

the Gospel Circle – The Hope of the Gospel Story

John 4:31-33 (ESV) 31 Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." 32 But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." 33 So the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought him something to eat?"
Left Jesus alone, hungry: he's now w a woman, poor outcast – Samaritan. Silence, hope, she leaves. Lost.

In our lives, we who follow Jesus often forget who we are & what we are to be about that feeds our souls. The 12 who closely followed Jesus – had no idea why he would engage this lady. They heard the mission from the beginning, but they forgot it often, didn't want to do it, didn't understand it, or had their own mission most of the time – just like us.

We forget this is not OUR life or OUR mission. As his deeply loved redeemed sons and daughters, adopted into His family by faith in the very life and blood of Christ – we often live like this life is about us.

Christ follower, son and daughter of the King, deeply loved by God –

Have you and I forgotten this is not our life, our mission? *Jesus said, ... / God says to us thru Paul, ...*

John 4:34 (ESV) Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.

Galatians 2:20 (ESV) I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ who lives in me

Jesus – the Son of God – knew His life was not his own. His purpose was the Father's grand eternal plan.

God tells us – when our hearts, our souls are brought to life in Jesus through His Spirit – we are not are own.

This isn't a threat or reminder to guilt us into some type of begrudging obedience *like soldiers who are forced to fight for a king they don't want to fight for. Rather, this is an invitation to live the life we were created for – walking in relationship with our great and glorious God – as He carries out His grand redemption plan – His mission thru us.*

When we live the mission of God - we give and receive the hope of the gospel.

01. We are called to a be a part of something great in this world – living the hope of the gospel story.

02. Hope echoes and declares the greater gospel story.

03. Engaging with others in the gospel story – engages us with the hope of the gospel.

01. We are called to a be a part of something great in this world – living the hope of the gospel story.

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The disciples were always looking for the great moment or to do something great. *They argue who is the greatest on the last night of his life.* They missed they were in the midst of the great ONE who was inviting them to be a part of something great – all the time!

Publicly or secretly - we all want to do something great in this world. It could be:

- Personal - having one significant relationship that matters or leaving a lasting legacy

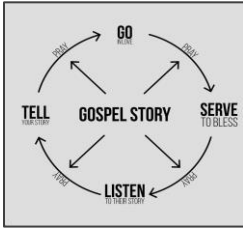
- Corporate - helping others in some significant way in this crazy broken world.

We all want to do something great. But the reality of this life seems to crush our dreams and most of us settle into a life with little hope of ever doing anything great. Truth: God didn't call you to do something great. That is the sin of pride that calls me to be great or do something great. **Rather, God called you to be a part of something great – Him.** *This is what you were created for.*

God has been about his grand redemption plan for all of eternity. The GREAT plan is God's work to reconcile hopeless sinners to himself and set right all in this world broke and wrecked by sin. Everything we do in this world that seems great and that could affect many pales and literally disappears one day if it is not something that will last for eternity. And the only thing that will – is everything done as a part of God's grand redemption work. **All your great deals, all the points you scored, all the things you built, even all the people you helped if not done in light of His redemption story – will one day amount to nothing in eternity.**

But amazingly, everything we do can be of eternal significance - if we do them to engage others in the gospel story.

How?



Gospel Circle

We have used this gospel circle to show us what this life can look like together. **And, we will continue to use this in all we do** as we seek to reshape our culture as one that lives the gospel story with every person God brings into our lives.

- Engaging others in the gospel story requires **actions**: *prayer, loving, serving, listening,*
- Engaging others in the gospel story requires **words**: *your stories-greater gospel*

story.

As we walked through this – I hope this does not feel like a list of things we do to sell a little Jesus, or a check list of things to do to be a good Christian. Rather, this is about a rhythm of life that God longs and calls us to live – as we love him and love others. *Let's see the power of true hope – as we tell our stories.*

02. Hope echoes and declares the greater gospel story.

Great stories echo in our soul.” – B Agovino Great stories echo in our soul if they are stories of hope bc this is the simple yet powerful experience of the gospel. Our souls long for real hope that can fix all things.

