

Easter 2026

I. INTRO

- A. You can walk into almost any town in America and find a church.
- B. In fact, around 65% of Americans would still say they're Christian.
- C. But when you look a little closer, a different picture starts to emerge.
- D. Recent studies suggest that only about 4–6% of Americans actually hold a biblical worldview.
 - 1. That means the vast majority of people aren't rejecting Christianity outright—they're blending it with other ideas, other beliefs, other versions of truth.
 - 2. In fact, over 90% of Americans mix beliefs from multiple religions!
- E. And when you get down to the core of the gospel itself, the confusion becomes even clearer.
 - 1. About half of Americans say Jesus isn't truly God.
 - 2. Only 65% of Christians believe in a literal resurrection.
 - 3. About half of regular church attenders in the USA don't know what the Great Commission is, and only about 5% regularly share their faith.
- F. So what does that tell us?
 - 1. We don't live in a nation that has fully rejected the gospel. We live in a nation where many people have heard *something*—but not clearly. Not fully. Not accurately.
- G. In other words, the average person (in this county) doesn't know the gospel
 - 1. And before people can believe the gospel... they have to actually hear it.
- H. Think about that: **Around 60% of America claims Christianity, but only 5% truly understands the gospel.**
- I. So. What is the gospel of Jesus Christ?
 - 1. Well, Gospel means "the good news"
- J. But why is it good? Who is Jesus? Why do I need good news? What's the bad news? The good news only makes sense if you understand the alternative.
- K. So today I am just answering the most obvious question: What is the gospel, and why should you care? We don't want to assume everyone could answer it just b/c you're here.
- L. We're going to walk through this step by step:
 - 1. Creation. Fall. Promise. Jesus (what he did, why he died, why it matters). How he changed people. How he can change you.
- M. So if you've heard the churchianity phrases (you must be born again, repent, believe, Jesus can save you, Jesus died on a cross, etc) and you don't really know what any of that means → today is for you

II. **CREATION** → *Genesis 1:26–31, [26] Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." [27] So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. [28] And God blessed them.*

And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." [29] And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. [30] And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. [31] And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

- A. The Bible begins with God creating everything.
 - 1. God created the universe.
 - 2. He created the world.
 - 3. He created human beings.
 - B. Humans were created:
 - 1. in God's image
 - 2. with purpose
 - 3. to know Him and live under His authority
 - C. We also see that in the beginning:
 - 1. Everything was good → the world we all want
 - a) There was no sin (rebellion, selfishness, pride, etc)
 - b) There was no death, no cancer, no disease
 - c) Most importantly, there was no separation from God
 - 2. Humanity was in 'right relationship' with their Creator God
 - D. Do you know what the most common questions people struggle with in counseling are? Do I matter? Do I have value? Am I worth having around? Am I safe? Am I significant?
 - 1. Everyone wrestles with this things at some point in time → What is my purpose? What's the point?
 - 2. This is increasingly important in an AI driven and replaced world
 - E. The Bible's message is clear: You are not an accident. You DO matter. Something else IS out there. You need to know about it. You have purpose.
 - F. **You have a Creator, and you are accountable to Him.**
- III. **FALL** → *Genesis 3:1–7, [1] Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" [2] And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, [3] but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" [4] But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. [5] For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." [6] So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. [7] Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.*

Genesis 3:22–24, [22] Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—” [23] therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. [24] He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

