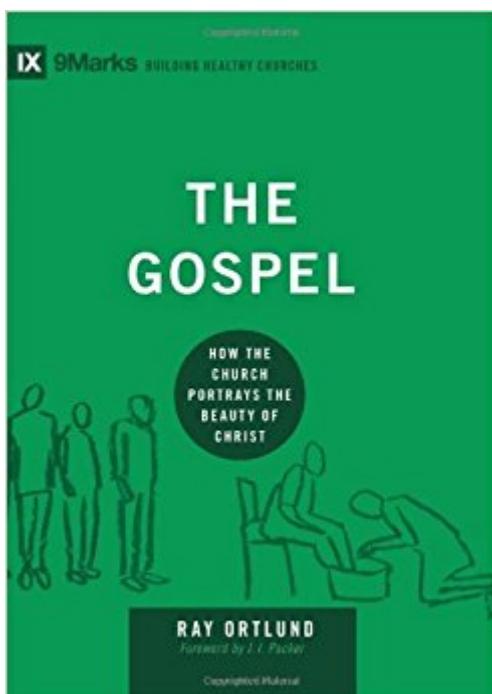


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# The Gospel: How The Church Portrays The Beauty Of Christ (9marks: Building Healthy Churches)



## Synopsis

How does the church portray the beauty of Christ? The gospel is a theological message. But this message also creates human beauty—beautiful relationships in our churches, making the glory of Christ visible in the world today. In this timely book, Pastor Ray Ortlund makes the case that gospel doctrine creates a gospel culture. In too many of our churches, it is the beauty of a gospel culture that is the missing piece of the puzzle. But when the gospel is allowed to exert its full power, a church becomes radiant with the glory of Christ.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“When Ray Ortlund speaks, I listen. My generation has grown in knowledge but needs sages. Pastor Ray is that to us. Pick up this resource and hear from a man who espouses theological depth matched by gospel grace.” Eric M. Mason, Lead Pastor, Epiphany Fellowship, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; President, Thriving; author, *Manhood Restored* “Churches don’t make the gospel true, but when the sweetness of the Lord is upon us, the church becomes a powerful testimony of God’s grace. With both realism and hope, Ray Ortlund tells us how that grace can thrive among us—even as broken as we are—so that Christ’s glory will radiate from us.” Bryan Chapell, President Emeritus, Covenant Theological Seminary; Senior Pastor, Grace Presbyterian Church, Peoria, Illinois “Ray Ortlund weaves together profound biblical reflection on how gospel doctrine must lead to gospel culture with

choice quotations from great saints in church history. A must read for any church that wants to help rather than hinder the lost in being attracted to Christ. • Craig L. Blomberg, Distinguished Professor of New Testament, Denver Seminary “Compelling. Convicting. Encouraging. Probing. And most of all, entrancing. What a beautiful vision of what the church can be through the power of the gospel. How evident it is that the gospel has penetrated Ortlund’s own heart. Read it. Pray through it. Ask God to use its message mightily in your church and in many other churches as well.” • Thomas R. Schreiner, James Buchanan Harrison Professor of New Testament Interpretation and Professor of Biblical Theology, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky “Pastor-scholar Ray Ortlund, in his newest book, brings out the goodness in the good news. And a church that doesn’t show this goodness in their life together, says he, undermines the very gospel they preach. It’s a good argument, and worthwhile.” • Mark Dever, pastor, Capitol Hill Baptist Church, Washington, DC; president, 9Marks “In this incisive book, Ray Ortlund does the necessary and compelling work of connecting the life-giving gospel to the lived experience and witness of the church. His vision for gospel cultures that bloom in the rich soil of gospel doctrine will capture those who desire to see the world captivated by Christ.” • Stephen T. Um, Senior Minister, Citylife Presbyterian Church, Boston, Massachusetts; coauthor, *Why Cities Matter*

Raymond C. Ortlund Jr. is the pastor of Immanuel Church in Nashville, Tennessee. He is the author of several books, including the *Preaching the Word* commentary on Isaiah, as well as a contributor to the *ESV Study Bible*. He and his wife, Jani, have four children.

