



The Gospel

According to Jesus

A blog by Julie-Allyson Ieron

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It's as simple as this ...

“Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations” (Luke 24:46-47 ESV).

I can't tell you how many messages I've heard about the gospel. I was practically born in church. My first excursion as an infant was to church, where my grandfather was the preacher. I quickly became the church mascot, singing my little two-year-old heart out to the rough tune of “Oh, How I Love Jesus,” and meaning it. I prayed to ask Jesus to forgive my sins and take me to heaven some day when I was about that age—and did it again at the ripe age of 8, just in case the first time didn't take.

But it's always concerned me that whenever I've been to a class on how to lead someone else to Christ we make things so very difficult. We have to take people down the Romans road – you know, the highlights are Romans 3:23 (all have sinned ...), Romans 6:23 (the pay for sin is death), Romans 10:9-10 (confess Jesus and believe in Him) ... Or we have to use some other method of long, involved explanation, hopscotching from one book of the New Testament to another to piece together the story.

I'd wondered and wondered, since salvation is the biggest deal imaginable, why didn't someone—especially Jesus—put the whole essence in one place. It especially troubled me because I've often been called on to pray with folks who are getting what may just be their last chance to be sure of salvation before entering eternity. They're on pain meds, in and out of consciousness, maybe even battling the worst imaginable mind deterioration of dementia. And frankly, they couldn't follow any road—Romans or otherwise. Their bodies are weak, their minds failing.

Then I lit upon what is quite possibly the clearest presentation of the gospel possible. It contains in a few well-chosen words the distillation of the entire story of God's provision for mankind—and it gives a sort of mission statement to every one of us who wishes to please Christ in our Christian life. Who put this genius statement together? None less than Christ Himself, in those moments just before He was majestically elevated into glory and re-seated at the right hand of the Throne of the Almighty.

Are you ready? Here it is:

“Repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His [Jesus Christ's] name to all nations.”

One more time ...

... that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations!

That's it. The gospel. *You're a sinner. Jesus Christ offers to forgive you. Accept this truth. Pass it on. To everyone.* Just about anyone can get that.

Jesus preached repentance as His core message (Matt. 4:17). So did John the Baptist to prepare the way before Him (Matt. 3:2). In a chapter of my new book, I give a more complete explanation of what this means (It's called *The GOD Interviews* and I hope you'll read it), but here's the gist.

Repent—acknowledge that you're on the path that displeases and dishonors God, and turn back in the opposite direction. Be sorry that you've sinned against God (not just that you got caught doing wrong), and turn yourself around to run toward Him.

Forgiveness—if you repent, you'll receive from Him the gift of restoration and of right relationship with Him (purchased at the cost of Jesus' life—after all the balance due in payment for sin = death).

So, then there is a one-stop-shop for the distilled, simple gospel that I received as a tiny tot and that I've had the privilege of sharing with worldwide TV audiences, retreat groups, and many loved ones on the brink of eternity. *If you turn from your sins toward Jesus Christ, He'll forgive you and usher you into paradise.*

Now, I'm not just preaching at you. I'm challenging you, fellow believer, to keep it simple. To be willing and ready to share this message with those you encounter as you walk your caregiving journey. Maybe your aging loved one needs to hear. Maybe a professional caregiver who comes into your home. Maybe a doctor or social worker—even a chaplain—needs this reminder.

So, once more ... just so we're sure we have it down. *Proclaim repentance and forgiveness of sins in Jesus' name to everyone:* You know you're a sinner. Jesus will forgive you if you ask Him to. Pass it on. To everyone.

Julie-Allyson Ieron is a perceptive journalist who investigates God's truth and crafts her discoveries into books and presentations that engage your mind and resonate with your heart. Her passion is to open God's Word with you and equip you to apply its riches to your daily joys, questions, and challenges. Visit her website at www.joymedia-services.com, her devotional blog for caregivers at: <http://womenscareforagingparents.blogspot.com>, or her publishing blogs at <http://writejoyfully.blogspot.com> and <http://theGODinterviews.blogspot.com>.