

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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SERIES

Grace Does Good

PART

1

TITLE

God's Good Plan

SCRIPTURE

Titus 1:1-4



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So great to see all of you. If you are new with us, welcome. We are thrilled that you have joined us as our guests. I hope this time is really encouraging. You actually are here on the first day of a new series and in the series, this book, it's called Titus. It's a absolutely remarkable manual on how a Christian is supposed to bear good fruit or to do good works or to be a godly person. It's a remarkable book. But what it does, and it does throughout the book, is it warns us of something that every single one of us in the room, it's a threat. It's a threat to each and every one of us. You see, so many people in the world this day, tragically associate all of Christianity and their whole experience of it like a backpack that you have to carry, and so it's a burden. It makes it very difficult to move with speed and quickness, because it's burdensome.

And all around the world today, what you find is people who are looking to carry a bag called righteousness, in order to please God, in order that God in some way, that that how well they carry the bag and how far they carry the bag and how high up the mountain they can carry the bag, they can somehow merit favor with God. And what's amazing is this, is that even in Christianity, which is an entire faith system, it's a belief that actually the son of God came to the earth and said, "It's not about how high you come up the mountain, because I came down the mountain in order to bear the burden for you." The fact is there's a remarkable number of people throughout the world who still associate their walk of faith as a burden to carry.

They may not say it as such, but that's exactly what they do. And they open up the Bible and what they do is they find all kinds of instructions, and what they do is they begin to think that these instructions in some way are an additional weight that they're supposed to carry. So they open up the Bible and they see that Jesus says, "I want you, I'm calling you, I'm telling you to come to me and believe upon me." And yet there's a lot of other things we could do. And so coming sometimes is difficult. And so we put that rock in the backpack that we're supposed to carry. And all of a sudden we keep looking and he says, "And not only do I want you to come to me and believe in me, I want you to worship me in spirit and in truth."

You see, we just spent some time singing. This isn't the only way that we worship God. It's a way that we worship God. Some of us in the room just worship in spirit and in truth, meaning our heart and our mind. Some of us only use our heart, some of us only used our mind, and some of us use neither. And yet we look at that and we think, "No, I'm supposed to worship. So I'm going to do this because I'm going to merit some kind of favor with God." And so even sometimes our worship can become a rock that we need to carry. We keep looking in the Bible and the Bible says, not only do we need to do those things, but Jesus says, "I want you to carry your cross. I want you to deny yourself and I want you to follow me."

And we think, "Oh, that looks all hard, but I think I can do it." And so we put that load into our backpack. And then we look in the Bible and we find all kinds of things that the Bible says don't do. He says, "I don't want you to lust. I don't want you to lie." And yet all of us are naturally really good at lusting and lying. And so we think, "Man, I need to do this well, I need to stop do this. And so I'm just going to white knuckle it." And so what happens is we take even the things that God says don't do, like don't store up treasures on the earth and don't worry and don't boast and don't be arrogant. Don't be rude other people.

And we load up, and we think, “Well, that’s one more thing I need to do.”

And we keep looking, and all of a sudden we find all kinds of other instructions. He says, “Oh, and by the way, I want you to be baptized and I want you to read the Bible. In fact, not only read the Bible, I want you to meditate on the scriptures day and night.” Both? “Yeah, both day and night.” Wow. All right. That’s a load. But okay, if that’s gonna make you happy, that’s what I’m going to do. And so we load up and we continue to go. And he goes, “You know what? I want you to be baptized and I want you to teach other people what you’ve learned. And not only that, you have those parents. Yeah. Well, I want you to honor those parents.” Well they’re really difficult. “Well, I want you to honor them.” All right, well, I’m going to load that up as well.

