

“LOST”: More Than Must-See TV  
***“Live Together or Die Alone”***  
June 26/27, 2010

**PRELUDE – “You All Everybody”**

**Worship Song – “O Praise Him” / “Give Me Your Hand”**

**DVD Clip - MAKE AMENDS (2.8 min)**

*Season 3 Disc 4 Ep 15 "Left Behind"*

B: Hurley: "I'm not supposed to be here."

E: Sawyer shakes head: "Banish me. Hah."

<cut>

B: fade up to ocean and Sawyer trying to fish

E: Sawyer: "let's spread the love." They walk off.

Good morning, everyone ... and, yes, I do know that I'm wearing the same shirt as last week ... but when you're stuck on the island, you just have to go with what you got and this is the only Hawaiian shirt I have!

Anyway, welcome to week three of our four-week series “LOST”: *More Than Must-See TV* in which we're using one of the most-watched TV series of all time to help us see and understand biblical truths that make a difference in real life. And we can do that because, as we learned in week one, the Island – as strange as it was – serves as a metaphor for the real world in which you and I live every day.

**As a blogger wrote to the New York Times ...**

“LOST was beautiful because it was about an island exactly like mine: the Earth is incomprehensible and magical, and no amount of faith and no amount of science will ever [fully] enlighten us.

(At least, not on this side of eternity)

“If you thought LOST was weird,” he continued, “well, it's certainly no weirder than life. You think a [fiendish] cloud of electric smoke is over the top?

“I think the fact that a screen in my apartment is currently showing me a live baseball game being played in Florida is, in a vacuum, no less incredible.

“Science fiction is relative,” he wrote. “If you had never heard of the internet, or giraffes, or

rainbows, you'd think those were science fiction too. LOST was strange in its details, but those characters' fears and moments of wonder were in many ways just like our own."<sup>i</sup>

And I hope you've been able to see that in this series ... that for all of its strange details, LOST really was about the characters – about *us* ... and, specifically, *two things about us* – two *biblical things* about us.

**Since we live in a world in which we can't figure it all out, then what matters most is relationships and community.**

As Paul put it in 1 Corinthians 13 ... when we come to the end of our knowledge, what remains is “faith, hope and love – but the greatest of these is love.” Or, as Jack Shepard (the main protagonist of LOST) put it: we can try to figure out this island but “if we can't figure out how to *live together* we're going to die alone.”

That's the first lesson and we learned in week one of this series.

The second lesson (which we learned *last week*) is that while we need “community” we don't need just any old community. If we're going to fix what's wrong with us – if we're going to get a chance at “another life” – that doesn't happen by traveling back in time and undoing the events of history.

**Instead, it happens in a redemptive community that offers us judgement, mercy and grace.**

In *judgement*, the community exposes and names our flaws and weaknesses as the sins they are; in *mercy* it shockingly doesn't make us pay what we ought to pay for those sins; and, in *grace* it shockingly offers us better than what we deserve.

And that's exactly what God has done for us in Christ by judging us as guilty sinners and then paying the penalty for our guilt on the cross (which is mercy) and then inviting us to be a part of his eternal community known as “the church” (which is grace). And, when it works as it should, the church – the fellowship of believers in Christ – continues that process of judgment, mercy and grace in our lives.

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Now, I'm pretty sure the creators of LOST weren't intentionally trying to illustrate that process, but that's pretty much what happens over and over again in the show. We just saw an example of it. Sawyer, who is basically a jerk, has done things for which the community can rightly banish him half-a-mile down the beach. That's judgement. But Hurley offers him mercy – “you don't have to suffer the consequences of your actions. There's a way out. Make amends with people.”

And as the scene plays out, that's exactly what Sawyer does. He kisses the baby. He makes nice.

He shares from his stash of goods that he's scrounged from "the hatch." He's nice to people, even going so far as to host a beach barbeque for everyone.

But watch what happens at that barbeque and see how Hurley has not only offered Sawyer *mercy* but also *grace*.

**DVD Clip - YOU TRICKED ME (1.6 min)**

*Season 3 Disc 4 Ep 15 "Left Behind"*

B: fade up to Sawyer marinating a pig

E: Hurley: "You did that ... You."

What he's saying is, "dude, I gave you better than you've earned and deserved: I made you the hero."

And that's grace.

