



Gospel Foundations

Secret Church, Session 2

David Platt | April 2020

The Gospel

We're about to pick up the pace, making what we've been doing feel pretty slow. We'll go through this first section swiftly, but I just want to say from the beginning, if you've been part of Secret Church before, this might be a refresher. Every year there are people who come to faith in Jesus during Secret Church. I pray that will happen, particularly in the next few minutes, as we look at what the Gospel is and what the good news of God's love means. Some of you may be thinking you believe these truths, so what's the big deal. Even demons believe what I'm about to say. I want to ask if the truths we're about to look at have captured your heart in such a way that the core of your life has been turned upside down, changing the way you live on a moment-to-moment basis.

We just read Philippians 1:27 a few minutes ago, "*Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel...*" Is this gospel core to who you are so it has transformed your very identity? Is Jesus your life? That's the question I want to ask as we look at the gospel.

The gospel is the good news that God, the loving Creator, sovereign King and holy Judge of all, has looked upon men and women, wonderfully and uniquely made in His image, who have rebelled against Him, are separated from Him and deserve death before Him. He has sent His Son, Jesus—God in the flesh, the long-awaited King—to live a perfect and powerful life, to die a sacrificial and substitutionary death and to rise from the grave in victory over sin, Satan and death.

The gospel is a summons from God for all people in all nations to repent and believe in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins, turning from all idols to declare allegiance to Jesus alone as King and trust in Jesus alone as Lord.

All who turn from Jesus will experience everlasting, horrifying suffering in hell, while all who trust in Jesus will experience everlasting, satisfying communion with God in heaven.

That's my best attempt to summarize the gospel. We're about to walk through it and I hope every word here is grounded in Scripture. The two passages that come to my mind that most clearly summarize the gospel are these. The Romans passage is probably the greatest paragraph ever written in history. Martin Luther called this the chief point of the whole Bible.

- *But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus (Romans 3:21–26).*
- *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:1–10).*

Based on these two passages, all kinds of Scriptures are going to flow. I want you to think with me about six core threads of the gospel. We’ll use this acrostic that I hope will help you remember it:

- **G:** God’s Character
- **O:** Offense of Sin
- **S:** Sufficiency of Christ
- **P:** Personal Response
- **E:** Eternal Urgency
- **L:** Life Transformation

Let’s think about these six threads of the gospel.

G: God’s Character

The gospel begins and ends with God.

God is the loving Creator, sovereign King and holy Judge of all.

- *I am the LORD, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King (Isaiah 43:15).*

God is the loving Creator of all.

- *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1).*
- *Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable (Isaiah 40:28).*

God is the sovereign King over all.

- *Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and you are exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all* (1 Chronicles 29:11–12).
- *The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD sits enthroned as king forever* (Psalm 29:10).
- *God is the holy Judge of all. The LORD judges the peoples; judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness and according to the integrity that is in me* (Psalm 7:8).
- *But the LORD of hosts is exalted in justice, and the Holy God shows himself holy in righteousness* (Isaiah 5:16).
- *In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!”* (Isaiah 6:1–3).

In all of His judgments, He is wholly right.

O: Offense of Sin

Men and women are wonderfully and uniquely created by God,
yet we have rebelled against Him, are separated from Him and deserve death before Him.
We are wonderfully and uniquely created by God, in His image,
with the capacity to know and enjoy God.

- *Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas* (Psalm 8:5–8).
- *Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!* (Psalm 51:1–2).

Men and women are wonderfully and uniquely created by God, in His image and with the capacity to know and enjoy God. We have been knit together in our mother’s womb by God Himself.

- *Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them* (Genesis 1:26–27).
- *For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths*

of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them (Psalm 139:13–16).

Men and women have rebelled against God. We've all turned aside from God.

- *None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one (Romans 3:10–12).*
- *Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned (Romans 5:12).*

Men and women are separated from God.

- *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God... (Romans 3:23).*
- *...but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear (Isaiah 59:2).*

Men and women deserve death before God and not just death on this earth, but as we will see, eternal death. We are hopeless in our sin, destined for death, desperately in need of salvation from sin and deliverance from death.

- *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins... (Ephesians 2:1).*
- *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23).*

S: Sufficiency of Christ

Jesus is the only way you and I can be saved from our sin and delivered from death.
He is God in the flesh, the long-awaited King
Who has come to live a perfect and powerful life, to die a sacrificial
and substitutionary death, rising from the grave in victory over sin, Satan and death.

