

- **The Gospel - Accept No Substitutes (Part 1)**
Rocklyn Clarke Sr. - Sunday April 14, 2013
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<http://www.LifeChurchBoston.org/>
- **The Gospel - Accept No Substitutes (Part 1)**
 - **Preparation**
 - **Introduction**
 - Welcome to another church meeting at the Hampton Inn & Suites.
 - Welcome Cards -
 - “I want to call your attention to the Welcome Card that you were given on your way into the auditorium”
 - These cards do two things for us:
 - They help us get to know our new visitors better.
 - They also give anyone (visitors or members) a chance to express a need or to give us feedback.
 - By filling it out you will help us to better serve you.
 - We're going to provide time for you to complete the cards at the end of our service, but we encourage you to start filling them out now.
 - **Please use this card:**
 - if you're a **first time visitor** or if you've **never** filled one out before,
 - to tell us about a **decision you made** today,
 - to ask us for more information, or to give us **feedback**.
 - **Please include your contact information** unless we already have it. At the **end of service** we'll ask you to complete the card and then place it in the designated box or give it to someone from our staff on your way out.
 - Regularly Invite People To Join Life Church
- Transition
- Review what it means to be a Christian.
 - What does it mean to be a Christian?
 - "Christ" = "anointed one" - effectively "king".
 - The Disciples were first called "Christians" at Antioch - Acts 11:19-26
Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews. Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to

Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. **The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.**

- "Christian" = "belonging to Christ".
- Christians follow Jesus
 - Jesus' people know his voice and follow him - John 10:22-30

Then came the Feast of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was in the temple area walking in Solomon's Colonnade. The Jews gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly."

Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one."
 - Remind them of how we illustrated "following" with "Simon Says".
- As followers of Jesus, we gather on Sundays (The Lord's Day) to celebrate him.
- Review two-stage process of divine revelation.
 - Think about two-stage journeys:
 - Fly to Florida to take a cruise.
 - Taxi to airport to catch a flight.
 - Jesus' contemporaries were flying from LaGuardia.
 - We're flying from Logan.
 - The words "Father", "Kingdom", "good news", etc. are the first leg of the journey. We then use stories to take us to a more complete understanding.
 - Other people's stories will control you unless you establish the story that God wants you to tell.
- **Read the Passage: Galatians 1**

Paul, an apostle — sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead — and all the brothers with me,

To the churches in Galatia:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel — which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!

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Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Peter and stayed with him fifteen days. I saw none of the other apostles — only James, the Lord's brother. I assure you before God that what I am writing you is no lie. Later I went to Syria and Cilicia. I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. They only heard the report: "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." And they praised God because of me.

- **Exegetical Idea**

Accept no substitutes for the authentic gospel.

- **What does this mean?**

- The Gospel - Good News

- References from Israel's history

- Adam and Eve were exiled from Eden.
- God chose Abraham to begin undoing Adam's failure.
- Israel, as Abraham's seed is given promises:
 - Deuteronomy 28 - blessings for obedience
 - Deuteronomy 28 - curses for disobedience
 - Deuteronomy 30 - promises for redemption from exile
- The end of exile - Isaiah 61-62
- Israel during Jesus' time was still effectively in exile because they were under the control of a foreign power (Rome).

- References from Roman history
 - Announcement of a new emperor.
 - Announcement of the emperor's birthday.
- What is the Good News?
 - God's Kingdom is near!
- Good news of God's Kingdom
 - Towards a proper understanding of God's Kingdom
 - The word "kingdom" has less meaning for Americans.
 - All the alternatives are also inadequate:
 - God's government
 - God's administration
 - Initial proclamation - **Mark 1:1-15**

The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

It is written in Isaiah the prophet: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way" — "a voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'" And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. And this was his message: "After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

At once the Spirit sent him out into the desert, and he was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. **"The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"**
 - "God's administration is coming to power. Repent and believe the election results!"
- Post-resurrection teaching - **Acts 1:1-3**

In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. **He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.**
- God's Kingdom is different.

