

2 TIMOTHY

THE GOSPEL: KNOW IT



TEACH IT COLLEGE AGE SESSION 4

1. Materials

For this session each student will need—

- the 2 Timothy Scripture sheets
- the student journal page for Session 4
- his or her Bible, pen, and notebook

You'll also need—

- a whiteboard and markers
- colored pencils (at least one color per student)
- a few good news/bad news jokes (We've supplied a couple; you may want to use an Internet search engine to find a few more.)

2. Session Intro

GOALS OF SESSION 4

As students experience this session, they will—

- discover the meaning of the word *gospel*.
- explore the message of the gospel.
- be challenged to view this message through fresh eyes.

PRAYER

Open your session by praying with your students that God will open the eyes of their hearts and that they will be receptive to what he wants them to see.

OPEN

Good News/Bad News

Ask students whether they've heard any good news/bad news jokes lately. Here are a couple jokes to prime the pump:

JOKE 1:

Doctor: I have some good news and some bad news.

Patient: What's the good news?

Doctor: The good news is that your tests showed you have 24 hours to live.

Patient: That's the good news? What's the bad news?

Doctor: The bad news is I forgot to call you yesterday!

JOKE 2:

Lawyer: I have some good news and some bad news.

Client: Well, give me the bad news first.

Lawyer: The bad news is that the DNA tests showed it was your blood they found all over the crime scene.

Client: Oh no. I'm ruined. What's the good news?

Lawyer: The good news is your cholesterol is down to the normal range!

Transition into the study by sharing—

In New Testament times there was only one way to get your news, whether good or bad—via personal messenger. If the news was good, like the outcome of a victorious battle or the birth of a child, the message was called *euangelion* (yoo-an-GHEL-ee-on) which literally means “good news.” This is the word translated in the Bible as “gospel”—and there’s a reason why the Bible writers called the gospel good news.

3. Digging In

Digging up News

Tell your students—

1. Read 2 Timothy 1:8-2:10 from your Scripture sheets and mark every mention of the gospel.
2. You'll be looking for phrases such as “sound teaching,” “good deposit,” “things you have heard me say,” and “God’s word” because Paul is talking about the gospel when he emphasizes these things to Timothy.

As you saw in your personal study, the phrase “testify about our Lord” can also be translated “the testimony of our Lord.” This, too, is a reference to the gospel.

After a few minutes, ask the group to tell you everything they found related to the gospel. List their findings on the whiteboard. Possible observations are noted below:

Info about the Gospel

- Don't be ashamed of it (1:8).
- Paul is suffering for it (1:8).
- Through it Jesus destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light (1:10).
- Paul was appointed a herald, an apostle, and a teacher of it (1:11).
- Paul was not ashamed of it, even though he was suffering (1:12).
- Keep it as the pattern of sound teaching (1:13).
- Guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit (1:14).
- Entrust it to reliable men, so they can teach it to others (2:2).
- Paul defines it as: Jesus Christ raised from the dead, descended from David (2:8).
- Paul was chained for it, but the gospel itself wasn't chained (2:9).

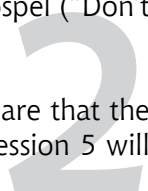
Ask—

How important would you say the gospel is, according to Paul?

If someone asked you what the gospel is and why it's important enough to be chained for it (as Paul was), how would you answer?

Point out that when Paul talks about the gospel in 2 Timothy, he's either describing it or giving instructions related to it. Direct the group to the whiteboard, and ask them to divide the list into instructions related to the gospel (“Don't be ashamed of it”) and basic info *about* the gospel.

Because there's no point in trying to follow Paul's instructions if we don't know what the gospel is, share that the rest of this session will focus on unpacking and describing what the gospel is all about—*knowing* it. Session 5 will focus on *doing* the gospel.



4. Cross-Checking



This Just In

Just what is the gospel? Share that students will be doing the next exercise in solitude and putting the gospel under a magnifying glass—examining it from every direction. The verses they'll be reading come from every part of the Bible—the Old Testament, the four gospels (biographies of Jesus), and the letters. Explain—

- 1. Find spaces where you can be alone with God, such as a corner of the room, a hallway, or an empty room nearby.**
- 2. You'll need your Bibles, journal pages, and pens.**
- 3. As you read each passage on your journal pages, jot in the space provided anything specific the Scripture tells you about the gospel, even if it's just indicating how the word is used. Be sure to respond to the questions on your journal pages beneath the Scripture references.**
- 4. By the way, the word *euangelion* can be translated "gospel" or "good news." A good starting point is to find these words in the passage and work from there.**

The Scripture references and possible observations are noted below.

