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Andrew M. Davis

Sermon Notes

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## **What Is the Gospel? An Outline for Evangelists**

Mack Stiles: *Marks of the Messenger*... great friend, excellent evangelist

At the end, tells a great story about an opportunity to lead someone to faith... a man from Nepal named Basanta. Basanta was waiting for Mack at the end of a worship service at the international church in Dubai, UAE. He initiated with Mack and said, "Can you help me?" Mack said "Sure!" He looked down at this rail-thin young man who was about the same age as Mack's son... the man was holding a worn-looking Bible in his hand. The young man said to Mack, "My name is Basanta. I am from Nepal..." and without saying another word, he said something that anyone who yearns to be fruitful in evangelism would love to hear: "Can you tell me how to become a Christian?" Mack answered, "Yes, I can..." He then shared a simple four-part outline of the gospel under the main headings of "God-Man-Christ-Response"... he wrote it out on a piece of paper. Basanta was in absolute rapt attention, hanging on every word... at the end of the God-Man-Christ-Response presentation, he asked, "Are you ready to turn your life over to Christ?" Basanta said, "Yes I am, but I have a story to tell you first!" Mack answered, "Okay". Basanta said, "Do you see this Bible?" "Yes" "My brother works in Saudi Arabia. Someone gave him this Bible, and he became a Christian." [Mack thought, "That's amazing... they don't have many Bibles in Saudi Arabia!"] Basanta continued: "My brother sent the Bible to my mother and father in Nepal, and they became Christians. Now they have a church meeting in their house." Mack was stunned and looked down at the Bible with new respect. Basanta continued: "... and I am the last brother. My parents sent me the Bible, and they have all told me that I must become a Christian too! So I am here to become a Christian."

Mack stood there with his mouth open... he said "Basanta, that's the most amazing story I've ever heard!" Basanta, having heard the gospel summarized in four points—God-Man-Christ-Response—made his response that day: repentance and faith in Christ!!

### **I. Central to Evangelism: Getting the Gospel Message Right**

#### **A. Biblical Evangelism is Not About Technique**

1. So easy to think evangelism training is all about tactics/techniques like learning to sell insurance from the leading insurance salesman of the year
2. Mack Stiles, in his excellent book on evangelism *Marks of the Messenger* said that a man he was seeking to train in evangelism said so often it felt just like this... to be effective evangelists, we must

- a. Pitch the message with a careful appeal to self-interest
  - b. Promote a program with pizzazz
  - c. Overcome hesitations with a winsome manner
  - d. Avoid any offense or problems
  - e. Answer objections with humor
  - f. Instill fears of losing out
  - g. Manipulate conversations to a point of decision
  - h. Sign on the dotted line with a sinner's prayer... and,
  - i. Hone our skills at closing the deal
3. Mack: "That may be fine for selling insurance or a used car, but is it really evangelism?"
  4. NO... some practical things may be helpful in learning how to reach out, but in the end, evangelism is a rescue mission in which we are seeking to resuscitate spiritually dead people—like giving mouth to mouth and performing CPR to a person lying unconscious and turning blue next to a pool he has just been pulled out from... HE NEEDS AIR and HE NEEDS HIS HEART BEATING
  5. In a much deeper way, the people we are seeking to reach with the gospel need to be raised from the dead spiritually:
  6. Only the gospel has the power to do this

#### B. Clear Verse on the Power of the Gospel

***Romans 1:16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.***

#### C. The Need for Constant Reminders

***1 Corinthians 15:1-2 Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. <sup>2</sup> By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you.***

1. First... because it is vital that each of you has believed the gospel himself/herself... what good would it be for you to evangelize others and be lost yourself

2. Second... because the more the evangelists themselves have drunk in the sweetness of the gospel, the more effective evangelists you will be
3. Third... because you are never done with the gospel message: Tim Keller: “We never get beyond the gospel in our Christian life to something more advanced. ... The gospel is not the A-B-C’s of Christianity, but the A to Z of Christianity.”
4. Fourth... because we tend to forget the gospel message, and need constant reminders
5. Fifth... because there is a difference between recognizing the gospel when you hear it, and being able to speak a clear summary of it yourself for others
6. Sixth... we must keep hearing the true gospel so we can PROTECT OURSELVES FROM DRIFTING FROM IT... both individually and as a church

