

## **The Good News That Changes Everything**

### **Part 1: Transformed By The Gospel**

Glad you are here with us ... great time to be here. →  
[Kicking off new series.]

Beginning of the year is a good time to reassess and recalibrate. Get back to what is most important.

As a church we are going to remind ourselves what is most important. (& inform those who are new).

#### **What are the things we cling to, that define us?**

So we are going to do over the next few weeks is look at our values: Gospel, Worship, Community, Mission.

Today we are starting with “Transformed by the Gospel”

If you are new, the gospel is the heartbeat of One Harbor Church.

If you've been around for a while... you've probably heard that word a lot. [Mission Statement]

## **DON'T GO QUIET // DON'T SLOW DOWN**

The danger for us is all is it can easily become a meaningless buzzword that we throw around to impress people.

Or it can be forgotten.

**Now, we have to ask ourselves ... what's at stake if that happens?**

[PAUSE]

We probably know people who stay away from church because Christians act so different to Jesus.

You might even be one of those people and figured you'd give it another shot today. "Thank you!"

The church has to own up to the fact that we can be a cantankerous / hypocritical bunch.

And that is what we become when the Gospel is assumed and moved to the periphery.

We can make church about numbers and programs and performance and entertainment and building a brand.

## DON'T GO QUIET // DON'T SLOW DOWN

That is a slippery slope.

The Gospel isn't like the starter house of Christianity we are meant to upgrade from.

It is good news we are meant to abide in.

So what is the Gospel?

Well it would be impossible to cover it all in one sermon.

So today we are going to look at a passage that gives us some of the headlines of the Gospel.

### Ephesians 2:11-19

**Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—<sup>12</sup> remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. <sup>13</sup>But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. <sup>14</sup> For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility <sup>15</sup> by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so**

## **DON'T GO QUIET // DON'T SLOW DOWN**

making peace, <sup>16</sup>and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. <sup>17</sup>And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. <sup>18</sup>For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. <sup>19</sup>So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God

The major headlines in this passage are repeating the same thing...

### **1. The Gospel Is The Good News Of What Jesus Has Done.**

It is important to realize that it is Good News not Good Advice.

It's not: 10 principles / life-hacks to the good life.

Advice you can take or leave.

But news is news.

News is what has happened.

## **DON'T GO QUIET // DON'T SLOW DOWN**

**Like my buddy Donnie says ...**

**“Advice is dependent on you doing something about it.**

**News has already happened to you.”**

It's the difference between “You've won the lottery!” and  
“You can be wealthy if you work harder.”

**Feel the difference?**

**[PAUSE]**

**I worked hard as a young man and experienced some success. [LED TO A LOT OF PRIDE. SUDDENLY, I KNEW IT ALL. OPINIONATED. JUDGED EVERYONE I WAS DOING BETTER THAN.]**

**But I also experienced failure. [LED TO A LOT OF DESPAIR. TRY EVEN HARDER. BURNED MYSELF OUT].**

There aren't different levels of Christianity to reach dependent on our performance and hard work.

The Gospel isn't good advice about what we can do to earn God's love and get into heaven.

It's the good news of what Jesus already did for us.

**Romans 4:6,8**

**“For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ... but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”**

We didn't make the first move toward God. God made the move toward us.

The Gospel doesn't tell us that we have to do whatever it takes to earn God's love.

It tells us God did whatever it took to rescue us.

Why? B/C he loves us.

When we read the Bible looking for good advice on how to live then we take credit for the results.

- When we do well → proud, arrogant, judgmental, condemning.
- When we fail → guilt, shame, despair.

And we will always move between pride and despair if we treat the gospel as good advice.

But when we treat it as the good news of what God did for us ... it makes us humble.

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Which is probably why we REALLY prefer to treat it as good advice.

**B/C Gospel headlines don't tell us we are the hero ... only Jesus is!**

**Not only are we not the hero ... the headlines make us out like we were bad off.**

### **2. The Gospel Is Good News Because There Is Bad News**

#### **Ephesians 2:11-12**

**Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—<sup>12</sup> remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world**

## **DON'T GO QUIET // DON'T SLOW DOWN**

If all that you watched of the Lord of the Rings was the very end it wouldn't have much of an impact.

It only makes sense in light of [the bad news] → all the evil and suffering they faced.

In the same way we have to remember why the Good News is the Good News!

Paul is saying to the readers ... "Remember that at one time ...".

Remember who you were before Jesus.

The Gospel only makes sense when we remember who we were without Jesus.

