

Speaking of Jesus – Is Speaking The Gospel

Who is Jesus? *What would your neighbor say? What would your uncle say? What would that co-worker say who always has an answer for everything? Interesting how so many people have such different views of who Jesus is – especially outside the church. Watch this w me and you will see what I mean. **Video - Man on the Street Interviews***

Who is Jesus - Just a man, great teacher, myth, God? It is interesting to hear what others think of Jesus. Interesting to examine what we think. But, if we really want to know the truth about Jesus – we need to go to Jesus. **What does Jesus say about Jesus – Who was He, why did He come to this earth?**

John 14:7 (ESV) If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. *From now on you do know him and have seen him.* **1) Jesus says – I am God**

Mark 1:14-15 (ESV) 14 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, 15 and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; *repent and believe in the gospel.*”

2) Jesus says – As God, I have come to proclaim and enact the gospel – my gospel.

The whole goal of this new series “Speaking of Jesus” is to inspire and equip Christ followers to speak of Jesus. So we must begin this series with being clear on who is Jesus – according to Jesus. To that end - we are going to begin with a simple yet profound truth.

When we speak of Jesus – we are speaking the gospel story. *Reversed – it remains true.*

When we speak the gospel story – we are speaking of Jesus.

According to Jesus - you can't separate these two. Jesus is the gospel – the gospel is Jesus. So it begs the question ...

What is the gospel?

As simply and succinctly as you can – how would you answer the question: What is the gospel?

Your story can be used to tell what the gospel is, but your story is not the gospel. It is good news – but, good news about what? The gospel is good news that God loves us. Yes – but the gospel is not just that God loves you. It is about heaven – but it is not just that we can go to heaven. So, what is the gospel?

01. The gospel (JESUS) is the redemption story of God at work in all of history.

Mark 1:14-15 (ESV) 14 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, 15 and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; *repent and believe in the gospel.*”

“the time is fulfilled” “the kingdom of God is at hand” – both these phrases speak to the idea that God has been at work from eternity past – but something – the kingdom – is beginning to come about NOW! What is the kingdom?

The kingdom of God – is the way things were meant to be: where God rules & we share the love and joy of God the Father, Son, and Spirit they have known for eternity.

Why is Jesus saying – the kingdom of God has come –repent and believe the gospel? *Because things didn't stay the way they were meant to be. Something happened to the kingdom.*

- Creation – The way things were meant to be
- Fall – The way things were meant to be were broken in us and in this world
- Redemption – A redeemer comes to make all things right
- Restoration – The kingdom will be fully restored – the way things were meant to be

Sometimes it is hard to wrap our heads and heart around this – so we need a simple picture. Let me try and give you one from the Lion King. Almost all Disney stories are redemption stories: creation, fall, redemption, restoration.

(Creation [Mustafa – Simba, Circle of Life-Kingdom established], Fall [Scar kills Mustafa], Redemption [Simba defeats Scar] , Restoration [Simba, Nala & son restore the kingdom]

- The gospel (JESUS) is the epic story of God at work in all of history to redeem His kingdom – where God rules & we share the love and joy of God the Father, Son, and Spirit they have known for eternity.

- The crux of the gospel story is Jesus' His life, death, and resurrection.

1 Cor 15:1-4 (ESV) 1 Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, 2 and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you —unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance

with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, The "scriptures" tell of God's redemption story thru history to send Jesus!

I put this in our CG books – but I wanted to say it again to you here. I feel at times that I am missing the whole point of why God gave us the crazy, absurd gift of His Jesus, His Son. As I read the New Testament words of God – I can't help feeling there is more that God has for us who are in Christ. Why do I believe this? Some times I am bored with Jesus, and the church. That is my confession and if we are honest – many of us sleep walk in this life with Christ as well. We often struggle with joy, have little passion for the things of God, and even less passion to talk about Jesus to others who are starving for hope in a chaotic and broken world that we all long to be fixed.

The gospel of Jesus ... is amazingly great and good news. But, I feel as maybe we have let it become trivial news, irrelevant news, old news, or at the worse - questionable news – like news we observe and doubt on social media.

How do we see the gospel as amazingly great and good news? We have to know the truth of the gospel and be awed by it often. Look with me at the work of Christ – or the gospel of God.

02. The work of Christ or the gospel is amazingly great and good news for us now ...

Gospel (Gk. "uangelion") good news in reference to some event that has occurred.

It was used by the culture in two predominate ways – 1) good news of any ordinary nature that makes the listeners really happy, 2) extremely good news from a messenger that a battle or war has been won that spares the nation of slavery or death. Jesus borrowed this word known to his culture and filled it. The messenger was called an evangelist.

- because we are no longer hopelessly doomed in this life and the life to come.

Colossians 1:21-22 (ESV) 21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, ... **Who do you hate the most in this world? Why? How have they hurt you? You were this person to God. BUT ...** The gospel is not great and good if we don't believe the bad news. Do you believe you are God's enemy - a part from Jesus? God says – yes, you are not just bad – evil!

