

Session 6

A ROAD MAP FOR GOSPEL CONVERSATIONS

*Romans 3:10-12,23; 5:1,6-11; 6:23;
8:1,38-39; 10:9-10,13-14*

Memory Verse


For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.


– ROMANS 6:23, CSB




A Road Map for Gospel Conversations


THEOLOGICAL THEME: The Book of Romans presents to Christians the essential truths of the gospel message and teaches us how to become Christians and live out our faith. Laced throughout the chapters of this book are key statements that also help us share the gospel with others.

 What is the one thing that most often holds you back from sharing the gospel?

 In what circumstances is it easy for you to share God's love with others? In what circumstances is it difficult?

 What is the most memorable thing that has ever happened to you while sharing your faith?

Often we think of large crowds, exciting music, stirring testimonies, and great preaching when we contemplate sharing the gospel. However, the New Testament makes it clear that every Christian should be an evangelist—one who shares the good news of Jesus Christ with others. Still, many Christians claim they don't know how to do so or leave that task up to others.


 Write a synopsis of the gospel on the piece of paper you gave them. Reflect on whether or not this was an easy challenge.

Session Summary

Many believers are so unclear on the gospel that they cannot write it in their own words and in the simplest terms. How can we expect them to share the gospel in the world? The gospel must be clear to us before we can share it clearly with unbelievers. Feeling comfortable with the gospel message also helps alleviate many of the fears that come with the thought of evangelism.¹

1. All Have Sinned and Face Death (Rom. 3:10-12,23; 6:23)

God created us for a relationship with Him—a relationship that centers around praising Him and making His name known to the world. But the Bible doesn't mince words when it tells us that our relationship with God is broken. There was a time when Adam and Eve, the first humans, walked with God and lived in His presence. (See Gen. 1–2.) Genesis 3 describes the fall, or unraveling, of creation when sin entered the world. Sin is understood as missing the mark when it comes to God and His expectation for His creation. As a result of sin, we are all born separated from God and that separation has a cost.

 How is sin defined in today's society? What do Romans 3:10-12 and 3:23 reveal about who we are apart from God? How do you react to passages like this in the Bible?

No one is without sin; we all have sinned. Furthermore, as sinners we always and continually fall short of God's standard for us. Human sin was catastrophic in its consequences. Our only hope was for God to mercifully offer us a way of salvation in Jesus Christ, His Son. God never offered to sell salvation to people for a price. On the

other hand, no human being could even begin to pay the equivalent value of eternal salvation. Not only can we never purchase salvation on our own, we are enslaved to sin and therefore we actually need to be purchased.

? Do you think most people recognize the desperate conditions of humanity? Why or why not? Spend a few minutes discussing the effects of sin in our world, creation, and your personal life.

We have all rebelled against God. It started with Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, and we've continued the streak of thinking our ways are better. We are rebels against our Creator. Paul said that because of this disobedience, we're considered dead as sinners—completely separated from God and under His judgment. Without God's grace, we're all spiritually hopeless.

? What is the result of slavery to sin? What is the benefit of slavery to God? Is it possible to be free from sin but still live like we're enslaved to it? Explain.

In Romans 6, Paul emphasized that Christians serve a new Master who liberated them from bondage to sin and empowered them to grow in faith. Paul summed up his argument in Romans 6:23. There are two ways set before us. Those who choose the way of sin earn its wages: death. Those who choose God's way of salvation through faith in Christ receive God's gracious gift: eternal life.

One of Paul's most often-used terms (eighty-six times in his epistles) occurs eleven times in the Book of Romans (twice in chap. 6; vv. 11,23). In Romans 6 "in Christ" is closely tied to our identification with Christ through justification by faith.

Based on everything Paul taught in Romans 1–5, it is clear that the only way a person can be "alive to God" (Rom. 6:11) is through the intermediation of Jesus Christ. Because humankind is sinful, separated from God, and dead in trespasses

and sin, men and women cannot be alive to God on their own. They must have righteousness imputed to them, and they must identify with the death and resurrection of Christ on their behalf as Paul describes in Romans 6.

? Application: How does the very real weight of sin provide motivation and urgency for us to have gospel conversations with others?

2. Jesus Made the Way for Salvation (Rom. 5:6-11; 10:9-10,13-14)

Paul continued by demonstrating how great God's grace is. God redeemed us when we were at our worst. We were utterly helpless to earn our righteousness. He showed His unmatched love for us in Christ's death.

? What does logic say someone will die for? How was Christ different? For the visual learners in your group, consider writing these two lists of responses on a white board or large piece of paper as you discuss.

Paul described the timing of Christ's death as "while we were still helpless" and "at the right time." Christ did not die for us when we were worthy of being saved; He died when we were wicked. Paul focused on the greatness of grace by pointing to the fact that it is illogical for someone to die for another person, especially an unrighteous person.

? How did Jesus accomplish this ministry of reconciliation? What impact does this have on our relationship with God? With others?

In light of the great work Jesus did, Christians are called to rejoice in God and praise Him for the grace they received. Paul emphasized that Christ's sacrifice was the demonstration of nothing less than divine love for sinners. God's plan of redemption was a demonstration of grace through and through.

