

Sermon:

The Gospel is for All of Life

My Testimony:

- Didn't grow up going to church often
- Parents got divorced when I was 10 and that set the tone for the chaos at home
- I spent most of my teenage years avoiding my house trying to figure out who I was
- In 2008 I was introduced to LAMC and that was the beginning of God resetting my life
- In 2009 I set off for Miami University in Oxford, OH to begin my college studies
- After a rough, dark, and lonely first semester I decided I was tired of running and on February 14th 2010 I placed my faith in Jesus as the payment for my sin and began my journey with him and my life has never been the same.

What I am currently doing:

- Fast forward 9 years I have been married for over a year to my lovely wife Tessie
- I worked for Cardinal Health for 5 years before a lay off pushed me in a different direction and that was to begin my dream of working in ministry.
- Today I work part-time for a campus ministry called *Athletes In Action*. I get to share the Gospel with student athletes here in Columbus and help develop them in their faith.
- I also work part-time for Chick-fil-A as a shift leader/manager.

What I would like to share with you today is what God has been teaching me over the last few years or so and that is that:

- The Gospel is for All of Life
 - The Gospel is for Restoration
 - The Gospel is for Transformation
 - The Gospel is for Replication
- Point #1: The Gospel is for restoration
 - What is the Gospel?
 - Gospel - literal translation is 'Good News' or "Good Message" also often referred to as the basic facts about Jesus death, burial, and resurrection
 - What is this good news that we often refer to as the Gospel?
 - "For I passed on to you as most important what I also received: that Christ died for our sins

according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. Then he appeared to over five hundred brothers and sisters at one time; most of them are still alive, but some have fallen asleep.”

1 Corinthians

- Jesus death and resurrection is the essence of our faith. If the resurrection did not take place the Bible says our faith is worthless and we are to be pitied above all people! v. 17-19
- “And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. Those, then, who have fallen asleep in Christ have also perished. If we have put our hope in Christ for this life only, we should be pitied more than anyone.”
1 Corinthians
- Even in Paul’s day there were many that did not believe Jesus resurrected from the dead.
 - “When they saw him, they worshiped, but some doubted.” Matthew
 - Reason and persuade people to the Gospel
 - “As usual, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days reasoned with them from the Scriptures,” Acts
 - These verses have comforted me because early on in my faith journey I needed to know if this Jesus thing was real or whether I just had an emotional reaction to Jesus because of my chaotic and lonely life
 - I began studying the historical evidence for the Christian faith and discovered: There are four facts that are undisputed by majority scholarship both skeptical and non-skeptical scholars
 - Jesus’ was buried by Joseph of Arimathea,
 - his tomb was discovered empty,
 - his post-mortem appearances
 - and the origin of the disciples’ belief in his resurrection
 - These four facts are taken as historically reliable. And for me the resurrection began to make more sense as the essence of our faith.

- However, there is a greater context we must know regarding the Gospel. Knowing these facts without knowing the story will leave us confused. Understanding this larger story will help drive home our understanding that the *Gospel is for Restoration*:
 - **In the beginning God loved us and created us to know Him personally**
 - John 3:16
 - “For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.”
 - John 17:3
 - “And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”
 - However, there is a problem. A problem that prevents us from knowing God and experiencing His love and plan and that problem is Sin.
 - Sin is missing the mark. God has a standard and that standard is perfection, but because of our sin we miss the mark every time.
 - **Sin prevents us from knowing God personally**
 - Romans 3:23
 - We were created to have fellowship with God, but because of our stubborn self-will, we chose to go our own independent way and our fellowship with God was broken. This self-will, characterized by an attitude of active rebellion or passive indifference, is evidence of what the Bible calls sin
 - Active rebellion
 - Passive indifference
 - In the end we are all guilty and fall short of God’s standard. **SHOW PICTURE**
 - Why is this an issue?
 - “For the wages of sin is death ...” Romans 6:23 – our sin requires a payment
 - **God responded by sending his Son Jesus. Jesus paid for us**
 - Romans 5:8
 - “but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

- John 14:6
 - “I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one can come to the Father except through me.”
 - *It's not enough to know these truths*
- **We must receive Jesus' payment**
 - John 1:12
 - “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God”
 - Ephesians 2:8-9
 - For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.
 - *Grace, saved, and faith*
 - “For because of an undeserved gift, you have been rescued from your wrongdoing, by believing in Jesus as your payment for sin.”
 - Judge payment example ***
 - Revelation 3:20
 - Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.
 - In order for us to be restored we must open the door, we must receive the payment.
- THE GOSPEL RESTORES US BECAUSE SIN DISLOCATED US
- What does ‘restore’ mean within the context of the Gospel?
 - ‘Restore’ in Greek means to put a dislocated joint back in place
 - When a joint is dislocated you do not get proper blood flow to the extremity that has been dislocated, and without putting the joint back in place it can lead to dysfunction or in extreme cases the loss of the dislocated limb.
 - Spiritually speaking without Jesus we are not getting proper blood flow, we are dislocated; we cannot experience life as we were designed to experience it