- Where is it?
- How does it expand?
- Who belongs to it?
- How is it managed?
- What's it like to be inside?
- Authentic gospel - the one Paul first preached to them.
 - What was the different gospel that they were turning to?
 - A curse on anyone who preaches a different gospel.
- Paul is not a people-pleaser.
- Paul received the gospel by revelation from Jesus - not from other believers.
- **Is it True? Do I believe it?**
 - Yes - Over the past two years I've been trying to make sure that we at Life Church understand the authentic gospel.
 - Life Church Mission - FIGS
- **What difference does it make? So What?**
 - There is power in the real gospel - Romans 1:16
 - Modern church tradition often offers people a false gospel.
 - What if some legalists tried to invalidate my ministry at Life Church?
- **Homiletical Idea:**
The Gospel - accept no substitutes!
- **Purpose of the Sermon (what listeners should do)**
 - Understand and be able to share the authentic gospel.
 - Understand how the gospel fits into your life path.
- **Understand and be able to share the authentic gospel.**
 - God's Kingdom is near: God is taking the throne and inviting outsiders into his kingdom.
 - Jesus is on the throne of the kingdom and at the center of God's plan to fix everything. - Ephesians 1:9-10
 - Isaiah 61:1-2 fulfilled in Jesus - **Luke 4:14-19**
 - Good news to the poor
 - Freedom for prisoners

- Recovery of sight for the blind
- Release for the oppressed
- Year of the Lord's favor (Jubilee, restoration of land, cancellation of debts)
- This is good news if you can see yourself as poor, a prisoner, blind, or oppressed.
- Another take: the beatitudes - Matthew 5:1-12
- **Understand how the gospel fits into your life path.**
 - What to do with the gospel.
 - Be a team player.
 - Join a team.
 - Pray for everybody.
 - Befriend the open.
 - Evangelize the curious.
 - Disciple the hungry.
 - Promote the faithful.
 - Seven foundations for a Christian life:
 - Follow Jesus
 - Family up
 - Feature the story
 - Face your problems
 - Farm your land
 - Find your purpose
 - Fulfill the Great Commission - **Matthew 28:18-20**
- **Discussion Questions**
 - What does Paul want us to know about his own role as an apostle?
 - Why was Paul astonished? Is there anything similar that astonishes you?
 - What's attractive about a "gospel" that involves following church rules?
 - What church conflicts have you witnessed or been involved in?
 - What had the Galatians been told about Paul?
- **Conclusion**
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- **Life Group Material**

- **Life Group Word Material**

These are sample discussion questions / topics. Your life group leaders may choose to adjust these questions, substitute new ones, or spend the Word section of the meeting in a different way altogether.

Scripture taken from the [HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION \(NIV\)](#).
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Galatians 1

Paul, an apostle — sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead — and all the brothers with me,
To the churches in Galatia:

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For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus.

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Matthew 28:18-20

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Mark 1:1-15

The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

It is written in Isaiah the prophet: “I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way” — “a voice of one calling in the desert, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’” And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. John wore clothing made of camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. And this was his message: “After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

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At once the Spirit sent him out into the desert, and he was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!”

Mark 16:14-20

Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen.

He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.”

After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.

Luke 4:14-19

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: **“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.**

He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

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Discussion Questions

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- **Scriptures For 4/14/2013 Life Church Sermon**

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Life Church Mission Statement

Our mission is to teach people:

to enjoy knowing Jesus without fear, inadequacy, guilt, or shame,
 to follow him together as his family,
 to function together as his body,
 and to work together to expand his kingdom.

Understanding The Bible

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Here, for your convenience, are the Bible passages for today's sermon at Life Church. We use mostly the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible so that you can read it in modern English. You may have been accustomed to reading or hearing the King James Version of the Bible, which uses older English (with words like "thee" , "thou", "thine", "believeth", etc.). Don't be alarmed - the passages are really from the Bible!

The Bible was originally written in three ancient languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. None of the people in the Bible, and none of the people who God used to write it spoke English. In fact, English did not even exist as a language when the Bible was written. The King James Version, first published in 1611, was a translation of the Bible from it's original languages into the every day English that people used back then - almost 400 years ago! They didn't just speak that way in church - they spoke that way with everyone. The King James Version was "modernized" in 1769, but, even so, English has certainly changed a lot since then! **We believe that if you're reading an English translation of the Bible it ought to be up to date - written in the English you speak every day. God wants you to understand his Word so that you can put it into practice!**