying for on your 3X5 cards these three weeks, and maybe others which come to mind today as well. Feel free to wander the room, get on your knees, pray by yourself, or with someone else. But right now, we want to pray that God will draw these people to His Son, Jesus, and give us boldness to turn everyday conversations into gospel conversations with them. I will open us, then give you a few moments to pray, then I will close us.

We're learning a conversational, relational way to carry out Jesus' mission for us as we go about our daily lives. The first week we talked about God's design for our lives, evident from the very beginning. We reviewed how God created everything & it was all good. Mankind as the pinnacle of His creation, made for relationship with God & each other. God's design is for us to *walk & talk* with Him just like Adam & Eve once did.

However, as we know, Adam & Eve departed from God's design - they wanted to do it their way instead of God's way. The Bible calls this sin & tells us that we have all sinned & fall short of God's perfect design (Romans 3:23). And that sin leads to brokenness.

We all know how that feels - broken relationships, addiction, depression, discouragement, fear, guilt & shame. Everybody wants out of brokenness, so we try to fix it (squiggly lines). We medicate it with drugs. Numb it with alcohol. Or strive to be better people, hoping that somehow, someday, our good will outweigh the bad. We look for ways to alleviate our pain. When we do that, we just get more & more broken.

Brokenness feels like a bad thing, but it's actually a good thing - it's the way God gets our attention. When we feel broken on the inside & everything's all messed up, we know something needs to change. This is where we get some really good news.

The good news is that **God made a way out of our brokenness**. He promised that a man would come to crush the enemy's head as we see in Genesis 3:15...*And I will put enmity between you & the woman, and between your offspring & hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel....*

Then in Genesis 3:21 God sacrificed an animal - shedding its blood - to make coverings for Adam & Eve. It says...*The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam & his wife &*

clothed them.. This is the protoevangelium or first announcement of the gospel. An announcement of the coming Christ & a foreshadowing of His blood sacrifice which will cover our shame! God loves us & sent His one & only Son to shed His blood to cover sin once & for all as stated in John 3:16...For God so loved the world that he gave his one & only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

We see this also in Hebrews 10:10-14 where images the sacrifice God modeled in Genesis 3:21 to cover our shame. It says...*And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. ¹¹Day after day every priest stands & performs his religious duties; again & again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹²But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool. ¹⁴For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.*

All those sacrifices made were an image of what Christ would do in perfection. A lamb without blemish, perfect, was to be brought & sacrificed at the alter of God. It's blood sprinkled on the alter symbolizing Christ's blood paying for our sin, covering us. It was modeled in Passover as the Angel of Death passed through Egypt & the firstborn of everyone & everything would die. But the Israelites, in painting the blood of the lamb on their doorposts, were able to see the Angel of Death passover their home - no harm came to them. The Bible is replete with this imagery of the sacrifice of Christ to teach us what God's done on our behalf!

The gospel is simply...Jesus died for our sins, was buried & God raised Him from the dead as stated in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4...Now, brothers & sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received & on which you have taken your stand. ²By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. ³For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures...

Sin is such an affront to a Holy God it must be payed for in death. If Christ hadn't lived a perfectly sinless life, his death would be powerless - but He did! If Christ hadn't risen from the grave breaking the power of death, our faith is in vain - but He did! This is the good news!

The gospel saves us from our sins as Paul says in Romans 1:16...*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. All anyone need do is repent & believe the gospel as Mark 1:15 tells us...“The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent & believe the good news!”*

Repent means to turn from our sins & turn to Jesus. Contrary to popular thinking God doesn't condemn. He's not an angry god hellbent on destruction. We're already condemned because of Genesis 3; God wants to save us. He's a loving God enduring

scorn & pride from that which He created to save them! He's made it simple, done the heavy lifting, we just repent & believe!

We see this in John 3:17-21...For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one & only Son. ¹⁹This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. ²¹But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

Life in Christ, or death in our sin. Live in darkness. Live in light. The choice is before us. The Good News is that in Christ, God helps us recover & pursue His design for our lives. He removes the heart of stone & gives us a heart of flesh fulfilling Ezekiel 36:26 where God said...*I will give you a new heart & put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone & give you a heart of flesh.* He does for us what we cannot do ourselves!

