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Why am I here?
2 Tim 3:17
August 7, 2016, Adrian Moskal

This week we have the 2nd part of a 2 part sermon. Last week we looked at a passage in 2 Timothy. The section we read in the NLT is titled, "Paul's charge to Timothy." The apostle Paul is giving his protege, his disciple his last instructions. Paul, at this point is awaiting execution and is facing certain death, abandonment by his friends, and the end of his ministry and yet in this letter he points to the hope that is only in Christ.

[2a]

We read 2 Tim 3:14,-16 NLT

¹⁴ But you must remain faithful to the things you have been taught. You know they are true, for you know you can trust those who taught you. ¹⁵ You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.

[2b]

We discussed 4 main takeaways from this passage:

- 1. God's word is an amazing story and it is true.**
- 2. Scripture's truth can lead to Christ and thus to eternal life.**
- 3. Scripture is not truth alone but full of grace and truth. It is a love story. A heroic love story. We learned that his gospel comes with grace, if his word comes only as truth - it leads to judgment but when paired with grace it leads to freedom.**
- 4. All Scripture points to Christ and how we can grow to be more like him. Therefore, if we allow him, Christ will change us through his word.**

Change is an interesting and can be very hard. Our church has gone through some changes over the last few years, months and even weeks. Some of the changes have been cosmetic like the colour of the walls. Some of the changes have been how we conduct our services such as how now we come forward to receive communion and before we served it up and down the aisles. Another change to our service is we introduced two services (traditional service that meets in the chapel, and a contemporary service that meets in the auditorium) and furthermore introduced a coffee fellowship time as these 2 services join together for the message.

There has also been change in direction of ministry and the change has been arrows pointing out and not in. I will give you an example of what I mean:

This week our Director of Maintenance came into my office and we were discussing what he has been working on. I don't know if you know, but Irwin went to the hospital the week before last because he was digging up a root and he hurt himself with a pick axe and he needed 6 stitches when all was said and done. You see, Irwin was digging up shrubs called "Crown of Thorns". I had no idea what that was until he told me where they were. You see they were beside most walkways. I knew exactly what they were when he told me that. They were planted there to keep the "kids" out of the flower beds. They are prickly, nasty bushes. They absolutely did their job. Who would go in there with these bushes. They are the most unwelcoming shrub you can imagine.

Irwin has been pulling these out over the last while. You see, he sees them as unwelcoming and decided we needed a more welcoming outlook. That is great how he looked at the gardening and saw how we could be more welcoming and gracious. I can appreciate that, when I came on staff we had a Building Use Policy that had about 8 points to limit the use of our building by outside parties. The last of those points was that it could be rented only if there was no other option in town. Unwelcoming and not very loving. It is not like that anymore as we see many groups use the building (Garden club, Parkinsons Support group, Census training, voting station, and possibly blood donor clinics in the future).

The focus of most of our ministries has changed or tweaked.

These ministry changes that we have implemented have led to questions about direction. "We talk a lot about doing evangelism but what about other teaching? Isn't there anything else?."

It depends on what is the purpose of your change? Is your purpose to make you happy? Is your purpose to make you safe, content? Because today we are talking about why are you here? Why are you here this morning? Why does God have you in your neighbourhood in Campbell River? Why are you here on earth. That is the oldest question in human history. People have been seeking that answer forever.

Verse 16 points to what change Jesus wants to do in us through his word:

[3]

2Tim 3:16 NLT

¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.

Scripture points out the change that Jesus wants to do in our lives.

Jesus shares in Matthew 25 what a changed heart will look like in our actions:

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Matthew 25:31:46 NLT

³¹ “But when the Son of Man* comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit upon his glorious throne. ³² All the nations* will be gathered in his presence, and he will separate the people as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will place the sheep at his right hand and the goats at his left.

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³⁴ “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. ³⁶ I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.’

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³⁷ “Then these righteous ones will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? ³⁹ When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?’

