

Share the Gospel

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[0 : 0 0] Good morning, everyone. Great to be in church with you again this morning. My name's Steve. If I've not met you before, I'm the senior pastor here at St. Paul's, and as Nick has indicated, we're coming towards the end of our vision series for this year.

A worldview is the way that we, as individuals, but also as cultures and societies, the way that we understand the way things are. That's what a worldview is.

And there are six basic questions that all worldviews should address, and they're on the screen. Things like, where did the universe come from? Where is things heading? What should I do or how should I live?

How do we attain our goals in life, fulfill our goals in life? What's true or false? And where did the answers to the first five questions come from?

And is whatever the source of those answers are, where it came from, is it internally consistent? That's the basic questions in terms of forming a worldview.

[1 : 1 0] And remarkably, because most of us don't think about it at all, but every single person has got a worldview. Even if you don't are even aware of the worldview, you are operating under a worldview. All of our value systems, our principles, the choices we make, the things that we commit to, are all attached to a much deeper thing, which is our understanding of the way things are.

And the Christian worldview is based on God's story of all things as it is outlaid in the Bible.

And it has four main chapters in it. The Christian worldview has four main chapters. Number one, chapter one is creation. The God who always existed, never had a beginning, never had an end, created all things by speaking them into existence, such as his power.

He made humanity for a special relationship with him. In fact, Christianity is the only worldview of all worldviews of the history of humanity, where a divine creator creates all things purely out of love. That's it. Chapter two in the Christian worldview is the fall. Humanity rejects relationship and rule of God.

[2 : 3 5] All people live life without consideration for their maker at all, flowing from the very first people right through to our current day and age. And the Bible calls that sin.

And the sin is the biggest problem for humanity. In fact, it has cosmic consequences of fracturing our relationship with God, with each other, with ourselves and with the rest of creation.

Humanity's special dignity created in the image of God means that God holds us especially accountable for rejecting him. And we see that in the early chapters of the Bible where God's judgment comes upon the nations of that time in Genesis 11 with the Tower of Babel.

It's an incident where God scatters people from his presence across the earth so that they will no longer work together in order to rebel against God as a collective, to attempt to defund God.

It's a judgment that ultimately symbolizes the ultimate separation from God and his presence and everything good for all of eternity for those who live a life consistently rejecting God.

[3 : 5 6] Chapter three is the story of redemption. And the great news is it starts within on chapter 12 of the Bible. It starts right there. God has a plan to reverse our rejection of him and make all things new.

And that plan begins with a promise to an obscure dude named Abram in Genesis 12. And God takes this guy Abram, gives him a new name, Abraham, and says that through you, all peoples of the world will be blessed.

And it's a redemption plan that is slowly worked out in all the chaos and carnage of human history as revealed in the Bible. And it finds its culmination in the person of Jesus Christ.

The Bible claims that Jesus, the Son of God, the creator of all things, to solve humanity's greatest problem and to deal with the need for them to be redeemed and brought back to God, God has to

enter his own story.

Not as a vengeful God seeking revenge, but as a servant of humanity, as we just read from Philippians 2.

[5 : 13] And everyone, what he does is, as a servant, he takes the judgment, his own judgment, the judgment of God for our sin upon himself.

He dies the death that we should die for our rejection of him. But the great news is, he rises triumphantly, therefore defeating sin.

And everyone who turns back to God in repentance and trusting Jesus is gathered back from all the corners of the world, gathered back into relationship with God, become members of his new family, his new society, his new people, his new nation who he will dwell with for all of eternity for our joy and his glory.

And the work of gathering people from all nations continues this day, 2025, through God's new people, as Jesus sends them out filled with the spirit and the good news of reconciliation to the very corners of the world, into every culture and people, group and nation, making disciples of all people until chapter 4 comes.

And chapter 4 is the new creation. It's the chapter with no ending. It's the chapter with no ending.

[7 : 06] It's the Christian worldview in a nutshell. This is so much more purposeful. And so, therefore, the opposite of the main worldview that is currently dominating our society here in this country, a worldview that says life's an accident, there's no reason or purpose or meaning behind existence at all, and therefore just do what you can because when you're gone, you're gone.

That's it. One of the things I've been saying throughout this series is that there is often a gap between the great truths of the Christian faith and the things that we hold in our mind to be true as God's revealed them and the lives that such truths should produce in terms of character and priorities.