***Hebrews 2:1 We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.***

Mack Stiles: Four stages of drift a church goes through:

- 1) The gospel is accepted
- 2) The gospel is assumed (that could happen to FBC!!!)
- 3) The gospel is confused
- 4) The gospel is lost

John MacArthur’s illustration:

A plaque on the side of a church building, taken directly from 1 Corinthians 1:23:

***1 Corinthians 1:23 we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles***

The plaque said: WE PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED. However, some vines grew up by the side of the building, obscuring part of the plaque: all you could see was “WE PREACH CHRIST”... the word “crucified” was blocked by the vines. Gradually, over time, they grew more and all you could see was “WE PREACH.” Then, a few years later... just “WE...” Then, eventually, the plaque couldn’t be seen at all!

SO... we must keep immersing our minds in the gospel message...

My desire is to both FEED THE SHEEP with the gospel this morning AND TRAIN THE SHEEP to be evangelists

D. My Goal This Morning: To Give You Three Simple Outlines to the Central Gospel Message

1. God-Man-Christ-Response
2. The Sacrificial System
3. Romans 6:23—One-verse Evangelism

E. Homework: Memorize These Outlines

F. Why? To Give You Confidence in Evangelism... and to Steer You in the Conversation

G. Also: We Can Never ASSUME the Gospel... we Must Immerse

## II. God-Man-Christ-Response

A. Simple Four-Part Outline of the Gospel

1. God
2. Man
3. Christ
4. Response

B. Outline Unfolded a Little Broader

1. God
  - a. Creator
  - b. King
    - i) Law-giver
  - c. Judge
2. Man
  - a. Created by God the Creator
  - b. Rebellious against God the King
  - c. Transgressor of God's Laws
  - d. Under Judgment by God the Judge

### 3. Christ

- a. God's Fourth Title: Savior
- b. Jesus' Supernatural life
  - i) God-Man
  - ii) Miracles
  - iii) Sinlessness
- c. Jesus' Substitutionary Death
- d. Jesus' Saving Resurrection
- e. Jesus' Salvation Gifts
  - i) Forgiveness of sins
  - ii) Eternal life: both now and forever

### 4. Response

- a. What you must DO: repent and believe
- b. What you must NOT DO: work for it or wait for it

### C. God-Man-Christ-Response With Supporting Scriptures and Illustrations

## God:

- God is Creator

*Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*

Therefore, God is **loving**

*Acts 14:17 “Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy.”*

- God is King

*Psalm 47:7 For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise.*

Therefore, God is **sovereign**

*Psalm 103:19 The LORD has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all.*

Therefore, God also **makes laws**: 10 Commandments + 2 Commandments

Ten Commandments:

- 1) You shall have no other gods
- 2) You shall not make or worship idols
- 3) You shall not take the Name of the Lord in vain
- 4) Keep the Sabbath day holy
- 5) Honor your father and mother
- 6) You shall not murder [and anger is the root of all murder]
- 7) You shall not commit adultery [and lust is adultery in your heart]
- 8) You shall not steal
- 9) You shall not bear false witness
- 10) You shall not covet anything

Two Commandments:

- 1) You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength
- 2) You shall love your neighbor as yourself

- God is Judge

*Psalm 96:13 the LORD... comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his faithfulness.*

Therefore, God is **holy**

*Habakkuk 1:13 Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong.*

## **Man:**

- Man is Created by God the Creator : Genesis 1:27

*Genesis 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*

Created to be like God, to know/love God, to serve God

- Man is Rebellious Against God the King

Universally Rebellious: Romans 3:10-12

*Romans 3:10-12 As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."*

Rebellious Against God's Laws: 10 + 2 Commandments

- Man is Under Judgment by God the Judge

Judgment Day

*Matthew 12:36 But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.*

Judgment Penalty

*Romans 6:23 ... the wages of sin is death...*

First Key Question: How can a sinful person enter heaven where God allows no sin?