### **Community-Building Skills**

Now, what Hurley did is just one example of the kinds of skills that are necessary in order for us to "live together" in a redemptive community of judgement, mercy and grace (instead of "dying alone"). But there are many others and LOST provides some great illustrations of those other skills, so what I want to do in the rest of this message is to just show you a bunch of clips and talk about how these skills are illustrated and how they apply to real life.

And just so you'll know ... this is really simple stuff. You don't really need to understand the show *at all* – nothing of the plot, nothing about science-fiction – to understand the clips I'm going to show you. In fact, it's *so* simple, that what I'm going to do is to show a clip and then *you* will tell *me* what's happening. OK?

And, since we started with Hurley and Sawyer, let's continue with them. This next scene we're going to watch actually happens several weeks *before* the one we just saw. It's a part of what precipitates Hurley's eventual "trickery" that offered Sawyer both mercy and grace.

Now, as you watch, the question I want you to have in your mind is ... what is Hurley doing, especially at the end?

**DVD Clip - HURLEY'S HAMMER (1.9 min)**

*Season 2 Disc 5 Ep 18 "Dave"*

B: Sawyer with a cookie

E: Fade as Jin is pulling Hurley off

If you've ever had someone make fun of you, I'm sure you can relate to that.

But what is Hurley actually doing here?

**Is he ...**

- A. Diving for cookies.
- B. Proving he's as tough as Sawyer.
- C. Expressing his anger.

What do you think?

**It's C – expressing his anger.**

And he has a right to be angry. And Sawyer needs to *know* that he's angry. Actually, what Sawyer needs to know is that his behavior needs to change.

And in a redemptive community, sometimes people need to know, for their own good, that their behavior needs to change. And sometimes, it takes anger to get that point across. Anger, when appropriately and proportionally expressed, is a community-building skill.

A lot of people get confused about this. They think that anger is a bad thing. They try to stuff it down and suppress it at all costs. And, anger *can* be a bad thing, but it doesn't *have* to be.

**Listen to what the Bible says:**

*Go ahead and be angry. You do well to be angry—but don't use your anger as fuel for revenge. And don't stay angry. Don't go to bed angry. Don't give the Devil that kind of foothold in your life.*

*Ephesians 4:26-27 (MSG)*

If we're going to "live together" in a redemptive community, from time to time there have to be appropriate expressions of anger. The consequences of not expressing anger are too dangerous for the people around us, and as we read in the scripture, also for us as well.

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Ok, let's look at another community-building skill. In this particular scene, they've discovered a briefcase belonging to the deceased U.S. Marshal which has information in it about the crime that Kate committed before the crash. And several times, she's lied to Jack about what's in this briefcase ... in addition to other lies she's told him.

Watch what happens as Jack opens the briefcase.

**DVD Clip - STOP LYING (2.1 min)**

*Season 1 Disc 3 Ep 12 "Whatever the Case May Be"*

B: case in view, then Jack: "Anything you wanna tell me?"

E: fade as Jack comes back into view

BTW, in that scene, she is telling the truth. The toy airplane belonged to the man she loved ... and also was responsible for his death. But remember, she is a chronic liar.

So what do you think Jack is doing in this scene?

**Is he ...**

- A. Being an obnoxious jerk.
- B. Making Kate feel guilty.
- C. Holding her accountable.

What do you think?

You might be tempted to think A or B, but really ...

**It's C – holding her accountable.**

She is a liar and a manipulator by nature and what she needs – at least for a while – is for someone to call her on it; when things don't sound believable, to be checking her.

And that kind of accountability is important in building community because the Bible says ...

*Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Hebrews 10:24 (NIV)*

And if you keep with the metaphor, spurs aren't very comfortable to a horse. They hurt, and they keep that horse going where it should go instead of maybe where it wants to go by nature; it's not very comfortable ... just like being held accountable isn't comfortable. But sometimes, that's what it takes.

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Ok, this next scene – this next skill – is a little lighter. One of the survivors, a rock-and-roller named Charlie Pace, is a drug addict, but no one knows this, but eventually, however, one person finds out about it.

Watch what happens when Locke catches Charlie sneaking off to the jungle to feed his habit.

**DVD Clip - LET ME HELP YOU (1.9 min)**

*Season 1 Disc 2 Ep 6 "House of the Rising Sun"*

B: Charlie walks out of woods

E: Charlie looking up at guitar case

Pretty cool. I like the way Locke is so matter of fact in this scene.

But what is he really doing?