? According to these verses, how is a person saved, and to what result? What truth is foundational to the Christian faith? How would our faith be different if this were not true? Why is a verbal confession of faith important?

We receive salvation and eternal life through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The phrase "believe in your heart" refers to genuine faith, an absolute trust that God made salvation possible and available to all when He raised Jesus from the dead. Saving faith focuses solely on Jesus, the risen Lord. Our inward commitment and outward confession are to agree on the primacy of Christ.

In Romans 10:14, Paul shared how God saves people. It is not through seeing His handiwork in creation. (See Rom. 1:20.) It is not through our own good works. (See Rom. 9:32.) Instead, it is through the sharing of the gospel. No one will be saved apart from hearing the gospel and believing in Christ as Savior and confessing Him as Lord. We are God's chosen instrument through which God declares His gospel message to the world. Our friends and family members who do not hear the gospel will not be saved.

If we do not share the gospel with our lost friends, their only hope to be saved is to hear the gospel from someone else. Christians possess the best news in the universe; it has the power to change the eternal destinies of those we love. Why wouldn't we tell them the good news about Jesus?

God doesn't need us to deliver the gospel to the world. If He wanted, God could write the gospel in the clouds or proclaim it from the heavens. God doesn't need us, but He has chosen us as His instruments through which the gospel would be proclaimed to all nations. (See Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8.) God chose to spread the gospel through us because He loves us and delights to share His work with us.

? Application: How do these verses speak to the idea that there are many ways to God? Read John 14:6 for further insight. How might you respond to others who hold this view?

3. Through Jesus We Have Peace with God (Rom. 5:1; 8:1,38-39)

A person under condemnation is one who has been pronounced guilty and sentenced to punishment. Because of the fallen state of humanity, we all enter this world as those guilty of sin and deserving of death. We do not have the ability in and of ourselves to have a relationship with God and receive the eternal life and grace He offers.

In the Book of Romans, Paul sought to answer a basic question: How can people be righteous before God? Here he answered that in Christ we have no condemnation. We do not need to fear rejection from God. The focus here is not solely on the end of life. No condemnation means we have no reason to live with guilt in the present. To be in Christ means to be alive through Him. Christians lives are determined in Christ.

Salvation through Jesus Christ brings us into a relationship of peace with God. (See Rom. 5:1.) God's love provided salvation for the world through the gift and sacrifice of His Son, but salvation comes only to those who believe in Christ. (See John 3:16-18.) When we believe in Him, we are restored to a right relationship with God, no longer separated from Him or under His judgment. The result of this restoration is eternal life in the presence of God.

? From these passages, how would you explain the gospel to someone who feels they are not "good enough" for God?

? Because of Christ, we are declared not guilty in God's eyes. Where do you see the ramifications/blessings of this truth in your life?


? How should the truth of these verses change the way we live each day?


Paul affirmed that nothing has the power to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. The list of potential separators in verses 38-39 includes physical danger, spiritual beings, present and future occurrences, and powers above us and below us. To clearly indicate that absolutely no thing or person can come between the Lord and His people, Paul concluded his list with “any other created thing.” Absolutely nothing can come between us and our Lord. Nothing can remove us from His family.


? Application: What are you tempted to believe can separate you from the love of Christ? How do these verses bring you comfort in this area and also give you confidence to pursue gospel conversations with others around you?

Conclusion

As followers of Jesus, we are commanded and compelled to share the gospel with others, but we can't do this until we know the gospel. When familiar to us, the passages we've walked through today can help us clearly communicate the gospel with others.

 What general observations can you make about our city or your neighborhood regarding what people believe?

 What do you need to do to make yourself more available for God to use in having gospel conversations with those in your circle of influence?

 Make a list of challenging situations in which we might spread the gospel (family gatherings, workplace, community events, with close friends). Which of these situations challenges you the most? Why are these situations intimidating? How can we overcome this intimidation?

CHRIST CONNECTION: Despite our sin and separation from God, Jesus has made the way for restoration through His life, death, and resurrection.

MISSIONAL APPLICATION: As believers, we are commanded and compelled to share the gospel with others, but we can't do this until we know the gospel.



FOR NEXT WEEK

God is Holy

Main Passages

- Isaiah 6:1-8

Session Outline

1. Worthy of Worship (Isa. 6:1-2)
2. Holy, Holy, Holy (Isa. 6:3-4)
3. A Living Sacrifice (Isa. 6:5-8)

Memorize

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- Romans 6:23, CSB

Daily Readings

- Monday - Romans 3:10-12,23
- Tuesday - Romans 5:1, 6-11
- Wednesday - Romans 6:23
- Thursday - Romans 8:1, 38-39
- Friday - Romans 10:9-10
- Saturday - Romans 10:13-14

References

¹Adapted from Donald S. Whitney, “The Gospel and the Discipline of Evangelism: Donald S. Whitney: Spiritual Growth,” (Lifeway, January 1, 2014), <https://www.lifeway.com/en/articles/spiritual-disciplines-gospel-evangelism-witnessing-missions-salvation-sharing-faith>.