

Invite

The Invitation received and the Invitation to Give

1 Gathering! This is awesome. None of you showed up at 9AM so that's good. We will see if anyone walks in at 10:30.

Today we begin a series titled Invite. This will be a series on the power of an invitation.

- We are praying that this will be a series for our church that reminds us to focus on the mission of the gospel and that is what our objective today.
- Today's message has two main focuses... *the invitation we have received and the invitation we are to give. In other words... what is the invitation that we have received in Christ and what is the invitation that we are called to give through Christ.*

Read 1 Peter 2:9

- *Today might feel like two sermons clumped together but I don't think we can understand the value and the purpose of inviting people toward the gospel with out having a clear understanding of the gospel itself.*
- *Once we have received the invitation of the gospel and understand it... then we are empowered by the Holy Spirit to give the invitation of the gospel.*

- The Invitation Received (The Gospel): What is this invitation?

- What is the Gospel? 4 things we need to know
 - FIRST we have to understand that the Gospel is a message about God. He is Holy. He is our Creator. He is Love.
- We cannot fully understand the gospel without delving into God's Holiness. What does it mean for God to be Holy.
- In the book of Isaiah we read a incredible account and vision of the prophet in the throne room of God. In Chapter 6 we read that Isaiah enters the throne room of God in this vision...He hears the heavenly creatures worshiping God with this refrain...

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory.”

 - **Important:** notice the repetition of the word “Holy” ... repetition was a Jewish literary device for emphasis. We may type something in a bold text or use explanation point to emphasize something important but the Jew would use repetition.

****The Bible says God is Holy, Holy, Holy. Not simple Holy. Not even Holy, Holy... He is holy, holy holy.**

The Bible never says God is love, love, love; Mercy, mercy, mercy; wrath, wrath, wrath; or justice, justice, justice... But **It does say God is Holy, Holy, Holy.**

****To say that God is holy, holy, holy is to say that God is**

- Most Holy; Totally Holy; Completely holy; Unwaveringly holy;

• So What does it mean to be Holy?

- We probably think “moral purity” (Ms. Linda)... **but the root word of “Holy” means “to cut” or “to separate”**

• So when we apply it to things outside of God, things that are holy are set apart unto and for God.

- Holy ground (Moses), Holy of Holies, Holy nation, Holy Sabbath.

- Tony Evans Illustration: types of plates in the China cabinet at Christmas.

• To say God is Holy is to say he is set apart... but from what is God separated from...

- The answer is this: **God is unique, distinct and different from everything that exists.**

• **God is transcendent:** He is totally unique from everything. Above all. exceeding all limits of measurement.

Rc Sproul says this about the transcendence of God:

“He is higher than the world. He has absolute power over the world. The world has no power over him. Transcendence describes God in His consuming majesty, His exalted loftiness. It points to the infinite distance between what separates Him from every creature. He is an infinitely cut above everything else.”

- **God is self-existence:** Everything in creation is a derivative, it is contingent on something else for life. But not God. He has always been and always will be.
 - **He morally perfect and sinless**
 - **He is all good, trustworthy**
 - **He is Holy!**
- God's Holiness is not just another one of His attributes (We say God is love, God is merciful) **His holiness is intrinsic to his nature.**
- To say God is Holy means God is God
- So God is Holy. That is who God is. There is no thing or no one like him. And everything about him is transcendent and perfect. So we could say God is Holy loving... meaning God is the loviest loving thing that exists. We could say God is Holy Just... Meaning His justice is Justeiss Justice that exist. (I realize that's not a word) God is Holy. There is nothing like him or above him.
- So again, the Gospel is a message about God. And our God is Holy.

- SECOND, the gospel is a message about humanity. We humanly creatures were Created in the image of God (Gen 1:27). Yet we have sinned against God. Paul's letter to the Romans helps us understand this more.
 - Romans 3:10-12 says that "None are righteous, not even one; There is none who understands, there is none who is seek for God; All have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one."
 - Then in that same chapter Romans 3:23 says "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." No of us are exempt. ALL have sinned against God and come no where near the standard that he has set in his holiness.
 - Romans 6:23 shows us the penalty for our sin before a Holy God. "The wages of sin is death. Our sin earns us spiritual death and eternal separation from our creator.
- This is the heart break of Genesis 3 when we see the fall of man in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve were created to walk with God. To be in perfect relationship with the Father. They were naked before each other and God with no shame. Fully known before the almighty, the creator of all things.
- They chose to sin. They Chose to rebel against the King. They Chose to believe their stomachs and the lies of the enemy were more trustworthy than God.