And all of a sudden you see all these other people around you. “I want you to serve them. I want you to be humble around them. I want you to love them. I want you to forgive them. I want you to give to them.” And not only all that, in the end he says this, he goes, “I want you to let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and praise your father in Heaven.” We think, “All right, well here we go. I’m loaded down.” And we close it up and this is what we do. It’s such a tragedy. And you see people all over the world and sometimes you see them in this room. And they take this and they think, “Okay, this is the Christian life. And so here we go. I’m just going to carry it around.” And this is what you look like. This is what you feel like.

For some of us in the room, our entire Christian experience, it feels like this. It’s just all burden. It’s all heavy and we know we’re supposed to worship him but we’re not too happy about it. And so other people look at us like, “Do you even love this? Or do you even like it? Because you don’t look so happy or joyful that this is the experience that you get that. That you get to actually carry this amazing burden and you get to be this kind of person.” And yet what happens though is we find our identity in this. We say, “But I’m good at this. I can carry it really well. And not only that, but there’s this people group on the earth that when they see me carrying the loads so well, they praise me. And so I even form an identity. It may be sending me further away from God, but it gets me closer to the approval of man, and so I’m just going to keep doing it.”

And the fact is, some of you in the room right now, this is you. You can think of no other way. When you think of prayer, when you think of worship, when you think of church, when you think of giving, when you think of serving, it’s just a burden, but I need to do it because, because I need to make God happy with me. And you know, Jesus came down from heaven, the son of God, and you know what he said? He says, “Come to me all you who are weary and heavy laden.” His invitation was to professional bag carriers, “And I will give you rest.” He says, “I want you to take off that yoke and put my yoke upon me for I’m gentle and humble in heart,” and he says, “And you will find rest for your soul.”

Let me just ask you something. In particular, Christians. Is your walk of faith, can it be characterized by the word rest? You see, this is what’s available to us and this is what Titus is warning against. This is what Paul is telling Titus within the city, this place, this amazing island called Crete and he’s saying, “Listen, there’s so many people, they live their entire Christian life ...” I better buckle this thing down.

“And they live their entire Christian life. And that’s what it is.” Like I said, some of you, this is how you think you get into the Christian life. Some of you, once you’ve trusted Jesus, you’ve reverted back to your natural white knuckle mentality of, “Okay, now I need to grow in Christ this way.” Paul is going to tell us in the New Testament, in another place, he goes, “Look, just as you came to faith in Christ, so you walk in him.” In other words, look dance with the girl who brung you. If you come to faith in Jesus Christ by grace, through faith, not of yourself, because then we simply cannot expect to grow in our faith by any other way.

And so what I have for you here this morning is really good news, in particular if this is you, if this characterizes what you feel like most of the time. I have great news, but I promise you that the news is going to shake your world. So let me pray for us before we get started.

Father in heaven, I ask that you would be merciful to us. In particular, Lord, those of us in the room who just feel that the whole walk of faith is a burden. But it’s a burden that needs to be done because there’s the reality of Heaven and hell. And I pray, Father, that you would be merciful to us and that you would help us to see the amazing power of grace and how you’ve designed the Christian life to be one of overflow. Where you move in us first and then cause us to be delighted to move in response. And so we look to you in faith. Would you speak to your weakness? I pray in Jesus name. Amen.

Well, I would love for you to turn in a Bible to Titus. We’re going to be in verses one through four, which is the brief introduction. Let me tell you about these verses though, okay? First of all, they are a little bit confusing, and the reason that they’re confusing is because it’s one sentence. It’s one Greek sentence. Paul just cannot find a period. Okay? He just starts using words and it just throws another phrase and another phrase and another phrase. And so the fact is, is when it’s translated into English, it’s hard to follow all the way through. And yet this introduction is actually, it’s the frame of the rest of the letter, the whole letter. And so we’ll keep coming back to these ideas that we read in the first four verses for the next month and a half as we study through the book.

