

Gospel Conversations — Week 3: Starting from Square One

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- What are the elements of coming to faith? God-shaped hole; crisis; longing; the message of the truth; loving witness/relationship; regeneration; time
- Both/and
 - Propositions *and* narratives
 - Truth *and* love
 - Meeting physical *and* spiritual needs
 - Conversion *and* ongoing discipleship
- We've seen so far:
 - Ruth; Naaman the Aramean
 - Jesus and the Jewish People (Jn 8:31–59)
 - Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:26–40)
 - Peter, Stephen and Paul speak to Jewish audiences (Acts 2; 7; 13)
 - Paul in Synagogues
- Foundationalism versus coherentism
 - Foundationalist apologetic: arguing toward the gospel from shared core principles/ideas. Building a scaffold that connects two buildings, coax them over it.
 - Coherentist apologetic: examining the interconnected and mutually-supporting beliefs in a system, and testing for coherence. Building log rafts, seeing which one floats, finding flaws in the others.
 - What are the advantages and drawbacks of each? Which do you find using in conversations with people who don't have any faith background?
- Paul and Barnabas at Lystra (Acts 14:8–23)
 - What precipitates P&B's opportunity to share the gospel?
 - What misunderstandings do the people display? How do P&B correct them?
 - What is the “good news” (14:15), and why is it good for the people of Lystra?
 - What is the result of P&B's apologetic?
- Paul and Silas in Philippi (Acts 16:16–34)
 - What events precipitate P&S's opportunities to share the gospel?
 - What are the interests that resist the good news? How do P&S respond to them?
 - Who are the “saved” individuals? What kind of salvation do they receive? (physical and spiritual)
- Romans 1:18–32
 - What does it mean that God's attributes are clearly seen (1:20)?
 - How does “suppression of the truth in unrighteousness” (1:18) inform our evangelistic conversations? (How can we apply this with empathy and not arrogance?)
 - What is your reaction to the list of fruits of ‘debased minds’ (1:29–31)? How does this play a role in our gospel conversations?
- What do these stories teach us about how to have gospel conversations? Can you think of some examples?
 - “What is the Christian sexual ethic, and why is it so important (for individuals and for society)?”
 - “Why do Christians believe that Jesus is the only path?”
 - “Why are some Christians no different than non-Christians? Why should a nice person become a Christian?”