The “gospel” has become somewhat of a buzzword in evangelical circles. It’s a funny thing because the gospel is at the very center of the Bible and God’s redemptive purposes. So it’s counterintuitive to claim the very idea that the gospel has become a buzzword. Christ-followers knowingly or unknowingly validate a ministry, band, or organization by attaching the label, “gospel.” In most cases, this approach is a good measuring rod of the validity of anything or anyone which claims to adhere to the historic Christian faith. But in some cases, it is a mere word that carries no more meaning than a sticker on a product. In this sense, the word becomes another piece of Jesus junk. Thankfully, the book under consideration does not fall into the later category. *The Gospel* by Ray Ortlund is the latest in a series of books in the 9Marks series, edited by Mark Dever. I’ve read nearly all the books in the series. They’re all good and are chock-full of sound biblical counsel. Each of the

books is designed to help establish and nurture healthy churches. I commend each book to pastors, leaders, and Christ-followers who love the church and have a passion to see Christ's glory penetrate the nations. It's almost unfair to compare the books because each one stands alone and is an important contribution. Having said that, Ray Ortlund's book stands head and shoulders above the others. Ortlund establishes the beauty of the gospel in the introduction: "God, through the perfect life, atoning death, and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, rescues all his people from the wrath of God, with a promise of the full restoration of his created order forever - all to the praise of the glory of his grace." With this definition of the gospel in place, the author defines the purpose of the book, namely -"to show how Christ puts his beauty into our churches by his gospel." The first sentence in the book provides a framework for the rest of the journey through this wonderful little treatise: "Gospel doctrine creates a gospel culture. The doctrine of grace creates a culture of grace." He adds, "Truth without grace is harsh and ugly. Grace without truth is sentimental and cowardly." Unfortunately, many churches reflect the later. But Ortlund is not deterred. In a short chapter devoted to expositing John 3:16, he unpacks the wonder and majesty of the gospel of grace. The gospel is compared to other so-called hopes that are offered up in the marketplace of ideas. But the conclusion is simple: "Every other hope is based, explicitly or implicitly, on how deserving we are. Only the Christian gospel is based - clearly, boldly, and insistently - on how loving God is to the undeserving." In short, "Gospel doctrine creates a gospel culture, and it matters." Ortlund maintains the gospel is for the church: "The doctrine of grace creates a culture of grace where good things happen to bad people." As such, the author guides readers through a stunning exposition of Ephesians 5:25 - "Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." Again, the culture is ultimately affected by the power of the gospel. It is the gospel that makes us holy. It is the gospel that makes us acceptable in the sight of a holy God. The author draws the attention of readers to the comprehensive nature of the gospel. The new heaven and earth are presented. In other words, as Ortlund writes, "This present heaven and earth, will be renewed. God will restore this creation that he made, owns, and loves - this creation where we ourselves feel at home." At the end of the day, the gospel produces a culture which is brimming with hope - the hope that Christ will make all things new! This is a book worth reading and reading. It is a book that needs to be absorbed and assimilated into the fabric of every local church. The Gospel should be placed in the hands of new believers and veteran believers. It should be gifted to non-believers who express an interest in the gospel. [...]

I could say that This book will benefit EVERY Christian in their grasp of the gospel- and that's true! I

could recommend it to every pastor, elder, deacon or other church leader - and that would be beneficial. But more than all, this book feeds our hearts on the sweetness of Christ and his treasure in earthen vessels- the gospel. Please read it and recommend it!

If you're looking for a pragmatic book on how to have a gospel centered church, this isn't the book for you. However, Ortlund does a great job pointing to Jesus on every single page! I was definitely helped by his explanation of gospel doctrine and gospel culture! Highly recommend!

A truly good book! First time that I've read Ray Ortlund; hope it's not the last. Great grasp of the need for gospel culture in the church to be driven by a solid understanding of gospel doctrine. It was also good to see that Ray was influenced by one of my profound mentors (Francis Schaeffer). I highly recommend this timely book!

Pastor Ray Ortlund is a pastor to pastors and in this book he artfully and courageously calls pastors, leaders and followers alike to take seriously the necessary relationship between Gospel doctrine and gospel culture. This book has already influenced me greatly.

If we lived according to this book, our churches would be joyful, peaceful and hopeful. We desperately need to apply the gospel to our own lives and our faith families. Let Dr. Ortlund show you how!

Easy to read book that focuses wonderfully on the foundation and practice of Grace. I only wish it was a bit longer to help flesh out more of the practical implications.

I thoroughly enjoyed this from start to finish. This book really clarifies the bullseye of every church: Right doctrine + Gospel Culture= a church that will be a fragrant aroma to the world.

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