Now let's unpack that.

Jesus is God in the flesh, the long-awaited King Who has come. It was promised throughout the Old Testament that the King is coming. In the New Testament, John and Matthew announced His coming.

- *Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts (Malachi 3:1).*
- *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14).*
- *Now when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. And leaving Nazareth he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned." From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 4:12–17).*

So what makes Jesus unique? He lived a perfect and powerful life, unlike anyone else in history.

- *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need* (Hebrews 4:15–16).
- *You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin* (1 John 3:5).

Jesus died a sacrificial and substitutionary death that you and I deserve to die. He took our sin upon Himself, dying for our sin.

- *...but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us* (Romans 5:8).
- *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God* (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Jesus rose from the grave in victory over sin, Satan and death.

- *For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve* (1 Corinthians 15:3–5).
- *And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him* (Colossians 2:13–15).

Just a couple weeks ago, my older sons asked, “Dad, how do we know Christianity is true when there are so many other religions in the world.” I said, “That is a great question. The answer is the resurrection of Jesus. No one else in the all the world—no religious teacher or leader—has conquered death but Jesus. Everything hinges on this reality.” Not just in Christianity and world religions, but in everything in our lives. This is Paul’s argument in 1 Corinthians 15. If Jesus didn’t rise from the dead, then we are wasting our time and to be pitied above all people. Christian life makes no sense if Jesus did not rise from the dead. But if He did rise from the dead, that has implications for every single person in the world, not just now but for all eternity. The only thing that makes sense is to trust Him with your life and follow Him as your Lord, no matter what that means in this world.

P: Personal Response

This is a fundamental part of the gospel. It’s not just good news about what God has done; it’s what He calls us to do.

God calls all people in all nations to repent and believe in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins, turning from all idols to declare allegiance to Jesus alone as King and trusting in Jesus alone as Lord of one’s life.

- *...because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved (Romans 10:9–10).*

God calls all people in all nations to repent and believe in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins. This was Jesus' message from the beginning and His message at the end right before He ascended into heaven.

- *Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:14–15).*
- *Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (Luke 24:45–47).*
- So what does it mean to repent? What is repentance of sin? The Bible describes coming to Christ as turning to God from idols to serve Him. This involves turning from all idols, false gods and sin, turning from ourselves to the one true God Who is Lord over all and Lord over our lives. Repentance is the essence of salvation.
 - *Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other (Isaiah 45:22).*
 - *For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God (1 Thessalonians 1:9).*
- Repentance involves declaring allegiance to Jesus alone as King. He alone is worthy of our lives.
 - *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6).*
 - *They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful (Revelation 17:14).*
- Repentance involves trusting in Jesus alone as Lord of one's life. Christ is not part of my life over on the side; that's not Christianity. Christ is my life!
 - *I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me (Galatians 2:20).*
 - *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain (Philippians 1:21)*
- Repentance involves resting in and relying on what God has done through Christ for your salvation. This means all of salvation, from start to finish, is a gift of grace.
 - *Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved... (Acts 16:31).*
 - *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God. (Ephesians 2:8–9)*

Whether or not we respond personally in faith and repentance, this has eternal ramifications.

E: Eternal Urgency

Hell is the eternal, horrifying destination for all who turn from Jesus.
Heaven is the eternal, satisfying dwelling place of God with all who trust in Jesus.

Do not play games with faith in Jesus. Don't fake it or put it off. Hell is real.

- *And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him (Hebrews 9:27–28).*

Hell is the eternal, horrifying destination for all who turn from Jesus.

- *This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering—since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed (2 Thessalonians 1:5–10).*
- *Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:11–15).*

All who turn from Jesus will spend eternity—forever—in what the Bible describes as a lake of fire. People ask if that's symbolic or literal language. It doesn't matter—either way it's not a place you want to be. If it's literal language, that's a horrifying place to be, but symbolic language? The whole point of a symbol is to express that which can't be expressed in words. So that's an even more horrifying place to be. And it will last forever, without end.

Heaven is the eternal, satisfying dwelling place of God with all who trust in Jesus as their life,

- *But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself (Philippians 3:20–21).*
- *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and*

they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” (Revelation 21:1–4).

Do you think the Christian life is just about joy then, but not joy now? Do you think about a better life in heaven, not a better life on earth? No.