This is humbling b/c its not a pretty picture.

- We were separated from God. [We were outsiders].
- Strangers to the covenant promises. [Didn't know God's plan to save his people through sacrifice].[Clueless!]
- We didn't have hope and we didn't have God.

So ... when I stop and remember when I was on my own ... when it was just "Jesse" doing his thing. Even when I was



## **DON'T GO QUIET // DON'T SLOW DOWN**

at the top of my game. ... Does the Gospel brag about those days???

Nope!

This is humbling ... [doesn't lead to pride.]

No matter what I did ... no matter how much church I attended, money I gave, sermons I listened to.

No matter that my dad was a pastor.

No matter that I achieved some success by the world's standards.

Without Jesus I didn't have God or hope.

I was a stranger to God's love. I was an outsider to His promises in Jesus.

Why?

B/C of sin. Sin separates us from God. Sin makes us strangers/outsiders.

It is good to remember this. But that doesn't mean we should dwell on it.

## **DON'T GO QUIET // DON'T SLOW DOWN**

It is good to remember our past. But we don't get stuck there.

Paul starts with the bad news ... “Remember ...”

Then he redirects us ...

### **Ephesians 2:13**

**“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”**

“But now ... in Christ Jesus”

**Everything that used to define you is totally changed!**

### **3. The Gospel Is The Good News That Changes You.**

The Gospel doesn't just change parts of you like a nip and tuck surgery.

**It totally changes who you are!**

**You are made new!**

## **DON'T GO QUIET // DON'T SLOW DOWN**

**Not like changing your name -- trying to bury who you once were.**

- Its an adoption. Belonging to a new family.
- It's a new citizenship. Belonging to a new people.

Here is a picture to help us understand what this is like ...

We go through life amassing these different labels that define who we are.

**Kind of like a NASCAR suit.**

- Some are identities we take pride in: "I'm a college graduate" / "I'm a Marine."
- Some are identities of shame: **"I'm in the Army" :) / [more serious]** "My parents didn't want me." [unloved / forgotten / abandoned]

**3 lies of I.D.: [I am what I do / have / others say or think]**

Some are I.D. labels we may have not been aware of:

"Without God" / "Without Hope".

**That is who WE WERE. BUT NOW... in CHRIST JESUS ...**

All those old identities are torn off. [good, bad, ugly]

**Now we have a new identity!**

A new way of being and belonging to God.

**Ephesians 2:18-19**

**[18] For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. [19] So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.”**

B/C of what Jesus did I am no longer an outsider and stranger to God.

Now I know God as Father.

That means we have a relationship established in love.

I'm not saved to be a slave. I'm saved to be a son.

We are saved to be his children. We are adopted through Jesus' blood.

Jesus' blood removes our sin and our old identities.

I'm not a stranger but a member of God's household.

I'm not an alien/outsider to God's kingdom. I'm a fellow citizen.

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All of this was accomplished for you and me by Jesus.

We didn't lift a finger to help. We didn't put money toward the cause. We didn't pass a test. We didn't have the "right stuff".

**God saved us in grace. It's ALL grace!**

B/C of sin we deserve separation from God. (The worst punishment there is.)

Instead He gives us what we don't deserve. He brings us near.

**When we remember "what we HAVE" vs. "what we DESERVE" b/c of what Jesus did it changes how we live. [compare *bad news v. good news ... wow!*]**

We live out of gratitude and thankfulness in response to God's grace and forgiveness.

But remembering this Good News not only helps us love God more ... it helps us love others more.

## **DON'T GO QUIET // DON'T SLOW DOWN**

God isn't saving us into silos where its just me and God all the time!

He is saving us into His family ...

There is a greater community that we get to be a part of.

### **4. The Gospel Is Good News That Affects More Than Just Us**

#### **Ephesians 2:14-16**

**[14] For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility [15] by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, [16] and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby **killing the hostility****

Remember ... it started with ... But Now ... us outsiders were brought near by Jesus' blood.

But a Christianity that reduces itself to **“there's God and me and no room for three”** is not what Jesus died for.

## **DON'T GO QUIET // DON'T SLOW DOWN**

We are brought near to God AND brought into a new community that God is making.

The Gospel *is* about the peace God made between himself and me ... but there's more ... & the rest of the Good News is just as important.

He is bringing peace between people and bringing us together.

**[PAUSE]**

**You would think from this passage that church should look like a big “koom-baya” circle.**

- the Diving wall of hostility is broken down!
- we don't treat people as outsiders / less than / judgmental

Let's be honest. When we think about the church that isn't the picture that comes to mind very often.

