



Gospel Threads

Thread 3: The Sufficiency of Christ

Key Question: *How can we weave truths about the sufficiency of Christ into our everyday conversations?*

Review: Why “Gospel Threads?”

- **God’s Word commands us to make disciples.**
 - Disciples Receive & Believe the Gospel (Delight)
 - Disciples Display the Gospel
 - Disciples Declare the Gospel
- **Evangelism is Not an “Event”, but a Way of Life**
- **Overcoming Obstacles:** How can we overcome obstacles to evangelism consistently and habitually?
- **Active and Passive Fields** - There are many “fields” of evangelism in which we can proclaim the gospel. They can be grouped into two categories:
 - **Active Spheres:** We intentionally alter our life to be around non-believers.
 - **Passive Spheres:** We engage with non-believers in everyday settings.
- **The Key:** *We need to develop habits of intentionality in our speech and actions that open pathways to share the gospel.*
- **The Method: Weaving Gospel Threads**
 - **The Threads:** Gospel themes.
 - **The Fabric:** Our everyday lives.
 - **The Needle:** Our obedience to display and declare.
 - **The Process:** Keep weaving threads until a door opens to take the next step.
 - **The Goal:** Share the gospel as an overflow of your already-established connection and friendship.

Gospel Thread #3 - The Sufficiency of Christ¹

• Why Focus on the Sufficiency of Christ?

- Jesus is the one to whom Scripture and the Spirit are always pointing.
 - **Luke 24:27** *And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.*
- The sinful human heart is desperate to justify itself or find any avenue to salvation besides Christ, so we need to be able to clearly explain why Jesus is the only way to be saved.
 - **Acts 4:12** *And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*

• False Solutions for Our Problem

- How can a holy and just God be reconciled to sinners like us, who are born with a sin nature and guilty of having committed sin?
- Can God “just forgive?” Can he overlook sin?
 - **Numbers 14:18** *The Lord is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but he will by no means clear the guilty...*
- Can we get God to forgive us by being sorry enough?
 - **2 Corinthians 7:10** *For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.*
- Can we earn our salvation by our good works?
 - **Romans 3:20** *For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.*
- Can we add Jesus to our works or religion?
 - **Galatians 3:3** *Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?*
 - **John 14:6** *Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”*
- Instead we need ...
 - a righteous representative who can merit God’s favor for us.
 - a spotless sacrifice who can endure God’s just wrath for us.
 - a holy priest who can safely approach God to intercede for us.
 - God himself to do what we cannot and work this salvation for us.
- **Question:** What other false solutions or excuses have you heard proposed? How might we respond to them?

¹ Lesson material for this thread leans heavily on the material provided in David Platt’s book, “Gospel Threads”. You can download a free PDF of this book here: <https://radical.net/book/gospel-threads-2/>

- **Jesus Christ, the All-Sufficient Solution**

- Jesus is the Last Adam, our righteous representative.
 - Like Adam, Jesus is our representative, whose actions and status are imputed to those he represents.
 - Unlike Adam, Jesus was perfectly righteous and earned for us eternal life and salvation in his life, death, and resurrection.
 - **1 Corinthians 15:22** *For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.*
- Jesus is the Lamb of God, our spotless sacrifice.
 - Like a sacrificial lamb, Jesus is without blemish and offers his blood as a covering for sin.
 - Unlike a sacrificial lamb, Jesus by his blood has truly atoned for sin.
 - **John 1:29** *The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"*
- Jesus is our Great High Priest, our holy priest.
 - Like the Levitical priests, Jesus brings a sacrifice for atonement for our sins and intercedes for us before God.
 - Unlike the Levitical priests, Jesus is sinless, has accomplished redemption once for all, and lives forever to make intercession.
 - **Hebrews 7:23-25** *The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, 24 but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. 25 Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.*
- Jesus is the Son of God made flesh.
 - The reason Jesus can accomplish all of this for us is because he is fully God and fully man.
 - Man, who was made in the image of God, has separated himself from God by sin. So Jesus, the Image of God, has united himself to Man without sin to restore us to God.
- **Question:** What are some of the world's false views of Jesus and how might we respond to them?

