

Get Your Passion Back

Part 4 | Grace & truth

The greatest days are still ahead

God is just getting started!!

Connect with us - Next Steps Form

- Text “Element” to 97000

Masks optional @ Kellogg

Easter - April 17th

- Egg hunt

GIVING TIME:

- **4 WAYS TO GIVE**
- ONLINE: <https://theelement.churchcenter.com/give>
- APP: Give Tile
- TEXT: Text an “amount” to 84321
- MAIL: PO Box 52 East Lansing MI 48826

Romans 8:28

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

People not happy?

Religion - high value on Something greater than us

Post modernism/Humanism - high value on us (we R it)

Christianity answers it uniquely..

This answer gives me hope

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Frame for life - worldview

ILL. Jungles & Helicopters: If someone took you out in a helicopter and dropped you in the middle/Amazon Jungle, what would they need to **offer you to equip u to survive & thrive until you arrive at safe destination?**

- **Ed Stafford** – only man to successful walk on foot the entire length of the Amazon (860 days):
 - **TOP FIVE TIPS for jungle survival** (“Shortlist Magazine” article)
 - He is NOT offering step by step details
 - He is NOT saying this is ALL you need to know
 - **He’s offering Elements of survival to safely reach destination**
 - #1.) Never run out of salt
 - Preserve meat, keep body working properly
 - #2.) Dig for water
 - #3.) Keep your lighter waterproof
 - #4.) Keep your machette sharp
 - #5.) Learn how to identify Palm Hearts (carbs)

What if I run into a tiger?

(get the basic elements down and you will have a chance)

What if I run across drug lords in Peru (cocaine growing capitol)?

(get the basics elements down and you will have a chance)

Basic Elements

- Loved By God (Grace)
- Liberated/Changed By Scripture/Truth (Truth)

John 1:14

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, Generous inside and out, true from start to finish.
MSG

Jesus loves us just as we are, right where we are
and loves us too much to leave us there.

Grace & Truth

These are the two if I could only teach two things...

Truth without grace is mean.
Grace without truth is meaningless.
- Jimmy Evans

#1.) Grace : We are loved by God

(13 Minutes)

“GOD” (define) =

- all powerful Creator Being-God (not a force or essence),
- who sits outside creation but *intervenes in* His creation,
- an incredibly good & holy God (his character = goodness),
- a knowable God (in Islam God is unknowable)
- an intimately *personal* God who pursues us for relationship
- who sustains that relationship with grace & acceptance (when we don't deserve it)

Truly we are loved by a good and powerful God!

“LOVED BY”:

RELIGION VS. CHRISTIANITY

“I'm not really into religion...”

Religion =

a set of rules (to keep) in order to earn our way to God

- Work harder
- External Behavior Modification
- Self Effort

The Gospel =

Jesus is a savior who earned His way to us

- Receive Jesus' work
- Life Transformation from the inside through connection with Jesus
- Divine empowerment

The Gospel:

“The gospel is this: We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope.” – Tim Keller

Religion tells what imperfect people must DO to work our way to God
Christianity tells what God DID to work His way to imperfect people

Loved by God means we work *from* God's acceptance not *for* it

Christianity is fundamentally different than every other world religion because we are Loved By God.

This is a theological reality
This is an experiential reality
This changes how we live:

John 3:16-17

16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. (no condemnation & saving)

Titus 2:11

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people.

Romans 5:8

8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (love while we were sinner & called us sinners)

Rom. 2:4

It is the goodness of God that draws men to repentance.

God not a crabby old man asking people to line up, He is a good, gracious, intimate & personal Creator who knows you and wants you to experience life in Him.

