

The Gospel and a Statement of Faith

NEFC

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I. Introduction



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- Romans 1:16-17
 - 1 Corinthians 15:1-5
 - 1 Timothy 4:11-16



□ Polycarp (AD 69–155/160)



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 - **Theological Declaration of Barmen
(May 29-31, 1934)**



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- ❑ Polycarp (AD 69–155/160)
 - ❑ Theological Declaration of Barmen (May 29-31, 1934)
 - ❑ **Christians in Iraq (July 27, 2014)**



Common: A commitment to Jesus Christ and the gospel of Jesus Christ, truth, doctrine, and a willingness to stake their lives on and give their lives for it.



Contrast: "A God without wrath brought men without sin into a Kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a Cross." H. Richard Niebuhr



II. Key Truths/Themes



“Tradition [doctrine] is the living faith of the dead, traditionalism is the dead faith of the living.” Jaroslav Pelikan



“The doctrinal heritage of the past is thus both a gift and a task, an inheritance and a responsibility. What our forebears in the Christian faith passed down to us must be appropriated, in order that we may wrestle with it within our own situation, before passing it on to those whose day has yet to dawn.” Alister McGrath



1. God's Gospel and God's Glory – the SOF begins (“for His own glory”) and ends (“to the praise of His glorious grace”) with an emphasis on God and His glory.



2. Orthodoxy (right belief) and Orthopraxy (right behavior) – doctrinal statements are made along with the practical implications of those truths in our lives as the people of God.



3. Response – the only appropriate response to this great God and what He has done is to believe the gospel: “We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ.”



4. Theology (truth/doctrine) and Doxology (praise/worship) – all theology is doxological, i.e. it is the context of worship. This is how the SOF ends: “to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.”



III. Statement of Faith

Theological Convictions



God

1. We believe in one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory.



The Bible

2. We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.



The Human Condition

3. We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.



Jesus Christ

4. We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus—Israel's promised Messiah—was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.



The Work of Christ

5. We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.



The Holy Spirit

6. We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.



The Church

7. We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.



Christian Living

8. We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.



Christ's Return

9. We believe in the personal, bodily and premillennial return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.



Response and Eternal Destiny

10. We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.



IV. Application:

Doctrinal and Functional Centrality
of the Gospel



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- ❑ Our spiritual lives originate in the gospel.
 - ❑ Our local churches exist because of the gospel and is a manifestation of the gospel.
 - ❑ Our EFCA movement exists because of and for the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - ❑ Our EFCA Statement of Faith is framed around the gospel.



The gospel – central message of Jesus (Mk.
1:15)



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- Small gospel = born again



□ Large Gospel = everything



Paul's Nuances of the gospel

- “the **gospel** . . . as of first importance (1 Cor. 15:1-3)
- “sound doctrine, in accordance with the glorious **gospel** of the blessed God” (1 Tim. 1:10-11).
- “only let your manner of life be worthy of the **gospel** of Christ” (Phil. 1:27).



