

Introduction: Pg. 976 (Office hours)

Have you ever broken something? We all have, right? I can remember playing Frisbee Tag in my grandmother's yard with my cousins, and one of the last things she said was: "Don't play close to the storm door." She said this because it had a fragile piece of pane glass." Well, as you might imagine, though we were not playing right next to the door, one of those perfect throws came right for my head, and being the competitive guy that I am, it wasn't going to hit me and it didn't! BUT it did collide perfectly square in the storm door and seconds later we all faced the wrath of Frances Turley. Can anybody identify with that story?

Or what about this one: One day in March of 2012, we had some friends up to visit and were in the dining room talking about going out later that night. I needed to grab something in the kitchen, so rather than leaving my little idol on the table, I stuffed in my pocket halfway. Somehow, it weaseled out, landed on the top left corner and when I went to pick it, just hoping to breathe a sigh of relief, I saw this: ****PIC** iPhone screen.**

My first thought of course was not: "How much is this going to cost to replace or fix?" BUT "What am I going to tell Marsha?" Those adult moments when you feel like a little kid with your tail tucked between your legs are awesome!

We all experience brokenness. Brokenness describes something whose original design has been distorted and it is no longer working properly. This can be something as simple as one of our possessions, but more dramatically, brokenness touches every area of our lives: Relationships. Work. Technology. The T. Organizations. Our Health. There is nothing *in our world* left untouched by the effects of brokenness.

BUT we also must come to grips with the reality that deep down there is something broken within us. We do not have consistent thought patterns that reflect God's ways. We often possess conflicting and corrupt desires. Our actions do not match up with the standards we set for ourselves, much less the ones God has graciously given us.

Brokenness is a riddle that has plagued our existence from the very beginning. What complicates matters even further is that sometimes what we break can not be restored. The damage is irreparable. Other times it can be fixed, but typically a significant cost is involved.

FCF: When we are at our best, we all want to fix that which is broken in our world. BUT we know we are limited in our resources, strength, and ingenuity to do so. Even when we see one thing restored, we know the reality of brokenness looms just around the corner.

Before you get too discouraged, what if I told you God has provided a solution for the brokenness in our world. What if I told you that his solution was 100% comprehensive? There is nothing that his restorative power will leave undone. What if I told you that his answer was 100% fail proof? There is no possible way what he heals will be broken again. What if I told you that God was so benevolent, so good, so gracious toward us, that not only will he bring this restoration, but he has already initiated it through the life, death and resurrection of his Son, Jesus Christ.

This morning we are going to consider part 2 of . . .

"Our Identity in Christ: Part 2"
Ephesians 1:7-14

In light of God's plan to unite everything that is broken in our world through Jesus, we have more reasons to...

The Point: Praise God for our identity that is forever made whole because of the cross of Christ.

Read 3-14

Preview: This morning we are going to look at 1) what God has done to heal what is broken within us, 2) what he has done to bring cosmic reconciliation, and finally, 3) the inheritance we are to God and the inheritance that awaits us in Christ. All of these are reasons to praise God. . . Here's the first reason we can praise God.

I. Praise God that *we are* redeemed out of our brokenness and forgiven IN CHRIST. 7-8

We see this in vv. 7-8.

- This flows out of what we saw last week. God, in his sovereign grace, set his love on those who would receive Christ before the creation of the world and he predestined us to be adopted into his spiritual family. Remember **this PICTURE**. Forever remember, we are IN CHRIST.
- Now Paul goes on to say, we have **redemption**
- Redemption refers to being delivered from imprisonment or bondage.
- The most significant picture of redemption in the OT is the Exodus, where Pharaoh treated God's people like slaves. . . . Israel's liberation story serves as a great precursor to God's greater story of redemption in Jesus.
- When someone was redeemed, there typically had to be a ransom price. For the Christian, the ransom price was the blood of Christ.
- So wait? Is salvation free? YES! Is salvation free? No. Not to Jesus. It cost him his life.
- At the cross, Jesus accomplished our redemption by giving his perfect life as a substitute so that we do not have to experience the penalty of our sin, death and eternal separation from God. He took the bullet for us.
- Listen to the words of **1 Peter 1:18-19**: "***you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.***"
- Why such a precious and costly gift? Because our sin against God was so great.

