

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Digital Fast- we are 2 ½ weeks in! How we doing? 5567 hours saved! Amazing!
- Some have been a little reticent to join in the digital fast donuts and discussion groups so we are lowering the bar. No formal questions. Just go down to the cafeteria, grab coffee and donuts around in cafeteria and ask, "how's the digital fast going for you?"
- WEEK OF PRAYER** – I cannot communicate how deeply I am looking forward to our week of prayer April 6-12. We are approaching it differently than we have ever done.
- Sunday April 6** –2 weeks from today - we will cut the service back a bit to create some additional space for us to pray together to kick off the week.
- Monday-Thursday** – nightly prayer meetings at the 133. We are asking CGs to come to the 133 instead of their normal gathering that week. We'll have worship, some guidance, and then an organic and open prayer time.
- Friday 4pm** will begin 24 hours of prayer. Our goal is to have 2 people pray each hour for the 24 hours. That's 48 people. I think we can fill it and I think we can have more.
- There will be some differences to this whole week. Not only is it the first time we have ever taken on a 24 hour prayer meeting, we are setting aside a room on the first floor as a prayer room. We are taking inspiration from the 24-7 prayer ministry which launched prayer rooms in England 25 years ago and has now spread to over half the nations on earth. We are setting that room up with some different lighting and decorations. We will be putting up paper on the walls to write prayer requests, Scripture, or to draw on (if you are an artist this is your time to shine!) all as part of prayer. We'll have music and spaces to sit or kneel.
- For the Monday-Thursday prayer meetings we'll also set aside the front room and some other spaces at the 133 for prayer since we are asking CGs to come.
- Saturday (April 12-5pm)** Night of worship and prayer right here at 5pm. Now, why are we doing this? I mean prayer is good but why are we inviting the whole church into this kind of week.
- I mentioned a couple of weeks ago that I look out at the world, at signs across our nation, and things happening here in Boston and I am increasingly convinced that we may be on the front end of an historic movement of God, one that may very well be written about a generation or two from now. I went to a global church planting conference this week with Tyler and Fady and there were people from all over the world. I will share some of these stories in the weeks ahead but let me say this as clearly as I can: GOD IS UP TO SOMETHING. This isn't just anecdotal evidence but statistical realities pointing to the beginning of period of a global renewal like none of us have ever seen in our lifetimes.
- I have felt this burden for prayer this year and felt deep in my soul that setting aside a week like this is God's will for us in this moment. And if God is doing something I WANT TO BE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE WATERFALL. I don't to miss it. I don't want us to miss it. I awoke at 2am one night at the conference and was praying for about an hour. I ended up on my knees praying for God to pour out his power and glory. I was so pumped I wanted to preach right then. Unfortunately, everyone else was asleep.
- That sounds great, Bland! What do we do? YOU READY??? Pray. We just pray. We confess our sins and repent of our spiritual apathy. We repent of not loving the lost like Jesus loves the lost. We repent of valuing our comfort, our pleasure, and our careers more than we value Jesus. And we pray and plead with God to renew us and renew our city.

- Our theme is Jeremiah 29:12-13 <sup>12</sup>Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. <sup>13</sup>You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.
- God is waiting to meet us! God is waiting for us to join him in what he wants to do in our city, in our workplace and in our school. So, go to our events page, and add the details to your calendar. Register for the 24 hours of prayer and we will send you a link to sign up for a slot. Find a friend and own that hour. I'm signed up for 3am. I am so committed to CoaH praying for 24 hours straight that I am willing to own any hour we don't fill. I don't want to miss what God is doing. **PRAY**

## INTRODUCTION

- 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8 For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was not in vain. <sup>2</sup>But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict. <sup>3</sup>For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive, <sup>4</sup>but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts. <sup>5</sup>For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness. <sup>6</sup>Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ. <sup>7</sup>But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. <sup>8</sup>So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.
- Today, we are in a series through 1 Thessalonians. A couple of weeks ago we began working through this letter from the Apostle Paul to the church in the Roman city of Thessalonica.
  - What I'm going to talk about today is how the gift of the gospel compels and move us to share the gospel with others. THE BIG IDEA: **The value of the gospel determines the gravity of our responsibility.** The glory and significance of the gospel demands we do something with it that corresponds to its weight.
  - The gift determines the stewardship. ILL – I don't know if anyone else remembered the time that cereal boxes came with a toy in them? You'd buy the box and you were supposed to eat all the cereal to get to the toy but I would just dig my hand down through the cereal to get the toy right after opening it. And this toy was as cheap a thing as humanity has ever managed to produce – it was some plastic figurine or a plastic ring. And do you know how many of those plastic rings I still have? ZERO. Not one. But I do have another ring (my wedding ring) – this is a treasure that was given to me 31 years ago in May. INSIDE. It is a treasure and I wear it because I value it.
  - Paul tells us in this passage that the gospel is a treasure. And what you do with the treasure reveals how much you value it. Few of us would call the gospel a plastic cereal box, but do we treat it as a treasure that we have been entrusted with?
  - Tyler shared last week that many of us find the gospel as something to be intellectually believed but not emotionally treasured. I listened to that and thought he could have just dropped the mic and walked off the stage at that point. Of course it is a headset mic so it is a little anticlimactic but you get the point.
  - LISTEN – if you are a Christian you have been given the greatest treasure any human being can be given and we can give this treasure to others!!! Paul says this treasure has been given to us and it CALLS for certain responses.