- A. That original relationship did not last. The first humans disobeyed God under the temptation of an enemy, an adversary (that’s what Satan means).
 - B. This act of rebellion is what the Bible calls sin. Sin is:
 - 1. rejecting God’s authority
 - 2. choosing our own way instead of His
 - 3. Telling God what is good and evil instead of submitting to him
 - C. This is exactly what Adam & Eve did and what we do as well
 - D. Their sin didn’t stay isolated – it affected everything. What changed?
 - 1. Relationship with God was broken
 - 2. Relationship with one another was broken
 - 3. Relationship with the world was broken
 - 4. Even their relationship with themselves (Human nature was affected)
 - a) Sin became part of who we are, passed down
 - b) Every person now sins (by nature and by choice)
 - E. Think about it this way: The curse of Adam’s sin impacts every area of your life
 - 1. Your relationship with God, one another, the world, even yourself
 - a) This is why people struggle with everything from anxiety to cancer to conflict. Not b/c their sin made them get sick, but b/c our world is not as it was designed to be.
 - F. On top of this relational fracturing, Death entered the world
 - 1. Physical death
 - 2. Spiritual death → separation from God
 - G. One act separated us from God. Think about that. One action. One sin. Why?
 - H. B/C God is holy → completely set apart in every way, every facet, ever reality
 - I. God is holy and humanity rebelled against him and one act was enough to separate us forever. Imagine what the verdict would be with 100 sinful acts, 1000 sinful acts, 1,000,000 sinful acts → a lifetime of brokenness
 - J. **God is holy, and humanity is sinful, separated.**
 - 1. And as a holy God, he cannot simply ignore sin
 - 2. And that creates a problem we cannot fix.
 - 3. B/C of Adam’s sin, humanity was kicked out of the Garden, separated
 - 4. And ever since we’ve tried to make our way back...
- IV. **PROMISE** → *Isaiah 53:5–6, [5] But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. [6] All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*
- A. God had to provide a way back → the way was shut, guarded, closed, sealed

- B. After the fall, God did not leave things as they were.
 - 1. He made promises.
 - 2. Matter of fact, in Genesis 3 we see the first promise → crush the serpents head + sacrifice
 - C. This trend continues. Throughout the Old Testament, over a long period of time, God revealed that:
 - 1. Humanity needed saving and he would send a deliverer
 - 2. Humanity needed their sin removed, covered, and he would provide a way
 - 3. Humanity didn't just need a bandaid, they needed complete re-creation from death to life, and he would promise to provide it
 - D. One of the ways in which God explained this was through the establishment of a system of sacrifices
 - 1. In the OT, animals were offered as substitutes (innocent death for our sin)
 - 2. This showed that sin has a cost—death
 - 3. But these sacrifices were temporary → like bandages on an open wound
 - 4. They pointed to something greater → a need for a sufficient sacrifice
 - 5. The blood of a goat could never truly forgive me for what I did, the same way that sending a murderer to jail is a fitting consequence, but it doesn't restore that which was lost
 - a) It's a failed attempt at restitution
 - E. So the Old Testament does two main things:
 - 1. It shows the depth of human sin in our constant rebellion against God
 - 2. It points forward to a solution → greater sacrifice, greater humanity
 - F. It is a promise looking ahead to someone who would fully deal with sin while simultaneously showing our feeble attempts to fix ourselves and our relationship with God do not work.
- V. **JESUS** → The promises in the Old Testament are fulfilled in Jesus → *Galatians 4:4–5, [4] But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, [5] to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.* (ESV)
- A. His Life
 - 1. Jesus entered history as a real person.
 - a) Born in fulfillment of promise
 - b) Born at the perfect cross section of history
 - c) Jesus came, the Son of God
 - (1) He is fully God but he didn't come down like Zeus
 - d) He submitted himself to humanity
 - (1) He was born of a woman (a virgin so as not to receive the fallen "DNA" of mankind – so to say)
 - (2) He lived under the Law (submitting to the same temptations, pains, hurts, realities, and consequences we face)

(3) He became fully human, living a real human life, but with one key difference:

(a) He never sinned. He perfectly obeyed God.

(b) He did what no one else has done.

(c) The only truly innocent person, the only one who didn't deserve death and separation

e) WHY DID JESUS COME? To redeem those under the law so we might receive adoption

(1) Redeem → to purchase out of slavery, to pay for

(2) Adopt → to bring us back into God's family since we've been separated, estranged, distant since Genesis 3

f) HOW? Through his death and resurrection

B. 1 Corinthians 15:3–4, [3] ...Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, [4] that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures

1. His Death (go slowly if time allows)

a) **Betrayed:** Judas handed Jesus over; Jesus prayed in agony, was arrested, falsely tried, and beaten.

b) **Scourged:** Brutally whipped, causing severe physical trauma.

c) **Crucified:** Nailed to a cross, suffered greatly, forgave others.

d) **Died for sins:** Took the punishment for humanity's sins as a substitute sacrifice.