Now, in Christ, His Spirit indwells & empowers us. Restoring us to the way we were supposed to be - reconciles us - repairs what was broken. **This is outlined in 2 Corinthians 5:17-21...Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! ¹⁸All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ & gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.**

We're new creations & God's ambassadors to a broken world! The Gospel is a thread running throughout all of Scripture! 66 books - one Story! The story of God reconciling people from every ethnic group on the earth through Christ! Using His people, blessing us to be a blessing with His message to others along the way! He pursues people even when they've turned their backs on Him!

So, like last week & the week before let's go through the 3 Circles diagram again to prepare ourselves to share Christ with others...

CIRCLE 1: God has a design for every area of our lives - families, marriages, money, sex life, work life & just plain life. **God designed** us to be in relationship with Him, that's circle one you draw for your listener.

CONNECTOR 1: But...we have all departed from that design, which the Bible calls **sin**. We're born with a sinful nature - sin comes naturally to us. There's no one who gets it

right. Romans 3:23 tells us... “...for all have sinned & fall short of the glory of God...” Which means, we all sin & fall short of God’s perfect design - the arrow you’d draw next.

CIRCLE 2: Then draw another circle explaining this sin leaves us in **brokenness**. Brokenness is easy for most of us to understand. It comes in the form of broken relationships, addiction, depression, discouragement, guilt & shame. We all want out of brokenness, so we try to fix it - that’s the squiggly lines coming out of the circle. We medicate & numb this brokenness in a variety of ways. We go one of two ways, we become licentious, or legalistic.

Some of us give up & give in to degradation, or seek identity through work, money, power, or false sexual identities - this is licentiousness.

While others strive to be better people, hoping that somehow, someday, our good will outweigh the bad - we try to make ourselves to be right (self-righteousness). We then look at others with disdain when they don’t measure up to our standards - that’s legalism. But suffice it to say, we all look for ways to alleviate our pain either through being bad, or being good.

But...in doing that, we just get more & more broken. Brokenness feels like a bad thing, but in many ways brokenness is a good thing because it’s how God gets our attention. It makes us recognize our need. When we feel broken on the inside & everything’s all messed up, we know something needs to change.

CIRCLE 3: Then we draw another circle stating there’s good news, which is what the word **Gospel** means. God sent Jesus to live a perfect life, die the death we deserve & be raised to life again. Proving He is who He says He is & can do what He says He can do. Jesus came to forgive our sins - to heal our brokenness.

CONNECTER 2: Then we draw an arrow to that circle from the 2nd, stating the Biblical word for change is repent. Repent simply means to turn around, to turn away from one thing to another. Brokenness is what gets us ready to give God’s solution a try, which is to **repent & believe** the Gospel. When we realize, the change we really need comes from Jesus we turn to, and place our trust & belief in Him.

CONNECTER 3: Then we draw an arrow from that to the 1st circle stating, when we repent & believe in Him, He gives us His Spirit who helps us **recover & pursue** God’s design. Then Jesus sends us right back out into a broken world to tell others how to find their way out of brokenness as well.

Now, again, let’s practice together! Push past the awkward - grab someone close to you & use your napkin to walk through this diagram as if they were a friend with whom you were sharing the Gospel. Again, we’re using napkins to remind ourselves that this can be done very easily over a meal. Draw it out explaining each step as I have, then switch & allow the other person to do it. Remember if you’ve downloaded the 3 Circles App to

your phone already, you can use that if it's easier, which does give you verses to share as well which I think is important.

I'll give you a few minutes...

We desire every resident of our community to have repeated opportunities to hear & respond to the gospel. We're training ourselves to go & tell them with this simple model. But don't let this slide by as just the next series, use it, practice it, share it! Since God's given us a mission & we want to be faithful to carry it out. Let's choose to help God repair those who are still spiritually broken.

My challenge to you again this week is this...practice this 3 more times with 3 different people than last week. But this week, make all three of those people non-believers! And if anything wonderful should happen, email me about it so we can share those stories!