**We have the treasure of the gospel. So, we... speak boldly to please God, speak faithfully because we are entrusted, and we speak lovingly because people matter.**

**1. Speak boldly to please God. (vv.2-3, 4b, 5-6)**

- When Paul and Silas arrived in Thessalonica, they weren't coming off a victory lap—they were coming off a time of suffering. Back in Philippi, they had been stripped, flogged, shackled, and locked up—all for setting a young slave girl free in the name of Jesus. They were treated like criminals, humiliated in public, and even denied their rights as Roman citizens.
- Most of us, after enduring that kind of suffering, would think twice before preaching the same message in another city. But not Paul and Silas. Bruised, battered, and still bearing the scars of Philippi, they stepped into Thessalonica and opened their mouths again. They didn't shrink back. They didn't compromise. They didn't water down the message to make it more palatable. No, they dared to boldly proclaimed the gospel, knowing full well that opposition might come again.
- How? Not by human willpower, but with God's help. Their courage wasn't arrogance; it was confidence in the power and worth of the gospel. No amount of threats, persecution, or mistreatment could silence them because they knew the message of Christ was worth more than their comfort, reputation, or even their lives.
- And here's the challenge for us today: What stops us from sharing the gospel? Is it fear of rejection? Fear of discomfort? Fear of conflict? Church, if Paul and Silas, bloodied and bruised, could stand up in a new city and declare Christ again, what excuse do we have? The gospel is unstoppable, and when we trust in God's strength, so are we.
- Speaking the gospel is about God. V.4- **we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts.**
- Our call to share the gospel is NOT about pleasing those around us. Jesus didn't please everyone when he was on earth. You can't please everyone. We are to speak the gospel to others to please God! I think most of us look at this completely wrong. It is a sort of anti-message. We think "I won't share the gospel so I please the people around me and they don't get upset with me." But that reveals we are more concerned about pleasing ourselves than pleasing God. Our focus is in the wrong place.
- Paul says we will speak the gospel boldly when we are focused on pleasing God, not people and certainly not pleasing ourselves. **The value of the gospel determines the gravity of our responsibility.**

## 2. Speak faithfully because we are entrusted. (vv.2, 4)

- v.2 **But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict.**
- What makes someone do this? Why did Paul, Silas, and Timothy go on sharing the gospel after being abused? Why are there brothers and sisters in Nigeria today who are suffering horribly and losing their lives but sharing the gospel faithfully? Why are there former Muslim women in the Middle East risking being cast out of their home and suffering horribly simply to share the gospel with others in their village?
- Paul saw this as a SACRED trust- v.4 **but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, SO WE speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts.**
- Paul says we have been entrusted with the gospel SO WE speak. The gospel demands to be declared! The gospel believed to a person becomes the gospel entrusted to that person.
- 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup>that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup>Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.**

- We have the ministry of reconciliation to God! We have the message of reconciliation! And we are appointed as Ambassadors. Ambassadors don't simply try to relate to the country they go to in a nice way. They go with the authority and trust of the country that sends them!
- God has sent you and me as ambassadors to our neighborhoods, to our workplaces. Students – God has sent you as an ambassador into your schools.
- As long as there is one person in our community who will go to bed tonight without eternal life in Christ, we need to take this sacred trust seriously. We need to be pressing on until every man, woman, and child in our community has the opportunity to hear and respond to the gospel of Jesus. We need to pray to call down support and power from heaven to help us.
- Some of you feel inadequate and keep telling Jesus you don't have the power to share the gospel but you are missing the point. The power isn't you. It isn't your gifting or your intellect. It is the gospel of God, the weight is on him to save. The weight is on us to share it.
- Two analogies – one for the kids. If you stopped at the grocery store and your mom gives you \$20 and tells you to go in and buy food. What would you come out with? What kind of stuff would you buy? Candy? Cookies? Cereal? Ice Cream? Now, imagine that your parent gave you that \$20 but this time they tell you go buy food but this food is going to be for a family that has no money and no food and whatever you buy is going to be the only food they will have today. What would you buy? Maybe some bread and peanut butter. Maybe some eggs and milk. What is the difference – that \$20 now represents a serious trust. It is important what you do with it. **The value of the gospel determines the gravity of our responsibility.**
- ILL – Analogy for adults - you are a physician dying of cancer who had a breakthrough in your personal research and it cures you. A completely new cancer treatment. A different way of looking at it. It turns medical research on its head and is going to cause some people to lose their jobs, drug companies, and cancer centers to lose massive amounts of revenue. The idea of writing this grant proposal and going through the process, of getting pushed back on and questioned, and criticized and even doubted and accused of medical malpractices for your idea seems really scary and overwhelming and difficult. But when it comes down to it, you believe it is the cure because you yourself have been cured of terminal cancer and the treatment is unquestionably avalanche to anyone who is ready to receive it.
- Why do it? Because the weight of the message determines the weight of your resolve to share it.

