

Daily Devotional Guide

Sun, May 10 – Your Gospel Is Too Small

“The power of God for salvation”

Read: Romans 1:16-17

Reflect: The gospel is not less than the good news that God saves sinners by grace through faith. That truth is beautiful, and we should never lose our wonder over it. In Christ, God declares sinners right with himself, not because we have performed well enough, improved enough, or made ourselves worthy, but because of sheer grace. But the gospel is larger than personal forgiveness, assurance, and heaven. It is the announcement that Jesus is King, that his kingdom has arrived, and that all who come under his reign are justified, formed, and sent. Today, let God enlarge your gospel. Rest securely in the grace that saves you, but do not let your vision of the gospel shrink until Jesus revolves around your needs. The gospel draws you out of a small, self-centered story and into the reign of Jesus.

Respond: Where has your understanding of the gospel become too small, and what would change today if you lived more consciously under the reign of Jesus?

Pray: Lord Jesus, enlarge my understanding of the gospel. Help me rest in your grace and live under your reign.

Mon, May 11 – The Grand Announcement

“The kingdom of God has come near.”

Read: Mark 1:14-15

Reflect: The gospel is not first advice about what we must do. Advice says, “Do this, and then this will happen.” News says, “Something has happened, and now everything is different.” When Jesus comes into Galilee announcing the gospel of God, he does not begin with a religious improvement plan. He announces that the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God has come near. The long story of God has reached its

decisive moment in him, and that kind of news does not merely inform us; it reorders us. If God’s reign has drawn near in Jesus, then every loyalty, habit, fear, desire, relationship, and system must be brought into the light of his kingship. Repentance and belief are not religious advice added onto the gospel. They are the only fitting response to news this large.

Respond: What part of your life needs to be rethought because the King has come near?

Pray: Father, help me hear the gospel as news before I turn it into advice. Reorder my life around Jesus.

Tue, May 12 – Gospeling the Gospel

“The gospel in which also you stand.”

Read: 1 Corinthians 15:1-2, 20-22

Reflect: The gospel is not static. Paul describes it as something proclaimed, received, stood in, held firmly, and saving. It is not merely a message we believed once and then filed away for religious safekeeping. It is a living reality that holds us even as we hold firmly to it. The gospel is already in motion because Jesus is alive, and those who stand in it are standing inside something that is moving toward God’s promised future. The resurrection is the center of that movement. If Christ has not been raised, then the gospel collapses into memory, faith becomes empty, and death still has the final word. But Christ has been raised as the firstfruits, the beginning of the harvest God will complete. To believe the gospel is to be drawn into that resurrection movement now.

Respond: Where is the risen Jesus inviting you to move with the gospel instead of merely believing it from a distance?

Pray: Risen Jesus, help me stand in the gospel and move with what you have already set in motion.

Wed, May 13 – Drawn Into the Kingdom

“Everyone tries to enter it by force.”

Read: Luke 16:16; Mark 1:14-15

Reflect: Jesus describes the kingdom as being proclaimed with such force that people are pressing into it. This is not casual religious interest. It is awakened desire. People press in when they believe something good is available now, when the opportunity matters, and when missing it would feel like loss. The gospel becomes urgent when we hear it not as old religious background noise, but as breaking news that God’s reign has drawn near in Jesus. Yet we cannot press into the kingdom while standing above it. The Pharisees ridiculed Jesus and justified themselves before others, but Zacchaeus had to climb down from his tree when Jesus called him. That is a picture of kingdom entrance: we climb down from pride, control, self-justification, religiosity, and distance so the nearness of the King can draw us again into repentance, belief, and trust.

Respond: What do you need to climb down from so you can press more fully into the kingdom?

Pray: King Jesus, draw me into your kingdom again. Help me climb down from anything that keeps me above your gospel.

Thu, May 14 – Turn Again

“Repent and believe in the good news.”