Do people you are befriending - know you as a person of hope? **Micro, Macro, Meta**

What would others say about you based on the micro stories of your life. Micro stories are the small stories that tell of our life. Stories about: family, kids, a dream, a failure, a huge success, a relationship crises.

Do people you are befriending - know you as a person of hope or do they know you as pessimistic, optimistic, or even realistic? *Our micro stories tell a lot about who we believe is our functional savior. You and I may say Jesus is Lord – our Savior, but if our stories – the smaller stories of our life constantly declare there is no hope – you and I don't really believe Jesus is our Savior, our Redeemer.*

Some times we all tell a story of hopelessness – when a tragedy happens and at that moment we have no explanation and no hope. But for many – these are moments that confront you – they don't define you.

But for others – the majority of their stories, maybe your stories, are full of discontentment, frustration, even - anger and or bitterness. And if this defines them or you - this is pessimism not hope.

- Pessimism in our stories echoes and declares there is no hope.

Pessimism – is an outlook on life that moves us to have a negative view of life based on our experience.

- When we constantly tell pessimistic stories we echo the belief that there is nothing to fix what is broken in this world. We echo hopelessness in the soul of our listener.

Marva – was a mom in the student ministry I helped lead for 7 years in Texas. The first few years I was there I walked the other direction when I saw her coming. She was constantly complaining and telling stories full frustration and bitterness. It overwhelmed me, so I hid from her. I wasn't the only one. Student's who didn't know Christ who came into our ministry avoided her as well. The problem – she was at almost all our events. Her life said – there is no hope and had an effect on believers and unbelievers a like. Do you know someone like this? Is this you? You may say no – I'm very optimistic! *That's not the hope of the gospel either.*

- Optimism in our stories echoes and declares there is hope in me.

Optimism – is an outlook on life that calls us to have a positive view of life based on our ability to will that view.

- Do people know you as optimistic or hopeful? Optimism is not usually hope.

Country Song -We don't have to and don't need to be cheerleaders in this life. Hope & optimism are different.

- Optimism - speaks of me as the great redeemer because optimism depends on my will to stay positive. And when something depends on us to keep going – then it can end if we are pressed and crushed enough.

Many things can do this – but betrayal is a great presser & crusher of optimism. Better said, betrayal is one of the great revealers & destroyer of optimism. Betrayal reveals the false security in having a positive view based on our will. Betrayal kicks the life out of our will and stands on the neck of optimism & chokes it out.

Kay was the most positive optimistic person I knew. One day her husband Ron betrayed her and what was left was a woman who couldn't believe anything good about anyone. Betrayal crushed and choked out her optim.

Do you know someone like this? Is this you? You may so no – I'm more of a realist. *That's not hope!*

- **Realism in our stories echoes and declares that hope is dangerous.**

Realism – is an outlook on life that calls us to avoid hope at all costs.

- **Do people know you as realistic or hopeful? Realism kills hope.**

- *Realism never allows us to step out in faith. It always keeps us in safe places that require no faith.*

- *Realism says pain is always coming if you step out in faith – and it is never good or redeeming.*

This is me a part from the power of the Holy Spirit. I have struggled with this much of my life. There are even times my stories move from realistic to pessimistic. But I believe this is changing over the last years and oh how I want God to continue to remove this and replace it with hope.

You and I are telling micro stories all the time. *In our FB posts, Twitter rants, and water cooler moments, we are telling micro stories. Are they stories of pessimism, optimism, realism – or hope?*

What is hope?

- **Hope in our stories echoes a greater story we all want to be true.**

Hope – is the confidence that in God's time – every thing can be redeemed through the person and work of Jesus (the gospel).

- When you tell your smaller, micro stories – do your stories eventually get to hope – ***even if that means you are wrestling with hope?*** You get to hope bc you believe even in the midst of pain - there is hope?

- **Hope doesn't mean everything is going to work out** in some pleasant way for you. Hope is a sure belief that God is redeeming, restoring my broken soul – even if this pain lingers or ends in great pain.