Martin Luther knew this centuries ago. He wrote,

“Here I must take counsel of the gospel. I must listen to the gospel, which teaches me, not what I ought to do, (for that is the proper office of the law), but what Jesus Christ the Son of God has done for me... that He suffered and died to deliver me from sin and death. The gospel wills me to receive this, and to believe it. And this is the truth of the gospel. It is also the principal article of all Christian doctrine, where the knowledge of all godliness consist. Most necessary it is, therefore, that we should know this article well, teach it unto others, and beat it into their heads continually.”

LOVED BY GOD = FOUNDATION OF OUR EXPERIENCE OF GOD:

“Confidence comes from belonging”

ILL. Kids “un-hesitation” - comfort with me - e.g. when they were little

- Sits on my lap during video calls or meetings
- Punches me when I walk by him
- Girls style my hair, pull my ears
- My kids have an “UN-HESITATION” toward me because they BELONG TO ME
- I’m their FATHER

THE GOSPEL IS THE NEWS: THAT WE BELONG

“Father” used to reference God 200+ times in the New Testament

Heb. 4:16

Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

ILL. News vs. instruction (pbj vs. war is won – ww2)

Gospel = news

What is left?: our response

The Gospel:

“The gospel is this: We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope.” – Tim Keller

Rom. 2:4

It is the goodness of God that draws men to repentance.

You Are Loved By God

That is NEWS.

You must decide how you respond.

Offer Prayer for Salvation & re-dedication at END

We are Loved by God.

#2.) Truth: We are changed by Scripture

(13 Minutes)

“I've always thought that the most powerful weapon in the world was the bomb and that's why I gave it to my people, but I've come to the conclusion that the most powerful weapon in the world is not the bomb, but it's the truth.” - Andrei Sakharov (Father of the Hydrogen Bomb)

aan·dray - saa·kr·aaf

Hydrogen Bomb Yield vs. Nuclear Bomb in Hiroshima Japan
(Source: Radiofreeeurope Radio Liberty - FRERL.ORG)
Hiroshima 1945 - detonate 15 Kilotons nuclear weapon yield
Tsar bomb 1961 - detonate 50,000 Kilotons nuclear weapon yield

Q: Why did Jesus come to the earth?

John 18:37-38a (Jesus on trial with Pilate)

³⁷ “You are a king, then!” said Pilate. Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, **the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth.** Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.” ³⁸ “**What is truth?**” retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews...”

What is Truth?

Truth = (official) “the quality or state of being true”

Truth = (wd) “that which describes ultimate reality – as it really is”

Does Truth Exist?

Where does Truth come from?

- Me
- Somewhere else?

Objective Truth (outside box) vs. Subjective Truth (inside box)

Q: How do we know what best describes Ultimate Reality (truth)?

ILL. “The Box” of Creation/Time & Space

Christians believe:

- God creates time & space (he is the “first cause” of the box/universe)
- God sits outside of time & space
- God is involved in time & space
- God defines what is morally & objectively - “good” (TRUTH) NOT anything inside the box
- The box does not have the ability to inform itself

Objective Truth (comes from outside the box)

Subjective Truth (comes from inside the box)

God created the universe & then informs the universe

Subjective Truth = Post Modernism (Relativity & Naturalism)

Absolute Truth – “inflexible reality: fixed, invariable, unalterable facts”

A truth claim (about ultimate reality) that is true for all people, everywhere

Objective Truth – “The state or quality of being true even outside of a person’s individual biases, interpretations, feelings, and imaginings”

A truth claim (about ultimate reality) that sits outside of our experience or opinion

“There is no objective moral truth”

How would you know that without something outside our experience revealing & proving it to you? Are you everywhere? Are the all knowing? Do you sit outside and have perspective outside the box?

“There is no absolute truth”

Are you absolutely sure that is true?

That is an absolute statement on the reality of truth.

Post modernism is self-refuting.
People believe it philosophically but not practically.

“How could a good God allows evil?”
Where do you get your concept of “good” & “evil”?

Without an objective moral law?
If there is an objective moral law, there must be an objective law giver

If there is no objective truth: If someone takes you wallet & shoots you.
You can say you don't like it, but you can't say it's objectively wrong.

