

Sharing Your Faith

"...Go into all the world and preach the gospel..."

Mark 16:15b

Sharing the gospel starts with being a good example. Sometimes you don't have to say a word. Whether you realize it or not, people are watching you. Even complete strangers might notice things about you that could give you opportunities to share with them. When you have a good walk with the Lord, you are a walking testimony, and you will find that it is easier to share your faith.

Sharing the gospel starts with being a good example.

Then, there are times the Holy Spirit will lead you to speak up and say something. It may be a testimony or a Biblical truth. Chances are, that is what you're used to doing. But there are times the Holy Spirit will want you to share the entire gospel and lead people to Christ. That's why you're reading this—to prepare you to do exactly that!

This chapter will teach you the gospel, and how you can share it when you only have a few minutes—or more thoroughly when time allows. You will have a better understanding of the gospel, as well as a clearer picture of the sacrifice Christ made on the cross. After taking this class, many believers testify they "didn't realize how bad a sinner they were" or "how great a Savior they had". The more you understand how bad sin is, and the more you realize what Jesus had to do to save you from your sins—the better equipped you'll be to share your faith with others.

How to share the gospel in a few minutes

Have you ever heard a Pastor finish his message with a short delivery of the gospel and an invitation to receive Christ? You can do the same thing—as long as you make sure you cover the main points of the gospel.

The four main points of the gospel are: **sin**, **Christ**, **repent**, and **receiving Christ**. People need to understand that they are sinners—and that Christ is the only One who can save them. They need to repent of their sin—and they need to receive Christ.

Here are four short ways to share the gospel when you only have a few minutes to spend with someone. The main points are in bold.

- 1** You need to understand that you are a **sinner**; that **Christ** is the only One who can save you; then you need to **repent** of your sin and **receive Christ**.

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2 We are **sinner**s and we need a Savior. **Jesus** is the only One that can save us. We need to **repent** of our sins and **receive Christ** as our Lord and Savior.

3 You must realize you are a **sinner** and recognize **Jesus** is the only One who can save you. You must **repent** of your sins, and **receive Christ**.

4 You need to realize you are a **sinner**. Sin separates you from God now, and will separate you from God for all eternity. You also need to recognize that **Jesus Christ** is the only one who can save you—or remove your sins—so you don't have to pay the consequences of your sins. You must **repent** of your sins, which means that you are truly sorry to the point of turning away and changing direction. Finally, you must **receive Christ**. This means that you are willing to put your trust in Christ—and nothing else.

What's missing?

Did you notice anything missing in the four short ways to share the gospel? It's the most important part. God wants to speak to unbelievers and He speaks to them through His word. God's Word is the power behind the message **"...It shall not return to Me void..."** *Isaiah 55:11*. What's missing in the examples above—is the word of God. It would be better to share a few scriptures without a single explanation—than a lot of explanations without scriptures.

When we talk to people about almost any subject, we rely on reasoning, communication skills, or our own power of persuasion. But, when we evangelize, we need to rely on God's word and the Holy Spirit. We present the information—God does the conviction and convincing. This is why sharing the gospel is so easy—and *anyone* can do it.

When we evangelize, we need to rely on God's word and the Holy Spirit.

Here is the same gospel you just read in example **4** above—but with scripture:

You need to realize you are a sinner. Sin separates you from God now, and will separate you from God for all eternity. The Bible says, **"...all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God."** *Romans 3:23* You also need to recognize that Jesus Christ is the only one who can save you—or remove your sins—so you don't have to pay the consequences of your sins. The Bible says, **"...while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."** *Romans 5:8b*. You must repent of your sins, which means that you are truly sorry to the point of turning away and changing direction. Jesus said, **"...Repent, and believe in the gospel."** *Mark 1:15*. Finally, you must receive Christ. This means that you are willing to put your trust in Christ, and nothing else. **"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become Children of God,..."** *John 1:12*.

Here's a little longer example. See if you notice any differences:

No one can make it to heaven on his or her own. This is because we are all sinners. Sin is our biggest problem. The Bible says, “**...the wages of sin is death...**” *Romans 6:23a*. It's important to realize that you are a sinner. The Bible says, “**...all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God,.**” *Romans 3:23*. You have to do more than realize you are a sinner—you have to be sorry for your sins and want to stop sinning. This is called repentance. The consequence of sin is separation from God, and eternal death in hell. When we understand the devastating consequences of sin, we should want to stop sinning. One of the first things Jesus said was, “**...Repent, and believe in the gospel.**” *Mark 1:15b*.