- **What Jesus Has Done**

- Jesus lived the life we could not live (his perfect, law-keeping life)
- Jesus died the death we deserved to die (his crucifixion)
- Jesus conquered the enemy we could not conquer (his powerful resurrection)

- **Pointing to Christ...Or Not?**

- Must we in every encounter point someone to Christ?
 - **Matthew 7:6** *Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.*
 - **Matthew 10:14** *And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town.*
- Scripturally, there are categories for times when one's audience is not ready to hear about Christ.
- However, around the Second Great Awakening, the popular method of evangelism changed to press for an immediate decision for Christ.
- While we of course understand the urgency of salvation, we also want to rest in God's sovereignty in salvation. Allow God's Law to do its work to drive a person to Christ. Offer rest in Christ to the weary and brokenhearted.

Weaving the Thread of The Sufficiency of Christ

- **Intentionally talk about Jesus, not just "God".**
- **Talking about Jesus life...**
 - Look for opportunities to highlight Jesus' example for us.
 - Look for opportunities to acknowledge Jesus' work in us.
 - Look for opportunities to point out Jesus' identification with us.
- **Talking about Jesus death...**
 - Never stop emphasizing the gravity of sin.
 - Never stop talking about your gratitude for Christ.
- **Talking about Jesus' resurrection...**
 - Speak about difficulties with hope.
 - Speak about death with joy.
- **Talking with Pluralist Paul (someone who claims that all religious roads lead to the same destination)...**
 - Highlight the all-important distinctions between taste, tradition, and truth.
- **Talking with Open-Minded Olivia (someone who claims that God would never send people to hell)...**
 - Explain the pursuing love of God in the perceived narrowness of the gospel.
- **Talking with Nominal Nancy (someone who claims to be a Christian but shows no evidence)...**
 - Point out how a privatized faith in a resurrected Christ is practically impossible.

Case Studies for Consideration

- **Nominal Neighbor.** You're catching up over coffee with a neighbor you've gotten to know and discover that she claims to be a Christian. However, through conversation, you find that she doesn't go to church and doesn't exhibit any spiritual fruit. When you bring up spiritual things, she warmly agrees that there's a God and that He's good, but she doesn't give evidence of actually having repented and trusted in Jesus.
 - **Question:** What questions could you ask to bring your friend to see her need for Jesus? What thread(s) about the sufficiency of Christ could you attempt to weave to get her to see how her faith doesn't align with Scripture? What next steps could you take to demonstrate the faith such that she comes to see her error?
- **The Good Person Who's Done Bad Things.** A friend from your gym has opened up to you over several conversations about some poor choices he's made in the past. He's been working hard on himself, and one day he tells you, "I've worked really hard to become a better person. I think as long as I make up for the bad I've done, God – if there's a God – will see that I tried." He pauses, then adds, "Doesn't he have to give us credit for that?"
 - **Question:** How might you applaud his desire to change while gently surfacing the problem with his basis for approaching God? How could you introduce the thread of Christ as our representative and spotless sacrifice? What questions could you ask to help him see his approach is faulty?
- **Deconstructing Family Member.** A family member you see at holidays has been gradually moving away from the faith he was raised in. There's not been a dramatic announcement, but a slow shift over time. This time, he says: "Honestly, I've been rethinking a lot of it. I still think Jesus was a great teacher. But the whole 'only way to heaven' thing just feels like something the church made up to control people. A good God wouldn't be that exclusive."
 - **Question:** How might you resist the urge to debate and instead engage him with genuine curiosity about why he's still drawn to Jesus? How could you direct the conversation toward exploring the contradiction of Jesus being a "good moral teacher" while he himself claimed to be the Son of God? What questions could you ask to expose his view's inability to answer the problem of sin? What aspects of Christ's identity (Last Adam, Lamb of God, Great High Priest) might speak most directly to his objections?

Lesson Summary

- Jesus is sufficient for all we need to be saved, and we must be absolutely clear in our evangelism concerning his sufficiency and exclusivity.
- There are many false solutions to the problem of sin that the human heart will cling to which will end in death, no matter how well-intentioned.
- Though there are many theological opinions Christians can safely disagree on, we have to believe the central truth about Christ: his eternal divinity, true incarnation, virgin birth, sinless life of obedience, vicarious death on the cross, and glorious resurrection.
- We ought to be careful about *how* we point a person to Christ to ensure they understand their need for him and the necessity of faith and repentance. Otherwise we may be creating false converts who not know the real Jesus at all.

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross."

Colossians 1:15-20