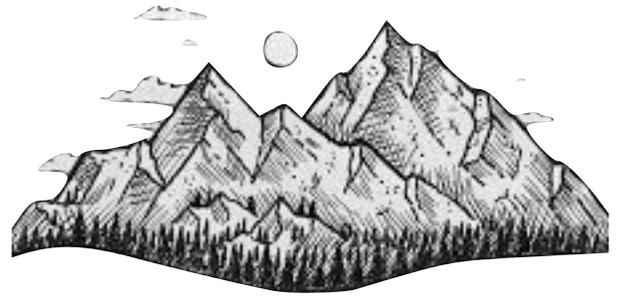


Gospel Fluency

The Scenic Route



This option involves using one chapter at a time then focusing in on the text that was preached the previous Sunday. Matt plans to make sermon-based questions available at redcedarchurch.org/shepherd the Thursday morning before the sermon is preached.

This “scenic route” resource could also be used alongside a deeper study of a key passage referenced in the given chapter. Or, it could be used alongside a Bible-book study of your small group’s choosing.

Gospel Fluency’s Main Argument

(introduced in chapters 1-2)

Because everyone is an unbeliever, the good news of Jesus is good news for everyone.

- People who haven’t been born again can trust Jesus for the first time and receive new life.
- People who have been born again can constantly re-apply the good news to areas of unbelief in their life.

Here’s the problem: We too easily try to address situations in people’s lives with advice instead of helping them see how they can trust Jesus in those specific situations.

Gospel Fluency is being able to apply the good news of Jesus to specific situations in peoples’ lives. As we learn to see God’s big salvation story as the defining story of our lives, we can learn to speak in a way that consistently points people to Jesus.

We need to help each other grow in Gospel fluency.

Chapter 1: Everyone is an Unbeliever

- What does the author mean when he says, “I’m an unbeliever, so are you”?
- How have you seen unbelief show up in you as a Christian? (see examples on 20 & 22) How do you think Jesus is good news for you in that unbelief?

Chapter 2: Give Them Jesus

- Why did Jeff Vanderstelt use the example of Alisa and her ex-husband? What was he trying to convey?
- What is the significance of the passage Jeff quotes (Eph 4:11-15)?
- Re-read the second paragraph of page 33 (“The reason we wait to have sex...”) to the top of page 34. How is “giving them Jesus” different from more generic biblical advice?
- Leader: If you’re up for it, consider sharing an everyday sin-struggle in your life (no need to reveal juicy information—just a basic example will do) and ask your group to practice “giving you Jesus.” Let people that this is an early-on practice opportunity and that they need not feel pressure to do this perfectly.

Chapter 3: Fluency

- Take some time to think through: What is an example of being fluent in a language and how does that relate to being fluent in the Gospel?
- Read the second paragraph on page 40. What does it mean to “speak in a way people can hear?” (Give examples)
- Read the first paragraph on page 44. When someone asks for you to tell them about yourself (in a job interview, for instance), what are important pieces that you choose to include in the story?
- As a leader, share your story in a way that makes Jesus the hero of your story. Give people time to ask questions along the way.

Chapter 4: The True Story

- Jeff breaks the story of the world into four acts: Creation, Fall, Redemption, and New Creation. What characters stuck out to you the most as you read this chapter. How do you relate to those characters?

- This chapter recounts what the Bible presents as the true story of the world. Most of us, though, tend to follow Adam and Eve's example and try to be masters of our own stories with ourselves at the center. How has this worked for you? What has helped you see your own life as part of Jesus' true story?

Chapter 5: Power for Salvation

- What things does Jesus' life teach us about God's Kingdom?
 - What does it mean for the good news about Jesus' life, death and resurrection to have power to change our lives?
 - Read paragraph 3 on p. 74: Have you seen the Gospel change you? How?
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What's Faith Got to Do with It?

(a core concept from chapter 6)

The only work that God calls us to do is to stop trying to make ourselves right with God and trust in Jesus—in His work on our behalf. Too often, though, we try to address sin problems with behavior-fixing solutions. This doesn't work because "All sin is a result of unbelief in God—particularly unbelief in Jesus and his work." (79)

Repentance is not primarily about stopping a behavior. Rather, it is about turning away from "wrong belief and turning to God in belief—belief in the gospel. It is by grace you have been saved *through faith*." (p. 81)

"The gospel is the power of God to save us, not only because our sin of unbelief is forgiven through Jesus's death on the cross, but also because in the gospel we come to know and believe the liberating truths of God revealed in Jesus Christ. And through believing those truths, the lies we've believed are dispelled and the truth sets us free to really live." (p. 89)

Chapter 6: What's Faith Got to Do with It?

- How is unbelief at the root of sin, guilt, and shame?
- The author lists three types of unbelief on pages 85-88. Which do you veer toward? How? Why?

Chapter 7: Good News to Me

- How does what we love shape what we talk about, and how does what we say shape what we love [give examples]?
- How has Jesus changed your life? (Spend time sharing and having people ask followup questions).