- because in Christ we are completely forgiven and accepted by God.

Colossians 1:21-22 (ESV) 21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him,

We are not Nixon (37th Pres, only to resign- Ford pardoned), God didn't pardon - he wiped clean;

We are not that niece or nephew you have to tolerate – you are the son/daughter He loves and fully accepts;

- because evil is destroyed forever – one day we will be fully restored to how we were meant to be (even creation will be restored).

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,

We are not the 3 legged dog the family loves, but is hopelessly impaired by only having 3 legs. Ever feel that way – like you are a 3 legged dog – hopelessly impaired to love your kids as God calls us to, hopelessly impaired to do friendships, hopelessly impaired to always think you are a god – able to fix the problems of this life, hopelessly impaired to tell the truth, hopelessly impaired to really forgive, But 2000 yrs ago when Jesus took God's punishment for the evil that broke this world and you and I and rose from the dead 3 days later – He fully crushed the power of evil. Right NOW its death grip on you has been loosed. In Christ – we will live forever with God beginning now. AND ONE DAY – God will fully restore your broken soul to how it was meant to be.

Why is the gospel not great and good news? **1) We forget what God has done**

We fill our head and heart with so much other news that speaks to our story. We all have a view of how things were meant to be. And, we all can speak of what has gone wrong – the problem is we are letting so many other redeemers capture our heart believing they can fix our job, our family, our dreams, our marriage, our kids. The gospel – Jesus – is old, boring, stale, ok news – because we forget how amazing and great it is bc we are filling our heart and head with other redeemers. What he has done often feels so far away, so unreal, so much like just a story.

2) We make ourselves the hero of the story

There are so many good redemption stories in book form and film. The Count of Monte Cristo and Edmond Dantes, Pride and Prejudice and Elizabeth Bennet, Harry Potter and Harry, Schindler's List and Oscar Schindler. When we see these stories and we dream of who we could be – we often find ourselves being the hero – We are Edmon

*Dantes righting all the wrongs from his life in The Count of Monte Christo. We are Elizabeth overcoming prejudice to help Mr Darcy overcome his pride so true love can be realized. We are Harry saving the world from evil Valdemort. We are Oscar Schindler rescuing many condemned Jews from certain death. Great aspirations and dreams are not bad – but the reality of this life tells us that we are not the hero of this story. We are not Edmond, Harry, Elizabeth, or Schindler in this life. We are not the hero who redeems what is broken to set right what was meant to be. We are not even the hero's helper – like Ron and Herminie who helps the hero Harry save the day. **Truth: We are the hopelessly broken in need of a hero - a rescuer.***

We often view our story with God like this. Somehow we become the hero or at least we are here to help the hero. When we believe we can rescue our selves, when we believe we need to rescue ourselves, or when we believe we need to help God rescue us - we have diminished and even perverted the amazing greatness and goodness of the gospel of Jesus and made Jesus, the gospel, just news, even old and maybe even questionable news.

The gospel is: the good news that God has acted in history through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus to: reconcile hopeless sinners to Himself now, conquer evil, and redeem His fallen creation.

What is our or other's response to Jesus – who calls us to repent and believe His gospel?

01. I believe in God – but, I believe my rescue requires something on my part.

- *God helps those who help themselves. I need to learn to love better, pray more, and help others.*
- *The cross is an example of how I am to live in this life and what God expects of me.*
- *I need help – not a savior. I'm not that bad.*
- **Ultimately – I won't say this – but I believe I must rescue myself.**

02. Don't care or don't believe there is God that I need to be reconciled to.

- *I will be my own god.*

03. I believe Jesus – I must repent of saving myself or ignoring God – and trust the gospel alone to reconcile me to God now and forever.

Jesus alone can rescue you and I – this is amazingly good and great news.

The only thing you bring to your salvation is the sin that made it necessary – William Temple.

What you get – God and his life. His love and joy that has been shared for eternity with Father, Son, & Spirit.

This is the gospel, why it is such great & good news – God who had everything – gave up everything, So, we who had nothing – could have everything in Jesus.

- *What is your response?*
- *Have you repented and believed the gospel? Have you turned from rescuing yourself, helping God, or being your own God – and trusted Jesus alone to rescue you – reconcile you to God?*

LET'S PRAY!

Believers

You are not speaking of Jesus if you are not speaking of God's gospel or the gospel story.

When we speak the gospel story – we are speaking of Jesus. *Let's tell his story!*

Let's learn together how to speak of Jesus - how to engage others in the gospel story.

It is not hard, kids can do it. But, I do believe there are things we must learn together. And even more, I believe that our heart and soul must be moved and captured by the gospel. It must become amazingly great and good news to us or – we will not speak of Jesus much. Next week, we will begin there together.

Today –join us on this journey to become the church God longs for us to be that speaks the gospel story in all of life. Join us in and let's be a part of something great together – speaking of Jesus.