

The Gospel Of Good News

When we think of the gospel, we can tend to think of it in only 'New Testament' terms. We might be of the impression that the gospel was something that came about around the time of Jesus and subsequently spread throughout the world by his followers. While this is somewhat true, upon more extensive reading we learn that the message of good news is much older than we thought. Yes, it concerns Jesus but it was preached long before his actual birth. In reality, it's a message as old as time itself and its inception stretches right back to the garden of Eden. And it's a message of good news and hope for all people!

A Little Background On The Word "Gospel"

"Good news" is the English translation of the Koine Greek word 'euangélion' (εὐαγγέλιον) (εὖ eû "good" + ἄγγελος ángelos "messenger"). In Old English, it was translated as 'gōdspel' (gōd "good" + spel "news"). The Old English term was retained as 'gospel' in Middle English Bible translations and has subsequently been carried forward into Modern English translations.

Incidentally, our modern word, evangelise or evangelist comes from the original Greek and carries the same meaning – one who preaches or tells good news, a 'messenger of good'. The writers of the gospels are sometimes known as the Four Evangelists, for this reason.

The message of 'good news' is taught throughout the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and it's certainly no coincidence that these books are collectively known as The Gospels.

But What Is The Good News?

The Gospel is described as “the good news of the Kingdom of God and the things which concern Jesus Christ”. Jesus himself preached about the coming kingdom of God, together with John the Baptist. Later, men like Paul the Apostle and Peter continued the message of good news

“Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God.” – Mark 1:14, KJV

Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand’ . . . And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom . . .” – Matthew 4:17, 23, NIV, KJV

“But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptised.” – Acts 8:12, HCSB

“For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance!” – Acts 28:30-31, NIV

In The Beginning...

[God's purpose](#), from the beginning was populate earth with people He could call His family, who were like him in every way. God created humans with this in mind and established the principle of **free choice**. He wanted us to **choose** Him, to **want** to be like Him. This kind of living, that reflects a desire to honour God and manifest His character to the world is what God calls the beginning of the kingdom of His son ([Colossians 1:13](#)).

Unfortunately, when given the choice, humanity chose wrong. We acted in a way completely foreign to God's character. Motivated by pride and selfishness and driven by impatience, we chose to "make ourselves like God" on our terms, not His. This choice, the first act of sin in the world, brought about its awful consequence – mortality, and being driven from God's presence in shame and disappointment. This is the story of Adam and Eve and their banishment from the garden of Eden.

Jesus Is The Good News

Yet God didn't give up. His desire to be at one with us, to complete His purpose with humanity, was so intrinsic that He immediately put in place a plan to bridge that ravine, to heal the breach between Himself and His creation. He did not allow His purpose to be compromised by our choice. This extraordinary plan was revealed in [His son, Jesus](#).

"Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures." – 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, BSB

The saving acts of God, due to the work of Jesus on the cross and Jesus' resurrection from the dead, bring reconciliation ("atonement") between people and God and it is a message of hope for the whole world (Luke 14:15-24). Through Jesus, we have forgiveness of sins and the blessing of God's grace.

The Message Isn't New

It would be easy to assume that the gospel was introduced by Jesus during his earthly ministry. Yet, this message isn't new

at all – it's much older than that and, in fact, Revelation 14:6 calls it 'the eternal gospel', "proclaimed to all those who dwell on earth."

In Galatians 3:8, we read the following: "Scripture foresaw that God would justify the [Gentiles](#) by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." Here, Paul is referencing a time in Abraham's life, [shortly after he left Ur](#), when God blessed him and told him the purpose He had with him.

"I will bless those who bless you, but I will put a curse on anyone who puts a curse on you. Everyone on earth will be blessed because of you." – Genesis 12:3, CEV

This blessing is further clarified by the words of Peter the Apostle in Act 3:28, where he was addressing the Jews, Abraham's descendants. He tells them, "You are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in your descendants shall **all the families of the earth be blessed**. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to **bless you**, in **turning away every one of you from his iniquities**." (Act 3:25-26)

Jesus Christ himself revealed that the Kingdom of God has been prepared for us for far longer than we can imagine.

"Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." – Matthew 25:34, ESV

God's plan of blessing has been in place since the beginning. It was made known to Abraham and he was promised a descendant who would fulfill God's promise of blessing for the world, first to the Jewish people and then, to all peoples of the world. In this way, Abraham was able to look forward in

faithful anticipation of the future when the saviour would be born, to fulfill the promise of blessing made to him. Jesus confirms this, when speaking to the Jews (who doubted he was the one who had been promised).

“Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad.” – John 8:56, NIV

Our Purpose Is God’s Purpose

Our purpose and the reason for our creation is to be part of God’s family. The good news is that through Jesus, we can be! We can become part of God’s family and part of His kingdom community right now, saved through the work of Jesus. Not only that, we can look forward to a future that is full of hope and blessing, trusting in God’s promise that has been established from the beginning of the world.

God has great plans for you, if you choose to accept them. The gospel message is one of hope and blessing and **everyone** is invited to take part.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” – Jeremiah 29:11, NIV

Avoiding Church Burnout

(Not a reader? Take a listen instead ↓)

Burnout is a state of emotional, mental, and physical

exhaustion. It occurs when you feel overwhelmed, emotionally drained, and unable to meet constant demands, whether real or perceived. Eventually, you find you literally have nothing left to give, either emotionally or physically. This state often leads to a range of issues including anxiety, depression, insomnia, anger and ill health.

