**LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

**Topic: How to communicate the Gospel and Lead People to Jesus?**

**Speaker: Tim Lochens**

There are some religious words that many of us would like to avoid. I’m not talking about the difficult concepts of justification, sanctification or propitiation (most dictionaries don’t even know what these words mean!). I’m talking about a common term, but a term that strikes fear into the hearts of many in pews  across the world; ‘evangelism’.

Will the pastor tell me off for not sharing my faith with people? Am I going to feel even more guilty about the fact that I’m sometimes scared to tell people I’m a Christian? How can I possibly share the gospel when I have so many struggles and doubts myself?

God’s will surely is not that we are crippled by fear at the prospect of serving him. Surely evangelism, sharing the gospel with others can be more of a joyful and life giving experience than our current fears indicate!

Maybe a good first step is to shift our language about evangelism:

1. The shift from **evangelism** to **witness**. To witness to someone is to be honest about your story. To witness is to share with others what God has done in your life. To witness is not to preach, but to point to God in the everyday.
2. The shift from **preaching** to **sharing**. Most Christians will never be called or gifted to preach. Rather than think about evangelism as something for the preachers and extroverts, think of evangelism as sharing your faith with those people God has placed in your life.
3. The shift from **holy men** to **hospitality**. There is a perception that only the most holy, godly and gifted Christians are worthy to evangelise. This is not the way God works, in fact he loves using everyday people to share his love. As we make space in our lives for people, as we show them love and hospitality, we create the environment for true sharing and witnessing to take place.
4. The shift from **duty** to **delight**. Evangelism is not a commandment that God enforces with a big stick. Evangelism is a privilege and a delight. In the words of Peter and John after they were released from capture:

“We cannot stop telling about the wonderful things we have seen and heard” Acts 4:20

**What is gospel**

* Euangelion definition
* NT Wright Video Clip
* https://vimeo.com/154056482

Read:

Mark 10:45

Rom 5:8

Rom 6:23

Rom 8:1

Rom 8:32

2 Cor 5:21

2 Cor 8:9

1 Timothy 1:15

1 John 4:10

2 Cor 4:5

**The Radical Heart of the Gospel**

***11****Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons.****12****The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them.*

***13****“Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living.****14****After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need.****15****So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs.****16****He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.*

***17****“When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death!****18****I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.****19****I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’****20****So he got up and went to his father.*

*“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.*

***21****“The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’*

***22****“But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.****23****Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate.****24****For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.*

***25****“Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing.****26****So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on.****27****‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’*

***28****“The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him.****29****But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends.****30****But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’*

***31****“‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours.****32****But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’”*

*Luke 15:11-32*

**A reformed/evangelical outline of ‘the gospel’ by Dr Mark Dever**

The gospel is the good news about what Jesus Christ has done to reconcile sinners to God. Here’s the whole story:

1 The one and only God, who is holy, made us in his image to know him (Gen. 1:26-28).

2 But we sinned and cut ourselves off from him (Gen. 3; Rom. 3:23).

3 In his great love, God sent his Son Jesus to come as king and rescue his people from their enemies—most significantly their own sin (Ps. 2; Luke 1:67-79).

4 Jesus established his kingdom by acting as both a mediating priest and a priestly sacrifice—he lived a perfect life and died on the cross, thus fulfilling the law himself and taking on himself the punishment for the sins of many (Mark 10:45; John 1:14; Heb. 7:26; Rom. 3:21-26, 5:12-21); then he rose again from the dead, showing that God accepted his sacrifice and that God’s wrath against us had been exhausted (Acts 2:24, Rom. 4:25).

5 He now calls us to repent of our sins and trust in Christ alone for our forgiveness (Acts 17:30, John 1:12). If we repent of our sins and trust in Christ, we are born again into a new life, an eternal life with God (John 3:16).

Now that’s good news.

A good way to summarize this good news is to biblically unpack the words God, Man, Christ,

Response.

**1 God**. God is the creator of all things (Gen. 1:1). He is perfectly holy, worthy of all worship, and will punish sin (1 John 1:5, Rev. 4:11, Rom. 2:5-8).

**2 Man**. All people, though created good, have become sinful by nature (Gen. 1:26-28, Ps. 51:5, Rom. 3:23). From birth, all people are alienated from God, hostile to God, and subject to the wrath of God (Eph. 2:1-3).

**3 Christ**. Jesus Christ, who is fully God and fully man, lived a sinless life, died on the cross to bear God’s wrath in the place of all who would believe in him, and rose from the grave in order to give his people eternal life (John 1:1, 1 Tim. 2:5, Heb. 7:26, Rom. 3:21-26, 2 Cor. 5:21, 1 Cor. 15:20-22).

**4 Response**. God calls everyone everywhere to repent of their sins and trust in Christ in order to be saved (Mark 1:15, Acts 20:21, Rom. 10:9-10).

**The Gospel as Story by Trevin Wax**

**Creation:** One Hebrew word sums up the picture of Genesis 1 and 2: *shalom*. Peace. Earth was full of God's shalom, the kind of peace in which everything works according to God's intention. The world was made for human flourishing, there we could live in joy in the presence of our Maker, worshiping God by loving Him and one another forever.

**Fall:** Adam and Eve rejected God's rule over them. We refer to their rebellious choice as "the fall," and because they represented all of humanity, their action affects us too. We have-- through our attitudes and actions-- declared ourselves to be God's enemies. This rebellion results in physical and spiritual death.

**Redemption:** Thankfully the loving Creator who rightly shows Himself to be wrathful toward our sin is determined to turn the evil and suffering we have caused into good that will be to His ultimate glory. So the next movement shows God implementing a master plan for redeeming His world and rescuing fallen sinners. In the Person of Jesus Christ, God Himself comes to renew the world and restore His people. The grand narrative of Scripture climaxes with the death and resurrection of Jesus.

**Restoration:** The story doesn't end with redemption. God has promised to renew the whole world, and the Bible gives us a peak into this glorious future. The restoration of all things will take place in two ways. Christ will return to judge sin and evil, and He will usher in righteousness and peace. God will purge this world of evil once and for all.

**What is the FULL gospel?**

* Whole of life transformation- (Ref The Great Omission by Dallas Willard) Mt 28:18-20
* Power Evangelism and Holy Spirit Promptings (story Philippian Jailer)

Reasons why we don’t share the gospel? Story of Jonah

Re-approaching the WHY of evangelism- Acts 4:20

A look at the 3 spaces of evangelism- Acts 16

Why is the gospel central not just for Salvation but for all of Christian living and worldview?

See.Timothy Keller Article- The Centrality of the Gospel Article- http://download.redeemer.com/pdf/learn/resources/Centrality\_of\_the\_Gospel-Keller.pdf

**Small Group Exercise**

1. Think of a (real) person in your life who needs to know the love of God.
2. Anticipate a likely scenario where a door may be opened to discuss faith, church, life etc
3. Discuss which aspects of the gospel you would try to cover with this person.
4. Discuss the ‘way’ or the ‘approach’ you would take with this person in order to contextualise the gospel for their unique situation and personality.