

We're All About the Good News – Eph 6:19-20

4th message in series – **What's Up With Harvest?** Who we are, What we do, and Why

Answer #1 – We're all about the Word

We're all about proclaiming the authority of God's Word without apology

Answer #2 – We're all about Prayer; We believe firmly in the power of prayer

Answer #3 – has to do w/ Worship

We're all about lifting high the name of Jesus in Worship

And the 4th and final answer to the question, “What's up with Harvest?” is that we're all about the **Good News**

We're all about sharing the Good News of Jesus with boldness

That's what we find Paul talking about in Eph 6:19-20 (turn there)

Start in v18b – *To that end* [w/ the goal of praying at all times in the Spirit] *keep . . .*

We're all about sharing the GN's of Jesus because

• **Paul was**

And he was all about sharing it with *boldness* – mentioning it twice in as many verses

Which, in a general sense it means courage, confidence

But in a biblical sense, it's a Spirit-led, Spirit-enabled conviction to act

That's the kind of boldness for which Paul was asking prayer . . .

So that according to 1 Cor 2:4, he could share the gospel *in demonstration of the Spirit and power*

Not in demonstration of his own strength, or the eloquence of his words . . .

But in *demonstration of the Spirit and power, that the faith of those who hear might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God* (1 Cor 2:4-5)

Paul wanted to preach the gospel with a Spirit-led, Spirit-enabled conviction to act, so that people's faith didn't depend on him, but on God

• And as an *ambassador in chains* (20), he could do nothing else

Just like an ambassador for a nation has a message to declare, and has to do so in a certain way . . .

So too, Paul, as an ambassador for Christ, had a message to declare, and was constrained (chained) to *declare it boldly, as [he] ought to speak* (20)

He *had* to do it; And he had to do it *boldly*

And that's exactly what he did throughout his ministry – speaking *boldly, reasoning and persuading people about the kingdom of God*. (Acts 19:8)

But there's another nuance here that's important for us to catch as learn fr Paul's example

In those days, an ambassador normally wore ornate chains when representing their country or leader

They were considered *chains of privilege* because of the opp they represented

Here was Paul, implying that his chains of imprisonment were not just chains of duty or constraint, but chains of *privilege* because of the opp they presented

The opp to represent Jesus Christ and proclaim the G *with all boldness* (Acts 28:31)

Would that more of us would take on that attitude when it comes to sharing the GN's

We're all about sharing the GN's of Jesus with boldness, because Paul was

• And so was Jesus (**Jesus was**)

Mk 1:14-15 – *Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”*

That's about as bold as it gets when you realize that John the Baptist had just been arrested for *his* religious zealotry

And that the political scene wasn't real conducive to proclaiming another kingdom

And yet Jesus was all about it, sometimes even risking his life due to the anger of crowds

• **We should be too**

Paul was all about it; Jesus was; And we should be too

That's what it means to follow Christ – to do as he did

Since he proclaimed the GN's with boldness, so should we

Not only that, but Paul says in 1 Cor 11:1 – *Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.*

So when he says in Eph 6:19-20 that he ought to declare the GN's boldly, we should too

And so imitate him as he imitated Christ

Paul was all about it; *Jesus* was all about it; And *we* are too – that's what's up w/ Harvest

• The question is – what is it?

What is the GN's? Or as Paul says in v19 – *the mystery of the gospel?*

First of all, *gospel* simply means – good news

It was a word originally used in the Roman world, referring to glad tidings about a ruler's rise to power, or a decree of peace and well-being in a country

So when Jesus came, he adopted it to describe his message of peace and salvation for the world

And eventually, that's what the word came to mean in the Scriptures

And it's a mystery, not in the sense that it's nebulous or hard to figure out

But in the sense that previous to Christ and the preaching of the apostles, it was unknown to the Gentiles, and unclear to the Jews

So when Paul refers here to *the mystery of the gospel*, he's talking about the message of peace and salvation found in Jesus Christ

The message that's still unknown to many; And unclear to even more

And so, since we're all about sharing it with boldness, I want to share it with you

And it begins all the way back in Genesis, at the beginning of time, where it says that . . .
God created man in his own image . . . And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. (Gen 1:27,31)

THE PROBLEM

• **In the beginning, our relationship with God was good (Gen 1:27,31)**

It was completely open and perfectly right

There's was unhindered fellowship between God and Adam/Eve

With no issues, no barriers, no enmity, no nothing

Just a relationship of perfect peace

• **But it's been broken by our sin (Is 59:2; Rom 3:23)**

Starting with the sin of Adam and Eve, and continuing with your sin and mine – our relationship with God has been broken, like **Is 59:2** says . . .