And to close the gap, what we need is grace-fueled rhythms, spiritual disciplines, things that God has given us that push God's plan of redemption in Jesus down from our minds into the centre of our lives so that it is, number one, constantly before us and it comes out of us in terms of changed characters and priorities and lives as we live confidently in the Christian worldview.

So as we open up Luke chapter 10, we are sitting in chapter 3 of God's worldview, the chapter of redemption.

And the main concern as we open up chapter 10, the main concern of Luke 1 to 9 is the question of who is Jesus.

[9 : 17] And then at the very end of chapter 9, it shifts. The theme shifts for the next few chapters. And it shifts to, if Jesus is who Luke 1 to 9 says he is, that he is the creator eternal God, the one who is the author of life, the one who has written the worldview, written history, if that is true and that he has entered into his world for our redemption, if that is true, what does it mean for life?

That's where we get to chapter 10. And the general answer to that question is, we should give our lives to Jesus, we should follow Jesus, we should obey Jesus.

And the specific answer that we're looking at today in chapter 10 verses 1 to 21 is, if that's true, if Jesus is who he says he is and that is how he has said that the world is, then as followers of Jesus, we are messengers of God in this world.

That's what we're looking at today. And so on the St. Paul's app, you've got four points there as we journey through this.

First of all, mission. The mission that we have as Christians in terms of, the mission in terms of our part to play in God's story of all things is in the very first sentence.

[10 : 59] After this, the Lord appointed 72 others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. Again, verse 3, go, I am sending you out.

Now, at the beginning of chapter 9, Jesus sends out his core team, you know, the 12, the 12 original disciples. And if we had just chapter 9 and not chapter 10, we could have stopped there and we could deduce that the sending out job here is for those in vocational ministry.

You know, the core team, you know, for Jesus' key disciples, not the rest of the crowd. You know, it's the job of the professionals, it's the pastors, it's the clergy, it's the evangelists, those kind of people. It's their job.

The rest of us, we pay them to do that job. Like, that's our job, you know. But then we get chapter 10 and chapter 10 entirely undoes that idea.

Jesus sends out 72. Now, if you've hung around the Bible at all, you would know anytime a number like this pops up, you go, what's the significance of 72?

[12:11] Why 72? I mean, it's a random, you, you, you, you, you, and just happens to be 72? Well, scholars will tell you there's something very significant happening here.

I mentioned earlier God's judgment upon the nations in the Tower of Babel incident, which is in Genesis 11.

It's in the, you know, the chapter 2 of God's story, scatters people to the ends of the earth. One chapter before that and chapter 10 and chapter 11 actually go as one unit.

So in chapter 10, what we have there is a list of the nations that God is judging at Babel and in the Greek language version of the Old Testament, think of the Septuagint, there is 72 nations listed. 72. This is Jesus' way of saying, I'm sending you out to all peoples of the nations.

[13:13] This is, as you go out, you are reversing my judgment. It's the symbolic reversal of Babel and it is the responsibility of all his people to send out.

A Christian is someone who has been gathered from the nations of the world back into intimate relationship with God through Jesus Christ and into his new people.

Then, having been gathered, they are then sent out on mission, sent out on God's mission to see more people from the nations gathered into God's new family.

Every disciple of Jesus is normally, naturally, personally involved in God's work of reaching those who don't have salvation and hope in Jesus as much as they are personally, normally, naturally involved in corporate worship, Bible study, prayer in exactly the same way.

Christians and churches can never outsource the mission of God to others. We can outsource roofing repairs to others, but we can never outsource the mission of God's work to others.

[14:42] It is all too easy, I believe, to put up pictures of missionaries, to receive new letters, to give financially to missions, be on boards of organizations, even support the running of an evangelistic course like Hope Explored and applaud myself that I've got a mission mindset and that we are ascending church.

I'm not saying those things are bad. What I'm saying is as he's gathered people, God sends us out, each of us personally.

we obviously do it together in partnership, but we go out personally, each of us has skin in the game as the old saying goes.

If you've never heard of it, don't worry about it. That's the first thing. There's a mission and we're all personally involved in it. Secondly, there's a message. Jesus' command to make disciples necessarily involves helping people who are not yet followers of Jesus to become followers of Jesus.

And core to the Christian mission is a message. Yes, the Christian mission includes healing and restoration.

[16:06] It includes deeds of love and mercy. Chapter 10, you just need to read the second bit of that. The Good Samaritan, you'll see that that's another core aspect of the Christian life.

