

Broken Religion 3

What is the best invitation you have ever received? There is something about invitations that stir our imagination our longings, our hopes. They can be so fun and compelling and ... so disappointing. What is the most compelling invitation that way under-delivered? **IN-LAWS** - "You will win a boat or a truck." Fran's parents won a boat, but it was a ruby dingy. That defines over-promised and under-delivered. In and of themselves, invitations to parties or events that under-deliver can be frustrating for you or funny stories for others. Mixed in with our lives – they can echo what happens to us much of our life. A parent: promises they will be there and does not show. Once is hard, but as a way of life – this is crushing. A friend: promises great loyalty until it is not convenient. Once is hard, but when we lose a friend – this is crushing. A lover: promises they will never leave you, until they do. And when they leave and don't return this is crushing.

What if God was inviting you to be a part of something grand and majestic with Him – that He could deliver? Here is God's invitation today – what he is promising to us from these – His Words.

If we believe the gospel - God has a compelling invitation into His grand redemption story.

If we refuse to believe the lies of broken religion and trust the person and work of Jesus ...

We will be ushered into God's great story – that is so much bigger and greater than our story or any promise that any other story can offer. And on top of all that – God delivers. To see and know this today we are going to look at three things as we look at this passage on three levels. (There are 3 layers to every passage in the Bible - like an **ORANGE**

1) What do you see on the surface (what does the passage/ orange look like)? 1) Paul's Micro Story -What was God doing then in/thru Paul to accomplish His grand redemptive work. Great for us to hear – but by itself – it is just history.

2) What truth is there about us or God / the peel). 2) The Unveiling of the Grand Truth of the Gospel - What is grand scope of what did God in the gospel and what did it accomplish. God is going to reveal and/or remind us today that the truth of the gospel is greater and more majestic than we imagine. We need this truth to reject lies and know the reality of God. But truth alone – can be **bitter** and **powerless**.

3) How can the gospel change us to live in this truth/the tasty meat of the orange). 3) The Compelling Invitation to Know/Taste the GREAT Power and Beauty of Jesus Through the Gospel –There is something about the beauty & power of Jesus that moves us and empowers us to live out the truth of the gospel. When all three of these come together – the story of God's work, the grand truth of the gospel, and power and beauty of Jesus – God moves in and around us.

01. Paul's Micro Story

Galatians 2:1-2 (ESV) 1 Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. 2 I went up because of a revelation and set before them (though privately before those who seemed influential) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain.

1) Paul was seeing the grand truth of the gospel of Jesus – affirmed.

After 14 plus years apart from the apostles – those who walked with Jesus. God leads Paul to unite with them and in so doing – Paul sees the grand truth of the gospel of Jesus – affirmed. This was huge, because he and the gospel of Jesus he was preaching was being attacked and like you and I – he needed encouragement and affirmation from God.

Galatians 2:3 (ESV) 3 But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek.

2) Paul was seeing the power of the gospel to restore situations that seemed hopelessly broken.

Jew and Gentile (those who were not Jew – this included Greeks who were on the despised list by the Jews) for almost 1000 years the Jews and the Gentiles had lived separate lives in hostile relationship with one another. God had asked them to stay separate from unbelievers – the hatred had come because of broken religion. By now – any thought of the Jews living in peace with another race was a hopeless thought. Paul – in the early church - was beginning to see races full of hatred - be united by the gospel of Jesus. Amazing.

Galatians 2:4-5 (ESV) 4 Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in—who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery— 5 to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.

3) Paul was seeing the beauty of the gospel as it conquered sin and evil in himself.

Paul was enslaved racism and to the approval of others his whole life. By the power of the gospel Paul was being freed from the slavery of these sins. How? In his micro story – he says – the freedom we have in Christ is better – more beautiful than anything we get in self-righteous judgment or living for other's approval. In his own life, Paul was tasting/ knowing the beauty of the gospel – in Jesus.

What is your "micro-story" of the gospel at work in you? Are you telling others as it is appropriate? (8)

02. The Unveiling of the Grand Truth of the Gospel of Jesus

Gal 2:5 (ESV) to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.

