

A Disciple-making church

Rob Rogers August 14, 2022

Introduction

YOU ARE A SPOON

When you walk into Cold Stone or Baskin Robins — this item is used to give people a taste of the ice cream before they commit to purchasing it,

Our job, the mission of the church, the people of God is to give people a taste, a preview, a glimpse into the goodness of the Kingdom of God; what it looks like living in His kingdom.

Psalm 34:8

Oh, taste and see that the LORD is **good!**

- You know what that means in the original Hebrew, that means you are a spoon. ☺ No, it means that it's our privilege as followers of Jesus, to know and live in the goodness of God, and it's our mission to give others a taste of the goodness of His kingdom.

This is what we've been talking about over the last five weeks, living on mission.

And **today**, I know many of us travel during the summer months, and there are many of you that are new, so first I want to bring everyone up to speed on where we've been. The Lord has been planting seeds in our community that we're already seeing fruit from.

I want to spend a few minutes in review, and then talk about what's coming up for us as a church family.

- The reason this is important for us to talk about in specific terms is because Proverbs warns us...

Proverbs 29:18 (*The Message*)

If people can't see what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves; But when they attend to what He reveals, they are most blessed.

So today, we want to attend to and be attuned to what God has been revealing.

REVIEW:

In April, we stated that based on what Jesus commands in the great commission, Matthew 28 — that we as a church family were going to be about one single thing. And that everything we do is going to align with this one thing.

We're going to be a: **A DISCIPLE-MAKING CHURCH**

Matthew 4:19

Follow Me, - and I will make you - fishers of men.

DISCIPLE: Someone that is following Jesus, being changed by Jesus, and on mission with Jesus.

FOLLOW | CHANGE | MISSION

PERSONAL: I came to know Jesus, not through a church service, or an altar call. I came to know Jesus because of a couple of people that were **FOLLOWING JESUS, BEING CHANGED BY JESUS, AND ON MISSION WITH JESUS** made room for and invited me to join them in that journey.

In all three of our summer sermon series... this is exactly what we've been talking about.

1. **The Gospel Centered Life** – *all about following Jesus. Centering your life on the gospel of Jesus Christ. It's the greatest news in history... that GOD came down and made a way for us to be FREE from sin, to have ABUNDANT LIFE!*
2. **The Transformed Life** – *All about being changed by Jesus – how do we grow to become like Jesus over time.*
3. **Life on Mission** – *the call of the Christian is to participate in the mission of God in our homes, neighborhoods, campuses, communities, and workplaces.*

All the seeds we've been sowing over the last few months — *and that we'll continue to sow long into our future* — are all aligned with us becoming **a disciple-making church (in middle TN) that brings the life of Jesus to individuals, communities, and nations.**

**What we believe will determine how we live.
What we believe shapes who we become.**

Beth Broom writes about the fact that our beliefs are the foundation of our lives... and just like the foundation of a home that is set incorrectly, the more weight you put on that foundation, the more tilted or unsteady the house becomes.¹

“We become what we believe, for better or worse.”²
~ John Mark Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*

“What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.”³
~ A.W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*

They're all reiterating what Jesus said in Matthew 7, contrasting those who build their house on the rock, or on the sand. When the storms come, one will fall, and one will stand. But it's about **your belief and practice**: orthodoxy (belief) and orthopraxy (practice) What you believe, and how you live.

*The American church is not suffering from a lack of information.
The American church is suffering from a lack of application.*

There are three foundational pillars that our house, this family, this body is being built upon.

These three beliefs have and will continue to shape our church family to look more and more like Jesus. They inform how we function, what we prioritize, our decision making, how we engage in relationship with one another, and how we live out and practice the ways of Jesus in a lost, broken and hurting world.

¹ <https://bethmariebroom.com>

² John Mark Comer. *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* (Crown Publishing Group, 2019)

³ A.W. Tozer. *The Knowledge of the Holy* (General Press, Mar 8, 2019)

We believe...The Gospel Changes Everything

Not some things, or most things. EVERYTHING.

Because the gospel isn't only a spiritual transaction that happens when you surrender your life to Christ... the gospel is the good news of the Kingdom that affects every aspect of your life.

It's not ethereal, it's practical. Because the gospel is the news that frees us from all of our efforts of self-justification... it frees us from inferiority AND superiority. The gospel delivers our hearts from all the lies we've believed about God, about ourselves, and about the people around us. It's the news that brings great joy to all people!

The Gospel is the good news of everything that God has done from creation to salvation to our ultimate redemption at the return of Christ.

John 10:10

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

That's the gospel!!! Life to the full!

Here are a few practical ways that Grace Chapel is building on this foundation.