We can't get rid of our sin—only God can. That's why Jesus came to earth. Jesus came to solve our sin problem—so we wouldn't have to be separated from Him now *and* for *all* eternity. Jesus died for our sins, rose from the dead, and He is the only one who can remove our sins so we can go to heaven. Jesus said, “**...I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me**”. *John 14:6b*.

If there were another way to get rid of our sins, Jesus would not have needed to die. It is important to believe *in* Jesus—but that's not enough. The Bible says, “**But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God,...**” *John 1:12*. Would you like to receive Christ?

Take a moment and see if you could share the gospel in a few minutes—if you *had* to. Share it in any order—just make sure you cover the four basic points: sin, Christ, repent and receiving Christ. Get somebody to listen if you can. I heard that Billy Graham practiced on farm animals. Practice sharing with your dog—if that would help. If anyone asks what you're doing, tell them you are preaching “**...the gospel to every creature.**”, just like the Bible tells you to in *Mark 16:15b*.

Practice sharing with your dog—if that would help.

How to share the gospel in more detail

Most people need to hear a more detailed explanation of the gospel to really understand it. Specifically, they need to understand what qualifies as a sin—so they are convinced *they* have sinned. They also need to understand that Jesus is God, and the only one qualified to save them. The basic idea is still the same—people need to understand they are sinners and that Christ is the only one who can save them. Then they need to repent and receive Christ. In other words, sin and Christ is *what* people need to understand—repenting and receiving Christ is *how* they need to respond.

A more thorough explanation of sin

The definition of sin is to “miss the mark”. We sin when we break God’s laws. There are many things that God considers sin. Sin can be doing wrong things—or doing the right things with wrong motives. Sin can be doing nothing to help a person when we could have done something. Even what we think about can be a sin. Jesus said ‘**...whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.**’ *Matthew 5:28*. Many people try to justify sin thinking it is cool, trendy, or beneficial—but sin is destructive.

Sin is alluring and pleasurable—at first, but later brings pain, misery, and regret. Sin separates us from God, keeps us out of heaven, and leads to death, hell and ultimately the great lake of fire. Instead of freeing us, and giving us a better life, sin robs us of life. Sin is deceitful because we don’t see the consequences (*Hebrews 3:13*).

We break God’s law—or miss the mark, all the time. When we stop and think about all the ways we sin, which includes all the greedy, angry, lustful, hateful, and arrogant thoughts we have, it’s amazing God loves us—yet He does. What may be even more amazing is that it only takes *one* sin to disqualify us from heaven. Adam and Eve sinned one time and the world has never been the same. We all were disqualified from heaven a long time ago. The Bible says, “**...There is none righteous, no not one;**” *Romans 3:10* and “**...all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God,**” *Romans 3:10 & 23*.

People need to understand, and agree they are sinners, and that their sins will keep them from heaven. If a person does not believe they have sinned, they won’t feel they have anything they need to be saved from—or realize any need for the Savior. When people realize their thoughts qualify as sin—and that one sin disqualifies them from heaven—they usually realize they have a sin problem.

As much as you want people to come to Christ, make sure you let the Holy Spirit do the convincing. Our job is to give the facts. The Holy Spirit’s job is to speak to hearts, and do the convicting and convincing. Don’t try to pressure people into a decision for Christ.

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Understanding Jesus better

Jesus was not a man in heaven—He was God. Jesus left heaven where He was comfortable, respected, and worshipped, and came to earth where He was uncomfortable, despised, and rejected. We spend most of our time trying to be comfortable, accepted, and respected, if not worshipped. Jesus wasn’t slightly inconvenienced when He came to earth to die for our sins—He sacrificed everything! He lived a perfect life—then paid the consequence for our sins by dying a horrible death.

The more we realize how much Jesus did for us, the more we should appreciate Him. No one has sacrificed more for us than Jesus—because no one loves us more than Jesus. Many people know Jesus is the Son of God, and that He died for our sins—but they don't know the extent of His sacrifice. When people understand *how much* Jesus sacrificed for us they often become more receptive to receive Him. Jesus told a parable about a man who sold all he had in order to buy a treasure in *Matthew 13:44*. Jesus is the man—we are the treasure.