We still quarrel and fight amongst ourselves.

**James 4:1-2 tells us that is b/c we are selfish and greedy and think about ourselves above everyone else.**

## DON'T GO QUIET // DON'T SLOW DOWN

We go about trying to make peace the wrong way.

We mimic how the world tries resolve disputes.

Look at the news!

What do you see?

Two very different people arguing over each other (Dem v. Rep).

They are in their identified camps, with their polarized ideologies.

The assumption is if I give you my advice louder and longer than I win and you should move toward my side.

Its peace through me conquering you.

That is just like what this passage was getting at. There two polarized groups. Gentiles and Israelites. (People far from God and people near).

God didn't make peace by moving all the people on the right to the left or vice versa. [not talking politics here]

The point of this passage is that he is taking two very different types of people: different in culture, custom, values, beliefs -- and making a whole new thing.



**He isn't splitting the baby between the two to make everyone happy. [Cuz that makes nobody happy].**

There is a Bible story where Joshua is looking at a city they are going to battle with the next day. Suddenly God's angel appears and he asks if the angel is for him or his enemies.

The reply is classic. The angel says, "No!" ... that's it. God is on God's side.

God isn't bringing people together by choosing one side over the other.

He brings peace through conquering our sin and bringing us to his side.

The Gospel tells us that everything that we thought made us better or significant or right is rubbish.

The apostle Paul was like the equivalent of crossing a Kennedy with Jewish Billy Graham.

He had it all according to people's standards.

In Philippians he lists out his resume and then calls it rubbish [lit. animal feces] compared to knowing Jesus.

## **DON'T GO QUIET // DON'T SLOW DOWN**

**Peace comes when we believe the Good News that nothing matters compared to knowing Jesus.**

When the church is saturated in the Gospel it stops acting like a bunch of moody judgmental curmudgeons.

Instead we are a people who forgive and give grace and mercy b/c we have received God's forgiveness and grace.

[MATTHEW 18:11-31 SUMMARIZE UNMERCIFUL SERVANT]

Pride and shame change people. It makes them more bitter, fearful, angry, anxious, and fake.

Grace and love change people too. It reproduces more grace and love.

This yields a harvest of peace which is what the church is meant to look like.

Jesus said that one of our best apologetics to the world that God is real would be our love for one another.

**This can only happen when we start to share the Gospel more than our good advice.**

**5. The Gospel Is Good News Everyone Is Meant To Hear Through Us.**

**Ephesians 2:17**

**.<sup>17</sup> And he [Jesus] came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.**

News has to be proclaimed.

The Gospel isn't caught by osmosis.

It is a message to share.

Jesus came and preached the Gospel and put it on display.

His words and actions lined up.

Jesus had the perfect relationship with God.

And he didn't want to keep it private.

That is what the Gospel does when it infects us.

We want to share it with everyone.

## **DON'T GO QUIET // DON'T SLOW DOWN**

**“People can’t believe unless they hear. They can’t hear unless someone preaches to them.” - Apostle Paul**

For the Christians in the room, the Gospel is meant to be on edge of our lips. Ready to come out.

The more saturated we are in it. The more we know it, the more we want to share it with everyone.

**Good News is hard to keep to yourself.**

**The first time Hayley was pregnant was good news. We couldn’t keep it to ourselves.**

**Would be weird if they only found out via Instagram post of us holding him.**

**[Check our pulse.]**

We talk about what we are passionate about.

If we don’t keep the Gospel the main thing we will grow cold toward it.

It isn’t the Good News we need to hear once ... we need to hear it again and again.

## **DON'T GO QUIET // DON'T SLOW DOWN**

The more in awe we are of the Gospel the more motivated we are to give it to others.

"I will not believe that you have tasted of the honey of the gospel if you can eat it all by yourself." - C.H.Spurgeon.

### **Listening and Not A Christian:**

Maybe you are hearing this Good News for the first time.

#### **How do I respond?**

God tells us to confess our sins and believe that Jesus is our Savior and Lord.

### **Listening and Christian:**

Remember the Gospel that changed you and is changing you.

Make your life about knowing and sharing that Good News.

### **Communion & Giving**

Communion puts the Gospel in 3D.

Jesus on the night he was betrayed ...

Broke bread → my body broken for you

Took the cup → this is my blood ... forgives your sins ...

made a new covenant (relationship with God). New man.

New Community. All in grace.

### **PRAY**