

The 3 Circles

Introduction - Why is sharing the Gospel hard?

- We're into our third week of our evangelism series. We've talked about the reason that sharing the Gospel is so important, looking at the Great Commission in Matthew, and last week Darryl spoke to us about being "salt and light" and sharing the Gospel with our lives.
- Well this week we're going to be doing something a bit different, as I'm going to talk to you a little bit about sharing the Gospel with our words
- As we think about that, what are some of the barriers, or fears that we have when it comes to actually sharing our faith?
- We worry about how people will respond to the message that we're sharing, it is very counter cultural in our world today.
- We worry about people asking us questions that we might not know the answer to
- But one of the biggest challenges that a lot of people face, at least people that I've talked to, is simply not knowing where to start, or wondering about what to actually say when sharing the Gospel with people.
- So specifically with that last challenge in mind, I want to actually share with you a really practical and helpful tool on how to go about sharing the Gospel. We don't want this series to be just theoretical, we want to give you tools like this that will help you put into practice what we're learning.
- And this is a tool that is super easy to share, it's a little diagram that you can draw out in a minute or two, and all you would need is a cue card and a pencil to share this with somebody.
- Earlier this week we sent out some notes for this week, so those will be helpful to you as I walk through this, but either way, I recommend that you at least have a piece of paper and a pencil handy as I go through this.
- What I'm going to show you is something called the "**3 circles**". It's a really helpful tool that I learned and practiced a lot when I was working at another church last year.
- So here is what we're going to do today, there's two main things that I want to accomplish. The first is to train you with this tool so that you can use it in sharing the Gospel with others in your life, and the other is that We're just going to walk through the Gospel story as I teach this tool to remind ourselves of the fundamentals of the Gospel. When thinking about sharing the Gospel with others, we need to also be remembering how important it is to be teaching ourselves the Gospel each and every day, reminding ourselves of what Christ has done, and our need for him.

- Paul says in Romans 1:16-17:

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."'" - Rom. 1:16-17 (ESV)

- This message is more than just something that we want to share with others, it is the very source of our own life. Paul calls it the “power of God for salvation to everyone who believes”, so we want to be daily reminding ourselves just how important and amazing this message is.

Part 1: The Problem

Step 1 - A world full of brokenness

- So starting with the problem, we have our first circle over here. This circle represents our world, but you can see that there's a crack in it.
- Our world is broken. You don't have to look far to see the truth in that. We are living in a global pandemic. Turn on the news any time during the day, and you will be confronted with the brokenness of this world.
- And this is really key to our understanding of the Gospel, because we need to understand that there is a problem. That things are not as they should be. This world is not the way that it is supposed to be.
- Because this is not how God created the world to be, broken and full of pain.

Step 2 - A world full of love

- God created the world perfect, and full of perfect love. Perfect love between him and us, and perfect love between ourselves.
- When he first created the world he said again and again that he created the world “good”
- Genesis 1 tells the story of the creation of the World, and it tells us that each time God created something he called it “good”, and at the end of the whole creation, he declared that it was “very good”
- Genesis 2:7-9 - Describes the perfect state of the world.

“then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree

of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” - Gen. 2:7-9 (ESV)

- What a beautiful picture that is, of a world so lovingly crafted and ordered by our God. Created by the word of his power, perfect and good.
- But we don't live in this world. We live in brokenness.
- Why is that? What went wrong? What happened to cause us to be here and not there? This is the fundamental problem that we face

Step 3 - Why we're here and not there

- We are living in this broken world because each of us has decided that we know better than God, and we have tried to do things our own way, rebelling against him. This is what the Bible calls “sin” and it is because of this sin that we live in this broken world today.
- Genesis 3 tells us this story, how Adam and Eve disobeyed the one instruction that God gave them, to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and because of that had to face the punishment that he warned them of, which was death and separation from their perfect and holy God.
- Genesis 3:8 - shows the broken relationship that resulted from disobedience and sin.

“And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.” - Gen. 3:8 (ESV)

- And if you look at us today, God's Word in the Bible is full of God showing us how to live our life according to his laws, and how to follow him, and yet each and every day we fail to meet that standard. We fall short of God's glory and because of that, we cannot have a relationship with God. We cannot approach him because he is holy, and cannot be near sin.
- Romans 3:23 lays out this problem perfectly when it says:

“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,” - Rom. 3:23 (ESV)

Step 4 - the bungee cords

- So we recognize that this world, and our lives are full of brokenness, but we don't like it. We don't want to be trapped here, so we try to fix this brokenness on our own, and find some way to escape this brokenness that we feel.
- We think that maybe money will get us out of the brokenness.
- We think that maybe power, or a good career will get us out of brokenness.

- We think that sex, drugs, alcohol, parties, etc. etc. etc. will get us out of brokenness.
- The issue with each of these things is that, while they may seem to fix our brokenness for a time, each of these things is really just an idol in our heart, and they act like bungee cords, and before long they will all pull us right back into the brokenness we were trying to escape.
- There is no way for us to get out of this brokenness on our own.
- So that is our problem. We live in this broken world, separated from a perfect relationship with God because of our own choices and sin, and there is no way for us to fix this problem on our own. And because we are trapped in this brokenness we have to deal with the consequences of our sin, which the Bible tells us in Romans 6:23 is death.