The biblical gospel

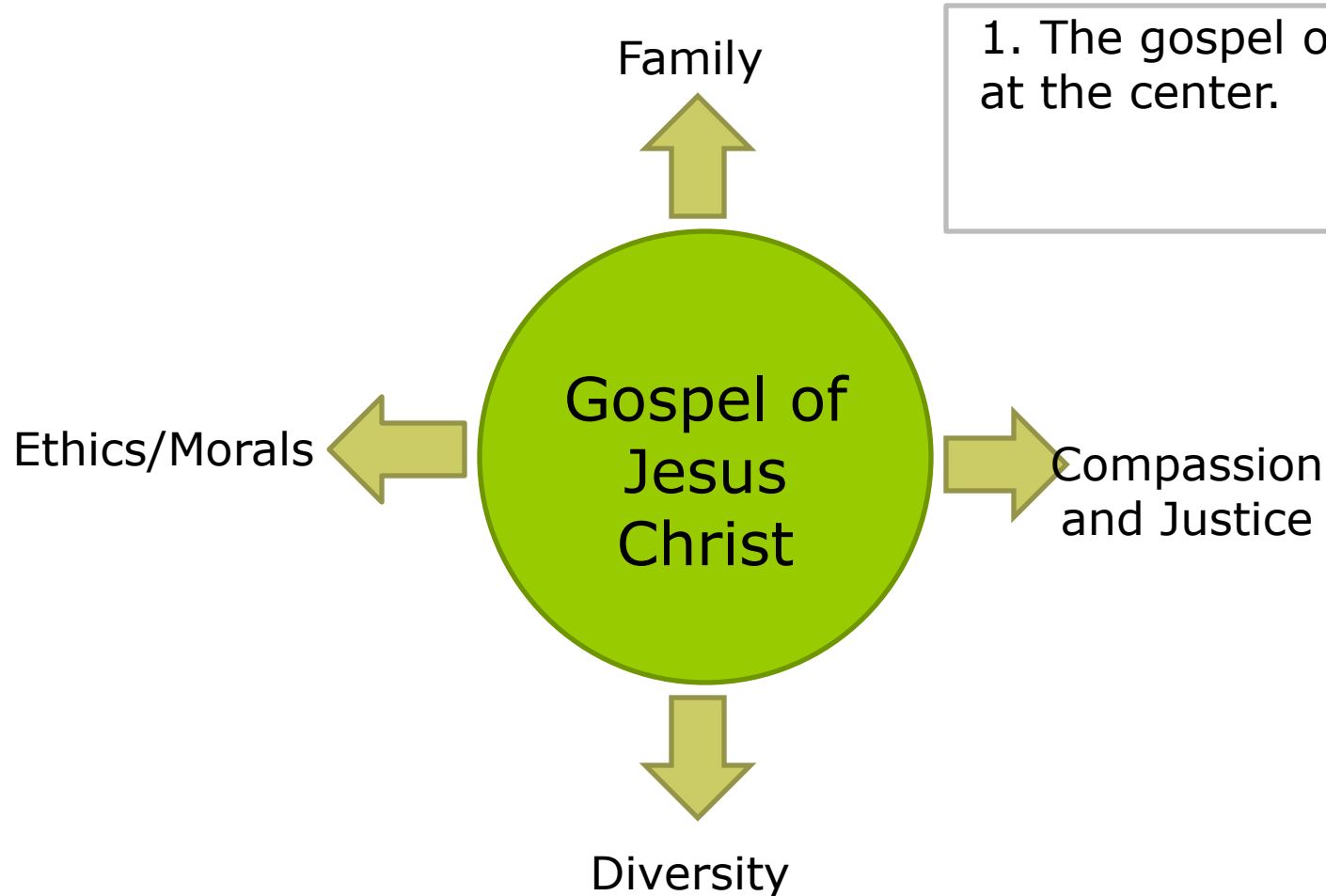
- Doctrinal centrality
 - belief and proclamation
- Functional centrality
 - life and ministry