If you're interested in any of the classes, or what we talk through, visit our website at gracechapel.net

EXAMPLES:

1. **Gospel-Centered Preaching and Teaching.** The whole counsel of the word of God. If I or we, in any context in this family — if we ever begin preaching a different gospel — challenge or confront us!
2. **Life Groups** – We want people to live what we're learning together. In our life groups people are taking these things and figuring how the gospel applies to their everyday lives — it's life changing.
3. **Crucial Conversations** – Beginning in October on Sunday mornings, we are going to have some guests for discussions. How the gospel infiltrates and informs how we navigate complex cultural issues and problems we're facing today.
 - a. Walt Heyer will be talking about Gender Identity.
 - b. Shedonkey Johnson will be here from Sierra Leone to talk about Hope for the American Church.
 - c. The Dangers of Progressive Christianity.
 - d. We will not now, nor ever shy away from addressing the hard topics!
4. **Partnering with Pastors** and other area churches to further the gospel in Williamson County. If the gospel is central, then there is no reason for the church to be territorial or competitive. We're all on the same team! So why don't we link arms and move the ball down the field together?
 - a. I had lunch with Randy Lovelace, the Senior pastor at Christ Community, to talk about what the Lord is doing in the church in America. There's another meeting at the end of August with some other area pastors to talk about how we can link arms together in a practical way.
5. **WORSHIP nights**, September 7th — partner with other churches.
6. **Corporate Prayer nights**, Night of Healing November 8th, once a quarter.

**The Gospel isn't just something you believe when you first come to Christ.
It's the whole story of everything that Jesus has done.
It effects every single aspect of life.
The Gospel Changes Everything.**

We believe...Discipleship is the Process

The process of what? The process by which we become like Jesus.

It's not just being discipled that makes us like Jesus, *it's also making disciples that makes us like Christ.*

You might hear that and think... I can't be like Jesus! I'm human... He's God!
To be clear, we're not saying you can BE Jesus. *But IT IS God's desire that you become like Him.*

Luke 6:40

Students are not above their teacher, but all who are fully trained will be like their teacher.

Romans 8:29

For God knew His people in advance, and He chose them to become like His Son.

2 Corinthians 3:18

And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like Him as we are changed into His glorious image.

Ephesians 4:13

...until we all...become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Colossians 1:28

...so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ.

1 John 2:6

...Whoever claims to live in Him must live as Jesus did.

God wouldn't command it if it weren't possible. *He's not setting us up for failure by giving us an unattainable goal.* The Christian life is about being formed into the image of Christ over time... growing to spiritual maturity... becoming like Him.

PROBLEM: Too many people in the church today are more formed by 24/7 news cycle than they are by Christ. The American church is at a turning point.

Dallas Willard once observed that one of the most significant issues of our time was whether people who identified as "Christian" would actually become apprentices, students, and disciples of the ways of Jesus, or if we would just settle for cultural Christianity (having the guise of religion with no ongoing allegiance or commitment to Christ and His Kingdom).⁴

*"The troubling reality is that believers can be deeply committed to being "Christian"
without ever being deeply formed by Christ."⁵*
~ Rich Villoidas

⁴ Dallas Willard. *The Great Omission* (Zondervan, Jun 13, 2006)

⁵ Rich Villoidas. *The Deeply Formed Life* (Crown Publishing Group, Sep 15, 2020)

This is why Jesus called us to be disciples that make disciples. So that we might engage in community with others that are helping us, as we're helping them move further toward becoming like Jesus. Not just doing the things that Jesus did, but thinking the way Jesus thought, feeling the ways Jesus felt, living a life of compassionate and courageous mercy — living out the life that Jesus lived.

"In order to grow in Christlikeness, you'll also need to be part of a community that offers you grace, particularly when you stumble and fall. To offer grace means treating others better than they deserve to be treated. It means looking past faults to give others our praise and support."⁶

- Bill Hull, Christlike: The Pursuit of Uncomplicated Obedience

If our aim is to help one another become more like Jesus, there will be grace to try and fail, and try again. There will be freedom to take risks in loving others the way Christ has loved us. And there will be support, accountability, guidance, and serious camaraderie as we move toward Christlikeness together.

The world doesn't need country club Christians. The world doesn't need Christians that are more committed a fear-mongering news cycle than they are to the ways of Jesus. What the world needs is people that are following Jesus, becoming like Jesus, and carrying out the mission of Jesus. The world needs people that are DEEPLY committed to being formed, molded, and fashioned into the image of Christ — to live out and practice the ways of Jesus.

EXAMPLES of ways we're building on those Foundational Pillars: gracechapel.net

1. Women's Discipleship

- a. We have around 20 mentoring groups that are in a year-long program.
- b. We will begin the next round in January 2023. You can find an application for that on our website on the women's page.
- c. We will also be starting some home prayer groups, in addition to our women's gatherings.

2. Men's Discipleship

- a. Happening through men only Life Groups, and in discipleship groups going through *Discipleship Journey*.

3. Adult Equipping Classes — Welcome Class. Connect Class. Discipleship Class. Total Transformation, all listed on our website.