“For the wages of sin is death” - Rom. 6:23a (ESV)

- Doesn't seem like an overly hopeful message at this point does it? If this were the end of the story each of us would be in pretty big trouble, but because of the love and mercy of God our story doesn't end there.
- The second part of that verse says,

“but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” - Rom. 6:23b (ESV)

Part 2: The Solution

Step 5 - The escape door

- You see, because God loved us so much, and he knew that we could never escape this brokenness on our own, he gave us an escape. A door that we could take to escape this brokenness.

Step 6 - God sent his son

- God sent his son Jesus to earth, who was fully God, and fully man.
- Jesus lived a perfect life on earth, he never sinned once.
- But because evil men hated him, they put him to death on the cross.
- A death that he did not deserve because he did nothing wrong, yet he willingly took on himself.
- Isaiah 53:5-6 gives us a picture of what Jesus actually did for us through his death:

“But he was pierced for our transgressions;

he was crushed for our iniquities;

*upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with his wounds we are healed.*

*All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned—every one—to his own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.” - Isaiah 53:5-6 (ESV)*

- So Jesus, in his death, willingly took onto himself the punishment of death that we deserved, and paid that penalty in full.
- His death is not the end of the story though, because three days later he rose from the dead, showing that he has power over sin and over death.
- This whole story is summed up so perfectly in John 3:16, which is why it’s one of the most famous verses in the entire Bible.

“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 (ESV)

Step 7 - Turn and trust in Jesus

- This is the solution to our problem. The problem of brokenness that we could not fix on our own. In Jesus’ death and resurrection he has offered himself as our solution, and he has given us an invitation.
- He has invited us to turn away from our sin, and rebellion against God, and to put our trust in him, making him the king of our lives.
- Romans 10:9-10 sums this up

“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. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.” - Rom. 10:9-10 (ESV)

- We also see an example of this played out in the story of the woman caught in adultery which John describes for us. In John 8:10-11

"Jesus stood up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” 11 She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.”” - John 8:10-11 (ESV)

- That “*Go and sin no more*” line is so crucial here, because it shows the need for a change to take place in our life. That we cannot just go on the same way that we have been, there is a responsibility to turn away from our sin.
- This is called “repentance”, literally to turn away from our sin in order to follow Christ. It’s one or the other, either we will live for ourselves and our sin, or we will live a life for Christ. That is the choice that he has opened to us through his sacrifice.

Step 8 - Made new, or trapped in brokenness?

- When we have turned from our sin and put our trust in Christ, he makes us into a new person, and allows us to have a restored relationship with God that was previously broken by our sin.
- Now that doesn’t mean that we suddenly become perfect people, who will never again sin in our lives. I don’t know about you, but I’ve been a Christian for almost 11 years and I have messed up plenty since the day I gave my life to Christ. But the beauty of Christ’s sacrifice is that he has taken the penalty for our sin, and we are able to receive forgiveness for our sins through him. And because he has given us the gift of the Holy Spirit, it means that God is continually at work in our hearts teaching us, and helping us to become more like Christ each day.
- So the Bible tells us that every person is in one of two spots. They have either turned and trusted in Christ and are being made new, or they are still trapped in brokenness.
- Romans 6:23 doesn’t leave a lot of wiggle room or middle ground.

“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” - Rom. 6:23 (ESV)

- So where are you?
- Where would you like to be?
- Is there anything keeping you from turning and trusting in Christ today?
- And I want to be clear, this tool isn’t the “magic trick to get the convert”, or some special formula to make someone accept Christ, but it does fully walk through the Gospel in a simple way, and opens the door for more conversation afterwards.

Conclusion - Recap and challenge

- So where does that leave us? Well first, for those of us who have trusted in Christ, it should cause us to celebrate and give glory to God because of this amazing gift and the new life that we’ve found in Christ, and second, it should encourage us and remind us of the need to share this message with anyone who will listen. It should put a burden on our hearts to know that

all those who have not trusted in Christ are still living in sin and brokenness, and will one day have to pay the penalty for that decision.

- This brings me back to the passage that was read at the beginning of the service:

“For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.” For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.””

“How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”” - Rom. 10:9-15 (ESV)

- Think of those who are lost in brokenness, and the need that they have for Christ. How are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? But we have heard of him. We have this amazing message of hope and life, and we need to share it.
- So who could you share this message with? Think about family members, neighbours, friends, co-workers, etc. and I want to challenge you to share this with someone. I’m going to post in the chat a link to a video of a pastor going much more quickly through this tool, actually the pastor who trained me with it, and I would encourage and challenge you to get familiar with this tool, and to share it with someone. Think of one person in your life who needs to hear this, and go out of your way to share it with them this week.
- It doesn’t answer every question that people may have, and it’s not a “guaranteed conversion every time” kind of tool. It’s a way to start conversations, get people thinking, and begin to open some possible doors.
- If people ask questions that you don’t know answers to that is OK, but take some time to look for an answer and follow up.
- We have heard and been impacted by the beauty of this message, and we have a responsibility to do something with it. To share it. Don’t just keep this inside, not sharing it.