Jesus made it clear that He is the only One who can save us when He said, “**...I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.**” *John 14:6b*. The Bible also says, “**Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.**” *Acts 4:12*. Jesus is the only One who can forgive our sins—and He is the only way we can get to heaven. Sometimes I tell people that He is the only One in the “Savior business”.

The thing that distinguishes Jesus from anyone else in history—is the fact that He rose from the dead. Death is our biggest enemy, and Jesus conquered death. Jesus said He would be resurrected, and He was. When Mary doubted Jesus would raise Lazarus from the dead, He told her, “**I am the resurrection...**” *John 11:25*. Who else can say that?

It is important people know that Jesus was not just a good man or a good teacher. They need to understand that Jesus *is* God. After you share about Jesus, ask if they understand who Jesus is. When Jesus taught, He asked a lot of questions—but the most important question He asked was, “**...who do you say that I am?**” *Matthew 16:15*. Peter got this one right when he said, “**You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.**” *Matthew 16:16*. Jesus is still asking this question through believers like you who share the gospel. When people agree that Jesus is God—and the only One who can save them—there is a good chance God is getting through to their heart.

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Repentance

Repentance means that you agree with God you've missed the mark, and you want to stop doing things your own way—so you change your direction. It means more than just being sorry for your sin—or sorry you were caught—because it requires a change in behavior. A person with a heart toward repentance realizes they do not have a valid excuse for their sin, and wants to be right before God. The following passage shows an example of one man who had a repentant heart and one who didn't:

“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’ And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes

to heaven, but beat his breast saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other;"
Luke 18:10-14a

You won't always know when a person chooses to repent. People respond differently. Some will show no emotion—yet are repentant, while others might outwardly express sorrow without desiring to change their direction away from sin and toward the Lord. All you can do is share the truth, and hope a person chooses to repent. If a person acknowledges their sin, and is willing to repent, continue sharing. It isn't your job to judge their sincerity. The tax collector in the example above may not have outwardly verbalized a single word—but God knew he was repentant. Let the Holy Spirit do His work. You can't make a person repent. People are either sorry for their sins or they aren't.

Receiving Christ

To become a Christian and receive God's gift of eternal life, you need to receive Christ. **"But as many as receive Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God."** *John 1:12a*. If a person has a clear understanding of the gospel—it's time to ask them if they would like to receive Christ. When people hesitate—less said is usually better. The person you are sharing with may struggle with making a decision for Christ. A spiritual battle is taking place.

If a person has a clear understanding of the gospel—it's time to ask them if they would like to receive Christ.

This might be a good time to review part of the gospel, share a scripture, or just simply wait quietly as they think about the answer to the most important question they'll ever be asked. Pray for the Holy Spirit to lead you. If the person wants to receive Christ, lead them in a prayer. Here's an example:

Jesus I ask you to forgive me of my sins. (Pause while they repeat)

I repent of my sins. (Pause)

Please give me your gift of eternal life. (Pause)

Let me have a personal relationship with you. (Pause)

Come into my life right now to be my Savior and my Lord. (Pause)

Make me the person You want me to be. (Pause)

Give my life new meaning and direction. (Pause)

Thank you Jesus for the gift of eternal life. (Pause)

I ask this in Jesus name, Amen.

Heaven is free

In addition to the four main points of the gospel, some people need to understand that heaven is free—that they can't do *anything* to earn salvation. Some people can't believe anything is free, but when God says salvation is free—it is absolutely and completely free! We can't earn God's forgiveness or His gift of eternal life, nor do we deserve it. We must take God's pardon and eternal life as a gift—or not at all. Jesus is the Savior—we are the ones being saved. Jesus paid the price in full—we pay nothing. Jesus did everything—we do nothing. If we had to do something, it would not be free. The Bible makes this very clear when it says, **“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”** Ephesians 2:8-9 **“Salvation is of the LORD.”** Jonah 2:9.

When a person thinks they have to do something to earn their salvation, they're putting their trust in themselves—not Christ—which puts their salvation in question (*Galatians 4:10*). When sharing with those who believe that works are contributing to their salvation, make sure they understand that heaven is free. You can't have both grace and works—they are mutually exclusive. Paul made this very clear when he said, **“And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.”** Romans 11:6.

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Jesus wants a relationship

God created us to have fellowship with Him. Jesus loves us—and wants a relationship that will last for eternity. He wants that relationship to start now. The most important relationship of our life is our relationship with Christ. Knowing God is more important than serving God. When Martha was serving, and her sister Mary was sitting at Jesus' feet, Martha complained, and wanted Mary to help her, but Jesus told Martha that Mary made the better choice (*Luke 10:38-42*).