4. Marriage and Parenting Classes — a way to create space for the gospel to infiltrate marriages and families in a transformative way — discipling one another and your children.

5. New Groups for New People — beginning in September on Wednesday night, from 6:30-8:00.

6. Young Adults — one of the many things the young adults are doing is, Caleb James developed a teaching team — and raising up the next generation of preachers, teachers, leaders, refining one another. *If you're a Young Adult and not connected, you need to get connected here — every Friday night in the barn.*

7. Disciplines of a Disciple — is our next sermon series — talking about the ancient spiritual disciplines practiced by believers, and the rhythms of discipleship that will aid us in becoming more like Christ. This series will culminate in what we're calling our **Discipleship Covenant**.

- a. In April we talked about membership — but we're not calling people to become members of a club. We sense God calling ALL OF US (*ourselves included*) to move toward **an annual covenant commitment with God and one another** — that we will commit ourselves to move into the ways of Jesus, regardless of what local church we participate in. This will be a church-wide invitation to be ALL IN on practicing the ways of Jesus SO THAT, we might

⁶ Bill Hull. *Christlike: The Pursuit of Uncomplicated Obedience* (Tyndale House, Feb 27, 2014)

become like Him. This series will culminate with an invitation to prayerfully consider whether or not you want to, or are ready to make that decision. We're going to press into it as a family.

The Gospel Changes Everything. Discipleship is the Process.

We believe...Everyone Owns the Mission

*"Churches that want to prevail against the gates of hell must learn to see themselves like aircraft carriers, not like battleships and certainly not like cruise liners. Members need to learn to share the gospel without the help of the pastor, out in the community, and start ministries, and bibles studies – even churches – in places without them. Churches must become **discipleship factories**, "**sending** **agencies** that equip their members to take the battle to the enemy."*⁷

~ J.D. Greear

What he's saying is every follower, every disciple, takes ownership of how they will live out the mission of Jesus in the world. Everyone owns the mission.

We have a beautiful example of this in the house today... our dear friends that are in town... Pastor Brian and Rochelle Ray from Grace Chapel Navajoa, Mexico. *Watch the service to hear their testimonies about:*

The call to go?

Challenges you've faced? What's happened since then.

Where are things now?

How would you challenge our people to press into this personally?

You don't have to travel to the other side of the world in order to live on mission. In fact, God placed you where you live, where you work, for a purpose that is greater than just your own comfort and earning a paycheck,

- Your own back yard is a mission field!
- Your neighborhood is a mission field.
- Your workplace is a mission field.
- Your school is a mission field.
- Your home is a mission field.
- Your church is a mission field.

And for some of you... maybe, MAYBE God is calling you, like Brian and Rochelle, to be sent out on mission in a foreign land?

- For us, it was God sending us to plant a church in the Bellingham, Washington — it was like a foreign country.
- Brian and Rochelle in Mexico.

It begins with faithful obedience to God here and now.

⁷ J.D. Greear. *Gaining by Losing* (Zondervan, Sep 13, 2016)

EXAMPLES of how we can be involved here at Grace Chapel:

1. For Wilco... Neighboring Maps... easy ways to engage your neighbors
2. Grace Serves
 - a. Volunteer led ministry that serves widows, single moms, elderly.
 - b. If you'd like to serve on this team, or if you have some needs that you could use some help with — email graceserves@gracechapel.net
3. Glow Station — Redeem Halloween! Set up Glow Stations to engage your neighbors.
4. Partnership with the city of Franklin to serve our community!
 - a. Pumpkin Fest
 - b. Main Street Festival
5. Local Partnerships with organizations like:
 - a. One Gen Away, HopeForce
6. International Partners
 - a. Josiah's House in the Dominican
 - b. India, Haiti, Mexico, South Sudan

Conclusion

**THE GOSPEL CHANGES EVERYTHING
DISCIPLESHIP IS THE PROCESS
EVERYONE OWNS THE MISSION**

Our job, the mission of the church, the people of God is to give people a taste, a preview, a glimpse into the goodness of the Kingdom of God.

**This is who we are.
This is where we're going.
This is the foundation that everything else is being built upon.**

We are a disciple-making church – we are people that are **FOLLOWING JESUS, BEING CHANGED BY JESUS, AND ON MISSION WITH JESUS.**

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss how you are like a spoon — giving others a *taste* of the Kingdom of God.
2. Our theme is **following Jesus**, being **changed by Jesus**, and **on mission with Jesus**. After these five weeks of study, where do you think you personally are on this journey?
3. Discuss: What we believe will determine how we live. **What we believe shapes who we become.**
4. Is there something you might become involved with at Grace, other than what you are now doing? Are you missing community? Is there a place/way *that you can contribute?*
5. Discuss: It is God's desire that you become like Jesus. God wouldn't command it if it weren't possible. Where are you in your spiritual growth, becoming like Him?
6. Discuss: Everyone owns the Mission. What is your part?

NOTES