- Then in their sin they run and hide from God. The Relationship was broken.
You and I were born into that line of sin and have committed the same acts of treason against Holy God. Therefore we are guilty of the same act of rebellion.
We have trusted that our way is better than Gods.
- Here is the problem. In the sinfulness of our hearts, we, just like Adam and Eve, run from God... Not to Him.
- In the sinfulness of our hearts we loose sight of God's holiness. We began to try to make ourselves feel better by comparing ourselves to other people thinking things like "Well I'm not as bad as most people. So If God grades on the curve than I'm doing pretty good."
- But Our righteousness isn't in relations to other sinners... But is in relation to Holy God. Our problems are not horizontal or sociological, rather vertical and theological.
- God's holiness is the standard. Church... that is the line we fall short of.
Infinitely short of, if I might add. We have committed treason against the Holy, perfect king of the universe. God enacts Holy justice against against sin.
Which the only just punishment for rebellion against Eternal God is eternal spiritual death.
- Richard Baxter, was a seventieth-century pastor in England. He is quoted saying that his greatest challenge he faced while ministering was convincing people that they were sinners in need of a savior. He shared this illustration,

- He said to imagine a man who is on the gallows, having been convicted of a capital offense. He is about to be hanged and has the noose around his neck. But imagine at that moment, a messenger from the king rushes up with a letter sealed with the king's seal. The messenger comes to this condemned man and says, "The king has pardoned you!" What would be that man's response to that news of pardon? He would be relieved and joyful but also humble because he knows he was guilty and deserves to die, yet the king has forgiven his offense.
 - Then Baxter suggests taking that same messenger from the king and having him deliver the message to an observer in the crowd. The messenger would say "Hey I have good news for you. The king has pardoned you!" Now how would that man respond... He would be neutral at best... He might even be hostile saying "I don't need to be pardoned. I'm offended by you suggesting that I need pardon. I haven't done anything deserving of death. I am an innocent bystander."
 - Baxter said the greatest challenge was convincing people that they were not the innocent bystander but the man on the gallows.
- We have to understand true reality of our sinful hearts or we will never understand the most radical, beautiful, great news of the gospel. You and I are sinners, great sinners, in need of a great savior. Let me say it again... You and I are great sinners, in need of a great savior.**
- The Gospel is a message about God. It's a message about sinners...

- THIRD, and the gospel is a message about the person and work of Christ.
 - Who is the person of Jesus?
 - John 1:29 says “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” Matthew 1:21 refers to Jesus as Emmanuel, meaning God with us. We just celebrated this during Advent. Jesus is fully God and fully man.
 - Jesus is the mediator between God and man. Scripture makes it clear that where we have failed, Christ was perfect.
 - Hebrews 4 says that the Lord Jesus was tempted in all things, just as we are, yet was without sin!
 - Because Jesus is fully God, He can certainly forgive sins. Because He is fully man he can sympathize authentically with us and serves as our true representative. He is the perfect mediator between God and man.
 - That is the person of Jesus... So
 - What is the work of Jesus?
 - The work of Christ is the cross of Christ. That is where we see our sin clearly and our need for a savior. This is why Paul preaches in 1 Corinths 2 “For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.
 - At the cross we see Gods Wrath poured out on the sins of the world. But it is not poured out on the ones who deserve it. Rather, Justice and love meet at

the cross of Christ. God is just, so sinned must be punished... But God, in the person of Jesus Christ, out of His Great Love for you and I, takes the penalty of sin upon himself.

- You want to know what the gospel is? It is the work of Christ. Jesus in our place. Jesus in my place. Jesus in your place.
- Not only did Christ take upon our penalty for our sin but also gave us his righteousness. 2 Corinithians 5:21 “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”
 - What??? Me a sinner... You a sinner... Who have rebelled against the King. Who have spit in the face of God. Who, Ephesians 2 says, were objects of Gods wrath... Christ has pardon you. He has taken your penalty for you.
- The Work of Christ is not Just a cross but a empty tomb. A resurrection!!! Christ did not stay dead...Why is this important? ... Because His resurrection proves Him to be the Son of God. Thousands of individuals died on a cross at the hands of the Romans (Two along side Jesus) but only one came back to life. The fact that Jesus is alive means all his words were true and His promise to redeem you comes with a resurrection.
 - Ephesians 2:4-6: “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ — by grace you have been saved — and raises us up with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

- The Gospel is about a Holy God, a loving creator. Its about humans who were created in His image but rebelled against God as sinful broken individuals. The Gospel is about Christ, the perfect sacrificial lamb who took our place on the cross. Who has risen from the dead and offers forgiveness and redemption to all. Which leads to the last thing we need to know about the gospel.

