

185 Good news? Good news? Good news?

Three times (1967, ~1987, 2017) I've had a real revelation of God's love, and three times my life has changed for the better, but twice I've lost it again. **Doh!** But today that love is still strong!

In 2017, I wrote an article^[0] because I realised that I'd spent 50 years 'being right', but that we should be living in love with God-who-is-community (Trinity) and with all people.

But I also faced the fact that the faith – even to me, let alone to outsiders – was more about sin and wrath and 'being right', rather than about love. Why? What went wrong?

The other day I reread my first main article,^[1] and I was thrilled to see how far I had travelled. I was asking, in mid 2018, for your help for 'Martha', who had been encouraged by her church to 'share the gospel'. She didn't feel motivated to tell her friends and family that they were all sinners – the absolute entry point for 'the gospel', as she and we have always been taught it.

So am I now any less wrong than in 2018?! Here's what I said then (*italic added*):^[1]

First, what's non-negotiable for me?

- 1) The central problem is human sin – broken relationships.
- 2) Our loving God has a plan to sort that problem.
- 3) The solution (salvation) centres on the *incarnation, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus*.
- 4) We need to respond in order to appropriate that salvation.

At that stage, I still saw 'the gospel' as centred around me-and-my-salvation (again, that's what we've always been taught, right?!), but encouragingly, there is the hint (*italic*) of a bigger picture!

Here's how I see my view of the gospel as having changed:

Pre 2017 – **'Jesus saves'**

Personal salvation
based on: The Cross
Resurrection = proof
Response: Repent, believe, be saved

2018 – **'A bigger picture'**

Personal salvation
Based on: incarnation, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus
(Not quite sure where that leaves us)

2021 – **'Jesus Christ is Lord'**

The story of Israel, fulfilled in the story of Jesus^[184]
Brings *restoration* to the *whole world*
Includes personal salvation
Declaring that Jesus, the Christ, is Lord of the Universe

So, ignoring that fuzzy transitional stage, the paradigms are:

Pre 2017: **Problem** -> solution

Response: Admit sin, **B**elieve in Jesus, **C**ommit to God (repent, believe, be baptised)

2021: **God's Plan: Declare Christ as Lord**

Everyone needs to live in love under Christ (God's kingdom)

Response: repent, believe, be baptised

All still a bit vague, I fear, but Scott McKnight's *King Jesus Gospel* is helping greatly.

You have to agree that it's a very different view of what 'the gospel' is. But maybe it's wrong? So perhaps we should look at how Jesus preached 'the good news' (people certainly received forgiveness), and check what the preachers in Acts said was 'the good news', and check 1 Cor 15, as a definition of 'the good news'.

Work with me here, please. Let's see if we can become a little less wrong.

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