It starts with a guy’s name and the name is Paul. Now let me tell you about Paul. Paul was a professional bag carrier, okay? He was a Pharisee and he was really good at it. In fact, he even said that among the Pharisees, he was in first place. In other words, when he looked at how do you merit favor with God, and he began that race, he was so good at it that not only he but everyone around him who thought that was the way to merit God said, “Paul’s in the lead.” And all of a sudden, Jesus though he does a work in his life, it’s an amazing thing. Jesus comes to the earth, and when Jesus starts promising people, “Listen, it’s not about your accomplishments and your work. It’s my accomplishments and my work on the cross for you. And if you believe in me, I’ll give you my perfect righteousness. You’ll actually be in first place.” And all of a sudden, Paul, who found his identity in being the bag carrier, he got angry at Jesus.

He started hating Jesus and hating Christians and says, "It's not about how many rules you keep, and it's not about how much weight you can carry religiously. It's about trusting in Jesus." So he not only hated Jesus, but he hated Christians because Christians and Jesus were taking away his identity.

And so he began to imprison people after Jesus rose from the dead. He was on his way to do so, when Jesus appeared to him after his resurrection, and he says, "Why are you persecuting me?" And suddenly an amazing thing happens. Paul looked in the face of Jesus and all of his life he'd been seeking to obtain the righteousness of God. And now he's looking at the righteousness of God directly in front of him. And he says, "You need to believe in me. You need to trust in me. If you do, I'll give you my righteousness." Well, this good news of forgiveness and a life that's characterized by lightness and joy and happiness in the Lord, was so overwhelming to him that he had to tell other people. And one of the individuals that he told was a guy named Titus.

Titus was a younger man. He was an older man. Titus was a Gentile Greek man. Paul was a Jew. They don't normally hang out, in particular at this time. But here he was. And Titus, he believed in Christ and he was saved. And for whatever reason, Titus and Paul, they kind of hit it off. Like you have a friend that you met the very first time and all of a sudden you're like, "I can be friends with this person." And it's just easy. It's like, wow. It just clicked. Well, Paul and Titus, they just clicked. And he began to mentor him and so Titus grew up in the faith. He became so mature, and then Paul noticed two particular gifts in the life of Titus that would be absolutely remarkable for a mediator in difficult situations. One was, he was a man of courage, but then he was also a man of compassion.

And so what we find in the New Testament is Paul kept sending Titus into these difficult situations in the churches that he planted around the empire, when they couldn't get along and they needed someone to go in and to do a difficult task, but to do it in love. We've been in First Corinthians 13 the last two months. Remember how much of a mess the church in Corinth was? Well, guess who Paul sent? Titus. Titus went. We're told in Second Corinthians chapter eight, it says that Paul gave him the letter and he says, "Please go do what you can." All of a sudden, Paul, he has Crete, this island, on his heart and he wants to go and tell them the gospel and so he organizes a little mission trip and Titus goes, "Well, I'll go, that sounds cool."

And so they formed a little team and they go over to Crete, they start preaching the Gospel and so many people trust Christ that they can't just have one church. They plant so many different churches in different villages where they're like, "Okay, all of you live together, you're all Christians, here a church and here a church and here a church." Then it was time for Paul to leave, because other people who've never heard the gospel needed to hear and just as he was getting ready to leave, some false teachers known as the Jesus plus people, Jesus plus works, Jesus plus literally circumcision, Jesus plus sincerity. It's Jesus. Okay, you did a good job, Jesus. Great job with the Cross and now we are going to supplement your deficiencies with something that we bring to the table. And your cross and our effort combined, it's going to sway the heart of God towards us.

And these false teachers comes into these little little churches there. They're all brand new and so their faith isn't so strong. And so Paul looks over his shoulder, I can just see him and he goes, "Hey Titus." "I know I'm staying, I'm staying." And so Titus stays on the island. Eventually Paul writes him a letter and that letter is what we have in the Bible. This letter right here, a real man named Paul, wrote a real man named Titus. And he says, "I want you to teach them God's good, good plan. And that is that grace does good." This is what he says. He says, "Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness and hope of eternal life, which God who never lies promise before the ages began. And at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I've been entrusted by the command of God, our savior. To Titus, my true child in a common faith, grace and peace from God the father in Christ Jesus, our savior." One long sentence.