### **3. Speak lovingly because people matter. (vv.7-8)**

- Matter to God... **John 3:16**.... "God so loved the world that he sent his only Son." There is not one person you will see this week that doesn't matter to God. The saddest most broken person you know matters to God. Your boss matters to God. Your roommate matters to God. Your coworker matters to God. Your friend who is far from God matters to God.
- Paul expresses in vv.7-8 **we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. <sup>8</sup> So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.**
- What a beautiful picture of love and tenderness toward the Thessalonians. This picture of a nursing mother is one who is giving of herself to sustain, strengthen, and give life to her child. Paul is saying, "you mattered so much to us. We so longed for you to receive this gift of eternal life in Christ that we were gentle, and tender, and we shared not just the message but our very selves." Telling them – you matter to me.
- City on a Hill Brookline – we have been entrusted by God with the gospel and planted in a community where only 2% attend a gospel believing church. The people who live in Brookline and Boston matter to God. EVERY... LAST... PERSON. Every child at Lincoln Elementary. Every student at Brookline High. Every college student at BU. Every Brookline town employee,

every researcher. Every musician. Every graphic designer, scientist, and engineer. EVERY LAST PERSON matters to God and should matter to us.

- And this idea should be crystal clear to every person in this room is a Christian. God got the gospel to you because you matter to him. You didn't pick your parents. You didn't orchestrate the life of the person who came to you with gospel message. You didn't place yourself in a place with gospel access and send someone to yourself. GOD DID. He entrusted people with the gospel and they brought it to you.
- I didn't pick my parents to sow the gospel into me my whole childhood. I didn't pick my roommate in college who would model Jesus to me and share the gospel with me. I didn't pick the college ministry that reinforced the gospel to me as I was coming to experience life in Jesus. I mattered to God and he sent the gospel to me through his people.
- People matter to God and God is saying you and I should have that same heart for people. We should speak the gospel not because we feel like it or because it is convenient or easy... it is rarely easy. We should speak it because people matter to God and they should matter to us.

#### CONCLUSION

- A little different – going to ask you all to bow your heads and close your eyes. If you feel comfortable, lay your hands open in your lap.
- If you are a Christian – with your arms open, I want you to imagine God placing the gospel message in your lap. In your hands. In your heart. Receive that image. God has given you this sacred gospel hope for the world. Now, ask God, “Who do you want me to give this gospel this week?” When he gives you that person, imagine yourself giving them this gospel message you are holding. **The value of the gospel determines the gravity of our responsibility.**
- If you are not a Christian, you can receive the gift of the gospel TODAY... God says TO YOU...

“Come, everyone who thirsts,

come to the waters;

and he who has no money,

come, buy and eat!

Come, buy wine and milk

without money and without price.

<sup>2</sup>Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,

and your labor for that which does not satisfy?

Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good,

and delight yourselves in rich food.

<sup>3</sup>Incline your ear, and come to me;

hear, that your soul may live; (Isaiah 55:1-3)

- You can receive life today in Christ. With your arms open, “I want to quietly pray after me. God, I confess all my sin to you. I have run from you. I have ignored you. I have lived life without you. I give all it to you.” Now, I want you to imagine God placing the love of Christ in your arms. Pray after me. “I receive you Jesus. I believe you died for me and rose for me. I receive all you have for me. Fill me with your love. Walk with me and help me follow you.” AMEN.
- SINGING – WHAT A BEAUTIFUL NAME IT IS. I want you to affirm this truth. You will share Jesus this week if you see how beautiful his name is. You will share Jesus this week if you delight in his name and remember there is no one on planet earth beyond the grace of Jesus. No situation too hopeless for him. No darkness too dark for him to overcome. You are doing spiritual warfare as you worship and declare this by faith.

**Prayer team** – SIDE AND BACK CORNER.

**COMMUNION** – You take the bread and the cup as a symbol of taking the gospel, taking Jesus.

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