(1) He did not die for His own sin. He died as a substitute

(2) He took the penalty that sin deserves.

2. His Resurrection

a) But then the miraculous happened → three days later Jesus rose from the dead. That's what we remember today

b) Only 65% of Christians think the resurrection happened. Why does it matter? Why should you care?

c) If the resurrection never happened, everything he said is a lie.

d) If the resurrection is true, that means:

(1) His death accomplished the payment for sin (death)

(2) The penalty was received → God retains his holiness and justice b/c someone gets the blame for what Adam did → Jesus, a second Adam (so to say), the innocent one

(3) Death was defeated → anyone who has been forgiven, anyone who trusts in Jesus, anyone who is hidden in him passes from death to life

e) Without the resurrection, the story ends in death, failure, a bad teacher who was a manipulator and a liar.

f) With it, everything changes. And people changed...

VI. **HOW IT CHANGED PEOPLE** → *Acts 4:13, [13] Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. (ESV)*

- A. After Jesus' resurrection, something happened.
- B. The people who followed Him changed.
 - 1. They went from hiding in darkness to being filled with courage at risk of their own death → all but one of the apostles died as martyrs!
 - a) You wouldn't do that for a lie
 - 2. They went from confusion to clarity. They argued about what was most important, who should lead, whether or not Jesus was this or that, but then they all of a sudden had razor sharp focus
 - 3. They began to spread this message regardless of threats. You wouldn't do that for something you made up
 - 4. They grew in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and more!
- C. The change wasn't JUST in the original disciples. It continued throughout history → stories of people (in this room) who have been transformed by Jesus
 - 1. People who believe in Jesus experience real change
 - a) Their guilt is removed
 - b) Their relationship with God is restored
 - c) Their lives begin to change
 - 2. God begins a good work in them and, just like growing after birth, you are reborn, growing slowly. Not perfectly, but genuinely!

VII. **GOD WANTS TO CHANGE YOU TOO** → *Titus 2:11–14 [11] For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, [12] training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, [13] waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, [14] who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.*

- A. The gospel demands a response: "Repent and believe the good news," Jesus said
 - 1. Repent (change of mind, change of direction)
 - a) Acknowledge that you are wrong before God
 - b) Acknowledge that your understanding is muddled with the world
 - c) Acknowledge that you stand guilty before a holy God b/c of sin
 - d) And turn from it. Turn from your sin and turn to Jesus, crying out to him for forgiveness and help
 - e) Stop trusting your own way to earn a right to return to the Garden
 - 2. And instead, believe
 - a) Believe is an empty word for us. It means to trust in Jesus alone
 - (1) Not your effort that God will see you did your best
 - (2) Not your morality and that you've been good enough
 - (3) Not religion, that God is glad you went to church
 - b) Belief means dependence, surrender, submission, trust
 - c) It means to rely on what Jesus has done, not what you can do.
- B. What happens when you repent and believe? You are completely transformed
 - 1. Your sins are forgiven
 - 2. Your guilt is removed

3. You are made right with God
 4. You receive new life
 5. You have eternal life
- C. What happens if you don't? Nothing changes
1. Your sin remains
 2. Your separation continues
 3. You have the eager expectation of judgment to anticipate
- D. There is no neutral position. You are either with him or against him.
- VIII. CONCLUSION
- A. This is the message of the Bible:
1. God created everything
 2. Humanity fell into sin
 3. God promised a solution
 4. Jesus fulfilled that promise
 5. For those who believe? Their lives are changed forever
- B. And you are called to respond. He won't force you.
- C. The gospel is simple, but it is also decisive.
- D. So, what will you do with this information?
1. You can't claim to have never heard
 2. If you have questions, they can be answered
 3. If you have doubts, they can be worked through
 4. But to simply walk away without processing is folly
- E. Friends, I implore you – be reconciled to God. Repent and believe in Jesus and you will be saved! Do so today