

the gospel explained

Study notes

A 1/2 day Bible study

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www.livingwordlabels.co.uk/bible-studies/the-gospel-explained.html

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Introduction

This booklet contains notes on how to run the 1/2 day bible study called, 'The Gospel explained'.

Materials needed

the-gospel-explained-study-notes.pdf (this booklet)

the-gospel-explained.pptx *

the-gospel-explained-questions.pptx *

* These are Microsoft PowerPoint presentations. You can open them in freely available programs on your smartphone, tablet or PC, such as Apple Keynote, Google Slides and LibreOffice.

Suggested plan

Session 1 (1 to 1 1/2 hours)

As an introduction, emphasise the importance of the gospel to the students. Something like the following...

'There is literally nothing more important than the gospel. All your aims and goals in life are in vain if you overlook it. You can tell the world is missing it when they talk about all sorts of things, but overlook the most important thing – that is getting a relationship with our Creator and our God.'

Then make the point that although we only need to believe the gospel to be saved, it is desirable to understand it. Understanding will protect us from error and encourage us to share it.

Open the presentation, the-gospel-explained.pptx.

Then go through the presentation at a reasonably quick pace. The students should be familiar with many of the slides. This lasts around 1 hour.

Session 2 (1 hour)

Divide the students into discussion groups. Aim to have between 3 and 8 groups.

Open the presentation, the-gospel-explained-questions.pptx.

Ask the groups to consider the first question. Read the text(s) which support the question. The students should then discuss the questions with other people in their group and prepare an answer. After about 10 to 15 minutes, ask the groups to give their suggested answer.

Try summarising their points to give a recommended response. Then read out the suggested answers in this booklet. Feel free to improve on the suggested answers in this booklet.

Repeat this for questions 2 to 4.

Session 3 (3/4 to 1 hour)

Continue with the discussion groups and consider questions 5 to 7. Question 7 might take a while to explain.

Conclusion

When you reach the end of this study, it is quite likely people will still have questions. It might be worth acknowledging this.

The gospel is not just an intellectual truth, but a spiritual truth. We need to pray to God to help us understand it.

Finally, while it is a really good thing to understand the gospel, it is not essential.

Mark 1:15...The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and *believe* the good news! (NIV)

Jesus did not say, Repent and *understand* the gospel.

Question 1: Why can't everyone go to heaven?

Text

Matthew 7:13–14 Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it. (NIV)

Suggested answer

It would not be heaven if everyone went there and continued to do wrong.

Revelation 21:27 Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life (NIV)

We have all done wrong and sinned.

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (NIV)

Imagine people continuing to lie, steal, cheat, slander in heaven? It would be awful. We need to confess our sins and receive a new heart.

John 3:3 Jesus replied, Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again. (NIV)

Everyone can go to heaven, but not everyone wants to confess their sins and be born again. So not everyone will go to heaven.

Question 2: Why do so many people say they follow God, yet they do not believe in Jesus?

Texts

Titus 1:16 They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good. (NIV)

John 16:2 ...the time is coming when anyone who kills you will think they are offering a service to God (NIV)

Suggested answer

Consider your favourite football team (or cricket team if you prefer). You know the team very well, how well they are doing, who the players are etc. But do any of the players know you?

We can know God very well, but yet He doesn't know us.

Matthew 7:21–23 Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles? Then I will tell them plainly, I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers! (NIV)

We don't have a relationship with God, because of our sin. We have to acknowledge we have sinned and ask God for forgiveness. And we can only do this because Jesus died for us.

John 14:6 Jesus answered, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (NIV)

Question 3: Why do we have to believe the gospel now before we die?

Texts

Hebrews 4:7 ... Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts (NKJV)

John 8:24 Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins. (NKJV)

Suggested answer

We can only have our sins forgiven by believing in Jesus.

Acts 16:31 So they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household (NKJV)

We can only believe in Him while we are alive on earth away from Him. Once we die, we see God face to face. Faith can only exist when we don't see something.

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. (NKJV)

Hebrews 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him (NKJV)

Question 4: Why is there only heaven or hell? Why not something in between?

Text

Matthew 25:46 And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life (NKJV)

Suggested answer

God is by nature extreme. He is perfectly righteous and infinitely holy.

Psalms 145:17 The LORD is righteous in all His ways (NKJV)

Isaiah 6:3 Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory! (NKJV)

He has to deal with sin in an extreme way. No-one carrying any sin, however small, can come near Him because His holy nature would demand immediate judgment. God has to express His complete and perfect hatred of sin, and hell is the way He does this.

God is also extreme in the way He loves.

1 John 4:7–8 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love (NIV)

1 Corinthians 2:9 ... Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him (NKJV)

Question 5: Why can we not come to God directly and just ignore Jesus?

Text

John 14:6 Jesus answered, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me (NIV)

Suggested answer

We do not have a direct relationship with God the Father. He is perfectly holy and righteous and we are corrupt.

Isaiah 59:1–2 Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear. (NKJV)

We need someone who can act as a mediator for us.

1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. (NKJV)

Question 6: How do we know whether we will go to Heaven?

Text

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (NKJV)

Suggested answer

God is faithful and we can rely on Him. He will keep His promise.

Numbers 23:19 God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good? (NKJV)

John 6:37 All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out (NKJV)

Our trust must be in God and not ourselves.

Luke 18:10–14 Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank You that I am not like other men – extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess. And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me a sinner! I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. (NKJV)

Question 7: Why can we only be forgiven through the death of Jesus Christ?

Text

Acts 4:12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved (NIV)

Suggested answer

1. The punishment due to us is death.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (NIV)

This death is a physical and a spiritual one.

Revelations 2:11 The one who is victorious will not be hurt at all by the second death (NIV)

Revelation 20:14–15 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire (NIV)

2. God cannot overlook this punishment – if He did, He would no longer be holy.

Nahum 1:3...the LORD will not leave the guilty unpunished (NIV)

In order to forgive us, He needs something to take the punishment for us.

3. We can't make up for our own sins, because the debt we owe is our own life.

Galatians 3:11 Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God, because the righteous will live by faith (NIV)

4. We cannot sacrifice animals to atone for our sin.

Hebrews 10:4 It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins (NIV)

Animals are of less value than humans so cannot adequately replace us.

5. No other human can die for us because we have all sinned and are all under the same judgment.

Romans 3:10 As it is written: There is no one righteous, not even one (NIV)

6. Good angels cannot offer themselves for us because they are spirits and so cannot die.

7. The person dying for us has to be willing to die for us and be perfectly righteous.

Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to feel sympathy for our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet he did not sin (NIV)

8. The person dying for us must be equal or greater in value than the whole human race. If he was just a man, then his sacrifice would save one other person.

Only Jesus can die on our behalf. Because He is the Son of God, His value is infinite and His death is enough for everyone to be saved.

Matthew 3:17... This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased (NIV)