Read: Mark 1:14-15; Acts 3:19

Reflect: Repentance is not only how we begin the Christian life. It is how we keep living under the reign of Jesus. To repent is to turn from whatever has begun to organize our lives apart from God: fear, pride, resentment, hurry, self-protection, image, appetite, control, or despair. Repentance is not merely feeling bad. It is re-evaluating life in the presence of the King and turning again toward his reign. This kind of turning is grace, not shame. The King who calls us to repent has already drawn near, and his nearness makes return possible. We do not repent in order to make God merciful; we repent because mercy is already calling us home.

Respond: What is ruling you that is not Jesus, and what is one concrete turn you can make today?

Pray: Lord, show me where I need to turn again. Lead me back under your healing reign.

Fri, May 15 – Trust the King Who Is Near

“We walk by faith, not by sight.”

Read: 2 Corinthians 5:7; John 20:29-31

Reflect: Belief is more than agreeing that the gospel is true. To believe is to entrust yourself to the King the gospel proclaims. It is possible to affirm the right doctrines while still carrying life as though Jesus were far away, unavailable, or uninvolved. But the gospel announces that the King has drawn near. Faith is the practice of letting his nearness become more real than the anxieties, pressures, and uncertainties that demand our trust. Some parts of life are easy to keep under our own management: our worries, relationships, future, money, work, reputation, wounds, and plans. But the gospel invites us to let the nearness of Jesus carry the weight of our lives, so that belief becomes surrender, dependence, and quiet confidence in the King who is near.

Respond: What weight are you still trying to carry alone, and how can you entrust that to Jesus today?

Pray: Jesus, I entrust myself to you again. Carry what I keep trying to hold alone.

Sab, May 16 – Live as a Sign of the Kingdom

“The first fruits of those who have died.”

Read: 1 Corinthians 15:20-28; Matthew 6:33

Reflect: The gospel does not end with private assurance. Because Jesus is risen, God’s future has already begun, and our lives can become signs of that future in the present. Christ is the firstfruits, which means the harvest is on the way. Death will not have the final word. Sin will not have the final word. Violence, injustice, pride, fear, and every rival power will finally fall under the reign of

Jesus. We cannot finish the kingdom by our effort. Only Jesus will finally put every enemy under his feet. But we can live now as witnesses of what he will complete then. In our homes, church, work, relationships, and community, we can become people through whom the reign of Jesus is seen: in mercy, justice, reconciliation, courage, humility, and hope.

Respond: Where can your life become a visible sign of Jesus’ reign this week?

Pray: Risen King, make my life a sign of your kingdom. Let your future take root in me today.

Discussion Questions

1. Where have you seen Christians, churches, or even your own life reduce the gospel to something smaller than the reign of Jesus? What changes when salvation, assurance, discipleship, and mission are all placed back inside the larger announcement that Jesus is King?
2. Mark 1:14-15 presents the gospel as news before it calls for a response. How does it change your experience of repentance and belief when they are understood not as religious pressure, but as the fitting response to the news that God’s reign has drawn near?
3. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul describes the gospel as something proclaimed, received, stood in, held firmly, and saving. Where do you sense God inviting you to move with the gospel rather than simply believe it from a distance?
4. Luke 16:16 describes people pressing into the kingdom. What makes the gospel feel urgent or not urgent in your life right now, and what would it look like this week to “climb down,” turn again, and entrust yourself more fully to the King who is near?

**prepared by Pastor Mel Baga*

RIVER FLOW

Cascading Sabbath into the Week

May 10-16, 2026

Over the first four sermons in the *Fluent in the Gospel* series, we have been invited to let the gospel grow back to its true size. The series has moved from a reduced gospel centered mainly on personal salvation, assurance, and heaven, to the grand announcement that God’s reign has drawn near in Jesus, that his resurrection has set God’s future in motion, and that we are being drawn into that reign.

These seven devotionals are designed to help us recapture and pray through that movement as we prepare for the fifth and final sermon in the series. This River Flow guide is meant to help you cascade Sabbath into the week ahead through personal reflection, family worship, group devotional study, or spiritual conversation with others. I pray that you will use it to deepen your walk with God and to widen the flow of his grace into the lives of the people around you.

Next Sabbath, I will return to the pulpit to complete the series with a message titled “Drawing Near with the Kingdom.”

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