

## **Following Up Your Summary Gospel Account "Second Tellings"**

I recommend we give a summary account of the entire gospel the first time we get the opportunity (phase 1) and then be ready to follow it up with "second tellings" (phase 2). This is similar to what we see in Acts (there are indications of "second tellings" in Acts 13:42; 17:2, 32b; 24:25).

The moment you finish your initial overview account, switch into the mode of following it up as needed. Stay with the person as long as appropriate that day to discuss the summary account you just shared. Then seek to get together with them as many more times as needed to discuss it further.

In the first phase you told them the good news that "Jesus Christ is Lord" and in this second phase you will move further into the mode of being their "servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Corinthians 4:5). Phase 1 was linear, but Phase 2 is not. *There is no set order or procedure for what comes next. Instead, as their servants, just make yourself available to listen and respond to their comments and questions and help them however it is needed.*

As you do this, pray often that God will give you wisdom "so that you may know how you ought to answer each person" (Colossians 4:6). Likewise, keep praying that God will "open their eyes" and shine the light of Christ's glory in their hearts (Acts 26:18; 2 Corinthians 4:4-6). He gives the growth (1 Corinthians 3:6-7). Make sure you are not heavy-handed or forceful, because that's not the way God's light shines. Instead, speak with "gentleness and respect" and treat them like Christ would (1 Peter 3:15-16).

You don't have to know all the information that follows. If you are humble and pray, God can work through you as you simply share the best responses you know to their questions. By all means avoid the human-centered notion that a person will come authentic faith in Christ only if you know all the right information, techniques and things to say. That kind of perspective is very American but is not very Christian. It puts way too much emphasis on our role and way too little on God's.

Even so, it is right for us to be as prepared as we can be, and God may choose to bless your investment in preparing yourself by working through you powerfully for his kingdom. So, at least familiarize yourself with the ideas below. You can keep these notes in your Bible. If the person brings up something related to the info here, you can say something like, "I was reading something previously that may relate to that," and then get out your notes and refer to them. You don't have to hide them. But you do want to be familiar with what is in them so you don't fumble around.

## Matters You May Want to Cover in "Second Tellings" of the Gospel (In no Particular Order)

- Ask them a couple questions along these lines to see where they are:
  - a. What did you hear from what we discussed before about Jesus?
  - b. Was any of it new to you?
  - c. Was any of it difficult to grasp? What questions do you have about it?
  - d. What do you think about it? How do you feel about it?
  - e. How would you describe who you believe Jesus is?
  - f. What difference does your understanding of who Jesus is make in your life?
  - g. Other questions you think of

Their responses to questions like these will help you know how to proceed (i.e., how to "answer each person," Colossians 4:6).

- Tell them the whole **NEWS** again, as a brief review or in some detail. Be open to telling it multiple times in your meetings with them, even spontaneously. The gospel is God's power for salvation.
- As you dialog with the person, it may become apparent that one or more aspects of it are not clear to them. If so, you will want to delve more deeply into that aspect of the **NEWS**. Don't forget that the key point Peter **E**xpressed in Acts 2 was the supreme authority and identity of Jesus as Lord and Christ (cf. Mark 8:27), so that truth is always worth repeating. Remembering this priority will give you some focus. Delving more deeply into any of the four truths may entail discussion, teaching, or reading additional Scriptures. Scripture will often be an important part of second tellings. Delving deeper might also mean telling other sub-points in addition to the ones you told them in your initial account. On pp. 4-6 below, there are many specific ideas and Scriptures you can use to delve deeper into each part of the **NEWS**.
- Tell them your personal story of hearing the good news, embracing it, and how it is changing your life. Be sure not to make yourself sound worse than you really were before coming to Christ nor better than

you really are now after coming to him. Instead, just be authentic. Also, make sure you don't let your own story upstage Christ's story. He is the Hero and focus. Your story is simply an illustration of what he did and does.