- Fourth, the gospel is a message about a response
 - We have been given a invitation by God. The gospel is good news that requires a response from us. The only correct response is **repentance** and **faith. Its not being a good person, striving harder, being more religious but is is repentance and faith.**
 - **Repentance** is not just feeling bad for our sin but is laying down your sin and turning to Christ.
 - **Faith** is belief that Jesus is the son of God and is the only way to salvation.
 - Romans 10:9 says if you confess with you mouth that Jesus is Lord (Repentance) and believe that God raised him from the dead (Faith), you will be saved.

- This morning You might be thinking... “Why is he spending so much time talking about the gospel?” On a series about invitation. We have heard this

before.” You might have check out already... But Church hear me. We never... NEVER... out pace our need for the gospel!

- There tends to be this view in the church that the gospel is the starting point. Like I get the gospel... time to move on to level two... Lets go deeper... time to study Eschatology...
- Church, the Gospel is not step one... it is everything.
- Jerry Bridges in his book *The discipline of Grace* says “Your worst days are never so bad that you are beyond the reach of God’s grace. And your best days are never so good that you are beyond the need of God’s Grace.”
- We never out grow our need for the gospel. We are totally dependent on Him and the Grace that he offers through the Gospel.

- That is the gospel. That is the invitation from our Holy loving, Holy merciful, Holy Just God. And now Christian, you and I are meant to share and share bodily this gospel message.

- Which leads to the Second main point this morning.
- **The Invitation we are called to give**
 - Church, you and I have been given a invitation by God to trust in the name of Jesus for salvation... But this message was not meant to stop with us... rather the invitation we have received we have been called to give.

- **Matthew 28:19-20: 19** Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in^[b] 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.”
- **Acts 1:8:** “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”
- 2 Corinthians 5:20: **20** “Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. (I love how the NIV puts this verse... It says We are Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us.)
 - Christian, the message of the gospel that we have just heard. That amazing news... God is making that news Mobile through you. His Appeal is through you.
- As we see when we look at the message of the gospel, we have received life changing and soul reviving grace through faith in the work of Christ Jesus and we are meant to take that message to everyone that would hear. This process is called evangelism.
 - This is what we are talking about when we say the invitation that we have to give. This is evangelism. Sharing the good news that you have received. Sharing the good news of the gospel... The news about who God is and how, In his great love and mercy towards all, has provided reconciliation for sinners.

- Dr. Timothy Beougher, professor of evangelism at Southern Seminary, defines evangelism this way. It's a little long but I think it is incredible directive and helpful. (On the Screen)
 - He says "It is the *compassionate* sharing of the good news of Jesus Christ with lost people, in the power of the Holy Spirit, for the purpose of bringing those to Christ as Savior and Lord, that they in turn might share Him with others." (On the Screen)
 - Lets break this down. The first thing we see in that definition is the *compassionate sharing* of the good news. Church, this is the spirit of sharing our faith...This is also one of the greatest reasons we don't share the gospel... We lack the compassion of Christ.
- Read through the gospels and see how many time you notice how many times Jesus felt compassion. Compassion is at the root of evangelism because Christ's example. Jesus felt compassion on the multitudes. He came to save sinners and show them mercy and compassion.
- Christian...Aren't you glad Jesus showed you compassion? Let me ask that a different way... Aren't you glad that a follower of Christ was obedient and showed you compassion by sharing the gospel to you?
- So often though, we lack a heart of compassion toward the unsaved. This leads to a cold and calloused heart. I am so quick to find myself in this place. I become so focused on me that I loose compassion for those whom I have been called to love in Jesus name. Many times over our lives church,

we will need to get on our knees before God pleading with him to give us compassion for the lost.

- John Henry Jowett (A British preacher) said “The gospel of a broken heart demands the ministry of pleading hearts. As soon as we cease to bleed, we cease to bless... tearless hearts can Never be the heralds of the Passion.”
- ‘One thing that I read in one of my recent classes was that “One key in developing a heart of compassion is to honestly face the truth that people outside of Christ are destined for hell, separated from God for eternity
 - Everyday 153,000 people die. 6,375 souls each hour. 106 people each minute. Roughly 2 people a second.
 - My goal in sharing that is not to shame you, but rather point to the real fact that people are dying and going to hell.
 - Lets remember what Charles Spurgeon said “If sinners be damned, at least let them leap to Hell over our dead bodies. And if they perish, let them perish with our arms wrapped about their knees, imploring them to stay. If Hell must be filled, let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions, and let know one go unwarned or un-prayed for.
- Let us pray for a heart that breaks for the lost. Compassion is the base of our spirit to share the gospel.
- The second thing we see in that definition is the method. The method of evangelism is sharing. Which means both verbal and non verbal

communication. I won't spend a whole lot of time here but we have to understand that sharing the gospel is preaching, speaking, talking... It is not the old saying that you have heard us reject here, "share the gospel and in if necessary use words." Sharing the gospel is not mere presence