Your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.

That's what sin does – it separates you from God who is holy, and will not tolerate wrongdoing, rebellion, or pride in his presence

And no one is exempt because the Bible says that – *All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.* (Rom 3:23)

In the beginning, our relationship with God was good, but it's been broken by our sin

• **And it leads to death and judgment (Rom 6:23; Rev 20:15)**

Rom 6:23 – *the wages of sin is death*

That's *eternal* death, as opposed to eternal life

Death that's characterized by torment and condemnation in hell, like **Rev 20:15** says . .

If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

The place *where the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest* (Rev 14:11)

That's the problem, the *bad* news – that our relationship with God was broken, and continues to be broken by our sin, and it leads to death and judgment

The good news is, there's a solution; And it starts with the fact that . . .

THE SOLUTION

• **Jesus laid down his life for you (1 Jn 3:16; 1 Pet 3:18)**

In his holiness, God demands a price be paid for our sin

The beautiful thing, is that in his love, he paid the price himself

1 John 3:16 – *By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us.*

And Peter says that he suffered for our sins, *the righteous for the unrighteousness, that he might bring us to God* (1 Pet 3:18)

God loves you so much, that even in your sin, he laid down the life of his Son . . .

• **So that you could pass from death to life (Jn 5:24)**

That's what Jesus said in **John 5:24** – *Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.*

Jesus laid down his life for you, so that you could pass from death to life, all . . .

• **By God's grace, not your works (Eph 2:8-9)**

The solution to your sin problem is not solved by good works, by doing good things

You can't work your way back to God; That's not how it "works"

The Bible says that *a person is not justified by works of the law* [he's not counted righteous by doing good things, or following the rules] *but through faith in Jesus Christ* (Gal 2:16)

Faith in *his* work of grace, to lay down *his* life for your sin, and spare you from the judgment that comes with it

That's not to say that God doesn't require good works from us; He does (Eph 2:10)

And once saved, gives us a desire to do them

But those good works don't save you – God does; God does that by his act of grace . . .

By his act of unmerited favor in your life

Which is exactly what Paul is getting at in **Eph 2:8-9**, when he says . . .

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.

It's not works that saves you; Nor is it grace *plus* works that saves you

Rather, it's grace, and grace alone, that saves you

Anything else allows you to boast, and robs God of the glory

Jesus laid down his life for you, so that you could pass from death to life, by God's grace–

• **If you confess your sins (1 Jn 1:9)**

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

If we admit our sin before God, asking him for forgiveness (that's confession) . . .

He will be faithful to his promise/character, to forgive us and wash us white as snow

If we confess, in true brokenness and humility . . .

• **And believe in Jesus (John 3:16; Jn 14:6)**

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him (whoever puts their faith and trust in who he is and what he's done on their behalf) should not perish but have eternal life. (Jn 3:16)

There *is* no other way to cross the great divide of sin

Jesus said – *I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.* (John 14:6)

The problem is our sin; The solution is Jesus; And the result is life

When you believe the GN's, and confess your sins . . .

THE RESULT

• **God assures you of eternal life (1 John 5:12-13)**

1 John 5:12-13 – *Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life*

If the Spirit of Christ dwells within you as the apostle Paul says, you have eternal life

If he doesn't, you don't have eternal life

V13 – *I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.*

The result of faith and belief in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior – is eternal life

God assures you of it

Not only that, but he . . .

• **God assures you of his love (Rom 8:38-39)**

The apostle Paul said it best – *I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.* (Rom 8:38-39)

When you confess your sin, and believe in Jesus – God assures you of eternal life, God assures of you of his love, and . . .

