

Gospel Threads

Thread 4: The Necessity of Faith

***Key Question:** How can we weave truths about the necessity of faith for salvation into our everyday conversations?*

Review: Why “Gospel Threads?”

- **God’s Word commands us to make disciples.**
 - Disciples Receive & Believe the Gospel
 - 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 #4 - The Necessity of Faith¹

- **What is faith?**

- Diluted Faith
 - **James 2:19** *You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!*
 - **Matthew 7:21-23** *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’”*
- Complicated Faith
 - **Galatians 2:16** *...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.*
- **Question:** Why are these two extremes dangerous for our understanding of faith?

- **The Goal of Faith**

- The goal of faith is not:
 - Happiness
 - Prosperity
 - Peace
 - Satisfaction
 - Joy
 - Heaven
- The goal of faith is restoration to God.

- **The Role of Faith**

- Jesus is the basis of our faith.
 - **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.”*
 - **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.”*
- Faith is the means by which salvation is applied to us.
 - “Faith is the anti-work.”

¹ Lesson material for this thread leans David Platt’s “Gospel Threads”. <https://radical.net/book/gospel-threads-2/>

- **Ephesians 2:8-9** *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*
- **Romans 3:28** *For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.*
- Works are the evidence of our faith.
 - You are justified based on Christ's work, not yours.
 - **James 2:14, 17** *What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? ... So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*
- **Question:** How can we explain the difference between this view and other worldviews?

● The Place of Repentance

- Repentance is turning away from sin to Christ.
- Faith and repentance are often tied together in the New Testament.
 - **Mark 1:15** *... "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."*
- True faith does not happen without repentance.
 - To turn from sin, you must turn to something else. It cannot be genuine faith in Christ if we do not trust him to overcome our sin.
 - **Romans 10:9** *...because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*
- This does not mean the struggle with sin and the need for repentance is over.
 - **Romans 7:22-23** *For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.*
 - **1 John 1:8-9** *If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
- **Question:** What are some ways we can point to the need for repentance and faith in Christ in our everyday conversations?

Weaving the Thread of the Necessity of Faith

- **Tell your story whenever you can.**
 - Be simple so that it can be easily understood.
 - Stay focused on God's work in your life.
 - Be humble in how you present yourself.
 - Show passion about what you've seen and experienced from God.
 - Be yourself and don't try to exaggerate.
- **Speak about restoration to God.**
 - Point out why we need this.
 - Talk about the effects of being restored to a right relationship with God.
- **Include repentance and faith in your conversation.**
 - Help them to see their sin and recognize the mercy found in Christ.
 - Help them to see Christ's presence even in the midst of sorrow or tragedy.
 - Help them to see the love of Christ through his sacrifice.
 - Help them to see his all-encompassing Lordship.
- **For children specifically...**
 - Use simple illustrations and be interactive in the conversation.
 - Talk to them about faith repeatedly.
 - Encourage faith and repentance without coercion.
- **For cultural "Christians" specifically...**
 - Ask many questions about their beliefs and the reasons for them.
 - Clearly define any common terms that might be interpreted differently.
 - Offer to study the Bible with them, and invite them to join you in your church community.
 - Be bold to call them to genuine faith.

Case Studies for Consideration

- **Friend from School**
 - Scene: You've gone to a high school reunion and are catching up with some of your old friends and classmates. You're talking with someone you haven't seen in many years, but you know that he used to go to church when he was young, but it seems like he doesn't now, although he'll occasionally say something about being a good person.
 - **Discussion Question 1:** What are some questions you could ask to explore the effect of faith on his life?
 - **Discussion Question 2:** How could you help move the conversation to a deeper level of discussing the implications of what it means to have faith?

- **Your Child**

- Scene: You're a mom with kids, and one of your kids has started to ask questions about Jesus. She likes to do the things that your family does as part of your worship activities, but it doesn't seem like she really understands why you do them yet.
- **Discussion Question 1:** How might you help her understand the importance of a faith that affects your entire life?
- **Discussion Question 2:** How could you encourage her to continue exploring faith in a way that will allow her to seek it for herself as opposed to being reliant on you as her family?

- **International Student**

- Scene: You've decided to get out of your comfort zone and invite an international student from a local school to your home for a holiday meal. He's very talkative and inquisitive, but it's clear he has no familiarity with the teachings of Jesus, and his worldview seems quite different.
- **Discussion Question 1:** How could you lovingly expose him to his need for faith in Christ?
- **Discussion Question 2:** What could you say to demonstrate the uniqueness and exclusivity of Christ to address the human condition?

Lesson Summary

- It is of great importance that we point others to the need for faith in Christ in our conversations and that we display how that faith affects our everyday lives.
- The true meaning of faith, rather than the extreme definitions that are so common, should be clear through our words and actions.
- We should keep God in focus and recognize our restoration to him as the joyous reward of our faith.
- Our own stories are incredibly valuable as tools to help us weave gospel threads into our conversations with those around us, as every part of our lives should be shaped by faith.

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you."

John 14:26