**Is he ...**

- A. Showing how much better he is than Charlie.
- B. Convincing Charlie to "believe in the Island."
- C. Bearing Charlie's burden.

What do you think?

You might think "B" but there was nothing magical about Charlie's guitar being on the side of the hill. So, it's ...

**It's C – bearing Charlie's burden.**

By the way, all of the answers won't be "C" ... just a heads up on that.

Anyway, what Locke is doing here is judging Charlie – "you are an addict" ... but he's also saying, "let me help you" ... and in the story, that's exactly what happens. Locke helps Charlie detox and no one else ever knows what's going on.

**The Bible says ...**

*If someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.  
Galatians 6:1-2 (NIV)*

And the law of Christ ... well, we'll see what that is in just a few minutes. But the point is that in a redemptive community, we need the skill of "burden bearing" to help people break free from their junk.

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Ok, since we're on the subject of Charlie and Charlie's problems, let's look at another clip starring Charlie. It's been several months since the plane crashed and Charlie has been informed

by the time-traveling Desmond (who we talked about last week), that he is going to die on the island in the very near future. Desmond has seen it, been there, experienced it. And, as you might expect, this news is very demoralizing to him and he becomes a recluse.

But watch Hurley does ... and enjoy the ride.

**DVD Clip - VICTORY OR DEATH (3.4 min)**

*Season 3 Disc 3 Ep 10 "Tricia Tanaka is Dead"*

B: Hurley: "Hey dude, stop moping."

E: Hurley looking at Charlie (cut before beer cans)

<cut>

B: "Are you nuts?"

E: Van runs thru opening

And they do travel down the road to Shambala ... and Charlie actually becomes a productive part of the community again, though he does die. But he chooses to die in a way that helps the rest of the community live.

Anyway ... so what is Hurley doing for Charlie in this scene?

**Is he ...**

- A. Smacking him out of a drug-induced haze.
- B. Giving him one last thrill ride.
- C. Calling forth the best in him.

What do you think?

It's C – calling forth the best in him.

Wait a minute – I said no more “C” answers ... I tricked you. I'm sorry, no more. I promise.

But what Hurley is doing here is challenging Charlie – “Charlie, you have more to do ... more to give. It's bigger than just you.” He's calling Charlie to be more than he is.

**And, the Bible says that followers of Christ are to do the same thing. Paul writes ...**

*Encourage (“parakaleo”) each other and build each other up ... 1  
Thessalonians 5:11 (NLT)*

Encourage (in Greek) = parakaleo ... para = coming alongside ... kaleo = calling out ... encouraging someone means to come alongside of them and call out of them something greater

than even they can believe of themselves. And that's another skill we need in order to be part of a redemptive community of judgment, grace and mercy.

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Now, this next scene happens much later in the series. A handful of the survivors are being transported to what they believe is a rescue ship several miles off the coast. But there's a problem during the transport.

Watch what Sawyer does to solve it.

**DVD Clip - EVERY OUNCE (1.9 min)**

*Season 4 Disc 4 Ep 13 "There's No Place Like Home II"*

B: Pilot: "We need every ounce of extra weight off now ..."

E: chopper flying away

And Sawyer has to make the long swim back to the Island, which was not a given being that it was several miles away. As to what he whispered to Kate ... well, I guess you'll just have to watch the show.

But what is he *primarily* doing in this scene?

**Is he ...**

- A. Stealing a kiss from Kate.
- B. Sacrificing for his friends.
- C. Trying out for the new season of *Survivor*.

What do you think?

Well, it sure does look like "A" but in reality ...

**It's B – sacrificing for his friends.**

And this represents a huge change in his character, by the way, brought on by living in a redemptive community.

**And it's also what Jesus told us to do ...**

*"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."*

*John 15:12-13 (NIV)*

This is the law of Christ that we read about earlier. Love one another by laying down your rights



and desires is a skill that builds relationships and community.

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Alright, this next one is very simple, although it *is* in Korean ... so pay attention. (Just kidding, there are subtitles).

Jin has discovered that his wife, Sun, was having an affair before the crash. Obviously, that was a painful discovery for him, and he was very angry for a while.

But watch what happens. What skill is on display here?

**DVD Clip - JIN FORGIVES SUN (1.6 min)**

*Season 4 Disc x Ep 13 "There's No Place Like Home II"*

B: Jin working on bedspread

E: Sun smiles

It's a very moving scene, isn't it?

But what is Jin doing?

