

God's Gospel Shaped Community: Blameless and Harmless Children of God

"Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life," (Phil 2:14-16 ESV)

We live in troubling times. Our culture has moved from respect to hostility to the Gospel and Christ. The question is: How do people in Christ live in such times?

As a Session we believe that God's word answers that question. We call on all our members to hear God's word. Let it be louder in your heart than the noise of our culture.

Do not be surprised. God tells us that the whole human race and the spiritual forces of darkness are always opposed to Christ. Peter said, "Be not surprised . . ." (1 Pet 4:12)

Fear not! God's purpose to advance the Gospel and call his people will succeed. Even imprisonment, says Paul, led to the advance of the Gospel (Phil 1.12).

Remember what the Gospel is. The Gospel is about Christ and his death for sinners. It is not about being religious, moral, conservative or liberal. The Gospel is what distinguishes Christians from Muslims, Jews, and Mormons, and all other religions.

The Gospel is about a relationship with the true and Living God. He is the creator of all that is. It informs us about his laws. His commands are good and right and just.

The Gospel is good news about deliverance from the wrath to come. At the end of this age, everyone will give an account of themselves to God.

The Gospel tells us that God has provided a way for the guilty to be forgiven and made new. God sent the Son to stand in our place and bear our sins. He rose. He reigns.

Remember, if you have not talked about Jesus' death to pay for sin and his resurrection to defeat death, you have not talked about the Gospel.

Be assured, Christ is the power of God to save any and all. Through Jesus, anyone can be released from the dark powers of sin. He cleanses us and makes us citizens in his kingdom.

Trust God that now is a time of opportunity for the Gospel. Our culture is filled with people who worship the false gods of political power, social justice, freedom, sexual license, and wealth.

Believe that God will work to call people out of this darkness into the light of the kingdom of Christ. Explain the Gospel. Welcome all who come to Christ as refugees from this crooked and perverse generation.

Be convinced that the Gospel, prayer, and godliness are the true weapons. Resist the temptation to fight with the weapons of morals and political power.

Make Christ known. Enter into conversation about Jesus. Ask people if you can tell them about the true King.

Commend the Gospel by integrity and love. Each of us serves Christ in our daily callings. God will show the truth of the Gospel through our humble Christ-dependent character at work, in marriage and family. Our unity as a church shows the truth of the Gospel. Pursue godliness. Be courageous. Love your enemies. Live as someone saved by grace.

Pray. We do not wrestle with flesh and blood, but with spiritual forces of darkness. Therefore, says Paul, pray at all times (Eph 6:10-12, 18). Pray for boldness, love, godliness, and fruit. Pray for those who hold office.

This cultural moment, especially in an election year, is an opportunity for the Gospel. Resist the idolatry of politics. Follow the true King and live as a citizen of his kingdom. Turn the conversation to Him.

Be bold, do good, and do not fear the one who can destroy the body. Fear not. Open your heart and home to be a refuge for those God is calling. Abound in doing good and pursuing what is for the good of others. And keep doing so to the end of our days.

We will pray. During this year and perhaps beyond, we will be calling the church to a few days of fasting and prayer for the Gospel to work deeply in us, and for fruit as we make Christ known.

Remember the Story we are part of. The Father sent the Son for us and our salvation. Christ died for our sins on the cross. He rose from death. He rules at God's right hand. Jesus will return to judge the living and the dead. All the kingdoms of this world will fall. Our God and Jesus will rule in a new creation forever.

Live in light of that story.

To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thessalonians 1:11–12 ESV)