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⁴⁰ “And the King will say, ‘I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters,* you were doing it to me!’

⁴¹ “Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, ‘Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons.* ⁴² For I was hungry, and you didn’t feed me. I was thirsty, and you didn’t give me a drink. ⁴³ I was a stranger, and you didn’t invite me into your home. I was naked, and you didn’t give me clothing. I was sick and in prison, and you didn’t visit me.’

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⁴⁴ “Then they will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and not help you?’

⁴⁵ “And he will answer, ‘I tell you the truth, when you refused to help the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were refusing to help me.’

⁴⁶ “And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life.”

This passage is not saying feed the homeless and you go to heaven or don’t and you go to hell. It is not saying that. It does point to those with a heart that has been changed by Jesus and those that it hasn’t.

About 5 years ago or so, I visited a church on the lower mainland that had a benevolent ministry that reached the poorest of the poor in Cloverdale. It was led by a former Vancouver Cop and this is the story of how Jesus changed his heart, his life and his mission. Pay careful attention to the role that Christ played, scripture played, and cooperative heart plays. I am just going to read an excerpt of what he shared with me.

It was a hot mid-week morning when my partner Mark and I received a Warrant for the arrest of a 14 year old boy wanted for breaching his Court Conditions. We arrived at his home where he lived with his aunt and grand mother, Warrant in hand. The front door was open revealing the living room. The room was decorated with empty liquor bottles, drug paraphernalia and trash. His guardians and a not known male were sleeping haphazardly on the furnishings. We knocked on the door frame and announced our presence. There was no response. We knocked ever harder. Still no response and it was quite apparent that the occupants were "sleeping it off". With gusto we yelled, "Vancouver Police!" and pounded on the open door. Not even a stir however I heard a rustling on the other side of the living room wall. I took a step inside and peered around the corner. There on the kitchen floor sat a two year old little girl. Her face, hands and clothes were filthy. Surrounded in cat feces, she ate spilled Cheerios off the floor. I spontaneously moved in, scooped her up in my arms and held her close. She stank. I went from Police Detective to a caring protective dad in blink of an eye. Overwhelmed, I wanted to take this beautiful little girl home and out of this situation. To my chagrin, after waking her mom and speaking with Social Services, it apparently "didn't warrant" removal but a home visitation from the Family Ministry. After determining our "Wanted Youth" was not there, we reluctantly left the residence, shaking our heads.

Our call disturbed me deeply. I was haunted by the images of that beautiful little girl eating Cheerios surrounded in cat ****. I was helpless to do anything. I questioned "Why did it bother me?" There was nothing different than what I have seen countless times before. Why do I care? After all, they are authors of their own misfortune? I was so confident I could figure out any problem, solve any crime but something was different. Even in my arrogance, pride and judgment I just could not blame that little girl. It was not fair, it wasn't her fault, and she was not to blame. Help me Lord! And at that moment God began to renew a right spirit within me. It was then my eyes and heart were opened. I saw what a poor reflection of Christ I was. With a new understanding, I read 1 Corinthians 13:2 (my paraphrase or epiphany) it says, "If I have the gift of prophecy (give warnings) and can fathom all mysteries (solve crimes) and all knowledge (know the law), and if I have a faith that can move mountains (give directions to semi-trucks), but do not have love, I am nothing." I cried and couldn't stop crying until I humbled myself and asked for forgiveness for my arrogance, pride and harsh judgment. In my spirit I sensed God saying, "You know nothing of God's love and compassion for others. You have received so many blessing in your life that you had no control over, yet, you pass judgment on those who have received no blessings in their lives whatsoever. The love and support you received, you now hold over others, in arrogance. How dare you condemn those who never had that opportunity or home life you experienced. You know nothing of their pain and suffering. They are just trying to survive. I pleaded, "Lord, what can I do?" And the Holy Spirit impressed upon me, "Change your Heart!"