- Bill Bright, the founder of Cru, tells a story of a christian business man who never opened his mouth to testify about Christ. He sought to live a life of integrity and model compassion amongst his fellow workers. One day a coworker entered his office and asked if he could ask him a personal question. The mans answer was "sure" thinking to himself "This is the moment that I will be asked about the Hope within me. The coworker began to share how he had noticed a difference between him and the other employees. To this the man was elated, preparing to be asked about Jesus and the good news of the gospel... Instead the coworker asked "Are you a Buddhist?"
- We must share the gospel. And we must share it with words. We began our time this morning by reading 1 Peter 2:9. Lets Read it again...
- We are to "proclaim His excellencies" ... Proclaim, preach, speak... the Good news of the gospel.
- The Third thing we need to notice from this deffinition is the emphasis on the power for evangelism. What does it say... "In the power of the Holy Spirit"
- We read Acts 1:8 a few minutes ago... "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you... (Then) you will be my witnesses."

- A lot of the time we use this verse as evangelistic, missional strategy... First to Jerusalem, then to Judea and Samaria, then to the ends of the earth... We ask questions like “What’s your Jerusalem?” “What’s your Samaria?” I’m not saying that’s bad but Don’t miss the main point of this verse... Jesus isn’t saying to the disciples “OK... Here is your strategy. The IMB is gonna love it. Step one... Jerusalem... Step two... Judea... Now do the best you can.
- NO... the strategy doesn’t mean anything without the power. You who are in Christ have been empowered by the Holy Spirit to be His Witnesses... Not without Him... with the worthless, powerless, striving of our own efforts... Rather, With the power of God within you to work, guide, speak, and move.
- Many of us would raise our hand today if I asked the question “Who feels inadequate to share the gospel?” But that’s not a point of shame but a wonderful thing. That is exactly where God wants you to be. God has quite a wrap sheet of working through incredibly inadequate people who’s only hope in their weakness is God’s empowering strength.
- Remember what the apostle Paul say in 1 Corithians 2... He said he came to the Corinthian Church in “Weakness and Fear and Much trembling.” This isn’t some random person... this was Paul... Who seemed to have a good bit of this whole sharing the gospel figured out... yet what does he say... I chose to know nothing among you except Christ and Christ Crucified. Why? Because just like you and I, He was weak but he knew in the power of the Holy Spirit,

He was strong. You feel inadequate to share the good news with a lost individual... Good, because that's where the strength of the Holy Spirit moves.

- Years ago I was leading worship for a room full of middle schoolers. I don't know if you have tried to sing songs about Jesus in a room full of middle schoolers lately but to say the least its a Interesting experience. Me and a team would lead in that room ever Wednesday night and I remember so many times that I would walk out angry...discouraged... calloused even. They would be talking instead of singing, distracting others around them... It felt like what we were doing was pointless and I hate to say it at times walking out of that space I truly believed it was pointless. But last November I got to go back to that Church and lead worship for a student event. At the end of one of the sessions a High school student came up to me...
- There I was... feeling that all we were doing was pointless, I was mad and angry at the students for not getting it but all while I was pouting... the Holy Spirit was working on this young girls heart. He was working through me and I had no idea.
- We are totally dependent on the power of the Holy Spirit to save.
- The fourth and last thing to see in this definition is both the purpose and continuation of evangelism.
- The goal of You sharing the gospel with someone is not to make them join our church or adopt new way of life... But are goal is to bring them to Jesus. You

and I don't save anyone. We preach Christ and Christ Crucified. We give the invitation. Trust the Holy Spirit to do the work. That is the purpose of evangelism. That is the purpose of the invitation. To have them know Jesus and Call upon Him as Lord.