- You don't have to always mention Jesus to tell stories of hope. Stories of hope – tell of redemption that comes from outside us. *And when we tell our micro story of hope – they echo loudly the greater story of the gospel – which is our hope – our true hope.*

Tim Gray – Kempton Turner's church prayer walking. Mrs. Janet Jones – in hopeless situation – broken foot out the door – can you pray for me. Literally blind in one eye and almost blind in the other – 71. Widow – just retired, had good insurance, but they refused to help her. Hope says – this is awful but this can be redeemed by God in some way, some how. (2 women did insurance advocacy, 2 more took her to the doc, and then in just the last few days they took her to get her surgery done on her foot.

This is a story of hope that echoes deeply in our souls. It says more than people can be good. It begs us to believe there is something out there bigger and greater to hope in.

How do we LIVE IN HOPE as opposed to pessimism, optimism, or realism?

1 Pet 3:15 (ESV) ***in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy,***

1) confess you are (*pessimistic, optimistic, realistic*)

2) turn from this by declaring, seeing – honoring Jesus as your life, your mission – He is above all.

The cross says – no matter awful the moment – hope is present. (*Jesus died – awful. But he rose from the dead and gave us life and in his rez he will restore all broken things. HOPE is real – pessimism is crushed.*

Optimism – that I can make this work out is useless bc – I will fail, people will fail – Jesus rose from the dead.

The cross crushes realism that says hope is dangerous. NO hope is deadly. Hope alone in Jesus gives life.

always being prepared live in, talk about, hear stories about, be around people of - hope

to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,

Hope echoes the gospel, but it can also declare the gospel – when the Spirit provides the moment.

The story is still ongoing – 2 of her daughters who are not believers are going to the Sunday gathering in East St Louis where Kempton is the pastor because of the love, service, and listening to their story.

These ladies will hear of THE hope in Christ from Kempton and those who will keep loving on this family. Hope echoes – but in time – when the Spirit of God tells us – it declares Jesus as the hope!

And, when this happens – something amazing happens to us – people hear what or rather who HOPE is – Jesus and his life, death, and resurrection. AND, we, the son or daughter who is

engaging with others in this gospel story – we are engaged and experience Jesus – who is our hope.

In new and fresh ways - we experience hope of the gospel – JESUS!

03. Engaging with others in the gospel story – engages us with the hope of the gospel.

John 4:36-38 (ESV) 35 Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. 36 Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. 37 For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' 38 I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."

- **God is the Great Redeemer.** His work alone in Christ redeems and restores all things. 38 I sent
- **We are harvest hands** – invited - sent in to live the life we were created for. 38 I sent you
- **We receive something as we participate** in His great redemption plan. receiving wages

• Our wage: the hope of God in Christ.

This is not about anatta boy. This is not about earning God's favor. This is not about a place in heaven or a better place in heaven. Our wage or reward for joining God in his grand redemptive work is actually experiencing the hope of God – the very person of Jesus living in and work in our broken soul.

We began this church to engage those who know and follow Jesus and those who don't - with the love of God in Christ. Last year, we realized as a church that we were struggling as a church to engage those who didn't know and follow Jesus - with the love of God in Christ. So we, as the Summit, stated back in August that we needed to reshape our culture to be a people who lived our whole lives in such a way that we engage those who do not know and follow Jesus with the love of God in Christ.

Will you join us? This is not a lone ranger endeavor – *this is "Together in the gospel – for the gospel" just like our mission statement says – so God is revealed as the greatest treasure – to the glory of God.*

We go together – so in our love, our care, our rejoicing, our suffering we may allow others to see and engage with the gospel story.

We go together – so as we befriend others – truly loving and serving and listening to them – *we may be able to speak stories of hope.*

We go together – so as the Spirit leads – we declare the hope that is within us. We speak of Jesus to friends who are thirsty for the story of hope we have been living and speaking.

Let's go together and live the life we were created for. Let's go together see the hope of the gospel change lives. *Because -* **When we live the mission of God - we give and receive the hope of the gospel.**