So what can we pull out from that sentence about God's good plan? Just three things this morning. First is that God's good plan, it provides grace and we all should love this because we all are in need of grace. Grace is unmerited favor. It's when you get something you don't deserve. We all love that, don't we? When we win something, like, "I didn't even have to work for it. How cool is that?" Grace. God loves to give grace. You see, here's the reality we find within the Bible, and that is that God created us with the capacity for good works, to be able to do good works. He created us like a piece of crystal. Intricate, well designed, thought out, able to receive light and then able to reflect that light into a number of colors, a number of good works, a number of acts of righteousness. He created you to be able to be kind and merciful and holy and gentle and righteous and all kinds of amazing things that would flow out of us. And yet the whole secret of the whole Christian life is that the power is not in the crystal. You turn off the light, it does nothing.

And in the very beginning of the Bible, it says that God created us in his image with the capacity to do amazing, good works in a relationship with him. And then the Bible tells of the greatest tragedy in the history of the world, and that is it says that we decided that we would prefer to be independently awesome than loved. We said, we don't want to be with God. We want to be like God, we want to have power. And this is what happened. We chose power over relationship and then quickly learned that there is no power without that relationship. And suddenly the lights turned off. We looked at ourself and we said, "Shine, do something amazing." And yet there was no light. Be a great husband, a great wife, a great mother, be joyful, be happy, don't be depressed, don't be anxious. And we looked at ourself and we were just, there was no more light. In the darkness of this moment in the garden, God, who Titus says can't lie, he made a promise. To send a savior.

His name is Jesus. Eventually he did come. He was the son of God. He came down and he lived, and he was like a crystal in perfect form that received perfect light. He was so kind to people, loving, gentle, courageous, [inaudible 00:19:04]. In every way, he lived a perfect life. He never once sinned. And yet he took our sin after promising to do so. And he died for it on a cross. He was buried in a grave. It's what we do with dead people. And then three days later, just as he promised, he rose from the dead.

And he extended an invitation to all, and that is that if we would repent the believing that the power is in us and that we can do something in order to merit God. and instead we would trust in his son's accomplishments, his righteousness, that he would give us grace, unmerited favor.

For our past, unmerited favor means forgiveness. We don't deserve forgiveness. We deserve punishment for our sin, and yet he gives us forgiveness. For our future. We don't deserve heaven or eternal life. We deserve eternal death. We deserve hell. And he says to us that this hope was actually one of eternal life. That's grace. But not only that, what we find in Titus is throughout every section, and we're going to actually find that he's going to make an appeal for good works. He's going to say and urge them for good works, good works, good works. But notice what it says in chapter two, verse 11 and 12 of Titus. He says, "For the grace of God has appeared bringing salvation for all people and training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions. Do you know the impulse that leads you to say no to sin? It's not your effort. It's God's grace. And to live self controlled, upright, godly lives. In other words, if there's any self controlled element of your life, if there's anything that's upright, if there's anything that's godly, it's because of grace, that's unmerited favor. You see friends, God's plan begins with God, not with us, not with you, not with me, not with our effort. It begins with God. His grace fills our soul and his grace moves our heart, and his grace empowers righteousness empowers self control. In other words, if it's not overflow, it is not Christian.

Some of you can't even imagine what I just said. You think, "Wait a minute, but I woke up early and I read the Bible and that took discipline and effort." That's true. Who gave you that Bible? Grace. Who gave you the inclination in your heart to even want to get up and read it? Grace. In other words, if our motivation in whatever good work we're trying to apply is to earn something before God, it's a motivation that's doomed from the beginning. But if however we come and sometimes ... Look righteousness, it takes effort. It does. It's hard to go confess your sin to somebody else. It takes resolve. It takes something and yet first there's grace. And so what we're doing is this, is the whole Christian life is a response to the grace that's come to us. If it's not overflow, it's not Christian, and yet so many people think that their whole life is one of carrying a bag instead of responding to fullness.