- In the same way a dislocated joint can't function the way it was designed to function, we must be put back into proper alignment
 - Reflective Application:
 - *Did you know without Jesus you are like a dislocated joint even on your best days? And with Jesus you are a dislocated joint that has been put back into alignment even on your worst days?*
- Begin Transition to Point #2: It isn't enough to know that the Gospel is for Restoration, we must live in a way that honors Jesus' sacrifice - Transformation
 - "If Jesus rose from the dead, then you have to accept all that he said; if he didn't rise from the dead, then why worry about any of what he said? The issue on which everything hangs is not whether or not you like his teaching but whether or not he rose from the dead." – Timothy Keller
- Point #2: The Gospel is for transformation
 - How does the Gospel transform us?
 - John 3:3, 5-6
 - Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again^[a] he cannot see the kingdom of God." Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit
 - Spiritual infant
 - In the same way that you don't come out of the physical womb fully developed and mature you don't come out of the spiritual womb fully developed and mature. Which will help us understand the how and why the *Gospel is for Transformation*
 - 2 Corinthians 5:17
 - Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.^[a] The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."
 - God has brought about a spiritual transformation inside of you, and your identity is tied to your new birth
 - What prevents the Gospel from transforming us?
 - Battle
 - Galatians 5:16-17 (old man vs new man)
 - But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to

each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

- Our old self, our old nature is waging war against the Holy Spirit inside of us and though our old nature cannot overpower the Holy Spirit, the HS won't force us to rely upon him so we often find ourselves still choosing sin because it's all we have known. We must learn to walk by the Spirit, and yield to His control. As we walk by the Spirit, He will override (not cancel out) our sinful desires.
- Immaturity/infancy
 - 1 Corinthians 3:1-3
 - But I, brothers,^[a] could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. ²I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, ³for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way?
 - Your immature or infant faith that you are experiencing or even the *presence of struggling with sin* does not mean you are not saved or not a part of the family of God or that Jesus has left you. Paul addresses the Corinthians, who were young in their faith and struggling with sin as 'brothers,' but he calls them to maturity and a life of repentance. God desires for us to grow and for that to happen there will be slip ups and times of discomfort, confusion, and frustration
 - In the same way that a child needs to be taught and trained between what is right and wrong and disciplined appropriately when they act out, we as spiritual infants need to be taught and trained between that which God desires and doesn't desire, and disciplined when we choose the things he doesn't desire. A lack of teachability and discipline will lead to chaos in our lives and those we interact with, which will not allow for the growth that God desires. Without spiritual growth, believers will continue to live as they did before coming to Christ.
- Misinformation
 - John 14:16-17
 - And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper,^[a] to be with you forever, ¹⁷ even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive,

because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will beⁱⁿ in you.

- The only way to receive the Holy Spirit is to receive Jesus. After we have received Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes to live inside of us. The evidence that the Holy Spirit is living inside of you is whether or not you have received Jesus. If you can honestly say you have received Jesus, opened the door for Him to come in, then you have the Holy Spirit living inside of you.
- Galatians 3:3-5
 - Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected byⁱⁿ the flesh? ⁴Did you sufferⁱⁿ so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? ⁵Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith—
 - Paul is addressing the Galatians who once were saved were quickly led astray by a group called the Judaizers who were telling them they must have Jesus AND be circumcised (follow the Jewish law and customs) to truly be saved. Paul calls this thinking foolish, yet 2000 years later and we still struggle with the same idea. We think Jesus is enough to save us, but it is on us after that. Paul calls that way of living foolish. What began by faith, must continue by faith. Our sanctification (growth, cleansing of the old nature) comes through the empowerment of the Spirit in our lives, not from our own will power, effort, or rule keeping.
- How can we experience the transforming power of the Gospel?
 - Word Filled
 - John 8:31-32
 - So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³²and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”
 - Jesus does not set us free apart from God’s Word:

- Jesus' birth, death, resurrection, and our salvation all happen according to God's Word. So therefore, if we are going to experience maximum freedom or freedom at all it is going to happen as we spend time in God's Word beyond our church experience
 - How do we pursue *Word-Filled Freedom*: FAITH; Adore, Admit, Aspire
- Spirit Filled
 - Ephesians 5:18
 - And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit
 - "Be filled," the literal translation of the verb in the Greek would read something like "be being kept filled." The idea is one of keeping yourself constantly filled, as you yield moment by moment to the leading of the Spirit
 - Pressure – stick in a river being dragged by the current; A spirit filled Christian isn't motivated by his own desires, he allows the Holy Spirit to carry him in the proper directions.
 - Permeate – flavored alka-seltzer; God wants the Holy Spirit to permeate and flavor our lives so people see Jesus and glorify God
 - Dominate – this is the idea of control; Paul compares being filled against drunkenness. In the same way that a drunk person is being dominated or controlled by the alcohol in their system Paul commands all believers to be dominated or controlled by the Holy Spirit as to not gratify the desires of the flesh
 - Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹ envy,  drunkenness, orgies, and things like these.