How do I change? First, I took my Badge number off my shirt and jacket and replaced it with my name. Rather than just remembering peoples name and criminal history, I learned of their families, dreams and more importantly why and when their life went

sideways. I would ask, “What would it take to make a life course correction?” Their responses, well, were eye opening. They were not much different than me except they were never given the tools to deal with life’s turmoil. My new strategy of connecting at a heart level resulted in an open dialogue with those I never previously related to. Trust was beginning to form between us. I began receiving unsolicited information on criminal activity which resulted in crimes being solved, the recovery of stolen property and weapons. My superiors began to notice. I received awards, recognitions and opportunities to speak nation wide via TV, radio, magazine interviews and to Members of Canada’s Parliament in Ottawa, on Youth Crime and Prevention. Some co-workers acknowledged my results but disapproved of my methods of “having to know the bad guys.” I reassured them, “You won’t.” Many missed my sarcasm or my point; it can no longer be “us versus them” if we want change in our community, policing needs a Change of Heart.

The ripple of God’s work on my heart continued. Mondays were my regular day off and it was one Monday that I stopped by my church to speak with its head (the Main Secretary of course – inside church joke!). During our conversation we were interrupted by a “street person” wanting assistance. Unfortunately, our Pastors were tied up and unable to break away from their tasks or programs. Our secretary was then left to discern the persons need and how to respond accordingly. Afterwards, she confided that although she was capable of doing the task she wasn’t very comfortable with it. Without hesitation, I said, “Hey that sounds like something I could do. I certainly have the training and experience.” Almost immediately I thought, “What am I thinking?” Did I just volunteer to spend my “day off” talking with “street people”? Am I nuts? But my spirit replayed, “Lord, what can I do?” God’s truth again spoke to me, in a paraphrased of (Esther 4) “For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews (the marginalized around you) will perish... And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?” Greg, you are that person.

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True heart change leads to change in our actions. Did you notice how the questions he had pointed to scripture, which pointed to Jesus, which pointed to heart change, and finally, pointed to change in action.

We finally come to our passage:

[10]

2Tim 3:17 NLT

17 God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.

God wants to use you in his redemption story of the world. His word points to the change he wants to do in your heart so that you can be used in his redemptive plan.

God wrote you an amazing true story through history and 1 bible in 66 books to point to Christ.

He wants to change your heart to reconcile you to God and allow you to be a part of the story of how he redeems the world.

[11]

Gal 5:22-23 NLT

²² But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

He wants to make you like himself. If you let him, he wants to make you more loving, more joyful, more peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle and having self control.

For what purpose?

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John 13:34-35

³⁴ So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. ³⁵ Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

[13]

Our change is so that the world can also find Jesus love, grace and acceptance.

[14]

Remember last week I shared the reminder at the top of every sermon curriculum that we use in growth groups.

[Remember, the main goal of each Growth Group is to allow God’s Word to change your heart so that others would see Jesus in you and be likewise changed to be like him. He wants to change the world through us]

Only Christ can do this. Only Jesus can change us so that others will see that change and thus want to meet him.

This is our purpose. “Leading others to become committed followers of Jesus Christ”.

This is our purpose in every ministry, in everything we do. There is nothing else. This is our purpose of each time each growth group meets. If you were not in a growth group last year, I have a sign up in the lobby. I don’t have all the days and times yet. But there is a sign up we will do our best to fit you into a group over the rest of the summer for a group that starts in September. If you can post what nights you have available, as well, that will help.

Because Jesus has a plan for us. He shared it with the disciples right before he ascended to heaven.

[15]

Matthew 28:18-20 NLT

¹⁸ Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations,* baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

These are our marching orders. This is the change he wants to do in us and through us.

[16]

2Tim 3:17

¹⁷ God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.

This is your purpose - God has a plan for you and your life and he wants to do amazing things through you. He wrote you a book that points to him and points to the change he wants to do in you and through you. He wants you to be a part of the most amazing story ever heard.