

*"Go teach, live, and love
like Jesus!"*

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More Than a Slogan

Last Week:

By His Wounds We Are Sent...
To go teach, live and love like Jesus.

How are we sent?
What does it mean to be sent?

How is it possible that the gospel should be credible, that people should come to believe that the power which has the last word in human affairs is represented by a man hanging on a cross? I am suggesting that the only answer, the only hermeneutic [means of interpretation] of the gospel, is a congregation of men and women who believe it and live by it.

- Lesslie Newbigin

...The most evangelistic thing the church can do today is to be the church — to be formed imaginatively by the Holy Spirit through core practices such as worship, forgiveness, hospitality, and economic sharing into a distinctive people in the world, a new social option, the body of Christ.

- Evangelism after Christendom, by Bryan Stone

The gospel story...defines the life of the Christian and the life of the Church, while the life of the Church and the life of the Christian is, correspondingly, a retelling and reinterpreting of that gospel story.

The world has no access to the gospel story other than as it is narrated in the life, worship, and proclamation of the Church...

Through its service and being as witness, the Church is a rendering of the gospel to the world.

- Living the Christian Story by John Colwell

The Church Is...

- Part of the Good News of Jesus.
 - The Bride of Christ.
 - The Body of Christ.
 - The Family of God.
- A People, a Community, a Living Organism intended to bring God's Light, Truth, Peace, and Goodness into all the world and every part of human society.

Acts 2:42-47 (NLT2)

All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer. A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had.

They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity—all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

Acts 4:32-35 (NLT2)

All the believers were united in heart and mind. And they felt that what they owned was not their own, so they shared everything they had. The apostles testified powerfully to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and God's great blessing was upon them all. There were no needy people among them, because those who owned land or houses would sell them and bring the money to the apostles to give to those in need.

Acts 5:1-4 (NLT2)

But there was a certain man named Ananias who, with his wife, Sapphira, sold some property. He brought part of the money to the apostles, claiming it was the full amount. With his wife's consent, he kept the rest. Then Peter said, "Ananias, why have you let Satan fill your heart? You lied to the Holy Spirit, and you kept some of the money for yourself...How could you do a thing like this? You weren't lying to us but to God!"

Acts 6:1 (NLT2)

But as the believers rapidly multiplied, there were rumblings of discontent. The Greek-speaking believers complained about the Hebrew-speaking believers, saying that their widows were being discriminated against in the daily distribution of food.

The Church Has The Power...

- To Unify and Divide.
- To Heal and Hurt.
- To Foster Relationships and Destroy Them.

History and Headlines Reveal The Truth

- The church has broken hearts, disappointed believers and even damaged the faith of some.
- It can be a deeply flawed, sinful, and unhealthy institution, marred by acts of injustice, corruption, abuse, misogyny, and oppression.
- It can be wrecked with bickering and division, celebrity worship and unaccountable leaders, false and shallow teaching, and a Christian industrial complex formed around greed and vanity.

How Do We Become The Church Of God's Intent?

- Acknowledge that we exist to be good news and to proclaim good news in word and actions.
- We exist to be Jesus to the world and to each other.
- As Jesus' representatives, we will seek justice for everyone, serve with humility, live transparent and confessional lives, admit and repent of our failures.
- We will seek to embody a culture that leads to healthy relationships and the goodness that is of God.

Tucked in midst of a series of ten miracles
where Jesus uses his power to save,
transform, rehabilitate and restore wounded
lives. We find the following verse just
before Jesus commissions the twelve to take
this same ministry to
“the lost sheep of Israel.”

Preach the message,
“The kingdom of heaven is near.”

Matthew 9:35-38 (NLT2)

Jesus traveled through all the towns and villages of that area, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And he healed every kind of disease and illness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. He said to his disciples, “The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields.”

Why Pray For More Workers?

- Jesus was telling them that the world is filled with wounded people and they were to be wound healers.
- Many of these disciples were “wounded healers.”
- The church is to be a place that redeems these people.
- There are people all around us that have suffered rejection, intimidation, and victimization that need a safe place where they will be treasure for who they are, God’s image bearers, God’s very good creation.

The Series of Message I Begin Today Are
Meant To Offer Hope And Compassion to
those Jesus Described As “*confused and
helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.*”

This Hope Comes From Being A Church
That Is Intentional About Fostering
A Culture Of *Goodness.*

We Create A Culture
And Then,
That Culture Creates Us.

This Is True Of Families, Churches, Businesses And Communities.

- We learn how to think and behave in ways that are culturally acceptable.
- We learn what is right and wrong, good and bad, by living in a culture that defines these things.
- We learn our moral intuitions, beliefs, convictions in community, in relationship with others.
 - This is also true of a church culture.

Culture Affects Everyone!

- Everyone in the world has been enculturated.
- We are all shaped by our interactions with others.
 - Every church is a distinct culture, formed and nurtured and perpetuated by the ongoing interactions of the leaders and the congregation's members.
- All are responsible, to one degree or another, for the culture of the church of which we are a member.

“A Church Called Tov”
by Scot McKnight and Laura Barringer

Forming a Goodness Culture
that Resists Abuses of Power and Promotes Healing

What Does It Mean To Become A Culture Of Goodness?

Romans 3:10-18 (NLT2)

As the Scriptures say, “No one is righteous—not even one. No one is truly wise; no one is seeking God. All have turned away; all have become useless. No one does good, not a single one.” “Their talk is foul, like the stench from an open grave. Their tongues are filled with lies.” “Snake venom drips from their lips.” “Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.” “They rush to commit murder. Destruction and misery always follow them. They don’t know where to find peace.” “They have no fear of God at all.”

Thus,
Scripture Boldly Denies Our Goodness

And Yet,
God Flips Everything Upside Down And
Calls Us To Both *Do Good* And *Be Good*
And To Be Known For *Good Works*.

We Are Not Good In And Of
Ourselves.

Thus,
It Is Only Possible By The Gracious
And Transforming Power Of
The Spirit Of God.

“The fruit of the Spirit is...goodness...”

Galatians 5:22

The Hebrew Word For Good, Tov,
Occurs More Than
700
Times In Scripture.

Next Week We Will Drill Down On What
Tov Means And Begin To See How It
Should Be Reflected In Our Lives.

In So Doing, We, The Church, Will Learn,
Or Remember, What It Means To Be The
Church, A Place Where The Goodness Of
God Is Experienced.