Your last week, did it resemble overflow? Whatever extent that it didn't, it's grace that we're leaving on the table because it's available. It's there for the taking. He wants you to experience it. So his good plan provides grace. Second, it produces godliness. You see, when grace invades, it does produce good works. It's like light that comes into a crystal and then reflects in all kinds of different colors. And this is what we find at the very beginning. He says, "Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth, Which accords with godliness." That word accord is really important. It means to harmonize with or to be consistent with. In other words, if I plant apple seeds, what do I get? I get apple trees that produce apples. There's consistency between what we put into the ground and what we get in the fruit.

Wouldn't it be amazing if your life was characterized by this picture? This is what God wants. He wants the branches our life to be absolutely filled with the fruit of the Holy Spirit. And some of us say, "Yeah, I just want that kind of fruitfulness. Love, joy, peace, patience. How do I get that? What's the process?" Some of us say, "I just want it now." You can't have it now. There's a seed that goes into the ground. And so let me show you what you find in these words and then we're going to find throughout Titus time after time after time. This is the sequence to godliness in our life. First is grace. God's grace comes to us. It's undeserved. We don't earn it. It just comes because he loves us.

Second is we respond to God in faith. He sends his son. That's grace. We respond to him. Faith by grace, you've been saved through faith. It's not of yourself. You can't boast of it because it's been given as a gift. And then all of a sudden what happens is we begin this relationship, we're believing in him, he's living within us and he gives us the word of God. And so then we open up the pages of scripture. Notice that Paul says, "I'm doing this for your faith and for your knowledge of the truth." And this is the third is that we begin to understand more of God's word. And as we understand more of God's word, we understand more who he is, that's his identity, and who we are, that is our identity. And that's where we get to the word identity. Understanding who we are as people.

Now, here's the thing. Every single one of us, we operate consistently in accord with who we think we are. Identity produces a particular kind of fruit. How you find your identity is knowing the scripture. How you know the scriptures is you believe in the son. How you believe in the son is because he gives you grace to believe in his son. So God starts with grace, then we believe in him and then all of a sudden we learn more of scripture, we learn more of who we are, we have an identity, and now all of a sudden our behaviors begin to flow in accord. This is where we're talking about overflow. There's not this breach like, "You know what? I know you planted apples, but I'm producing oranges." No, that's not how it works. His grace, properly sequenced, going all the way through, it produces good works in our life.

And here's the deal. Paul, he started and as I said earlier, he was a professional bag carrier. He loved it and he was good at it. He says in Philippians, "Look, if anyone else thinks that he has reasons for confidence in the flesh, meaning your own accomplishments, I have more." And he goes on and he goes, "Why? Well, because I was circumcised on the right day, it was the right people, the right tribe, and as the righteousness under the law, I was absolutely blameless. In other words, I was winning the race. God was so proud of me, until I found out that he wasn't, because I wasn't trusting him and his word." And so what happens? This was his identity. He walked around and he says, "Yeah, I carry bags and I'm a, I'm a commandment keeper. That's who I am." And every single one of us, we have an identity. When you think about yourself, you think about something. Some of you think, "I'm a leader." What that means is when you get in moments where leadership is needed, you naturally step forward instead of step back. That's what I mean. We live in accord with our identity.

We all have an idea of who we are and we all live in accord with who we think we are. Here's the crazy thing, is that if you don't understand who you are in Christ, even if it's true of you, if you believe something else is the most true thing about you, then you'll live in accord with what's not true about you. Let me illustrate. There's some folks and they did this thing. You can just type scar experiment in Google and you can read all about it. Okay? But there's some people and they basically got some volunteers and said, "This is what we're going to do. We're going to paint this gruesome scar on your face and we're going to have you walk out in public and you just experience what life is like. People looking at you with this nasty scar, and you're going to come back and you're going to record what it felt like."