Church Burnout

Burnout, particularly in relation to church life, is a subject that doesn't get as much discussion as it should. Perhaps it's because we tend to think that 'doing lots of stuff' and 'attending lots of events' is a requirement of any conscientious church member. We dutifully fill our calendars with copious church events, often to the exclusion of personal time, family time or, most importantly, time *with* God.

We curate an 'all-or-nothing' mentality in relation to church service; and any spare time we *do* find ourselves with is spent wracked with guilt, thinking about all the things we "should be doing". Frankly, if we're not *dying* from exhaustion, we conclude that we lack any kind of serious commitment.

After all, church life is supposed to be all-encompassing, exhausting, limiting (of our 'own time') and (between you and me) somewhat boring, right?

Wrong!

A church is like the human body, a living thing – made up of real people (1 Corinthians 12:12). Real people have their limits, emotionally, spiritually and physically. Not only that, our levels of limitation will fluctuate during different stages of our lives.

We cannot be the same person once we have a partner or children as we were when we were single.

We don't have the same strength or 'spring-in-our-step' in our older years as we did when we were younger.

Our capabilities and energies ebb and flow, along with the ups and downs of our lives, and ***we can only give what we can give*** in the very moment of **right now**.

And church life should be rewarding, fulfilling, energising and motivating! Being at church should feel like being part of the family – comfortable, welcoming and with a real sense of belonging. The minute we stop seeing the value in what we're doing is the minute we need to stop and rethink the ***why*** of what we're doing!

"Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household" – Ephesians 2:19, NIV

A Church Is Only As Healthy As Its Members

It's important to remember a church will only be as healthy and balanced and energised as the sum of all its members – those real people who make up the congregation.

If, individually, the members are exhausted and overloaded, the church will display signs of exhaustion too. It will become unbalanced, unhealthy and stunted in growth. It's also important to remember that **we** don't grow our church – God does the growing. Sure, we all have our part to play but no single person is responsible for, or indispensable to, God's plan for the growth of a church or community.

"The key issue for churches in the twenty-first century will be church health, not church growth." – Rick Warren

What Does Church Burnout Look Like?

Have you heard yourself saying this recently?: “I’m so exhausted”, or “I just *can’t* go to another thing this week”. Maybe you’ve found yourself thinking, “I’m *never* at home” or “Why can’t *someone else* do this for once?”. If you have, you may be suffering from church burnout.

Here’s what church burnout looks like, in real life:

1. You’re always busy, at everything, constantly in motion. You find yourself overcommitting and double booking.
2. You have idealistic standards about what a ‘real church’ should look like.
3. Your day always seems to arrive with constant low-grade stress and periodic crisis.
4. You often decline offers of help and assistance.
5. You feel a strong sense of responsibility, even when others don’t.
6. You feel extremely guilty about not attending church events or activities, even if you’ve already attended several that week.
7. You feel a strong sense of expectation from other church members.
8. You have an inability to say no and if you do, it’s with reluctance and guilt.
9. When you think about church, you feel suffocated, resentful, despondent and angry.

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” – Matthew 11:28-30, NIV

Church life – life with Jesus – is for those who are weary and burdened – because in Jesus we find rest.

Church life becomes a natural extension of the peace and fulfilment that we've found in Jesus. It's designed to enrich our lives, ease our burdens, and provide supportive relationships for hard times. It develops character growth and maturity so that we can support others, when needed. And service within our church should be something that fills us with joy and deep personal fulfillment.

Church life is the natural outworking of a life based on *being* a certain kind of person, not *doing* certain kinds of things.

Tips For Preventing Church Burnout

- Emphasise grace over works in your personal life. Concentrate on who you're ***being*** rather than what you're ***doing***. Remind yourself that we don't earn God's blessings by the amount of work we do. He wants us to lead healthy, balanced lives where ministry service is a joy, where giving becomes as simple as *doing because it has been done for us*.
- Make time for regular recreation. These are the times when you can pause, reset and renew. Without recreation, burnout is inevitable.
- Know your limits and set reasonable, achievable boundaries for the work you take on. Giving of yourself is a valuable and worthy service, but sometimes giving isn't always possible or profitable. If you need to say "no", then do so, with **no guilt attached**.
- Remember that the work is God's, not your own. Seek His guidance and help when you consider your responsibilities and commitments within your church.
- Learn to put [first things first](#). Being involved within your church community is a valuable part of a fulfilling spiritual life – but never at the expense of your time with God or your family. Set priorities and look for ways to involve your partner or family in church activities. Be willing to occasionally say no to low

priority church activities when they conflict with quality family time.

- Listen to your body's warning signs, such as headaches, backaches, dizziness, insomnia, and unexplainable fatigue. Learn to slow down and be less anxious. ***You can only do what you can do, right now*** – nothing more.

Ultimately, you are in control of you – your decisions, your motivations, your attitude and your abilities. You, alone, can gauge whether a task or event is too great for you to take on or attend, or whether it's something that you can fit into your life.

The most important part of church life is focusing on ***who you are being***, not what you are doing. Focusing on your 'being', rather than your 'doing' will bring things into perspective and make it easier to see what's important and what's not so important. When ***being*** becomes your focus, rather than ***doing***, you will go a long way towards avoiding church burnout.