The truth of the gospel is: the good news that God has acted in history - to carry out His grand eternal redemption plan - through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

Jesus has: *redeemed hopeless sinners to God, conquered evil, and restored fallen creation.*

1) Redeemed hopeless sinners to God – to know His joy

- Broken religion says: you are not that hopeless. You can redeem yourself: *obey our rules = you will get heaven.* Gal 2:3 (ESV) But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek.
- The true gospel says: your sin makes your situation before God hopeless. Only God can redeem you: *Christ's obedience = the joyful presence of God.*

Broken religion is small in its promise & work. If you obey our rules continually: you can please God. Lie/small. The true gospel is grand in its promise & work. You are hopeless, but by Christ's obedience: you can be in the joyful presence of God. Which are you trusting? Religion (your obedience)/ the gospel (Christ's obedience).

2) Conquered evil – to bring freedom through Christ now

- Broken religion says: the gospel is only about getting a place heaven.
- The true gospel says: the gospel has redeemed hopelessly fallen sinners to Himself, *conquered evil and restored fallen creation* This is powerful. For many of us the gospel is only a way to heaven – a ticket out of hell. The scope of what Christ accomplished on the cross is grand. This is the truth God was defending.

Galatians 2:4 (ESV) 4 Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in—who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery

God knows the power of sin. It is not just about being naughty. Sin destroys & makes slaves. If God just wanted to reserve you a room in heaven – he could have waved his hand over your sin – pardoned. But to bring you to his joyful presence, he had to destroy the thing that kept you from his presence – sin.

Rom 6:7 (NLT) For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin.

By the work of Jesus – one day all traces of evil will be vanquished. No sin in heaven. But even now - evil's all encompassing power over us has been destroyed. We are no longer bound to a life of sin and its consequences.

3) Restored fallen creation – bringing restoration to situations that seem hopelessly broken

- Broken religion says: the gospel is only about getting a place heaven.
- The true gospel says: the gospel has redeemed hopelessly fallen sinners to Himself, *conquered evil and restored fallen creation*

Galatians 2:3, 10 (ESV) 3 But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek. 10 Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

Two cultural situations are mentioned in this passage that seemed hopeless then and seem hopeless now.

1) Racial division 2) Poverty. Why are these mentioned?

Broken religion says – religion doesn't really affect the culture – it's just between you and God.

*The gospel says: the cross restored all things. Christ in us **will move us into all of God's redemptive work on this earth.** (Can't separate redemption from restoration – they are 1 & we are a part in Christ.*

Rom 8:19-20 Tells us even the physical creation will be restored one day at Christ's return

Colossians 1:19-20 (ESV) 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

That every part of creation is affected by the gospel when it begins to work in someone's life. And when it begins to infect a church – families, neighborhoods, cities will be affected. The gospel is GRAND! (18)

03. The Compelling Invitation to Know/Taste the GREAT Power and Beauty of Jesus Through the Gospel

1) We can know/taste the beauty and power of Jesus in God's restorative work on this earth.

When you look around it is not hard to see the brokenness of this world. Physically – tornadoes destroyed and kill this weekend in Miss. But it is not just in creation we see this.

We live in a world inundated by brokenness unless you ignored it. Disease, death, poverty, orphans, widows, racial divide, addictions, hunger, sex-trafficking, slavery, and the list could on to detail the brokenness of our world. This is not how things were meant to be.

In this letter, Paul mentions two places that God was inviting his redeemed ones to join him in his grand restorative work on this earth through the power of the gospel. How?

Every place that we (the body) see an injustice we are called to bring mercy to bear. Why? Injustice means that is not the way it was meant to be. When we see injustice, we can get angry, want revenge, or get self-righteous - but that is all sin rooted in a lie about the gospel that says God is not just. He is. Look at the cross.

Let me give you an example of how we the cross, the gospel empowers us to join God in his inviation.

Charleston – Anthony Thompson, husband of murdered bible study leader, Myra Thompson.

He poured out mercy that day in court – on Dylan Roof. I want him to know the mercy I have known – that means I must tell him of the justice Jesus took for him. But I want Charleston to know mercy – not riots and rage, black against white. So, I pray for you to hear me. “The justice you long for will not come in riots and rage. That is too small. You need a far greater act of justice to cover this horrible evil. And God poured out that great act of justice - on Jesus – so you and I can give mercy to each other.”

The gospel says - the justice you long for is too small if you think you are going to find it in revenge or self-righteous anger. This calls for a far greater act of justice – what God did to Jesus.

Look at the beauty of the gospel in Jesus – who took the full justice of God so you could know and give mercy.