- If a person asks questions or wants to talk about matters not related to the gospel (**NEWS**)...
  - a. Try answer them simply and briefly, and then redirect their attention to the gospel. This is the central matter.
  - b. Anytime you don't know the answer to a question, it's fine to say you don't know (and perhaps remind them that the central matters are clear!). If the question is truly important to them (as in d. below), you can tell them you will look into it some more and get back to them. Then study, do some research or discuss it with a mature, knowledgeable Christian.
  - c. If their questions are "way out there," you may not even want to answer at all. Some people tend to focus on the wrong issues, either unintentionally out of mere curiosity or intentionally, as a way of avoiding God's truth. You might say, "We'd just be speculating if we tried to answer that. I think it is much more helpful to focus on the central truths the Bible emphasizes."
  - d. If you sense that a person's non-central question is not a diversion but rather a genuine hindrance (e.g., Why does God allow bad things to happen to good people? Or What about people who don't respond to Christ?), you may want to explore it with them a little more than recommended above and also pray with them about it. Sometimes there is a personal story behind questions like these. You might even probe for that a little.
  - e. If person persists in "off subject" questions, you may want to speak to them about it directly. Perhaps say, "You have a lot of questions about many things, and it is certainly good for us to learn all we can about God, but I want to make sure you know that God has not told us the answers to everything. Yet he has made some matters are absolutely clear, and these deserve our priority attention." (Consider and perhaps even share with them Psalm 131; Deuteronomy 29:29; Isaiah 55:8-9; Ecclesiastes 11:5)

## Some Ways to Delve More Deeply into Each Aspect of the NEWS

**N**-arrate the highlights of Jesus' life story.

- Read the passion narrative from one of the four Gospels (choose your favorite in advance, Matthew 26-28; Mark 14-16; Luke 22-24; John 18-20)
- Tell *all* the subpoints from all the summary accounts of the gospel in Acts, not just the ones you told them initially. (see your notes)
- Tell / read some of your favorite parts of the highlights his life story or something that has affected you personally (a favorite miracle, something about his execution, his resurrection, the meaning of him ascending to God's right hand)
- About the miracles: the signs, wonders, and miracles Jesus did in his ministry attest to the truth that he is the ultimate authority (Matthew 12:25-28; John 20:30-31; Acts 2:22; 10:38)
- About Jesus' death: It was initiated by people who did not recognize who he really was (Acts 4:11; 13:27). His shameful death made it seem like he wasn't anyone special (1 Corinthians 1:22-25). In fact, however, the death of Jesus was...
  - Part of God's plan (Acts 2:23; 4:27-28)
  - A fulfillment of Scriptures that said he would have to suffer (Luke 24:25-27, 44-48; Acts 3:15-18; 13:27; 17:2-3)
  - A sacrifice for our sins (Mark 10:45; Romans 3:25; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Hebrews 7:27; 9:15, 26; 10:8-14; 1 John 2:2; 4:10)
- About God raising Jesus from the dead...
  - He was seen by many (more than 500) eye-witnesses (Acts 2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:39, 41; 13:31; 1 Corinthians 15:3-7)
  - It showed that he was more powerful than death, Satan's strongest weapon (Hebrews 2:9, 14-15; 1 Corinthians 15:26; 2 Timothy 1:10)
  - It showed that he is the Son of God (plus all the other titles mentioned below on page 5)(Romans 1:1-4; 10:8-9; Acts 17:31)
  - We have a strong basis for hope that we too will be raised from the dead (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Colossians 1:5; Titus 1:2; 2:13; 3:7)

**E**-xpress the point of his story (his exalted identity)

- Read some miracle accounts that indicate his identity (e.g., Mark 4:35-41) or passages that say the purpose of his miracles was to point to his identity (e.g., John 20:30-31)
- Reading a passion narrative fits here as well as above, since the point of his story is to tell his identity (Romans 1:4 may help here as well)

- God has appointed Jesus the ultimate authority in the universe until the end of time (Matthew 28:18; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:19-23). Various words are used to express his supreme identity and it might be good to discuss what each one means.
  - Christ, Messiah or King (Acts 2:36, 42; 8:5, 12; 17:3, 7; 18:5; Mark 1:1). Both Christ and Messiah literally mean “anointed one” and refer especially to a king (see 1 Samuel 10:1; 15:17; 16:13)
  - Lord (Acts 2:36; 10:36; Romans 10:8-9; 2 Corinthians 4:5; Philippians 2:9-11)
  - Son of God (Acts 9:20; 2 Corinthians 1:19; Mark 1:1; Matthew 16:16)
  - Exalted to God’s right hand (Acts 2:33; 5:31; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 7:26; cf. Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20; Hebrews 1:3)
  - God glorified him (Acts 3:13; 1 Peter 1:21)
  - Savior (Luke 2:10-11; John 4:42; Acts 5:31; 13:23, 32; Titus 3:3-7)
  - Judge (Acts 10:42; 17:31; 24:25; Romans 2:16)
  - Leader or Prince (Acts 5:31)
  - Prophet to whom we must listen (Acts 3:22-23)
  - Capstone or Cornerstone (most important stone)(Acts 4:11; 1 Peter 2:1-7; Mark 12:1-12)
  - Read/tell stories about people seeing who he is (John 20:24-29, Luke 9:28-36)