**Is he ...**

- A. Forgiving her.
- B. Attempting to reconcile with her.
- C. Seeking restoration of their marriage.
- D. All of the above.

What do you think?

Obviously, it's A since those were his exact words. But he probably also wants reconciliation – peace between them and maybe even restoration of their marriage. We don't know just from that scene what his intention is, but we can guess.

**So, it's D – all of the above. Or maybe it's A or B or C ... all answers are correct.**

And obviously, the ability to forgive, reconcile and restore relationships is huge in community-building because, well, people mess up.

But what I like about this scene is that not only does Jin forgive her (and even more, because they do go all the way on that restoration) he also takes responsibility for his part in pushing her away. He humbles himself in his forgiveness.

**Which is exactly what the Bible says:**

*Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. Ephesians 4:2-3 (NIV)*

Humbly, gently bearing with the faults and failings of others ... that's a skill that is necessary in building community.

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Ok, one more scene to look at ... one more skill we need if we're to live in redemptive community with others.

At this point in the story, Charlie's sweetheart, Claire, has been abducted. Charlie tried to fend off the attacker but he failed (he got beat up pretty good – almost died) and he's dealing with the guilt of that failure as well as fearing for Claire's life.

Let's watch what happens.

**DVD Clip - ASK FOR HELP (2.9 min)**

*Season 1 Disc 3 Ep 12 "Whatever the Case May Be"*

B: Charlie: "Why are you smiling?"

E: Charlie: "Who's gonna help me?"

<cut>

B: Charlie comes up behind Rose

E: fade as woman comes into view

I was blown away by that scene – it just brings tears to my eyes every time I see it.

But what is Rose really doing for Charlie?

**Is she ...**

- A. Gently pointing him to God.
- B. Pointing out that he is a godless heathen.
- C. Pointing out how spiritual she is in comparison.

What do you think?

**It's A – gently pointing Charlie to God.**

Now, in the show, this is about as overtly Christian as it gets, but the point is there. Charlie needed help beyond himself. And in a redemptive community of judgment, mercy and grace, we have to point each other to the Source of that judgment, mercy and grace.

**That's why the Bible says ...**

*Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.*                      *Colossians 3:16 (NLT)*

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Well, those are some of the ways that LOST really helps us visualize the ways that life-changing community really works, and the things that need to be going on between the people in that community.

1. Expressing appropriate and proportionate anger that lets people know that change is necessary.
2. Holding one another accountable.
3. Bearing one another's burdens.
4. Calling forth the best from one another.
5. Sacrificing for one another.
6. Forgiving, then if possible reconciling and if possible restoring relationships with one another.
7. Pointing one another to God.

**Bad News/Good News**

Now, at this point, I suppose I could end this message by saying, “How are you doing on these things? Look at your life. Look at the people around you. Which of these things do you need to work on? Who needs to be on the receiving end of some of these things from you?” And, if I did end it that way, I think this would be a pretty good *message* ... but it wouldn't be good *news*. It wouldn't be *the gospel*.

Instead it would be *religion*. It would be...

- A checklist of to-dos by which we elevate ourselves in comparison to others: “look how great I am at these things (or this one thing) compared to everyone else.”
- A measuring stick which we then use to beat ourselves up as failures: “oh, great, another list of things I don't do right.”
- A bargaining chip that we use to try and manipulate God: “If I get my act together in these areas, then God will be obligated to bless me like *this*.”

Ever think like that whenever you hear a list of biblical principles? I do. But that kind of thinking is a dead end, which is why the Bible says that trying to keep “the letter of the law” (which is what this list is) *kills us*.<sup>11</sup> And that’s bad news, not good news.

“So, wait a minute, Rick. Are you saying we shouldn’t try to do the things on this list? I mean, that’s what it seemed like the point of all this was ... but now you’re saying that trying to do these things kills us? Now, *that’s* confusing. I think you’ve been spending too much time watching LOST!”

Maybe ... maybe not. I *will* admit that what I’m saying here is a little confusing, but that’s because there’s a very fine line between *religion* which always kills and the *gospel* which always frees.

So, I want to show one more clip that, I think, will help illustrate the difference and help us understand what to do with this list of skills we’ve been talking about.

And, what’s happening in this scene is that not long after the crash, Sawyer – who had never met Jack before in his life – tells Jack about a “chance” meeting that took place between himself and someone very close to Jack. As you watch, be looking for what *did not* happen in Jack’s life.