Jesus – who took the great justice of God – moves us to give mercy when we see His beautiful justice. So what is God inviting us to do... **bring mercy to injustice.** Where? *Let me give you a couple of thoughts.*

Our body is involved in 2 thoughts in connection to 2 issues mentioned here in this passage

1) Poverty – “Sharing Shed” (Come ask at the welcome desk for info.)

2) Racial Divide -

* Join me in repentance – the church left the city – the gospel abandoned our cities – STL.

* Fruit of repentance – pray for and build friendship with someone not your race.

* Join us as a church as we begin to pray and plan how we can join some black pastors in planting gospel churches in the inner city. I’m meeting with pastors, businessmen, and others to prayerfully begin a project where we bring the only hope for our hearts (that are full of fear and prejudice) and our city that is stuck in systemic poverty and racial divide. Do I believe God can change everything in our life time? Sure – but it doesn’t matter if He doesn’t. He will – and right now the gospel calls us to this or we don’t know the gospel

One day – Jesus will fully restore the creation of this earth and the body and soul we live in how. In that day there will be no more tears, disease, death, orphans, widows, or racial divide as black and white, Asian and Hispanic, and every race and color will unite in worship and praise to God and begin our reign with him in heaven forever and ever. Will you start today by joining me in repentance? (28)

2) We can know/taste the beauty and power of Jesus in His freedom from evil and sin.

Follower of Christ - are you stuck in a cycle of sin?

Paul was a prejudice man – who was addicted to other’s approval and his story – God’s growing freedom.

Ask God today to help you step on a path of on ongoing repentance. It begins by uniting yourself with a few brothers or sisters who will walk with you in your sin. **We (you and I) desperately need the body.**

Gal 2:3-5 (ESV) 3 But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek.

But our ability to have victory over this deadly cylce of sin rests in seeing Jesus and His freedom won for us in the cross as more beautiful than the sin that we are stuck in. *Something about all sin is enticing. Paul says something about Jesus is more beautiful and powerful than the sin that we are stuck in.*

4 Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in—who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery— 5 to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, Paul saw the beauty of Jesus who freed him from the sin of others approval. What did he see?

He knew that approval tastes good – so a greater approval was needed. Not something small.

That greater approval is God’s all consuming, eternal pleasure in you and I – because of Jesus.

If Paul had believed the lie for a moment – Titus would have had to have been circumcised in order for them to gain the approval of these false brothers in the church.

Imagine that conversation – “Hey Titus – I have some good news and bad news.” And that sin would have happened because Paul deserted the truth of the gospel.

You need the beauty of Christ in the gospel alongside other believers to begin to live in repentance. God is inviting you to freedom through the greater approval of Christ. Will you join Him?

Community Groups, DNA Groups, - Together we grow in the gospel. (34)

3) We can know/taste the beauty and power of God in redemption. (you being redeemed or others)

Are you living in the trust right now that the person and work of Jesus – *alone* -reconciles you to God?

What's keeping you from trusting Jesus with your soul?

- Are past wounds from broken religion holding you back? Are you scared you will get crushed again?

Truth – Broken religion piles burdens on top of burdens that then crush and humiliate us if we cannot carry them. We are crushed when the weight of doing the right thing all the time to be pleasing to God & others is too much. We are humiliated when others say we are not good enough and abandon us. I'm truly sorry if this has happened to you and want to apologize and repent for the church at large that has crushed and humiliated you.

Christ is inviting you to something different. Instead of burdens piled on – He is offering freedom from the weight of obeying to get God. He is saying – I have done all the obeying – for your to be with me. Listen ...

Matthew 11:28-30 (ESV) 28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

The true gospel is grand in its promise & work. You are hopeless but Christ's obedience = God's joyful presence. No heavy burden to be good enough. Jesus has done all the heavy lifting. He will take the weight of shame & guilt off you. How? Confess your hopelessness because of our sin & trust Christ's obedience.

**** Pray with me – confess your hopelessness before God and trust Christ's obedience.***

Now – what do we do? ***We begin with prayer.***

Dustin and our worship team are going to lead us in a time of prayer and worship.

We want to believe the greatness of the gospel – and step into God's invitation to live in His grand redemptive work. Let's pray together now. (40)

BLESSING

Jude 24-25 (ESV) 24 Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, 25 to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen. 1

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jud 24–25). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.