So they said, "Okay," they got some volunteers and so sure enough they sit him down, group, nasty thing. They showed them a mirror and they're like, "Wow, that's terrible. I've got to walk out like that. All right, well let's do it." They said, "Okay, hold on. Just one more thing. Let me just add one more thing." And when they said we're going to add one more thing, they removed the scar completely. They didn't tell them and they went outside. They come back after the whole day and what they record is, "Man, everyone was staring at me and making fun of me and they were pointing at me," and yet it wasn't true at all. There was nothing on their face. It was just them, and yet they lived in accord with who they thought they were.

Let me tell you something, whatever it is that you're struggling with, or whatever it is that you're doing well in terms of good work, it's because you believe that's your identity. There's something, there's a cause for all of that. Now, here's the deal. Who you are in Christ has already been established. He calls us sons and daughters to the king. He calls us more than conquerors. He says we're holy and blameless, but if we do not believe it's the truest thing about us because we have no knowledge of the truth or because we're not believing his son, then it will not be our identity and therefore we will not live in accordance with who we actually are in Christ.

Do you know who you are? It is not found by looking in the mirror. It's found by looking in the Bible. A knowledge of the truth creates an identity, that creates a life of good works. And all of it is made possible because of grace. And so his good plan provides grace and it produces godliness, and the third is it restores peace. It restores peace. You see, grace always runs with peace. That's what you see at the very end. Verse four he says, "Grace and peace." They're running mates. In other words, when God's grace comes to us, when we believe in the son, we're set at peace with God.

Romans 5:1, that's what he says. He says, "Look, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." And when we're set at peace with God, we receive resources to be at peace with others. That's why all the commandments in the scriptures of how we're supposed to treat one another is love as you have been loved. Forgive as you have been forgiven. Welcome others as you have been welcomed into the family of God. It enables us to experience peace with one another. But what's remarkable to me is the little verse when it says, "My true son in our common faith." And the reason is because at this point in time and in this place, Jews and Gentiles, they didn't hang out together. [inaudible 00:30:35], when he says this, we're supposed to go, "Wait a minute, a miracle has taken place here."

You see there was this ethnic ratio, historical hostility between their two peoples, and all of a sudden we see that God has done something in their lives that now they're friends.

You know, I'm alive, I've now walked a surf for 45 years. I've been to about that many countries and every country I've ever been to, I've found at least two people groups who hate each other, historically. We find our tribe and every tribe has a rival, and then those rivals are separated by wars and by walls and by train tracks. And you look at this picture and you see all four different kinds of people. They're all in different skin colors. And yet, isn't it the same picture? Really? We are we and you are you and I don't like you, so I'm going to kill you. There's an absence of peace throughout the whole world and notice what Titus says. He goes, "Hey, there's a peace. Peace is available." And here are a Jew and a Gentile. They're hanging out together, doing ministry together. How? Ephesians 2:14 says that Jesus made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility.

See Jesus Christ died on a cross. And when he did, he took the wall that separated us from God and he tore it to the ground and he took the walls that separated us from each other and he tore them down, so that you and I could actually form one new bloodline, which is his bloodline, one new family in Christ. It doesn't matter what color, it doesn't matter what ethnicity, what culture. One day when we will see each other in heaven, we will still have our own skin. We'll have our own languages. He says, "In heaven, every tribe, every culture, every tongue is all still going to be there." There's still the distinction. All those distinctions will still be there. Why? Because nothing glorifies the son of God by taking diverse things and unifying them all together. He made us this way. He made us different. It's a display of his honor and creativity. He calls us to come together as a family. But you know what, a new family is through has old ruts.