Have a look at verse 9. Heal the sick who are there and tell them the kingdom of God has come near to you. Then in verse 11, yet be sure of this, the kingdom of God has come near.

Again, verse 16, whoever listens to you listens to me, whoever rejects you rejects me, but whoever rejects me rejects him who sent me. Every follower of Jesus has been given a message that they are to communicate and to urge those who hear it to believe it.

Now, what I've just said there is very controversial in our society in this day and age. There are many people in our society who are quite tolerant of Christianity, providing that we don't try and convert other people to our view of things.

You know, that is very happy in our society, very happy for people to have a private faith that's totally fine, if it works for you, it's good for you, but it's wrong to tell others that they should believe it as well.

[17:31] Now, this creates a problem for the Christian because the message Jesus sends us out with is called the gospel. The word gospel had a very specific meaning in Jesus' time.

A gospel was news of an objective, historic, life-altering, changing event.

An event that changes everyone's situation, not just a couple of people, everyone's situation and therefore required a response from everyone at some point.

For instance, in the Berlin Museum, if you've got a chance to go there, you can see a thing called the Prienin calendar. This thing was discovered in the town square of ancient Prienin in western Turkey.

The inscription on it is known as the gospel of Caesar Augustus. Pax Romania. The inscription portrays Augustus as a saviour and as a benefactor and with his birth.

[18 : 53] It's a gospel that went to the Roman Empire upon his birth, that with his birth and his rule, that he will bring salvation to the Roman Empire.

It is referred to as a gospel, the gospel of Caesar Augustus. And the gospel of Caesar Augustus promises peace and prosperity for the empire through his reign, through his life.

And so a gospel is an announcement of a major history altering event that impacts every single person under the jurisdiction of that gospel, of that announcement.

And so like Prioryne, throughout the ancient empire, this thing was carved in stone and jammed in the middle of the town square. Every corner of the Roman Empire, it was sent.

And the response of all people is, you submit to the emperor. You want peace and prosperity? You do what he says. Now the problem for the Christian is that when society is, well if it works for you that's fine but don't tell others, what it's saying is that the jurisdiction of the gospel of Jesus Christ is just you, it's not me, it's just you.

[20 : 23] It's not relevant for me. And yet what the Christian gospel claims of itself is fundamentally far bigger than that. And we get a subtle hint of it in verse 18.

This is the extent of the claim of the Christian gospel. Verse 18. Jesus said, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. In very simple terms, what Jesus is claiming there is that he was there.

He was there when Satan fell. He was there when Satan himself rebelled against God, rebelled against his maker, before the world was even made.

Way before the world was even made, Jesus claiming, in this that I was there, I was there when Satan fell for the very present God for his pride and his arrogance.

I was there. And he's claiming in this statement, I am the everlasting God, I am the maker of all things, I am the sustainer of all things. That is, my jurisdiction has no bounds, not just to all peoples of the earth, but to all things of the world and beyond the world and into the universe.

[21 : 46] Every realm comes under my jurisdiction because I've made it all. The staggering, unique and exclusive claim of the Christian gospel is that Jesus is not just a religious leader with a bunch of advice about God.

The staggering claim is Jesus Christ is God and he has entered his story. The writer of history has put himself in the storyline so that the storyline has absolute clarity.

reality. And the Christian has been sent out by Jesus with the news that changes everything and it's a response is required from all of humanity.

Now the second problem with a common view of believe, but be quiet, is that while it seems really tolerant, it seems really tolerant, it's not actually consistent, internally consistent.

Remember question number six about your worldview? It's not internally consistent. It's actually not that tolerant at all. What that view is really saying is you shouldn't believe it either.

[23 : 09] You shouldn't speak it because you shouldn't believe it. when it boils down to say we must keep our faith private is to say Jesus cannot possibly be who he claims to be.

And so you shouldn't claim, you shouldn't speak about it, you shouldn't believe it, you shouldn't believe that about him. Believe he's a nice guy, believe all these other good things, but do not believe what he claims to be.

And in that moment when someone says believe it yourself but be quiet about it, you're asserting your worldview on me. Your worldview.

It's an assertion that my worldview must not be communicated and as you do that, you are saying that your worldview must be adopted. In the end, the reality is every single person is a messenger and evangelist for their worldview.

Everyone is. No one can say you must stop communicating your worldview without doing the very thing they just told you not to do.