A relationship with Christ is not an option for those who have received Christ. God wants our relationship with Him to be our top priority, and our master passion. Jesus said there will be some people who will call Him Lord, but He will tell them, **“...I never knew you; depart from Me.”** Matthew 7:23a. Having a relationship with Christ is something we need to have every day. We need to spend time with the Lord through prayer, reading His Word, worshiping Him, and asking Him throughout the day to be with us and lead us.

Putting it together

When you share your faith you will start to see how the main points of the gospel are related. For example, if you talk about sin first, you could tell people, “It’s important to know that you’re a sinner, but you need to do something about it by repenting”. You could also say that sin is the problem, but Jesus is the solution, or we are sinners and we need a Savior. I often tell people that it’s important to believe in Jesus, but that is not going to get you into heaven. Even the devil believes in God. You must receive Him. If you talked about Jesus first, and then wanted to talk about sin, you could tell them we need a great Savior because we are big sinners. The more you share, the easier it will be to flow from point to point.

The better you know how everything is related, the easier it is to jump in at any point and start sharing, and then share in any order. For example, if someone said, “I believe in God”, you could ask if they believe in Jesus, and then tell them about Jesus. Then you could then explain why Jesus had to come when you tell them about sin, and see if they want to respond by repenting and receiving Him. If someone told you they believe in Jesus, ask if they have received Him. If they haven’t, see if you can tell them what it means to receive Christ. One man asked me why Jesus was the only way to heaven. I told him about Jesus first, then shared about sin, that Jesus came because we’re sinners, and that he had to repent from his sins and receive Christ. Be flexible and let the Lord lead.

*Be flexible and let
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An example of how the gospel can be shared

Sometimes after believers hear the gospel being shared something “clicks” and they say, “Now I get it!” Hopefully the following example will make sense to you. The first example is a typical way I have shared the gospel on missionary outreaches in public places:

Several of us are out here talking with people about God—why He created us—and how we can have a relationship with Him. Did you know that God created us to have fellowship with Him? —that God wants you to know Him personally —and that God wants to give you eternal life so you can be with Him forever? The Bible says, “The gift of God is eternal life.”

When God says heaven is a free—He really means free. Eternal life is so free there is *nothing* you can do to earn your way into heaven, even if you wanted to. You must receive eternal life as a gift—or not at all. The Bible says, **“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”** *Ephesians 2:8-9.*

Heaven is free because we could never earn it. This is because we are sinners. Sin can be doing wrong things, doing good things with wrong motives, or doing nothing when we could have done something. Sinning one time disqualifies us

from heaven. Sin is a lot like poison. If I put just one drop of poison in this bottle of water, would you drink it? I wouldn't either. That's the way sin is. Just as one drop of poison ruins all the water, one sin disqualifies us from heaven. God is not going to allow one sin to enter Heaven anymore than you would want just one drop of poison in your drinking water.

*Sin is a lot like poison.
If I put just one drop of
poison in this water bottle,
would you drink it?*

Did you know our thoughts could be a sin? One greedy, selfish, hateful, prideful, or lustful thought disqualifies us. Let's face it—we were all disqualified a long time ago. The Bible says, **"...all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God."** Romans 3:23.

Not only are we sinners, we need to repent of our sin. Jesus began His ministry by saying, **"...Repent, and believe in the gospel."** Mark 1:15b. Repentance means to change your mind. It means that you are truly sorry for your sins, and that you want to stop sinning—so you start doing things God's way. It's like turning around and going the other direction. It's as if you are going south—when you want to go the exact opposite direction—so you turn around and go north.

When you turn from your sin, you need to turn toward Jesus Christ. Jesus is God. He is the only way you can get into heaven and have a relationship with God. Jesus said, **"...I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me"**. John 14:6b. Jesus died for our sins, and He rose from the dead. He took the punishment we deserve, **"...God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us"**. Romans 5:8.

Jesus didn't die for His sins—He died for our sins. If there were another way to get to heaven, Jesus wouldn't have needed to make this sacrifice. Jesus sacrificed His life so that we could have life. The gospel is summed up in John 3:16: **"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life"**.