We all functionally believe in truth,
we disagree about where it comes from.

Comes from us (the box)
Comes from the culture (the box)
Comes from God (outside us/the box)

Tolerance: Old vs. new

Old Tolerance – “Equal treatment of all people – when you disagree”

New Tolerance – “The equal treatment of all ideas...”

New Tolerance is self-refuting. (and IMPOSSIBLE)

Some of the people who shout for tolerance the loudest are the least tolerant people
I've ever met.

We treat all people as equally valid, never all ideas as equally valid

Truth Claims ARE EXCLUSIVE:

“All Truth claims are exclusive... all truth by it's very nature is exclusive. $2+2=4$, not 5, 9, 247... mathematics are exclusive... History makes truth claims, philosophy makes truth claims, science makes truth claims, every other religion, including... atheists (those who don't believe in God)... [make truth claims]” - Andy Bannister

ILL. Abe Lincoln's 4 Legged Dog

- In 1970 the popular syndicated advice columnist Ann Landers published another version of the Lincoln anecdote:
 - When Abraham Lincoln was asked by a prosecuting attorney, “How many legs does a sheep have?” He replied, “Four.” The attorney then asked, “If you called a sheep's tail a leg, how many legs would he have?” Lincoln replied, “Four. Merely because you call a sheep's tail a leg does not make it one.”
- Q: How many legs does a dog have if you call the tail a leg?
- A: Four. Calling a tail a leg doesn't make it a leg.

So all truth claims are exclusive truth claims - even ones who claim no God/religious affiliation

When we talk about faith & the Bible it isn't a "preference".

We don't just prefer Christianity, we believe it to be the explanation of things as they really are (truth)!

4 Components of a worldview:

- Origin,
- Morality,
- Meaning,
- Destiny

**God doesn't like Jesus better:
We believe the Bible is unique in it's claim
on what ails us and what will heal us.**

John 14:6

"I am the Way, the Truth & the Life. No one comes to the Father except by me."

John 8:32

"You will know the Truth and the Truth will set you free."

**The Bible makes many exclusive Truth Claims about
Origin
Morality
Meaning
Destiny**

**If Biblical Truth is the accurate view of reality,
True FREEDOM is aligning to & living according to that reality.**

"In our lives, true freedom is not doing whatever we think is best, it is living and operating within our God given design... a fish is not free in a front yard." - Pastor Scott Hayes

Accepting the truth is the first step to personal growth... In the long-run, the harsh truth is always better than comfortable lies.

“Truth is not what you want it to be; it is what it is. And you must bend to its power or live a lie.” - Miyamoto Musashi

Bible =

I am loved.

I am the problem.

I need a savior.

“The gospel is this: We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope.” – Tim Keller

Practical Takeaways:

A. We take assessment of Original Sin - we are the problem

- My Google doc “auto populated” “solvers” after me writing, “We are the problem...”

B. We must get settled on the Truth Claims of Jesus & the Scripture

- Where does right & wrong (truth) come from?
 - You?
 - Culture?
 - God?
- Is Jesus who He claimed to be?
- Is the Bible what it claims to be?

C. We take personal responsibility for our growth in the Truth

- We don't allow questions to linger inside - we look for answers
- Proactive & humble learning
- [Courage to align our lives to it](#)
- Learning how to give a defense for the hope we have – growing in knowledge
- S.O.A.P. – Bible Reading
- **Stand to Reason (STR.org)** - Stand to Reason trains Christians to think more clearly about their faith and to make an even-handed, incisive, yet gracious defense for classical Christianity and classical Christian values in the public square.)

Do you need to repent and surrender to God' Love/Grace?

Do you need to repent and surrender to God's Truth?

The world and religion offers limited counterfeits of this, Jesus is the embodiment of BOTH!

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ENCOUNTER TIME – Salvation