And so when Gentile Christians started trusting Jesus, do you know what happened? The old Jewish believers in Jerusalem, they got mad. They even summoned Paul to come to Jerusalem and give an account of why you're telling Gentiles about our faith. And do you know what he did? It says in Galatians two that he brought Titus. He says, "Come on. I know they're not going to like you at first. Once they get to know you, they're going to love you." He brings Titus in, bunch of Jewish people, and all of a sudden the Gentile walks in and he says, "Evidence A of God's grace among the Gentiles, right here." And by the end of the day they repented of their racist hatred. Miracle. But it's a miracle that takes place because of God's grace.

So before we take the supper, let me give you a few thoughts. First is let's trust Christ's work on our behalf. I know for those in this room who have lugged maybe your whole life, a bag of good works around, trying to earn God's forgiveness and you think you're really good at it, but you're not so happy about it. This whole thing may be threatening or it may be relieving. Whatever it is, I urge you today to trust Jesus Christ as your savior, because without saving faith in Jesus Christ, the individual that dies in socially awkward sin is going to go to the same place as the person that dies in this service. It's about Jesus. Religion, you take somebody who's religious, irreligious, moral, immoral. We all come together. We have to come through Jesus Christ.

And then for those of us who have, I want to encourage you to go on trusting and growing in the knowledge so that you can live in accord with your new identity. Second, let me encourage you to repent for contributing to a lack of peace. All of us, you see we all have a tendency to restack the bricks that Jesus tore down. We choose sin even though it injures our fellowship with God. We choose to withhold forgiveness even though it injures fellowship within our family or friend network. We tend to toss gasoline on the fire of social injustice even though we have a fire extinguisher in our right hand called the gospel. Let me encourage those of you in the room who love social media and who love to point out things that are happening in the world. As you point out, injustices that are happening in the world as a believer who has the power of God unto salvation in your right hand called the Gospel, don't leave it on the table, otherwise we only contribute to the problem.

We do no good in the world by saying, "See, that's hatred." If we're the people with the solution, if we do not present the solution as we point out the injustice, we only contribute to the injustice. We are gospel people, we're Jesus people. Reliant on him and so wherever it is that we see our contribution to strife in the world, we should repent because peace is available. And last is this is let's share the gospel as our only hope. You see, there is human involvement because Paul says that all of this is made known to people by preaching, by Christians telling other people about Jesus Christ. He says, "I'm laboring for the faith of God's elect." Who are these elect people? Who are those people who will trust Christ, but they've yet to hear about Christ. People have to hear to be saved.

Romans 10:17 says, "Faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of Christ." God loves to save people when they hear the story and so we have to tell the story. Let me encourage you with one very last thing and it's this. As we seek to tell the story, when we look at other people who are yet to be saved, if we start with the ethics of Jesus, what happens is we either create bag carriers or we create people who are bitter. Start with Jesus, help people see the supremacy of Jesus and not his rules, and what you'll find is this, is once their heart becomes captivated by Jesus, his ethics will become more attractive. And God has given us an amazing gift called the Lord's supper to help us remind us of these things. And so for those that will be serving us, if you want to go ahead and stand and head back to the corner and get each of these elements. The Passover was always taken with family, and yet the very first time that Jesus instituted the Lord's supper that we're about to take, it was Passover. He had 12 men and he took them away from their family.

And the reason he did so it was because he was creating a new family. The supper is bread and a cup, symbolic of his body and blood. The Bible tells us that if you know Christ as savior and Lord, that you're welcome to take and we invite you to do so. But if you have yet to trust Christ as your savior, the Bible says to take these things is to treasure them. And so to take them and not treasure them is actually an indictment upon you. And so the Bible would welcome you, invite you at this point in time, just let it pass if you don't know Christ. We would love to talk with you after the service about how can know Christ, but for now we would ask you to pass. But if you know Jesus as your savior and are relying upon him, then we invite you to the table. So let me pray for us.

Father in heaven, as we pass these elements and take them, we pray that you would be glorified. We thank you for the grace that you have given to us and pray that as we consider our life and consider this truth, that you would stir our hearts to see any sin in us and to take this time to confess it to you, that we could be forgiven. And we pray all of this in Christ's name. Amen.



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