## Christ:

- God's Fourth Title—Savior

*Isaiah 33:22 For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; it is he who will save us.*

### Saved from what?

*Matthew 1:21 "She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."*

- Jesus' Supernatural Life

### God-man

*John 1:1, 14 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ...The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.*

### Miraculous

*Matthew 11:5 The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.*

### Sinless

*1 Peter 2:22 "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."*

- Jesus' Substitutionary Death

*1 Peter 2:24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.*

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

- Jesus' Saving Resurrection

*1 Corinthians 15:3-5 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.*

- Jesus' Salvation Gifts

### Total Forgiveness of Sins

*Ephesians 1:7 In [Christ] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace*

### Eternal Life



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

## Response:

- Second Key Question

*Acts 16:30 "What must I do to be saved?"*

- What You Must DO:

*Mark 1:15 "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"*

Repent: U-Turn: Away from sin; Toward God

Believe the gospel: Believe THAT it's true; Believe IN Christ

- **What You Must NOT DO:**

Do Not Work For It

*Ephesians 2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.*

Do Not Wait For Tomorrow

*2 Corinthians 6:2 For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.*

*Eternal Life Now (on earth)*

New Creation by the Creator

*2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*

Joyful Servant to the King

*1 John 3:24 Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.*

Completely Pardoned by the Judge

*John 5:24 "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."*

Adopted by the Father

*John 1:12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God--*

### **Eternal Life Forever (in heaven)**

***John 11:25-26 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"***

Closing Question (Mack Stiles):

“You know, I think that this is an urgent matter in your life. I think that you understand the gospel, and really what is left is for you to place your complete faith and trust in Christ.

**WHAT IS STOPPING YOU FROM DOING THAT?”**

And wait for their answer!!

#### D. Quick Summary from Mack Stiles:

Mack Stiles, *Mark of the Messenger*: “There’s bad news before there’s good news, and the bad news is that we’re rotten sinners. Were it not for God’s mercy and love, we would all face certain destruction. We’re under God’s judgment right now. But the good news is that if we turn from our unbelief and pride and put our complete faith and trust in God’s Son, believing that he has taken our sin on his body at the cross, and ask him for forgiveness as the risen Christ, we can enter into a restored relationship with the living God.” [p. 88]

### III. Application

A. Come to Christ

B. Drink in the Gospel Again for Your Own Vitality

C. Ask Yourself These Three Diagnostic Questions

1. Do I know the gospel?
2. Do I live the gospel?
3. Do I speak the gospel?

D. Pray for God to Give You BOLDNESS to Share the Gospel

1. Paul asked for boldness and clarity

***Ephesians 6:20 Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.***

***Colossians 4:4 Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.***

2. Get five people to pray for you to have boldness to share the gospel with someone

E. Pray for God to Give You Opportunities to Share a Gospel Outline with Someone

F. TAKE ACTION [Mack Stiles]

1. Do a “body check”: check your head—is the gospel on your mind throughout the day; check your gut—are you willing to be bold in the face of your fears? Check your feet: Are you willing to move out into a hostile world to speak the truth? Are you willing to go where unbelievers are to meet them and know them and eventually share with them?
2. Pray: and pray again... pray for yourself; pray for lost people you know;
3. Plan: look at your life ahead... vacations, business trips, this week’s schedule; ask the Lord to go ahead of you to prepare witnessing opportunities
4. Think: think through issues that unbelievers are likely to raise... think about how you would answer them;
5. Prepare: memorize these outlines:
  - a. Memorize “God-Man-Christ-Response”
  - b. AND/OR... Memorize Lessons from the Sacrificial System
  - c. AND/OR ... Memorize Romans 6:23
6. Get started: do you have a hobby you enjoy??? Connect with other like-minded people; have lunch with people; get involved in a sports league with unbelievers; be bold in conversation: “What spiritual interests do you have?” “What is your spiritual background?” LISTEN... find ways to show compassion, to pray for lost people
7. Gather: with other Christians to pray specifically for people you’d like to bring to faith in Christ; gather with non-Christians to do four-week investigative Bible studies in the Gospel of Mark
8. Serve: find ways to bless people in your neighborhood, workplace, community
9. Invite: be hospitable... invite lost people into your home
10. Pursue: don’t ever give up... keep trying ways to reach out

Mack Stiles: The best part of evangelism... when the OPPORTUNITIES BECOME BIGGER THAN THE OBSTACLES!!