

Essentially, the gospel means "good news." But, what is the news and how is it good. Any presentation of the gospel should include three elements. Knowing them will help you critique Christian ministries, celebrate biblical preaching and share the good news clearly and succinctly. In his book "Doctrine," Mark Driscoll writes about the three essential elements of the gospel -

"The New Testament church was birthed with Peter's preaching of the gospel in Acts 2. This gospel is the means by which God's power is exercised both for and through the church. The gospel pattern of Acts 2, as well as of other Scriptures, breaks down into three aspects: (1) *revelation*, or what God did; (2) *response*, or what we do; and (3) *results*, or what God gives."

#### *Revelation: What God Did*

Peter begins by affirming that Jesus fulfills the promises of a divine Messiah, God come among us, with miracles, signs, and wonders (v. 22). Next, Peter declares that Jesus died on the cross according to God's prophetic purpose (v. 23). Then he proceeds to emphasize the reality that God bodily raised Jesus from death in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy (vv. 24–32). Peter concludes with the final acts of God exalting Jesus to the right hand of the Father and pouring out the Spirit in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy (vv. 33–35).

#### *Response: What We Do*

The first thing we are to do in response to God's revelation is repent (vv. 36–38). Repentance is the Spirit-empowered acknowledgment of sin that results in a change of mind about who and what is lord in our life, what is important, and what is good and bad. This is followed by a change of behavior flowing

out of an internal change of values. The second response is to accept the revealed message about Jesus by Spirit-empowered faith (v. 41). Faith means taking God at his word and trusting our life and eternity to the truth of his revelation. All of this is seen in the act of baptism, which is the visible expression of our connection with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus through repentance and faith (vv. 38, 41).

### *Results: What God Gives*

Peter immediately announces the gift of forgiveness of our sins, which is the result of the propitiatory death of Jesus (v. 38). This gift flows into justification, or the imputed righteousness of Jesus. Peter goes on to the second gift: the Holy Spirit and the new heart and new life of Christ (v. 38). This regeneration, or the imparted righteousness of Jesus, is for living a new life as a Christian with, like, for, to, and by the living Jesus. The third gift is membership in the body of Christ, the new community of the Spirit called the church. This community is a supernatural community where God's power and generosity are seen from miracles and supernatural signs to the sharing of possessions among the community members and giving to all in need (vv. 41–47). The fourth gift is participation in the mission of the church to join God's mission to rescue the world from sin and condemnation through the gospel (v. 47)."

So the gospel centers on God and His grace. It is a) revelation – Jesus died for sinners; b) response – Spirit-empowered repentance and faith (repentant faith) and c) results – new life in the Spirit. That's it. It's that simple to remember and that simple to share. By the way, with whom have you recently shared the gospel?