Chapter 8: The War of the Mind

- What might it look like to have a victim mentality toward your unbelief vs. a fighting mentality? (See p. 112, paragraph 3)
- What fruit are you seeing (good or bad)? How does this connect with unbelief or belief?
- This week, look for evidences of God's grace in your life and words/attitudes/actions that point toward a struggle to trust Jesus. Be prepared to talk about that next week.

Chapter 9: Fruit to Root

- Have people take time to quietly think through fruit in their life that points toward unbelief.
- If a brave soul is willing to share his/her fruit, use that as an opportunity for your group to practice the tree exercise, using the questions and diagrams on 122-123.
- Think about what your daily eating-routine looks like. We're not looking for dietary notes! Just a sense of what your weekly pattern looks like as a whole.

A Note on Chapters 10, 11, and 12

Each of these chapters lends itself well to practice, as opposed to just discussion. It could work well to have people read the chapter with the expectation that they will be practicing what they read the upcoming small group time. It will also be good to make use of the brief "for next week" homework ideas at the end of each set of questions.

Chapter 10: Eating to Remember

- What role do meals play in helping us remember Jesus?
- What does your typical meal-routine look like over the course of a week (alone? with other people? what do you like? what do you wish could be different?) How might you incorporate a routine of remembering Jesus into your daily meals?
- Consider sharing a meal together even as you have this discussion.
- For next week: As you go through your week, look for either good or difficult moments that God could use to show you something about Him and Yourself. Keep a mental (or real-life) list.

Chapter 11: He's the Better

- Re-read “The True and Better” on pp. 153-155. Which of these Bible characters or stories have connected with you in the past? Does this “better” concept help you see those stories differently? If so, how?
- Review the questions on the bottom of page 144. Ask for someone to share their good or difficult moments from last week with the goal of having the group use these questions.
- For next week: See if someone, or a few people, from your group could volunteer to share their story next week—using chapter 12 as a guide.

Chapter 12: The Hero of Our Story

- Spend time listening to 1-3 people's stories (whatever you have time for). After each story, give time for people to ask questions with the goal of knowing and loving the story-teller. Then, spend time thanking God for His work in that person's life while asking Him to continue His work.

A Note on Chapters 13-Conclusion

These chapters are worth lingering over. Here, we see the connection between being Gospel-Fluent and moving toward unbelievers in our lives. You might consider talking through a list of nonbelievers the your group has been praying for at the beginning of each time in order to help situate this discussion in real-life relationships.

Chapter 13: Listen and Learn

Chapter 13 is a primer on listening to people, asking good questions, and loving people. This chapter urges us to be better lovers of people by being better learners of people. It is full of examples and geared toward speaking with people who haven't yet come to know Jesus as Savior and Lord. This chapter helps us think of evangelism in much more everyday—yet not less urgent—terms.

- Read through the story of Jesus and the woman at the well in John 4. What do you think is the heart behind Jesus' questions—and even the way he asks these questions? How can we model our question-asking around Jesus?
- Consider exploring examples of question-asking opportunities people in the group may have had (either with Christians or non-Christians). Talk about people you hope to have question-asking conversations with. Pray for those people.

Chapter 14: Show and Tell

Chapter 14 helps us think of our lives as “gospel metaphors.” The idea of a “gospel metaphor” hinges on the logic of Eph 1:22-23, 1 Pet 2:9, and 1 Pet 3:14-15. These passages point out that we are saved *from* sin, Satan, and death *FOR* God's purposes here and now. What are these purposes? To show the world what God is like in our actions and our words. We must be a displaying people *and* a declaring people.

- Consider using the author's idea in the “Display” section on pp 187-190. He has his group think through what we know of God through Jesus' work and compiles a list of titles, attributes, and activities of God that we see in Jesus. Then, he picks one of those and has the group reflect on the question: “how might we show how God brings restoration through Jesus in our neighborhood or community?”
- Consider talking through the 5 hesitations to speak about Jesus with others. What resonates? How can we help each other and pray for each other?
 1. The enemy tries to keep us from speaking about Jesus
 2. Many of us love what people think of us more than we love people
 3. Most Christians have never tried to share their gospel hope and haven't experienced the Spirit giving them words and boldness
 4. Many Christians just don't know the gospel very well and, if they do, don't practice sharing it with other believers very often
 5. Most Christians don't really believe in the reality of Hell and that—apart from faith in Jesus, people will miss out on enjoying life with God forever

Chapter 15-Conclusion: Grow in Love and Wisdom

Chapter 15 celebrates God's work of incremental change and our need for Him to capture us with His heart for people. He admits that living with Gospel fluency in the day-to-day is far from easy and calls us to ask God for wisdom. **"Ask God for wisdom, and He will give you Jesus. And if you get Jesus, you will get everything you need for every part of your life. He is good news for the everyday stuff of life."**

- Consider beginning with: "What have you enjoyed about our time in *Gospel Fluency*?" And possibly: "In light of our time in this book, what is one way that you'd like to see God help you grow in the weeks ahead?" [Follow up with "tell me more questions" on people's answers to that second question]
- What is the author trying to say when he says he wants the ideas in this book to be used as/ a healing balm, not a hammer? (p. 197)
- What could be some evidences that we are growing in love for the people that we've been praying for?
- Spend some time praying for God to grow your love for specific people that are on your missional-prayer list.