- The Holy Spirit isn't going to force you to choose the righteous, holy, and good things. He will empower you when you let go of control.
 - How do we pursue spirit-filled Gospel transformation?
 - Spiritual Breathing
 - 1 John 1:9
 - If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness
 - John is referring to indwelling sin that continues to seek to empower us over the Holy Spirit. He tells us that if we confess, God is faithful to cleanse us and empower us to yield to the Spirit moment by moment.
 - *Exhale* - confess your sin to God the moment you become aware of it
 - *Inhale* - pray to yield control of your life to Christ and rely upon the Holy Spirit to empower you
 - *Prayer*: I confess ... thank you that ... empower me to ...
 - Obedience comes as a result of yielding our direction to the Holy Spirit (*spirit-filled*) and increasing our love for Jesus (*word-filled*)
 - "To be filled by and walk in the Spirit is to fulfill the ultimate potential of your life on earth as one of God's children." -John MacArthur
 - *Reflective Application*:
 - When you are not walking in step with the truth of the Gospel (*spirit and word-filled*) you are living dislocated. And as a Christian, if you are walking through life with "dislocations" and aren't trusting Jesus to restore those areas of your life, then the church suffers because you are not functioning the way God desires you to function. It's your responsibility not to try harder and do more, but to surrender more, and spend more time with Jesus with a posture of learning and listening. *The most effective Christian is not the one who tries the hardest, it is the one who surrenders most.*
- Point #3: The Gospel is for replication
 - How is the Gospel replicated?
 - Actions
 - "Share the Gospel at all times, if necessary use words."
 - I have a love/hate relationship with this quote. I love it because we should be constantly sharing the gospel

with how we live: our words, thoughts, and actions should always communicate a gospel change in our heart. Though we won't be perfect, how we live and treat others including our enemies is one of the greatest ways we can reflect the Gospel. What I don't like about this quote is that it gets used as an excuse to never communicate the Gospel: people are sinful and need a savior, Jesus died as a payment for our sin. We must share that. The Gospel message isn't solely communicated by our actions. People can't come to an understanding of their need for Jesus just because you opened the door for them.

- Words
 - Communicate
 - Romans 10:14-15, 17
 - How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? ¹⁴ And how are they to hear without someone preaching? ¹⁵ And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" ¹⁷ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.
- Why should the Gospel be replicated?
 - Commanded
 - Matthew 28:18-20
 - And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ **Go therefore and make disciples of all nations**, baptizing them in ¹ the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."
 - To not go and to not share is to disobey the very words of Jesus; to suggest that sharing your faith is imposing your viewpoint on another person is to oppose Jesus' teaching
 - God desires none should perish
 - 2 Peter 3:9
 - The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, ¹ not

wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

- Who do we replicate the Gospel to?
 - Every tongue, nation, and tribe
 - Every color, every dialect, every culture, every generation, both male and female. We must have a vision for everybody.
 - After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb (Revelation 7:9)
 - Global missions are important for replicating the Gospel and for showing us how glorious our God is through the diversity he created. We don't conform to one dominant culture; we conform and teach others to conform to the Gospel message.
- What prevents the Gospel from being replicated?
 - Fear
 - Reputation - we fear being labeled as something we are not. We fear losing friendships and relationships. Jesus risked it all for us, should we not in return risk being misunderstood by our friends, family, and neighbors when we tell them about Jesus
 - Financial - if God has commanded us to go and has promised us to supply all of our needs then he will provide the finances you need to travel the globe and the finances you need for survive while we are away. God would not command us to do something and then not supply our needs to accomplish the task
 - Unwillingness
 - We think that it is not necessary or that we won't have any impact so why bother? Yet, we have no idea how God will use us if we reject our unwilling heart and open ourselves up to be used by God to lead another to Jesus
 - Lack of knowledge
 - for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say. (Luke 12:12)
 - Misguided motives
 - If you spend more time politicizing than Christianizing, woe to you; engage people you disagree with, with the

intent to introduce them to Jesus not argue your political persuasion. You're not replicating the Gospel if you are spending more time defending sinful men and women over the Sinless God-man. Jesus doesn't ride on the backs of Elephants or Political Donkey's.

- Where do we go from here?
 - Those of us who have opened the door to Jesus (*restoration*) must learn how to be restored relationally to Jesus (*transformation*) and in turn help others to be restored to Jesus for eternity (*replication*)
 - Our lives are a road map. Are we pointing people to Jesus by how we live, what activities we participate in, our social media posts, how we speak to others and how we speak about others? Or are we pointing people away from Jesus and to the forces of this world that seek to kill, steal, and destroy?
 - Know your story, share your story; know the Gospel, share the Gospel. Start small; who is one person you know that needs Jesus? Would you pray for them this week and share your story with them the next?
 - Read Acts 22 and use it as a guide to write your story.

Reflection Question: What areas of your life - thoughts, attitudes, actions - do you need to surrender to experience the Fullness of Jesus and the power of the Gospel?