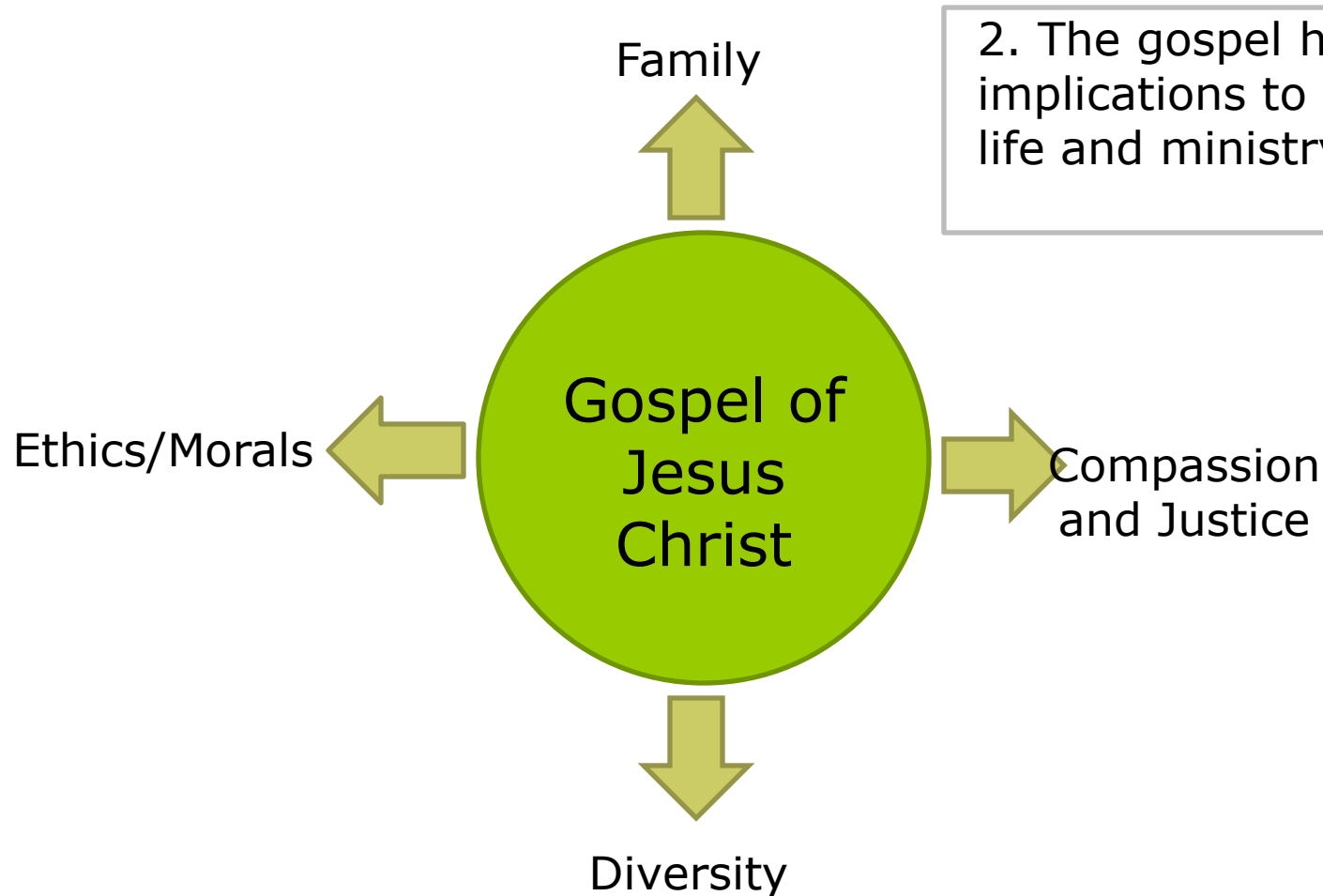
Doctrinal Centrality of the Gospel

Gospel of
Jesus
Christ

Doctrinal and Functional Centrality of the Gospel

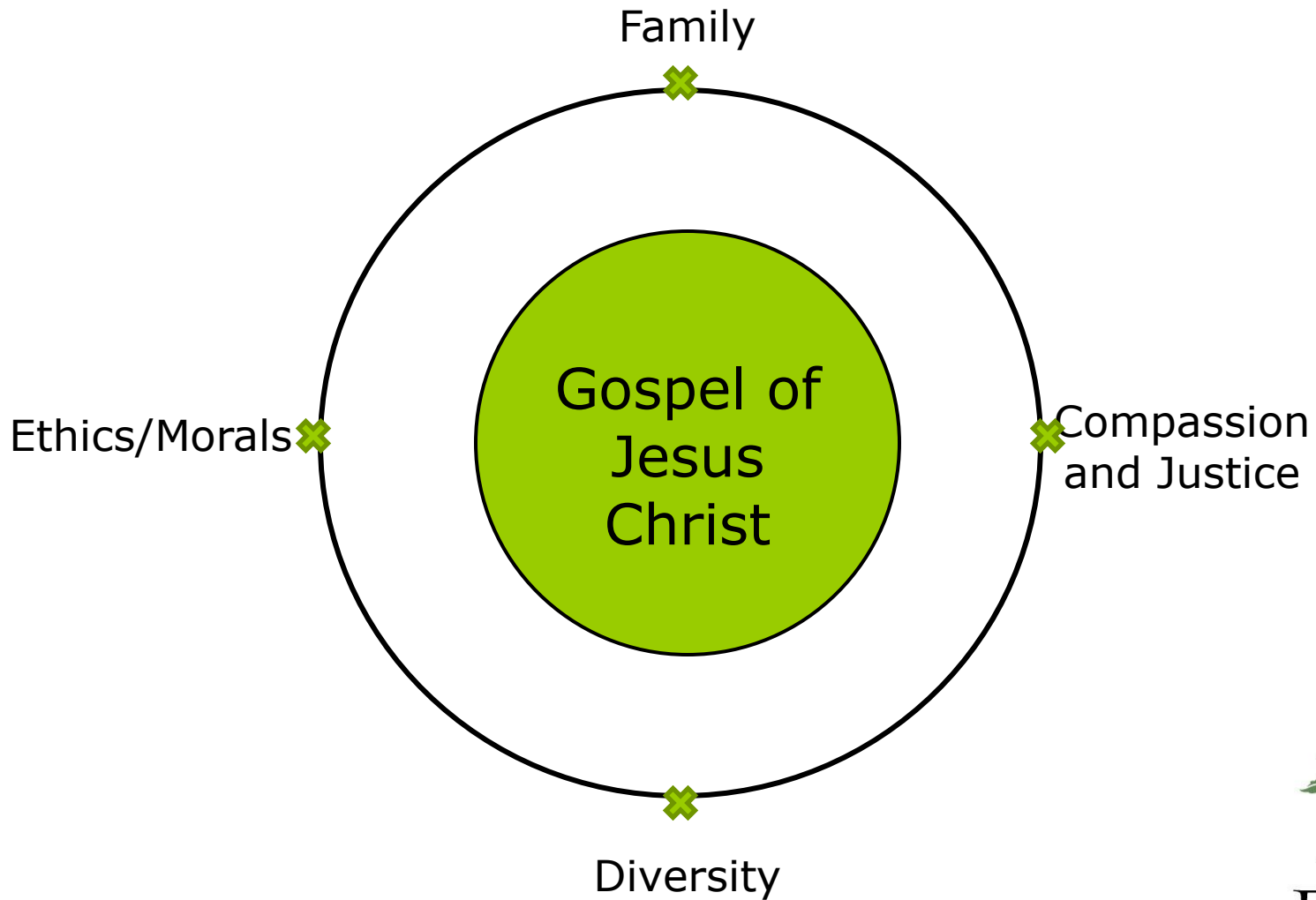


