

Guard the Gospel

The gospel is good news. It is good news because it addresses who we are and what we long for. We seek approval, love, belonging, acceptance, and hope. And the gospel addresses all these things in a final and full fashion. The gospel is centered in what God has done in Jesus (historical), changes who we are (personal), and makes new his people and all creation for eternity (cosmic). The gospel is hard for us to imagine for in it we find that God has done for us what we could not do for ourselves. Here are a handful of scriptures that speak to some aspects of the glorious gospel entrusted to us.

The Language of Salvation

The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners (1 Timothy 1:15a)

The Language of Justification (legal metaphor)

“Yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.” (Galatians 2:16)

The Language of Redemption (slavery and sacrificial metaphor)

“In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace which he lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight” (Ephesians 1:7-8)

The Language of Adoption (family metaphor)

“But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12)

The Language of New Creation (life and death metaphors)

“But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions - it is by grace you have been saved.” (Ephesians 2:4-5)

The Language of Substitution

“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.” (1 Peter 3:18a)

The Language of Exchange

“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Corinthians 5:21)

The Language of Love

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

The Language of History

“Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you...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 according to the Scriptures.” (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)

The Language of Cosmic Realities

“He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” (Colossians 1:13-14)

If you and I are to effectively guard and proclaim the gospel in this complex world, we will need to develop a certain fluency with it. The scriptures listed above provide us with a variety of metaphors and words that might help us to communicate the truth that stands at the core of our faith. Below are two examples of people who have stated the gospel truth in their own words:

“The gospel is the good and true story that Jesus has defeated sin, death, and evil through his own death and resurrection and is making all things new, even us.” (Jonathan Dodson)

“It is that you are so lost and flawed, so sinful, that Jesus had to die for you, but you are also so loved and valued that Jesus was glad to die for you.” (Tim Keller)