• **God assures you of his presence (Heb 13:5)**

Not from a distance, but up close and personal; Not just sometimes, but always

Because he promises to never leave us or forsake us

That's what he says in Heb 13:5 – *I will never leave you nor forsake you.*

When you give your life to Christ, he comes into your heart, dwells within you, and never leaves

Nor will he ever turn his back on you

The *problem* is your sin; The *solution* is Christ's death

So that through faith in him and repentance of your sins, you can be forgiven and saved

The *result* is the never ending gift of God's life, God's love, and God's presence

That's the GN's of Jesus, the gospel; And . . .

IT'S YOUR CHOICE – to believe it or reject it

If you believe it; If you understand for the first time . . .

If you're convinced of its truth and convicted of your sin . . .

I'm going to give you an opp to come forward in just a minute

An opp to kneel down, confess your sins, commit your life to Christ, and be saved

If that's you, if you're convinced and convicted . . .

Don't let this moment go, without getting right with God

If that's not you, what's keeping you from it?

What's preventing you from making this decision and crossing over from death to life?

• Is it unbelief?

Are you thinking – “I hear what you're saying, and understand it perfectly well, but since when does the Bible have a lock on truth?”

If that's you, you owe it to yourself to get the facts

To investigate the overwhelming evidence that the Bible really is the inspired word of God, and that it's true and reliable in all it says

Don't risk your eternity on what you *think* – get the facts, ask questions, find the truth, and then accept it for what it is

• Or maybe you're thinking – “I'm not that bad; I don't need this”

Compared to who? Your neighbor? Maybe so

And you're certainly not as bad as the worst person in the world

But they're not the standard of comparison – God is

He says that compared to his holiness, none of us are righteous, not even one

We're all bad in his eyes no matter how good you think we are

And you're either going to die an eternal death in the torment of hell for it

Or you're going to accept the death of Jesus in your place

Either way the price will be paid, because you *are* that bad compared to God

And the sooner u admit, the sooner God will do something about it

• Or maybe you're not interested in all this GN's stuff, because you like your life just the way it is; No change necessary

And you certainly don't need someone telling you what to do

If that's you, you need to understand something – God calls you a fool (Lk 12)

You're trying to hang on to the life you can't keep – the life you so cherish in all your self-sufficiency

While taking a pass on the life you can't lose – eternal life found in Jesus Christ

It's foolish – don't be a fool

• Or maybe you're thinking – “I'm not quite ready, I'll do it later”

That's all well and good, if there *is* a later

If God doesn't require your life this very night

If you don't get run over by a truck tomorrow morning

If your heart hasn't become hardened by the deceit of sin in the meantime, so that you have no *desire* to “do it later”

It's not worth the risk

You're flirtin' with disaster on this one, because you don't call the shots on your life –

your days are numbered, and there may not be a later

And if there is, the longer you go *not* living for the Lord, the more you'll regret it if you ever do

Don't wait, there may not be a tomorrow

• Take the step now – no matter what the cost

You may suffer for it; You may lose your friends; You may even lose your life

It doesn't matter, because your walk w/ Jesus will far surpass the value of anything this world has to offer; And eternal life awaits

Invitation (pray)

Worship Team is going to sing – listen to the words (Come Ye Sinners)

If God's calling you to himself, if he's calling you to belief and faith – take the step

Slip out of your row, come down front, and kneel before the Lord

If God's calling you, take that step, and come

Doesn't matter what anybody else does; Doesn't matter what anyone else thinks

What matters is what *God* thinks

What matters is that if he's speaking to you, if your heart pounds, you *come*

It's not that you have to come forward to be saved

But the commitments to Christ where I've seen most fruit in shortest amount of time . . .

Have come from those who are *broken* enough in their sin, and *bold* enough in their profession of faith, to make it public

So broken they don't care what anyone thinks; So bold, only care what God thinks

If that's you, you come

If you can't point to a time in your life when you made a conscious decision to believe in

Jesus, confess your sin, and live for him the rest of your days – do it now; make sure

And whatever you do, don't wait; Because there may not be a later

As they start to sing, you come

Prayer

God, I'm a sinner

I believe that Jesus laid down his life for my sin

And I don't want to be separated from you any longer

So please forgive me of my sins and save me from the consequences

I trust your grace, long for your presence, and rest in your love

Here's my life – use it for your glory

Praise God for you; Stay up front with us for worship

Stand – Beautiful One

Close

Ushers – GN's Card; New Believer's Packet

Next week – I'll be preaching at HBC-RM; John Walters here

Following week – launch our new theme and message series