Here we go.

**DVD Clip - NEVER MADE THE CALL (2.0 min)**

*Season 1 Disc 6 Ep 23 "Exodus Part I"*

B: Sawyer: "Jack!"

E: Sawyer: "... he never got around to making that call" then fade.

So, what didn’t happen for Jack? A phone call that he desperately needed.

And, if you watch the story, you realize that one unmade call was just one of *many* unmade calls ... and that almost everything Jack struggles with in his life – from his lack of compassion, to his drivenness, even his lack of faith – comes from the fact that he had received almost nothing from his father and so he was desperately trying to prove that he had “what it takes.”

That’s how religion works. We get a list of things and then we use that list to try to prove ourselves in some way. But we don’t have it in us.

**See, here’s the deal: you can only give what you’ve received.**

If you haven’t received it, you can’t give it. You can try ... but you’ll probably fail. Or, if you do

succeed in actually living up to that list, you're going to use that as a religious prop, or you're going to use that to beat yourself up ... which, again, leads to death.

See, religion says "I have to do this" ... but the gospel says "this has already been done for me." Religion says "I have to obey to get something from God" ... the gospel says "I've gotten something from God, therefore I can obey."

See, that's the good news.

**The good news is that in Christ, we have received all of those things we've been talking about this morning and more, and therefore we can actually turn around and give them.**

For example,

1. We've received anger. Appropriate and proportionate anger to our sin - God's anger over sin in our lives makes us aware that change is necessary.
2. The Holy Spirit holds us accountable by convicting us of our sin.
3. Jesus bore our burdens on the cross.
4. God calls forth the best in us. Gives us a purpose for living.
5. Jesus sacrificed for us.
6. In Christ, God forgave, then reconciled and restored relationship with us.
7. The Spirit gently points us to the Father.

All of these things have been given to us freely. And, out of those we are empowered to act.

**This is why the Bible says things like ..**

*Freely you have received, freely give.*

*Matthew 10:8 (NIV)*

*Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Ephesians 4:29-32 (NIV)*

You have received and now you can give. That's the gospel; that's the good news. And, that's why it is so important that, if we belong to Christ, we continually come back to this. We come back and we remain rooted in this faith; we stay close to the source of judgment, mercy and grace.

## **Closing**

So, here's what we're going to do as we close this service, to bring us back to that and apply what we've heard.

- I'm going to give you some questions to think about (they'll come up on the screen and they're also printed in your outline).
- Then I'm going to say a short prayer to ask that the Holy Spirit would speak to us.
- Then, for one minute, we're going to have a time to listen to God and write down whatever comes to us in the space on the outline.
- Then the band will do a song to close us, and you can keep writing during that time if you wish. Something else may come to your mind.

So here are the questions to ponder for a minute ...

**What have you received from Jesus?**

I've received patience with my failures and shortcomings; so, now, I have within me, the power to give patience to others.

**What do you *need* to receive from Jesus?**

If you look at your life and you see that you have no patience because you don't understand the patience of God, you might say, "God I need I sense of your patience with me."

**What do you need to do or say to someone else?**

Do you need to say something or do something in order to restore a relationship? Build a relationship? Build a person up? Or, get angry with someone to get them to change something. What do you need to say or do to someone else?

**Who is that person?**

It might be your husband or wife ... one of your kids ... your mom or dad. It might be someone you work with or a friend or even an enemy.

OK, those are the questions I want us to think about in the next few minutes as we close this out.

So, let's pray.

God, here we are ... dropped onto a beautiful and dangerous island called "Earth" with a bunch of beautiful and dangerous people around us. And we know that you have called us to live in relationships with these folks, but a lot of times, that doesn't come easy.

But because you have loved us more than we can earn or deserve in Christ, you have given us the power to love others as you have loved us. So, in this moment, Father, please reveal to us "who" and "what." Who needs a word of encouragement or rebuke or prayer

or confrontation or forgiveness or just an expression of simple kindness? We give this time to you. We're listening.

Amen

What have you *received* from Jesus?

What do you *need* from Jesus?

What do you need to do or say to someone else?

Who is that person?

### **Feature – “Say What You Need to Say”**

#### Endnotes

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<sup>i</sup> From Dan Cambridge May 25th, 2010 12:17 pm, comment #31 at <http://tinyurl.com/262ljqw> (NY Times blog)

<sup>ii</sup> 2 Corinthians 3:6 (NASB)