**W**-hat should we do in response?

- Read accounts where the response is told in Acts
- Read several Scriptures about each one of the responses, especially if they have questions about it:
  - Believe in Jesus as the ultimate authority (John 8:24; Acts 10:43; 13:38-39; 16:31; Romans 10:9-10; Galatians 2:16; Philippians 3:8-9)
  - Repent (change our hearts and lives) and turn to God (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30; 20:21; 26:20; cf. Mark 1:14-15; Luke 24:47)
  - Embrace and confess Jesus as our Lord (Romans 10:9-10, 13)
  - Be baptized (immersed in water) in the name of Jesus Christ (John 3:1-8; Acts 2:36-41; 8:26-38; 10:47-48; 22:16; Colossians 2:11-12)
  - Also we must have these attitudes:
    - Humble ourselves (Matthew 11:25-27; 18:1-5)
    - Give him our utmost loyalty and devotion (Matthew 6:24; 13:44-46)

- Submit to our new Lord in our hearts, words, and deeds (Luke 6:46)

**S**-ignificance of Jesus being the Christ (**S**-alvation in the broad sense of the term). Use the **SAVED** acrostic below to remember and communicate a more complete picture of what it means for Christ to save us:

- **S**ins are forgiven (Matthew 1:21; Luke 2:10-11; Acts 2:38-39; 3:19; 4:12; 5:31; 10:43; 13:26, 38-39; 16:31; 20:24; 1 Thessalonians 1:10).
- **A**ccess to his Royal Counsel and Wisdom. This is implied by all his authoritative titles and is spelled out overtly in Acts 3:22-26. Here you could also include the fact that we now have a wise King to lead us (Matthew 2:1-6; 4:23; Mark 1:1, 14-15; Luke 2:10-11; 4:43; 8:1), and He will turn us away from worthless things (Acts 3:16; 14:15)
- **V**ery Presence and Power of God (that is, the Holy Spirit)(Acts 2:38-39; 5:32; Romans 5:5; 8:9; 1 Corinthians 6:19; Galatians 4:6). Our King has faced our Enemy for us and can deliver us from his power (Matthew 12:24-29; John 12:30-31; 1 John 5:18). He gives us peace (Acts 10:36; Romans 5:1; 14:17; Colossians 1:19-20)
- **E**veryone is invited. Our King welcomes anyone who will submit to him (Matthew 11:5; Luke 4:18-19; 7:22; Acts 10:34-35; 1 Corinthians 1:26-31).
- **D**ay of his return. A day of restoration (Acts 3:19-21) and recompense (Acts 10:42-43; 17:30-31; cf. 2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Peter 4:17)
- All this is good news! (meaning of "gospel")

### **Other Key Truths / answers to Questions:**

Jesus is the only way to God (John 14:6; Acts 4:12)

There will be a day of judgment for everyone (Matthew 25:31-46; Acts 17:31; Romans 2:1-16; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Hebrews 9:27; 1 Peter 4:17)

It is not *yet* God's will to destroy all evil (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43)

If you feel like you are so bad that God could never forgive you (Mark 3:28; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Timothy 1:15-16)

If you feel like you could never measure up (Mark 10:17-18; 1 John 1:8-10).

Believing in him is a choice (John 7:17; 12:37; Acts 14:2; 19:9; 28:24)

How could a good God send people to hell? He does not answer to us, but he has said his judgment will be just (Acts 17:31; Romans 2:5; 2 Timothy 4:8).

Interestingly, no one ever questions him about the opposite matter: How can a just God allow sinful people to go to heaven?