OLD TESTAMENT

Isaiah 52:7

It involves peace and salvation.

JESUS/GOSPELS

Mark 1:1-15

-It's all about Jesus (v. 1).

-It is the good news of God (v. 14).

-It's a proclamation that the kingdom of heaven is near (v. 15).

-To experience it you have to believe it (v. 15).

Luke 4:17-21

It's good news to the poor, freedom to the captive, sight for the blind, release for the oppressed (v. 18-19).

ACTS

Acts 5:42

Jesus is the Christ.

Acts 10:36

It involves the fact that peace is available through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.

Acts 20:24

It is a message of God's grace.

LETTERS TO THE CHURCHES

Romans 1:1-4

-It was promised beforehand through God's prophets in the Old Testament Scriptures (v. 2).

-It has to do with Jesus, who was David's physical descendant. Jesus was also God's descendant, as proved by the Resurrection (v. 3-4).

Romans 1:15-17

It is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes (v. 16).

1 Corinthians 15:1-8

- Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures (v. 3).
- He was buried and was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures (v. 4).
- He appeared to Peter and then to the Twelve (v. 5).
- Finally, he appeared to Paul, too (v. 8).

Galatians 3:8

God told Abraham about the gospel, saying that all nations would be blessed through him (i.e., through his offspring).

Colossians 1:19-23

- All of God's fullness dwells in Jesus (v. 19).
- God reconciled all things to himself through Jesus (v. 20).
- God made peace with all things through Jesus' blood (v. 20).
- Through Jesus our alienation from God and the warring factions in our own minds have been reconciled (v. 21-22).
- Through Jesus we are presented holy in God's sight, without blemish and free from accusation (v. 22).
- It holds out hope to us (v. 23).
- It has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven (v. 23).

5. Taking It Inward

Skeptic's Forum

After a few minutes, get the group back together. Ask a few volunteers to share how they described the gospel.

As the discussion unfolds clarify that 1 Corinthians 15 is the go-to passage that spells out precisely what the gospel message consists of:

- Jesus Christ died for our sins, exactly as the Scriptures said he would (v. 3).
- He was buried and rose again on the third day, exactly as the Scriptures said he would (v. 4).
- He appeared in real life to many people (v. 6).
- Not only did he appear to people in real life after he ascended to heaven, he appeared to Paul (v. 8).
- A final point implied by the fact he appeared to Paul is that he still "appears" to people, including us—those who believe in him without the benefit of having seen him in person.

Then ask—

Why would knowing and believing all this be good news?

How is calling his salvation good news not simply an act of self-aggrandizement on the part of God?

The need for the gospel is set up by man's depravity, but depravity on whose scale? How is this not simply the greatest marketing scheme of all time: creating the need (declaring the gap between God and man to be a big deal) and providing the product (Jesus' blood can bridge that gap)?

Let this discussion be open-ended on both of these questions, but bring the group to a good conclusion, such as: Even the staunchest skeptics admit that man has a spiritual gnawing. It's quite evident the need is real and built into our spiritual DNA. God's grand plan, from Genesis to Revelation, explains better than anything how to satisfy the spiritual gnawing. You can see why this satisfaction came to be called "good news."

Discuss the type of person to whom your students think it is the most difficult to explain the need for Jesus—and thus to see the need to accept the good news. Come up with two or three types of people. Here are a few examples:

- 1. Those who are cruising along just fine in life. They've got the dream career, the great family, the big home—and no fear of what will happen after they die. (In their minds hell doesn't exist.) Why should they care about the gospel?**
- 2. Those who have endured more than their fair share of hardship and heartache and have never seen a trace of evidence of a loving God.**
- 3. Those who see mankind as a random accident of creation.**

Work as a group or in teams to create a presentation that explains the gospel in terms each type of person (mentioned above) can understand. In other words try to avoid “church speak,” and incorporate info from the passages in this session in a way that brings a fresh perspective to what the gospel is and what the gospel means.

6. Wrapping It Up

World News Today

Emphasize that the point of the last exercise wasn't to learn how to publicly defend the gospel (though that's a worthy pursuit), but to simply understand it better. After all, if we call ourselves Christians, the gospel is what we've said yes to.

Close by having a few volunteers pray for the group, asking God to help each student grasp why the gospel is good news and how it can change the way we live each day.