

The Watford Word

www.watfordchurchofchrist.org

What's on

Sunday 28 April - 10:30AM. Malcolm speaking

Sunday 05 May - 10:30AM. Lance speaking

Sunday 12 May - 10:30AM. Malcolm speaking

Pentecost Sunday 19 May - 10:30AM.

International Sunday and international food

Sunday 26 May - 10:30AM. Malcolm speaking

Sunday 02 June - 10:30AM. Visiting speaker Dr John Oakes (<https://evidenceforchristianity.org/>)

Sunday 14 July - 10:30AM. Kerry Mathurin speaks

New Creation - New Picture of Gospel

What is your picture of the gospel? Doubtless it is affected by your personal spiritual biography and formative spiritual experiences. Is it possible that your view could contain an incomplete or even distorted view of the gospel? For many, the gospel is mostly about forgiveness, going heaven, and avoiding hell. Is that all?

Good News

The 'gospel' means 'good news' (from the Greek, euangelion). The Scriptural idea is encapsulated in this verse:

"How lovely on the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who announces peace And brings good news of happiness, Who announces salvation, And says to Zion, "Your God reigns!" (Isaiah 52:7 NAS95)

The image is someone running from the battlefield, bringing good news of a military victory. Watchmen were trained to notice how these specialist runners ran. If they were doing the survival shuffle it was bad news. If their legs were pumping, and the dust was flying, it was good news.

In essence, this is the gospel. God has won the victory; we are part of his victorious people and we share in his celebration.

Have a look at Romans 10:15 and Ephesians 6:15 for further development of these ideas.

How did Jesus define the good news?

Jesus connected the good news with the coming of the kingdom. They are one and the same.

"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." Mark 1:14-15

Why did he see the gospel as the coming of God's kingdom? Because it is where God reigns and gets his stuff done. Because his stuff is good (love, mercy, justice, forgiveness, healing, wholeness), it is good news that the kingdom is here. It is an attractive place! That is why we pray: *"Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven."* Matthew 6:10

A completely different kind of life is now available: *"for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."* Romans 14:17

What does this mean for us?

It means that a skinny gospel of forgiveness and going to heaven needs fleshing out into the full picture of what Jesus was teaching, demonstrating and offering.

1. Mission

Accepting Jesus means a personal, global and cosmic impact:

"The gospel is personal but never private." Trevor Hudson

Joining up with Jesus means joining him in his mission. Have a look at Luke 4:16-21. What was his mission? Among other things, it was—and is—justice for the poor, healing for the sick, liberation for the oppressed. We are called into this mission. You are a portal for God's justice, mercy and liberation.

2. Life

In John's gospel the word 'kingdom' is used less than the other gospels. Instead he uses the word 'life' ('zoe' in Greek) as a rough equivalent.

"This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." John 17:3

This fullness of life containing eternity starts now - not in heaven. The gospel is *knowing* God, not simply going to be with God. As Richard Foster put it,

"The goal of the Christian life is not simply to get us into heaven, but to get heaven into us."

For reflection

Do these thoughts challenge your understanding of the gospel? What does it mean to you to live out Jesus' mission? How do you think God is trying to get heaven into you?

Your brother, Malcolm

Unity Process Update

The UK & Ireland unity process continues this weekend with representatives from many of our sister congregations gathering in London. The aims of the meetings are as follows:

- Communicate in a general sense what the Unity Advisory Team (UAT) have heard and some of the concerns that have been raised.
- Explain where the UAT goes go from here as it continues its journey toward a unified UK family and begins to map out its recommendations.
- Help to restore our faith in God and build the church that He desires
- Study the Scriptures together to help us all understand what "biblical unity" looks like in the fellowship and in our personal lives.
- Help restore relationships as we discuss needed topics in small groups.
- Dedicate a special time of prayer together that God will move in a powerful way and do "more than we can ask or imagine" in this much needed area of reconciliation.

Please pray these conversations move us towards creating a healthy unity culture for our churches.

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Watford Contribution Details

If you want to donate to the work of the church here, please go to this link and look for the 'ICC Missions standing order and gift aid form' — <https://watfordchurchofchrist.org/podcasts>

Watford Media

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCj9Qa8D9zumJZdoAtARDUww>

Podcast: <https://www.podbean.com/pu/pbblog-aiinq-1aef90>

ICCM Mature Singles Weekend



FRIDAY 6TH TO SUNDAY 8TH SEPTEMBER 2024

TWO NIGHTS STAY AT
THE HAYES, SWANWICK, DERBYSHIRE DE55 1AU

You are invited to register for the **Mature Singles Retreat 6-8 September**. Early Registration is recommended to avoid disappointment.
Cost £260 for the whole weekend.



CHURCHSUITE REGISTRATION LINK:
<https://iccmissions.churchsuite.com/events/0p8r3gqs>



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