Doctrinal and Functional Centrality of the Gospel



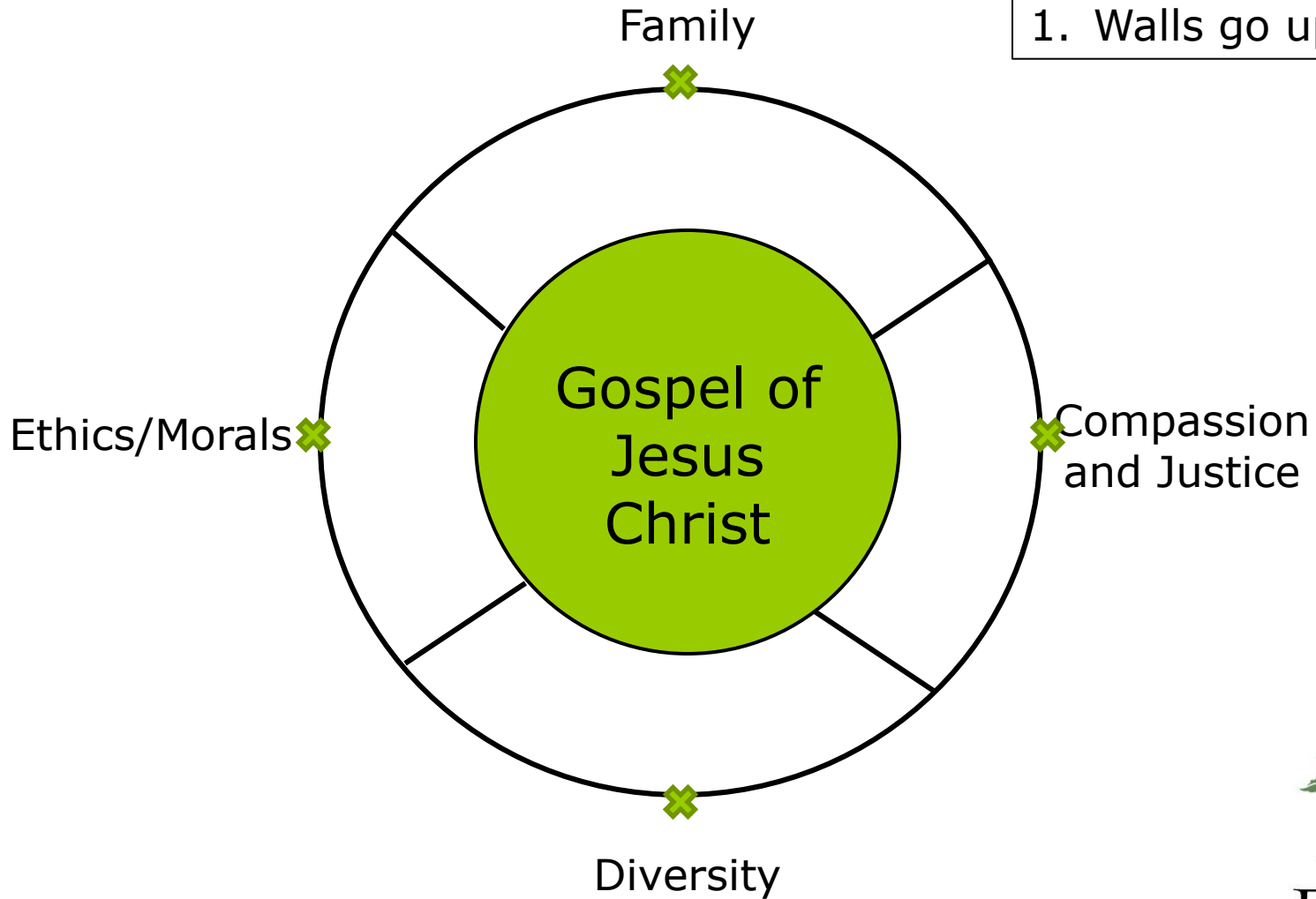
2. The gospel has implications to all of life and ministry.