[24 : 26] No one can do it. To say no one should claim absolute truth is in fact an absolute truth claim. All people are messengers of their worldview.

you. And so if Jesus is who he says he is and has achieved what he claims to have achieved, to not declare it to all people is reprehensible.

Absolutely reprehensible. to find a cure for cancer and keep it to yourself and the people you love, that's just plain wicked.

it. But to keep the news of hope in Jesus Christ in eternal life, that's evil.

Third point, motivation. Now I acknowledge the concerns of our society and I totally agree with it, that there has been quite a lot of damage done by absolute truth claims throughout history.

[25 : 43] leading to oppression of people and all sorts of things, just awful stuff. And Christians have got blood on their hands on this one as well. But I want to say that the Christian gospel never takes us in that place.

The Christian gospel, the Christian faith in no way ever justifies that in any way. The motivation for being messengers is never influence, it's never power at all.

Verse 17, the 72 returned with joy and said, Lord, even the demons submitted to us in your name.

Of course, verse 18, Jesus said, of course they did. I saw Satan fall. Of course they're going to submit in my name. My name is the name above every name. Of course they're going to. But then his response is in verse 20 to them.

However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven. So in other words, the 72 come back with all full of joy, amazing stuff, Jesus, you should have been there, and he goes, rebukes them.

[27 : 04] It's a rebuke. The 72 did not come back rejoicing that people's lives are being changed by the gospel, that people are being set free from oppression, have been healed from infirmities.

There is no mention at all of people's lives and communities being changed by Jesus. At all. They are rejoicing in power.

Now, Jesus, we were part of something spectacular. Us no-name people that you've gathered from all the people of the Middle East as you walked through, us people, no-one knows, we're still not named, no-one knows who we are, and we are now spectacular.

We, Jesus, now have power, and so therefore we must be something in your eyes, Jesus. Jesus says, no, your joy should be that your names are written in heaven.

Not that now that you've made a name for yourself, but that your names are written in heaven. This is the deepest motivation for being a messenger, receiving a name in heaven, receiving a name from God himself, in other words.

[28 : 23] Christians are somebody because they have received a name from God, not earned a name for themselves through power of success or accomplishment or performance or gifts or how big their church is or how effective they are or Jesus warning them in verse 18 that if you go down that line, then it will lead to the exact same thing that led to Satan fall, pride.

And he's a great oppressor. Pride will always lead to oppression and aggression. In fact, it was in an attempt to make a name for themselves apart from God that saw the 72 nations come together to build a tower to Babel, the Tower of Babel, to storm the heavens to remove God in order that we might make a name for ourselves.

It saw them judged. it's pride that saw Satan pushed out from God and pride that saw the nations scattered from God. How humanity is gathered back in and receive the approval of a name in heaven is the essence of the message that Jesus sends his people out with, his friends out with. So how do we get that name? Well, way back before Jesus, the leader of God's people was a bloke named Moses. And you see him popping up in the second book of the Bible, a book called Exodus. In Exodus 32, there's this horrendous incident where Israel disobeyed God in a really, really big way, really big way.

[30 : 29] And Moses knows two things. God is a perfect God, he's a just God, and so therefore Israel must be punished for their rebellion against God. But Moses also knows that he loves Israel and he knows that ultimately God loves Israel as well, which is why he saved them in the first place.

He wants Israel to be saved from judgment. And so there's this remarkable moment where Moses pulls himself away and he prays.

He says, God, please forgive Israel. Please forgive your people and punish me instead.

Save them and take my name out of the book that theirs might remain. And God replies to him and says, well, actually, I will remove their name, but Moses, you keep leading them.

What's going on here? If God's going to remove their name, why does Moses have to keep leading them? What's the point of that? Why is he going to front back up again with these rebellious people and keep leading them? If you're going to blot their name out, just blot the name out.

[31 : 53] Just remove it. Because God is a patient God. God is waiting for centuries upon centuries for the ultimate Israelite to turn up.

He's waiting for the ultimate Israelite to come, the true person of God. God. And he's waiting for centuries and centuries and centuries for the ultimate Moses to turn up, the ultimate mediator and substitute for a sinful person to be sent.

And the Christian gospel is that God was waiting for to send his divine son Jesus, the ultimate Israelite, and the true mediator and substitute for a sinful people.

Jesus Christ, the eternal son of God, was sent into God's story as an Israelite man. Born, he bore God.

