



Eaglais Shóiscéalach
na hInse

Ennis Evangelical Church

Know Jesus - Make Him Known

The Gospel for EEC

What is the gospel?

The gospel is the Good News that Jesus Christ (God's Son) has come in the flesh (that is as God incarnate); John 1:14. That He lived on earth and, that He died vicariously on a Roman cross as a sacrifice for sin. By so doing, He took the penalty and the judgement for our sin on Himself so that forgiveness could be offered to mankind on the basis of repentance and faith; Acts 2:38; Rom 10:9. His sacrifice is the only basis by which God can pardon man's sins and therefore it is an entirely free gift; Eph 2:8. It is by His free grace that we are saved and not on account of any effort by man to earn salvation; Eph 2:9. It was on the basis of God's love for His fallen creation that He sent His Son to die as an atoning (wrath appeasing) sacrifice. Those who come to Him and receive the pardon that He has purchased are born again (of the Spirit; John 3:5) receive the free gift of eternal life (John 3:16), and are given the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). They also receive the righteousness of Christ as a gift in exchange for their unrighteousness (divine substitution) and positionally, therefore, are justified before God and as a result are no longer under condemnation (Romans 5:18). As a redeemed believer they are adopted into the family of God and become a child of God (John 1:12) and receive the hope of an eternal inheritance kept safe for them by Christ Jesus (1 Peter 1:4).

Who needs the gospel?

Sinners need the gospel because in an unredeemed (lost) state they are still under the judgement of God and if they die they shall die in their sins and perish without hope for "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God"; "there are none righteous no not one"; Romans 3:9,10,23. But the Good News as mentioned above is that they need not die in their sins, that there is hope for them if, they will come to Christ receiving His sacrifice for sin (and their sins) as their **only** hope and trust Him **only** to deliver them from the wrath of God that is to come on all those who disobey God's commands. That through this knowledge they would come to personal experience of the love of God toward them and mankind as a whole (For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life: John 3:16). Since **all** are born in sin and shapen in iniquity (Psalm 51:5) and unable to offer God the price for their redemption from the debt they owe Him for their sin (Psalm 49:7), therefore all need a Saviour if they are to be delivered.

Who is the gospel to be offered to?

The gospel is to be offered to **all**, freely (Mark 16:15). The call to repentance is universal (Acts 17:30). This is why we preach the gospel to **all** men and invite **all** men

to come to the Saviour to receive pardon and eternal life. The scriptures are clear that God calls all men everywhere to repent; that He is not willing that any should perish (2Peter 3:9); and who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1Tim 2:4); 'As surely as I live, declares the sovereign Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but prefer that the wicked change his behavior and live. Turn back; turn back from your evil deeds! Why should you die, O house of Israel?' (Ezekiel 33:11); 2Pet 3:9: The Lord is not slow concerning his promise, as some regard slowness, but is being patient toward you, because he does not wish for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

Will all be saved?

The answer is no! Because Jesus was also clear that those who do not receive the offer will be condemned because they have not believed in Him and the reason they don't believe is because they have loved the darkness rather than the light (John 3:18,19). Men and women are responsible moral agents and as such are accountable before God for the decisions they take and especially for the one they make regarding the offer of pardon and eternal life in Christ Jesus. We also know that not all will be saved because of the record of the scriptures themselves. In the book of revelation we see humanity going out to a lost eternity after the Great white throne judgment (Rev 20:11-15). Jesus also spoke of separating the sheep and the goats at the end of the age with one going out to eternal damnation and the other entering into the kingdom prepared for them by His Father (Matt 7:21; Matt 25:31-46).

In John 6 Jesus also spoke of the fact that all who come to Him are drawn by the Father. So, in some mysterious way (ie not revealed to us by God but a fact nonetheless) there is an electing grace in the Father so that those who come to Christ are actually chosen by God. As Jesus said to His disciples You did not choose me but I chose you. Jesus also said in John 6:

6:37; Everyone whom the Father gives me will come to me, and the one who comes to me I will never send away

6:65; So Jesus added, "Because of this I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has allowed him to come."

6:44; No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.

Here we are dealing with God's foreknowledge, something which implicitly belongs to the divine omniscience and which God in His wisdom has not revealed to us. It is not our privilege to know who will be saved and who will reject Christ, such knowledge belongs exclusively to God. We are commanded to spread the Good News and leave the saving to God. When men try to work out the why's and wherefores of God's electing grace, predestination and foreknowledge, something which in fact they cannot do because they lack the omniscience that belongs solely to God, they end up in an extreme doctrinal position and try to narrow the invitation of the gospel and try to play the role of God in deciding who is elect and therefore should be offered the gospel. While the truth of God's electing grace and sovereignty are presented as facts in the scriptures they also clearly teach the responsibility of man to respond to the invitation of the gospel. Both must be held in balance and no attempt made to try to explain away one at the expense of the other. For, in so doing, one ends up in an extreme position in either case, but at opposite poles. Either, an overemphasis is made on the Sovereignty of God and men cease to be free moral agents or the emphasis is placed on the responsibility of

man rendering God nothing more than an onlooker who awaits the outcome of His invitation. Let us be mature in our understanding with respect to these high doctrines and accept that both are declared in scripture and like the children of Israel in Deuteronomy 29:29 accept that "the Secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those that are revealed belong to us and our descendants forever, so that we might obey all the words of this law."

Does the doctrine of election mean that I can't be saved?

The scriptures are again clear regarding this. The gospel is offered to all. It is to be preached to every creature. Jesus said that all that come to Him He will in no wise cast out (John 6:37). He also said "I, if I be lifted up will draw all men unto Me." In John 3:14-17 Jesus declared "Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 3:15 so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. 3:16 For this is the way God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. 3:17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world should be saved through him."

John 6:40: For this is the will of my Father – for everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him to have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." The offer is freely extended to all so that whosoever believeth shall be saved. Jesus did not condition the offer of salvation on whether you believe you are elect or not but simply on whether you genuinely turn from your sin and solely believe on Him with all your life for the forgiveness of sin. There is to be no stumbling block put in the way of those who hear the call to repentance. Jesus said come to the water of life and drink **freely** (Isaiah 55:1-3; John 7:37). It is for all who will come. Would you be saved? Then come to Him, for all who come to Him He will receive. The doctrines of men may try to stop you coming by doubting the grace of God towards you but the love of the Father and the Son are reaching out to you in the call. Therefore if you hear His voice calling you today then come, for all who call on the Name of the Lord shall be saved (Acts 2:21). If you want to come to Christ then you may be sure that it is God who is drawing you to Himself and you can come. It is only those who refuse to come to Him, those that reject His offer that are not saved.

One of the greatest comforts to a Christian is the knowledge, after he is saved, of election. Because afterwards, they find out in coming to Christ it was actually the Father drawing them and choosing them. What a blessing this is, to know the electing love of God and feel it in your heart by the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit. It humbles the heart and draws forth adoration and worship to our Great God and Saviour.