Gospel Assumed, Centrality of Function

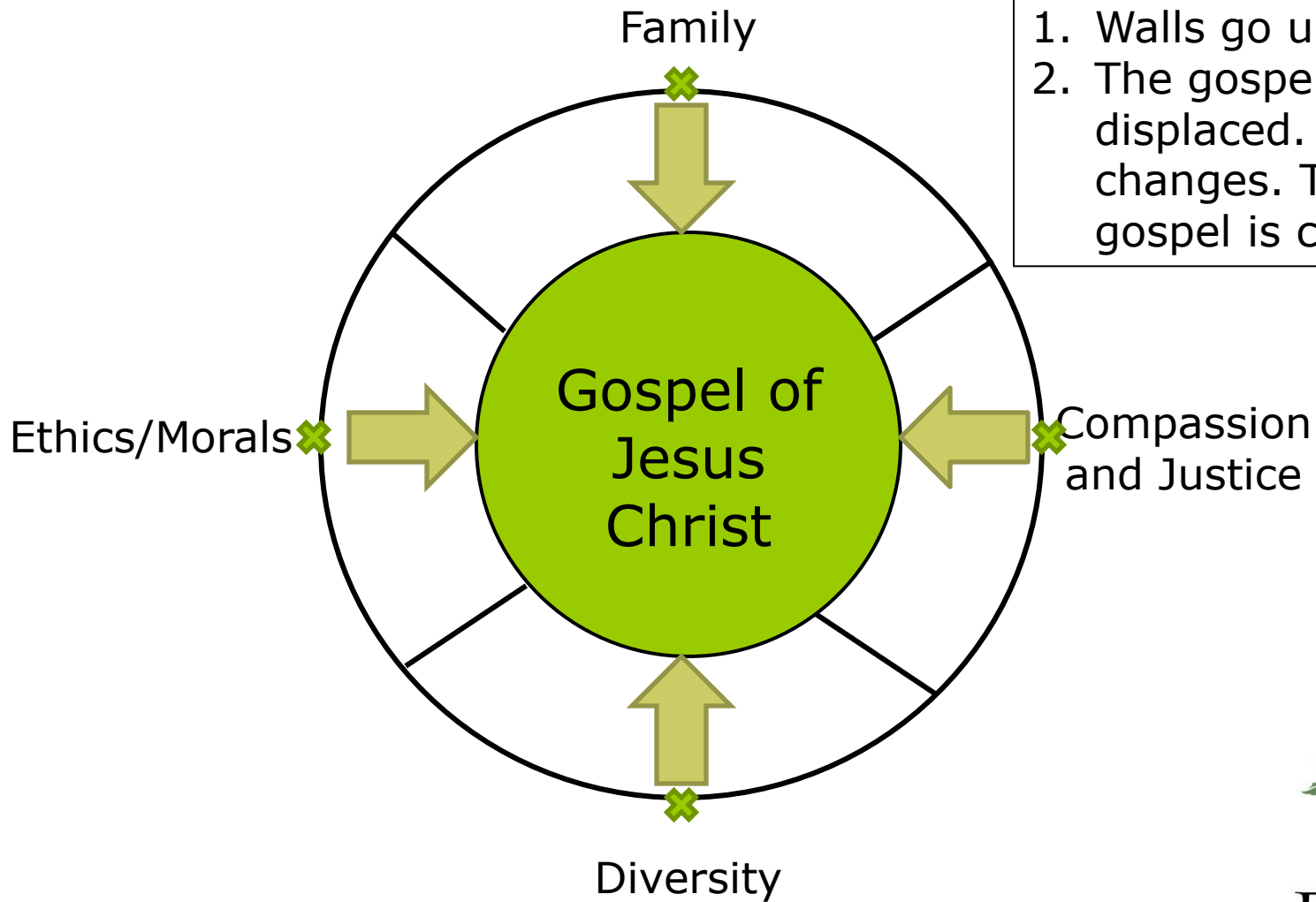


Gospel Assumed, Centrality of Function

1. Walls go up



Gospel Assumed, Centrality of Function



1. Walls go up
2. The gospel is displaced. The lens changes. The gospel is changed.

Gospel Denied