L: Life Transformation

All who believe the gospel are new creations:
filled with God’s Spirit, children in God’s family,
members of God’s church and heirs of God’s Kingdom.

- *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come (2 Corinthians 5:17).*

All who believe the gospel are filled with God’s Spirit. So the Christian life is not a list of instructions you have to follow; it’s a supernatural life of satisfaction you get to experience.

- *I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God (Ezekiel 36:25–28).*
- *And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high (Luke 24:49).*
- *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth (Acts 1:8).*
- *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law (Galatians 5:22–24).*

All who believe the gospel are children in God’s family. You are adopted as God’s son or daughter. You can come to the God of the universe as your Daddy, anytime, any day.

- *In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved (Ephesians 1:4c–6).*
- *For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” (Romans 8:14–15).*

All who believe the gospel are members of God’s church. We are part of the body of Christ—an invaluable part of that body.

- *Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it (1 Corinthians 12:27).*

- *So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit (Ephesians 2:19–22).*

All who believe the gospel are heirs of God's Kingdom.

- *In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory (Ephesians 1:11–14).*
- *The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him (Romans 8:16–17).*

So let us be finished and done with a Christianity that consists of praying a prayer one day, then moving on, spending your life like nothing has changed. No, everything has changed. The Spirit of God lives in you. You now know and walk with and enjoy and love Him. You will want to glorify God as your Father, as a member of His body, the bride of Christ, the church. You no longer live for the possessions, pursuits and pleasures of this world. You're living for another world; you're storing up treasure there. You're not living for what matters now; you're living for what matters forever. That's what's driving you day in and day out. The gospel changes everything about your life.

I want to pause right now and ask you to bow your heads. If you know Jesus as Lord, just pray right now that God would draw people to trust in Jesus, to experience Jesus as their life.

I ask every single one of you right now, is Jesus your life? If there is not a resounding yes in your heart, I invite you to pray from your heart, saying, "Dear God, I confess that You are holy and I am not. I've sinned against You. I've turned aside from You, but right now I want to turn to You. I want to turn from all idols in this world, from money, success, pleasures and pursuits of this world, from myself. Right now I turn from my sin and myself, putting my trust in You. Jesus, thank You for dying on the cross for my sin. Thank You for rising from the dead in victory over sin. In this moment, I confess You as my Lord and trust You with my life forever. In Jesus' name. Amen"

With our heads still bowed, if you just prayed that to God from your heart, believe this in faith and repentance, trusting Jesus as Savior and Lord.

God, I pray for all those who are trusting You right now that they would know life transformation from You from this point on. I pray for all who have trusted in You, who said coming into this event, "Yes, Jesus is my life." Please God, help us make this gospel known among people who have never heard it. God use our lives, spend our lives on an adventure, however You want that adventure to look, making this gospel known among people who have never even heard it. God, we pray the fruit of this event will be this gospel proclaimed in all nations through our lives. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

So if you just trusted in Christ for your life, share that with somebody who you know is a follower of Jesus. That's the first step I would encourage you to do (Romans 10:9-13). Don't keep this to yourself. From there, get plugged into a local church and grow in Christ.

Recap: What Is The Gospel?

The gospel is the good news that God, the loving Creator, sovereign King and holy Judge of all, has looked upon men and women wonderfully and uniquely made by Him in His image. We have rebelled against Him, are separated from Him and deserve death before Him, but He has sent His Son, Jesus—God in the flesh, the long-awaited King—to live a perfect and powerful life, to die a sacrificial and substitutionary death, then to rise from the grave in victory over sin, Satan and death.

The gospel is a summons from God for all people in all nations to repent and believe in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins, turning from all idols to declare allegiance to Jesus alone as King and trust in Jesus alone as Lord.

All who turn from Jesus will experience everlasting, horrifying suffering in hell, while all who trust in Jesus will experience everlasting, satisfying communion with God in heaven.

- **G:** God's Character
- **O:** Offense of Sin
- **S:** Sufficiency of Christ
- **P:** Personal Response
- **E:** Eternal Urgency
- **L:** Life Transformation

Permissions: You are permitted and encouraged to reproduce and distribute this material provided that you do not alter it in any way, use the material in its entirety, and do not charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction. For web posting, a link to the media on our website is preferred. Any exceptions to the above must be approved by Radical.

All Scriptures are quoted directly from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

Please include the following statement on any distributed copy: By David Platt. © David Platt. Website: Radical.net