- From that place we see the Continuation of evangelism. As the gospel is shared, many will trust in Jesus and those who do, are redeemed by the same savior as you and I. They will have the Holy Spirit within them. This is where we see the beauty of the continuation of the gospel message going forth. You are a recipient of the gospel because men and women of the faith for centuries have been used by the Lord to preach Christ... and many will receive the gospel message because you have been used by the Holy Spirit to bring lost souls (Just as you once were) to the feet of Christ... in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth.
- One of my favorite examples of this in Scripture is in The call of Levi (Levi was the Tax collector who would later be called Matthew the disciple of Jesus). Tax collectors were despised by the Jews of that day. We see this beautiful story in Mark 2 where Jesus calls out to Levi while he is sitting at the Tax collector booth... Jesus says to him "Follow me" and it says Matthew rose and followed Him... In the very next Paragraph it says that Jesus reclined at his table and that many tax collectors and sinners were with Jesus. So what's the point... Matthew rose to follow Jesus, Invites Jesus into his home and then invites more Tax collectors and sinners to

come meet Jesus. Matthew was Changed by Christ and took that message to others that they might follow Jesus and do the same.

- This Is our mission Church. We have received a beautiful, glorious, life changing invitation to follow Christ. To be redeemed from our rebellious, broken, and sinful hearts by the Work of the Cross. And You have been made Alive to “proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness and into His marvelous light. To share the good news with others, through the power of the Holy Spirit, they they might turn to repent and believe in the saving, merciful, almighty King Jesus.
- This invitation has been given to you so that you will give this invitation to others. The Invitation to believe and follow a God who loves them.

Here is how I'd like to close this morning. I'd love to leave you with a few thoughts when sharing the gospel and then we will take some time to pray and sing together. (I'd encourage you to write this down)

1. Pray that God would give you compassion and a heart that bleeds for the Lost.
 - This needs to be a daily thing. We are so quick to become internally focus on ourselves and as a result we will miss so many opportunities to share our faith with others. Let us allow the Lord to break our hearts for the lost and have compassion for those far from Him.

2. Your role is not to save. Jesus saves.

- Your role is to be an ambassador. You proclaim the kingdom... The King signs off on citizenship.

3. You don't know what link you are in the chain.

- There may be instances when you share the gospel with someone and they respond immediately to it. They call upon Jesus to save them and go on to live a fruit bearing life for the kingdom. But the majority of the time, you will most likely share the gospel (maybe even multiple times) with a individual and you may see no response or fruit. We can't allow ourselves to be discouraged by this.
- You don't know what link in the chain you are. Remember, your role is not to save anyone. Jesus saves. Our role is to be faithful in sharing the message and that link will lead to the next link... and the next. Until eventually that person, prayerfully, trusts in Christ. But your link was vital to that chain.

4. Share your story. Revelation 12:11 says... they conquered by the Blood of the Lamb and the word of a testimony. You have a first hand account of the saving work of Jesus Christ. You are living breathing proof that Jesus came to save sinners, and you are a recipient of God's life changing grace. Share that. Share your story.

5. Think and Pray how you can leverage your life for the gospel. How can you leverage your schedule, gifts, finances, and resources to build opportunities for the gospel message to be shared.
 - Madison's and I were talking through our goals for next year. Her goal of sharing the gospel in a regular place
 - A mentor and friend of mine Austin Ryan love to play Tennis. He payed money for him and his wife to join a Tennis club With the sole purpose to be around more people who don't know Jesus. They made friends who would never be caught in a church. Austin ended hosting a Monday night football hangout at his home once a week for his new Tennis friends where he would get to know individuals more and share the hope of Christ with them.
 - Pray for the Lord to show you simple things you can do with what you have to leverage your life for the sake of the Gospel.
6. Put a rock in someones shoe... This idea really freed my mind and heart when sharing the gospel.
 - Gregory Koukl wrote this in his book Tactics: He said "My aim is never to win someone to Christ. I have a more modest goal, one you might consider adopting as your own. All I want to do is put a stone in someones shoe. I want to give that person something worth thinking about, something he can't ignore because it continues to poke at him in a good way."
 - If before I walked up here to preach this morning I put a rock in my shoe, I might limp up here and be able to ignore it at first... but over time all I am

going to be able to think about is the rock in my shoe. I'm going to have to deal with it.

- That should be our goal when having gospel conversation. Let me share the truth in such a way that even if they never see me again, the sweet news of the gospel is like a rock pressing into their foot as their life goes on. Eventually, again, through the power of The Holy Spirit, they can no longer ignore it.

Lets pray together:

1. Pray for the one in the room that needs to repent and believe in Jesus.
2. Give the Christian a chance to pray.
 - Pray that the Lord would break your heart for the Lost. That he would give you compassion for the unsaved.
 - Pray that he would empower you to be bold with sharing the gospel.
 - Pray that God would help you to rest in His power to save and to help you trust him, even with those who seem to be far gone.
 - Pray that He would, even now, begin to reveal to you how you can leverage your life, resources, gifts, and family for the sake of the gospel.