And as he died on that cross outside of Jerusalem, he died and his name was blotted.

[33 : 26] He gave up his place in heaven, he came to us, he was born into a nobody village, he was despised, he was mocked, he was scorned, he was rejected, so that we might have a permanent name in heaven.

And the good news of Easter day is that he rose triumphant, defeating death, and now reigns as the Lord of all the universe and as we just said earlier in the service, he now has the name that is above every name and at some point in history either now or in chapter 4 every person who has ever, ever, ever breathed breath on this earth will declare with their lips his name.

And it's because he rose triumphant over our sin that he secures our name so that we reign with him.

our name in heaven is attached to his triumph. Our name that is our approval, our welcome, our intimacy, our life is a gift and that's why in verse 21 Jesus is full of joy.

So many scholars as I read through this just said this is the ultimate expression of Jesus in joy.

[35 : 03] Verse 21 because the plan of God is not to give his name, not to give his grace and his favour to the wise, to the strong, to the oppressors, to the successful, to the gifted, but to the little children.

The nobodies in first century is the symbolism here. The weak, the powerless, the vulnerable, the broken, the flawed, God's grace to the undeserving sinner in Jesus is the gospel.

That's the message we're sent out into all the world with. So if you've tuned on in here this morning and you don't know Jesus, or if you're sitting in this room and your confidence is ultimately in yourself and Jesus, I urge you, today is the day of salvation, I urge you to accept that message now.

Speak to me afterwards, I'd be delighted to pray with you, accept it now. God's grace to the undeserving sinner in Jesus Christ is the gospel.

It's the motivation for the Christian to go out as messengers and it shapes the manner in which we go out. Courage is certainly needed. I know that fully, courage is needed. As even Jesus says, we are sent out like lambs amongst wolves and humility and grace is needed so that us lambs never turn into wolves.

[36 : 49] Christians can never be persecutors or oppressors even if we are being oppressed and persecuted. it is one of the horrendous ironies that any Christian would communicate the glorious gospel of God's grace with arrogance, with pride, with anger, with condemnation, with coercion.

even the woes that are in Luke 10 that were read out to us are not a anger, not a judgment statement, they are an empathy statement.

Oh, urge you, Chorosan, please, please, come to the gospel. So this is my last point is that Jesus sends the Christian out.

That requires movement, frankly, it always does, one step, two steps, there's always a first step and ongoing steps, and the first and ongoing step of daily, weekly, monthly, every moment being messages of the gospel is verse 2, the harvest is plentiful with the workers a few, ask the Lord of the harvest therefore to send out workers into the harvest field.

In other words, what it's saying there is pray, pray, pray every day, we cannot separate what we have been sent out to be and do and the God who sends us out and all of his power in sending us out.

[38 : 28] We cannot be his messengers in our own wisdom, with our own power, our own intellect. Pray, pray for opportunities to be messengers of the gospel.

Pray specifically for people who you know don't know Jesus to know Jesus. We've been encouraging you to do that here for numbers of years. One plus one plus one.

One plus one. Pray for one person once a day for at least one minute that they might know Jesus and embrace him for their joy. Pray for people to say yes to an invite to church or to an invite to read the Bible with you or to come to a course that explains the Christian faith.

Pray for boldness and courage to take that next step. Pray too for the mission of this church. Right now there is a small group of people amongst us, I emphasise the word small there, group of people amongst us who are praying one plus one plus one by name for those attending the Hope Explored course.

prayers. And the second step really is to prepare. Be prepared to be the person that God will use to answer your prayers at any moment, which basically means learn the gospel, learn how to communicate it winsomely, sensitively and relationally.

[39 : 58] We've got training on that does that for you here as well. Third step, which is not in your notes, it was an afterthought, proclaim it. It was literally an afterthought.

Proclaim it. Actually speak it. I mean, you can't just pray and prepare and not actually do it. You're actually sent out to do it. So in case that wasn't clear, proclaim the truth, just do it.

God calls scattered individuals into his family, from all the nations of the world, into his worldview, into his reality of everything, the way it is going to be, and he sends us out as partners with him and each other to bring more people into his saved eternal family.

For our joy and for his glory, the Christian is daily on mission, daily bearing witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Christ. And yet, recent statistics I saw was that less than 5% actually are, even those who claim maturity in Christ.

[41 : 17] What's your next step? what's what