

# LIVING SENT

## Week Six: Defining the Evangel

### INTRODUCTION

The announcement of the end of World War II was good news. Many of us have seen photographs of the ensuing celebrations--confetti in the air, strangers embracing on the streets, soldiers triumphantly holding up newspapers with headlines declaring, "Peace!" The joy is understandable. After several years of brutal war, the fighting would stop, families would be reunited, and hundreds of thousands of people would be liberated.

The good news of the gospel is infinitely more significant. This good news means that the war on sin has been won on our behalf. It means that peace, not only among men, but with God himself, is possible. It means being united with an eternal family--a heavenly Father and our brothers and sisters in Christ. And it means the ultimate liberation of our souls from bondage and death.

### BIBLICAL MATERIAL

"Evangelism" is derived from the Greek term euangelion. "Eu" means good, and "angelion" means message, so when we are talking about "the evangel," we are talking about the good message, the good news. What is the good news of the gospel? Perhaps the most recognizable iteration of this good news is found in John 3:16--God would save sinners and give them eternal life through the death of his Son.

But this was not a one-time announcement. The first articulation of the gospel is found early in the Bible and in human history. The protoevangelium or "first good message" was declared by God at what might have seemed like a strange moment: in describing the effects of the fall. God tells the serpent: "I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15). This offspring, the one who would bruise the head of the serpent, was Christ.

This promise of this offspring would come again and again through the Old Testament. The good news is given to Abraham in the words of the covenant: "I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you" (Genesis 17: 6-7).

We hear the evangel in the Psalms as well. In Psalm 2, there is good news for God's people: "I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill." The prophets repeatedly speak of the good news of the coming Christ: "And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed" (Daniel 7:14)

In the New Testament, this promised good news is fulfilled: "And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel [euangelion] of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction" (Matthew 9:35). The offspring had come to bruise the head of the serpent, to defeat sin and death, and bring eternal life through his own death and resurrection for all who believed.

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### MISSIONARY TASK RELEVANCY

It is clear from the New Testament that evangelism is an expectation. The Great Commission (Matthew 29:19-20) clearly commands evangelism. In the book of Mark, Jesus specifically speaks of the “good message”: “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel [euangelion] to the whole creation” (Mark 16:15). The apostles declare repeatedly that their ministry is to “testify to the gospel [euangelion] of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24). This is undoubtedly an urgent missionary task, and one for which we should intentionally prepare, down to putting on the “readiness of the gospel of peace” as one would put on a pair of shoes. Don’t be caught barefoot. Be ready to share the greatest news the world has ever known.



### LIFE APPLICATION

The first step in being able to share the good news is being able to explain what the good news means. There are many resources available to help with this (including upcoming sessions in this study!), but at the most basic level, being able to articulate the problem of sin and God’s solution through his Son is the key to defining the evangel.

Be ready to testify to how the gospel has changed your life. Your personal testimony is a powerful part of sharing the good news.

Be a student of the whole Bible. Jesus told his followers that all of Scripture spoke of him (Luke 24: 25-27). Knowing the big picture of the Bible helps us to understand the big picture of the good news. This leads us to praise God for the “good message,” the euangelion, the gospel.

- Consider how the previous sessions in this study help us to apply the definition of evangelism. How do knowing our neighbors and practicing hospitality help us to share the good news?
- In a world that often seems overwhelmed with bad news, how can we prepare people to hear the good news?
- What strategies for evangelism can we adopt as individuals? As families? As a church?
- Although we want to carefully consider the culture in which we are ministering, we never want to compromise the message of the gospel to fit with an unbeliever’s worldview. How can we be sure to focus on clarity in presenting the gospel?

If you’re in a group setting, get into smaller groups of two or three. Take time now to practice articulating the gospel to one another. Try using the three circles method presented in the video. You may also incorporate pieces of your personal testimony.