Do you believe everything I've shared so far? Good. There's one more thing you need to do. You need to receive Christ. Believing in Christ is important—but it's not enough. Even the devil believes in God. The Bible says, **"You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe and tremble."** James 2:19. You have to believe in God enough to trust your life to Him. It's a little like taking medicine. Believing in the medicine doesn't cure you, you have to trust it by taking it in. In the same way, you must trust God enough to ask Him into your life. The Bible says, **"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become Children of God,..."** John 1:12.

To summarize, you must realize you are a sinner. You must recognize Jesus is the only Savior. You must repent of your sins and you must trust Christ by receiving Him into your life. I only have one more question to ask you—but it's the most important question you will ever be asked. Would you like to receive Christ so that He can forgive your sins, and you can have a relationship with Him both now and in heaven?

How the gospel was shared with Mike

The next example is the actual dialogue that took place when we shared at a convalescent hospital. After we had shared with some patients, and as we were talking in the hallway about it, we noticed an employee listening to us—so we approached him and asked if we could share the gospel.

...as we were talking in the hallway... we noticed an employee listening to us—so we approached him...

Hi, my name is Judd, and this is John, and Keith. We are from Calvary Chapel and we are sharing with people tonight about how they can be certain they will go to heaven when they die. Can I ask you two questions?

Yes

Before I ask you the questions, let me ask, what is your name?

Mike

OK, Mike. Here are the questions. If you were to die right now, do you know, for certain, you would go directly to heaven?

Well, I'm fairly certain.

The second question is—If you were to die right now, and God were to ask you, 'Why should I let you into heaven', what would you say to Him?

Well, I've really tried my best to live a good life, and I do go to church.

Believe it or not Mike—according to the Bible—that would not allow you to go to heaven. Can I share with you how you can go to heaven, *and* how you can be absolutely sure you will go to heaven?

You're kidding—I thought you had to live a good life. I would be interested in what the Bible says about that.

Well, one thing is certain—we are all going to die—but the good news is, heaven is free. The Bible says that, “...**the gift of God is eternal life...**” *Romans 6:23b*. Heaven is free, and it is yours for the taking. God also wants you to have a relationship with Him—just like you have a relationship with your friends and family members now.

The problem though—and the reason we don’t have a relationship with God—is that sin is in the way. The Bible says, “...**all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God.**” *Romans 3:23*. God is up here (imagine hand motions), we are down here, and our sin—here in the middle—separates us from God. God will not allow even one sin to enter heaven, and our thoughts qualify as sins. The Bible says, “**For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.**” *James 2:10*. Do you agree that you are a sinner?

Yes, I would have to agree that I am.

Not only are we sinners, we need to repent of our sin. Jesus said, “...**Repent, and believe in the gospel.**” *Mark 1:15b*. Repent means to be sorry for your sins. You need to be willing to turn from the direction you are going—so that you can go the direction God wants you to go. It is like taking a U–turn on the road of life.

Jesus is the only way you can get into heaven and have a relationship with God. It is important to understand that Jesus Christ is God. The Bible says that, “**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God.**” “**And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,**” *John 1:1 & 14a*. In other words, Jesus became a man—He was not a man in heaven. Do you have a dog Mike?

Yes, I do.

I do too. What if you had to communicate God’s love to your dog? Let’s say that in order for you to do that—you had to become a dog. That would mean you would live like a dog. You would not have any of the comforts you were used to. You would sleep outside every night. You would literally be in ‘the doghouse’ every night—if you even had a doghouse. Your meals would be dog food and table scraps. Everything you now enjoy, would no longer be part of your life.

There’s no way I would do that.

I wouldn’t do that either, but let’s say that after you became a dog, God asked you to sacrifice your life for your dog. In other words, you die so your dog can live. After making this sacrifice, God resurrects you—but when He does, you would continue to be a dog for all eternity. Do you really think anyone would do that?

Do you really think anyone would do that?

No way!

I don't think anyone would do that for their best friend, let alone their dog—but that is what Jesus did for us. Jesus made a tremendous sacrifice when He came to this earth, but He also died for our sins. He took the punishment we deserve so we wouldn't have to pay the consequences for our sins, and spend eternity separated from God. When God the Father, resurrected Jesus, He was still a man, and will continue to be a man for all eternity. That's why Jesus is the only way we can get to heaven, and that's why Jesus said, “**...No one comes to the Father except through Me**”. *John 14:6b.*

That is amazing. I never realized that.

