

***Finishing up some thoughts on last week***

- **Me-centered witness vs. God-centered witness?** (some truth given out of context)
  - If we only center on the individual, we usually promote a threefold negative effect: (Harris)
    - Deceiving non-Christians - unbelievers trust in their response for assurance, i.e., “I know I’m saved because I prayed the sinner’s prayer.”
    - Distorting Christian expectations - believers look for another stage or experience in their Christian life, often becoming disillusioned
    - Disgracing God’s honor - people profess salvation with unchanged lives.
- **Additional thoughts about Gospel tracts**
  - Tracts must not truncate the Gospel lest they convey a path to salvation devoid of biblical foundation
  - Tracts must not engage in “*theotainment*” – tell a compelling story but miss a complete expression of the Gospel

***The Grammar of the Gospel***

- We must exercise great care to not present misinformation
  - “Asking Jesus into **my** heart” – where is this taught in Scripture?
  - “Inviting Jesus into **my** life” – “Which of the Apostle’s used this language?”
  - “Trusting Christ as Lord and Savior” – accurate when connected to clear statements about the Person and Work of Christ
  - Half-truths – “Every day with Jesus is sweeter than the day before” Really?
  - Selfish, sinful desires met – Prosperity and Happiness Theology
- We must exercise great care to get the message correct
  - The Whole Gospel to the Whole Person by Whole People (Metzger)
  - J.I. Packer (Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God) makes the case that the Gospel is a message about: (Romans 1:16f)
    - God
    - Sin, Sins, Sinfulness
    - Jesus Christ: His Person and Work
    - A Call to Faith and Repentance – No conversion without transformation

***Biblical truth is the measuring stick of true evangelism, not how effective a method is in leading people to a decision. (The Holy Spirit is not hamstrung without our methods)***

***The power of the Gospel is not measured in how many people make a decision; it is how the Gospel transforms a person’s life.***

***Getting the content of the Gospel correct is more important than mastering methods for communicating the Gospel. (Sometimes we assume the content and focus only the method)***

***Methods of evangelism are NOT the test of biblical orthodoxy; getting the content of the Gospel correct is the test of orthodoxy.***

### **Getting the Story Straight is Paramount**

- **Creation – Fall – Redemption – Consummation** as expressed in the 66 books of the Bible is the Gospel
- A truncated Gospel leaves people with no biblical basis for their salvation, results in spiritual stillbirths and does not provide the foundation for making disciples (leaves spiritual babies on park benches)
- A modern American story (Pyramid of science, technology, economy) promise of inevitable progress – diminishes the biblical call to “die to self,” which is an essential element of the Gospel
- A postmodern story among stories (True for me) – reduces the biblical narrative to personal religious preference instead of being the Story (attempts to soften the exclusive truth claims of the Gospel (cannot avoid the scandal of the Gospel without harming the Gospel))
- A personally driven and directed story - hyper-individualizing the Gospel makes conversion solely personal benefit driven.
- God’s Grand, True Story of Creation-Fall-Redemption-Consummation (Real answers to Real questions)
  - **Creation**
    - Who is God?
    - Who am I?
    - Why am I here?
    - What is this place?
    - What is real?
  - **Fall**
    - What is wrong with this place?
    - What is wrong with me?
    - Things are not the way they are supposed to be
  - **Redemption**
    - What is the solution to this problem of sin?
    - Person and Work of Jesus the Christ-life, death and resurrection
  - **Consummation**
    - For what may we hope?
- Metzger’s “Coming Home” Story approach (See Sheet)