

Gospel Culture

Ephesians

Main Idea

The Gospel teaches us who we were and how we came to be, therein communicating how we are to then be towards God and one another: A Gospel people full of the grace and love of Christ.

Overview

What is our Message? The Gospel of Jesus Christ

- Ephesians 1.13: Paul says we (church) are the people who heard the word of Truth, the Gospel of your (our) salvation...they/we believed and were sealed w/ the Holy Spirit
- Ephesians 3.6: Gentiles (non-Jews) are members of the same body and partakers of the Promise of Christ Jesus through the Gospel
- Ephesians 6.15: Paul finishes by telling us to put on the shoes of the Gospel of peace
- Ephesians 2.1-10 explains the Gospel and what happened to those of us in the church:
 - Vss. 1-3: Life before Christ:
 - We were not basically good but basically evil: vs. 2
 - Dead in our sin (not sick): vs. 1
 - Following whatever is popular in the world: vs. 2
 - Following the Evil One: vs. 2
 - Living in whatever WE felt like doing: vs. 3
 - Vss. 4-9: What God did to those in Christ
 - Gods nature of mercy and “great love” led Him to act (That was/is His motive): vs. 4
 - WHILE we were dead in our sin (haters/enemies of God: Romans 5.8)
 - God (not us) made us alive: He is the author of life and He woke us up from our death (vs 1)
 - Not only did He give us life, but He seated us w/ Him in the heavenly places in Christ (union w/ Christ): Vs. 6
 - And this came to us all by grace (We did nothing to deserve it): vs. 8-9
 - Vs. 8 & 10: What we do
 - We respond to Gods Grace through faith (trust): vs. 8
 - Faith in the Atoning work of Christ: (Life, death, burial, resurrection)
 - We respond to a new life of selfless work in keeping with the one that loved us: vs 10
- This is the message that creates and sustains us:
 - We never move beyond the Gospel only deeper into it

What is the Goal of our salvation? What is God doing with the church? Making us Holy

- Ephesians 1.4: God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, THAT we should be Holy and blameless before Him
- Ephesians 5.27: He saved His people (church) THAT He might present the church to himself in splendor w/o spot or wrinkle or any such thing that she might be holy and w/o blemish
- Christ does not die to create a people that simply do nice things...but most pre-eminently to be a Holy people (set apart from the world)
- In our holiness we display the manifold glory of God to a watching world (Eph. 3.10)

How are we made Holy? And what is it that holds us together? By Grace and for Love

- By Grace (Eph. 2.8):
 - The church is the only organization on planet earth that is, by its nature, full of unworthy people (No one is inherently worthy to be a part, quite the contrary!)

- The church is the only grace based organization on planet earth: Entirely unique
- For Love:
 - Ephesians 3.14-21: Paul's prayer is for the local church of Ephesus be strengthened with the Spirit in their inner being that Christ would dwell in their hearts:
 - That they would be rooted and grounded IN LOVE
 - So that we would comprehend with all the saints (not merely an individual faith but a corporate faith...we were meant to be with Gods people):
 - We would comprehend what is the breadth, length, height, and depth of the knowledge of the LOVE OF CHRIST that SURPASSES ALL KNOWLEDGE (why!?):
 - That we may be filled w/ all the fullness of God (Holiness)
 - This is all happening in the church (vs. 20) so that the glory of God would shine into the world
 - Ephesians 4.12-13: The goal of pastors and every member that is gifted is to build one another up into the unity of the faith that is the knowledge of the Son of God...to the measure of the stature of the Fullness of Christ
 - Eph. 4.14: We do this so that we are not tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine (like we were before we were in Christ)

What should be the culture of the church? What should we be like when people come in? Full of the Grace and Love of Christ

- Paul says after rehearsing how we came to Christ in Ephesians 4.1: THEREFORE walk in a manner WORTHY of the CALLING you have received
 - What is that manner? Grace, Love, and Mercy of Christ
- That means:
 - Grace & Love does not show favoritism:
 - Peter showed favoritism in the church and Paul says he was “not in step with the Gospel” (Galatians 2.14)
 - Grace & Love does not show arrogance:
 - Christ's loved stooped and came to serve and not be served (Mark 10.45)
 - Grace & Love does not show indifference:
 - Ephesians 5.25: Christ loved the church so much that He gave
- What does it look like to be a people who are full of the Grace and Love of Christ:
 - Ephesians 4.2-3, 15-16, Romans 12.9-21
- Love is other oriented and interested in building one another up in the love of Christ

Questions

Discussion Starter: *How has this short series on the church helped you understand the church better?*

1. Review the previous sessions. What does 'church' mean? Why is Preaching the word so important to the church? Baptism? Lords Supper? Making Disciples?
2. Read Ephesians 2:1-10. What is the message of the church?
3. Read Galatians 2.11-14, 1 Tim. 3.14-15. How does the Gospel inform not only what we believe, but how we behave? How can certain behaviors undermine the gospel?
4. What is the goal of Christ in our salvation?
5. Read Eph. 3.14-21. How does the church body help each other comprehend the dimensions of Christ's love? Why is this important?
6. Read Eph. 4.11-16. How does the body help build each other up into maturity? Why is this important?
7. Read Eph. 4.1-3, Romans 12.9-21. How do these verses help us understand what it looks like to be a people of grace and love? Are you “eager to pursue the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace” in love?
8. Explain ways you have seen this grace and love in the life of the church. What potential “threats” do we face that might undermine our gospel culture?

Accountability Question: *What are some evidences of grace in the brothers/sisters life in this area?
Where are you struggling to be committed to love in the manner of the Gospel?*