

Ask Fr James

Where did the word 'gospel' come from and why is the gospel good news?

The word "gospel" is the translation of the Greek word "*euangelion*" which means, "to bring or announce good news or good announcement. *Euangelion* is the root word for evangelization which means to invite people to come hear the good news. The gospel or good news is about the coming of Jesus and how the world was saved through him. This whole good news (gospel) are contained in the New Testament.

However, there are four canonical Gospels; Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and they all open with chapters recalling the greatest good news of all time; God coming to earth as Jesus. It is good news that God became human and lived among us - the Word became flesh. By the very fact of God coming to live among us, the kingdom of God has come to us and is at work in the world. This is good news.

Through the Gospels we came to the understanding that God chose not to remain hidden from us, his human creatures, nor to approach us only in anger at our rebellion and disobedience. God reaches out to us in love and grace through Jesus Christ.

The deepest need of all human beings is the need for reconciliation with God. For God so love the world, He sent his only begotten Son (John 3:16). It is good news that Jesus demonstrated by his death and his resurrection. He bore our sins and took our place on the cross and he rose again to defeat all the powers of evil and death.

God offered us this love for free. Our appreciation of God's love is what we come to church celebrate every time we attend Mass. A thanksgiving for what Jesus has done out of God's love for us. This whole story is what the Bible conveys as good news. Thus, the 'gospel' means that salvation is always and has always been a free gift, offered by our loving creator to all persons, regardless of the culture-specific social and religious conditioning that the belong. That is very good news!