Your church will not save you and my church will not save me. Jesus is the only Savior. Believing Jesus exists is not enough—you must receive Him. The Bible says, “**But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God,...**” *John 1:12.* If you're sick and your Doctor gives you medicine, you can believe in the medicine—but you have to trust it enough *to take it* if you want to recover. I'm sure you would know that from working here.

The same thing is true with Jesus. You must receive Him by asking Him to save you from your sins and to be Lord of your life. In other words, you must realize you are a sinner—and Jesus is the only Savior. You must repent of your sins and receive Christ. Do you understand?

Yes, I do.

I can tell that you do. Mike, I have only one more question to ask you—but it is the most important question you will be asked in your entire life. Would you like to pray—right now—to receive Christ and the free gift of eternal life?

I've already done that.

Mike, do you remember those two questions I asked you earlier?

Yes.

You told me you were not certain you would go to heaven when you died, and that God would let you in because you lived a good life and went to Church. Do you remember saying that?

Yes.

When I asked you what you were putting your trust in to get into heaven, you never mentioned

When I asked you what you were putting your trust in to get into heaven, you never mentioned Jesus.

Jesus. You told me you would get there because of the things you did, not because of what Jesus did—right?

You're right... I said that.

Anyone who has received Christ will know two things. First, they will know they are going to heaven, because the Bible says we will know, **“These things have I written... that you may know that you have eternal life...”** 1 John 5:13ac. Secondly, they will know how they will get there—which is through Christ—because He died in our place, and took the punishment we deserve. If you had received Christ, you would have known that.

Now that you know and understand the gospel, would you like to receive Christ and His gift of eternal life by praying with me right now so you can be absolutely certain you will go to heaven when you die?

Yes, I would.

Mike, you just made the best decision of your life. I will lead you in prayer. Simply repeat this prayer after me.

Sharing a portion of the gospel

This next example shows how part of the gospel can be shared when you know a person has heard all the main points but still doesn't understand certain parts. This is part of an email I wrote in response to family members that thought being a good person would be enough to get you into heaven. My main focus was that salvation is a gift, not of works: *...some family members thought that being a good person would be enough...*

Some believe they might go to heaven because “they are such a nice person” and “they do so many good things”. Getting to heaven is not about being nice or doing good things. It's not about us at all—it's about Jesus. When we compare ourselves to others—and do not take into account our own sins, or God's standards—too often we don't realize how much we sin or that only one sin disqualifies us from heaven.

Jesus made it clear that our thoughts qualify as sin. Our motives behind our actions can also be a sin. Sometimes not doing anything when you could have is a sin. Even not believing God is a sin. If you are honest with yourself, we all sin—all the time. We are all greedy, selfish sinners. If every sin were recorded, we'd all have enough sins to fill up a library. Jesus said, **“...No one is good but One, that is, God”**. Matthew 19:17a. Serial killers can go to heaven—if they repent. **“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who**

desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

1 Timothy 2:3–4. If you don’t believe this, you’re not seeing your own sins. To God—our sins look like what a serial killer’s sins may look like to us.

Every sin we commit is an offense to God. God wants us to admit our sins—not try to excuse them. It doesn’t matter who you are, or how great a sinner you are. It only matters that you have repented and allowed Christ to forgive your sins. The only way you will get into heaven is through Jesus Christ. Jesus said it Himself: **“...I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me”**. John 14:6b. Don’t look at everyone else’s sin—consider your own sin, and then look to the Savior. Salvation is not based on what we do—it’s based on what Jesus has done and whether or not we accept His pardon.

No one is any better than anyone else. We can all receive God’s gift of eternal life. God is offering it to you on a silver platter. Actually, He’s offering it to you on the wooden cross His Son was tortured on. It was expensive to God—but free to us. You can have it if you want it—it’s yours for the taking. **“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”** Ephesians 2:8-9.

See if you can do it

After my chiropractor told me about the stretching exercises he wanted me to do, he demonstrated how to do them. I wasn’t sure I would remember them so I asked him to show me again. Instead of showing me again, he had me do them—and I remember them to this day.

Now that you have read how the gospel could be shared, see if *you* can share it. If you feel awkward, wierd, or stupid practicing, keep in mind that just about everyone practices. Doctors, pilots, actors, athletes, musicians, and firefighters all practice. I bet you wouldn’t trust a surgeon if he told you, “I’ve never done this before—I’m just going to trust the Lord to guide my hands.” Go ahead give it a try. See if you can share the gospel. Get someone to practice with you, if you can. If not, you better call your dog or just practice by yourself.

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