

The Power of the Gospel - Pt 2

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I. Recap

A. Last week we looked at John 4 and specifically Jesus' ministry to the woman at the well and the Samaritans.

B. There is great joy available in partnering with God in the harvest. A lot of Christians lack joy because they haven't engaged in the harvest and experienced the Father's joy. There is great joy available to believers in partnering in the harvest.

C. We also found out that Jesus picked the people who were the last in line to receive the gospel and made a beeline for them. He showed radical, inconvenient mercy to the Samaritans and they came into the kingdom. The whole town got saved.

D. Jesus calls us to similarly embrace the ones who we would think of as the last and the least likely to receive the gospel and show them radical kindness and mercy.

E. Today we're going to get a simple understanding of what the Gospel is and then look at Jesus' example in sharing with those who are away from the Lord.

II. What is the Gospel?

A. The Greek word for Gospel is "Evangelion" - The Good News, The good tidings. This shows up in the New Testament 103 times.

B. Broadly speaking, the Gospel is all of the details that explain the truth of Jesus as Savior, King and Judge and the reality of His coming Kingdom.

C. Specifically, the Gospel is any part of that story.

D. Most often in Scripture, when the Gospel is mentioned, it refers to the details

that enable people to come to faith in Jesus so they can be saved.

E. God created humanity to have a loving relationship with Him forever. Unfortunately, Adam and Eve sinned, setting all of humanity on a path of rebellion separating us from God and leading us to eternal destruction. Sin severed the relationship God longed to have with us. But, because of God's great love, He sent His only Son, Jesus, who was completely sinless, to take our sin upon Himself and bear our full penalty on the cross. Though He knew no sin, He died for us so that we could be saved. This means that when we trust in Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, our sins are paid for, we are forgiven, declared righteous, and fully restored to relationship with the Father. Without Jesus' sacrifice, we will stand before God bearing the penalty of our sin ourselves; but when we receive Jesus' sacrifice by faith, God exchanges our sin for His righteousness and gives us the gift of eternal life. He died for us to bring us back to God, not as slaves, but as beloved sons and daughters, living forever in the love relationship we were created for. He died for all that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for him who died for them and rose again. (2 Cor 5:15)

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

—Romans 1:16

F. I am absolutely convinced that the gospel still has the power to save, deliver, and heal. No matter how far someone is away from God, the power of God in the gospel is greater than any sin, any bondage, and all the darkness the enemy has to offer. There is nothing greater than the power of the blood of Jesus to set someone free. No matter where you are today, you can be completely forgiven and completely freed from every sin through the power of the Gospel.

G. So the Gospel is incredibly powerful, the key is how do we get this power to those who are unbelieving. Let's look at Jesus' example:

III. Jesus' Example

A. Jesus was a Friend

- Everywhere Jesus brought the gospel, He showed up as a friend.
 - Wedding at Cana (John 2 - Saves wedding family's honor)
 - Samaritan Woman (John 4 - Breaks barriers; dignifies her)
 - Woman Adultery (John 8 Protects, restores dignity)
 - Zacchaeus (Luke 19 - Stays at his house)
 - Blind Bartimaeus (Mark 10 - Stops for him, listens, heals)
 - Rich Young Ruler (Mark 10 - Looks at him and loves him)
 - Each of the Disciples, Peter, Andrew, James, John, Nathanael, Matthew, Jesus shows up as a friend and invites the follow him.

Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

—2 Corinthians 5:20

- In the New Testament, there is no record of Jesus sharing the good news with the lost without first showing up as a Friend — with dignity, compassion, and relational connection.
- One definition of reconcile means to restore friendly relations
- He is the Friend of sinners, and we are His ambassadors, called to re-present Him in the same posture. To be true ambassadors, we must re-present Him in the same way: friendship is the first face Jesus always showed the lost, and it is the first face we are to show the lost.
- Friendship is not optional in evangelism; it is the Spirit's strategy for transforming hearts.
- One of our biggest challenges is that we don't see Jesus as a friend, and so we don't represent Him this way. We see Him as a master or

king, but not
a friend. Jesus Christ, friend of sinners. Jesus said to the disciples
no longer
do I call you servants; I call you friends. Understanding His
desire to be your
friend and confidant, will unlock your ability to share the gospel,
because
you'll realize He wants to be your friend and He wants to be
their friend.

B. Jesus was Authentic

*Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being
wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was
about the sixth hour. 7 A woman of Samaria came to
draw water. Jesus said to her, 'Give Me a drink.'*

—John 4:6-7

- Jesus wearied from the journey. It's amazing how easy it was for Jesus to just be real and show His humanity. He had no problem just being Himself. He was tired and thirsty and had no problem expressing this.
- When he asked her, "will you give me a drink of water?" He is simply expressed His need and asked for help.
- The fact that he asks her for help to meet his immediate need is stunning. Though He is the answer to her every need, He asks her for help.
- Being authentic is incredibly valuable. Your needs, your pain, and your path is likely what another needs to hear to be able to be comfortable in hearing how you received your healing. In a certain sense your pain and your path are a gift to another that enables them to hear the story of your healing.
- If our Savior could show his physical vulnerabilities to an unbeliever, how much more should we be able to?

IV. Friendship Carries the Power

A. If the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, relationship/friendship is what carries the current.

B. So often believers think that sharing the gospel with the lost is only or mostly accomplished through cold-call contact evangelism, open air preaching, or gospel crusades. They tend to speak to the unbelieving the way that Jesus spoke to the religious and completely miss how kind, relational, and friendly Jesus was to the broken.

C. The New Testament model is that the gospel is shared primarily through relationship - with family, friends and close associates. Sharing the gospel is not primarily about public confrontation, like we see Jesus with the pharisees, it's mostly about simple connection via relationship and friendship. From the place of friendship, we offer others the things that are most precious to us.

D. Does sharing the gospel require boldness? Yes. But in as much as sharing the most important things in your life with another requires boldness.

V. A Call to the Harvest

A. Many believers who reject a prosperity gospel, embrace a gospel of comfort and ease. They believe that God wants them to be as comfortable as possible in every way possible.

B. Many in the church are dealing with older brother syndrome. They have become so accustomed to the comfort of the father's house that they've become ungrateful and judgmental. The Father is filled with joy when a lost son comes home, but the older brothers judge the wayward and lost all the while enjoying the safety and security of the Father's house.

C. The unkind and arrogant version of Christianity that wags its finger and struts at moral victories looks almost nothing like the version that Jesus gave us, which is a version of Christianity that meets outcasts at the well, gets in the dirt with harlots, makes friends of tax collectors and sinners, and spends days reaping souls in Samaritan villages.