- T: And through this work of redemption for his elect, God can extend **forgiveness** to his people. Forgiveness is part of God's redemptive work.
- Forgiveness refers to cancellation of a financial debt or legal charge.
- Here is **the irony of the cross** . . . **We owed God a debt we could never pay, and Christ paid a debt he did not owe.**
- Just think about it: all of our sin - all of *your* sin: every twisted thought, every misguided word, every selfish act, every moment of pride, lust, greed, anger, self-glory. Jesus voluntarily went to the cross that he might be slaughtered like a sacrificial lamb and looks at us and says, "Look at what I have done for you." I took care of the debt. It's gone. Erased. Eradicated. The wrath and judgment that you deserved has been (as my boy Pastor Jon Chasteen taught me yesterday) exhausted.
- Do you think you are beyond the grasp of God's gift of forgiveness? "You know Tanner, you just don't know what I've done, everything that I've been through."
- If that is how you are thinking, please listen to me carefully, because what I'm about to say, I say with complete love: "Don't be so arrogant to presume that Christ's death was insufficient for the measure of your sin."
- *The measure of Christ's love extends way beyond the measure of your sin!* "**There is more mercy in Christ than sin in us.**" - **Richard Sibbes**
- If you are not yet in Christ, receive the gift he offers you today.
- If you are in Christ, when you partake of communion this morning, stand in awe of God's great love to cancel your debt and grant you redemption.

This all happened "according to the riches of his grace."

- What is the cause of our redemption? Grace. The wealth of God's generosity toward us in Christ is highlighted by the term "riches."

- They have been *lavished* on us. Poured out abundantly. We are swimming in the oceanic riches of his grace because of the cross of Christ.
- God has done this and also given us “all wisdom and insight.” We have the ability to grasp his divine purposes because he has enlightened us to see this grand mystery, which is where he takes us in verse 9.

T: #2

II. Praise God that *we are* part of his cosmic unification plan IN CHRIST. 9-10

Read vv.9-10

In simple terms: here’s the gist of vv. 9-10.

- Paul says, that God has a mystery. But it is a mystery that is being made known . . . To who? You got it. Those IN CHRIST.
- Mystery refers to something once concealed now revealed. The curtain on the stage God’s dramatic work in history is being lifted, and it reveals “a glorious goal” (O’Brien). And behind the curtain stands Jesus. God makes his eternal purpose known in Christ and God fulfills his purpose in Christ.
- What is this purpose plan? He is uniting, bringing together everything that is broken in our world through Jesus. This is personal and this is way, way, way beyond us. The unification project God is orchestrating in Jesus is truly cosmic. You can call it galactic.

Let’s break this down

- The scope of what Christ is doing “all things” is clarified or should we say, amplified, by the next phrase: “things in heaven & things on earth.”
- This is not mere “rhetorical flourish” for Paul (O’Brien). He is referring to two separate spheres where Christ wields his influence and he is going to keep bringing them up as we work through Ephesians.
- “Things in heaven” seems to primarily refer to *the powers of darkness that oppose God and his plan of redemption*, things we cannot see.
- “Things on earth” seems to primarily refer to *the church and the restoration of God’s good creation*, things that we can see.
 - We first observe this on a personal scale where God reconciles people who should have never been united to him *and also* reconciles people who would have never been united to one another if not for the gospel.
 - I love Martin Luther King Jr. Day because it is an opportunity to celebrate the great work Dr. King spearheaded for civil rights and against racial discrimination.
 - But I also love it because when I think about racial reconciliation, it reminds me of the gospel that says, not simply that #blacklivesmatter although it most certainly screams that, but it also screams #everylifematters!
 - God can take two totally different people. It doesn’t matter if they are Black or White, Asian or South American, a Nerd or a Patroits Fans, he can bring them together as one because our lives have been redefined in Jesus. He has given us a new identity and part of that is seeing them as he sees them as those made in the image of God who possess inherit dignity and worth. Remember that tomorrow and every day.
 - But we also will one day observe this on a much grander scale when God restores his good creation. Romans 8 says that creation is longs to be set free from its bondage to corruption. Simply put, even the world we live in is broken and the hope of the gospel says it too will be fixed and made whole!
 - Everything will be restored to God’s original design. There will no longer be the distortion and disintegrating effects of sin, but everything will be harmonious and whole. Because everything has been brought together through the Messianic glue of Jesus.
 - {{**Vinoth Ramachandra** talks about how this vision of creation and recreation is unique to Christianity amongst the world religions: “**So our salvation lies not in an escape from this**

world but in the transformation of this world . . . You will not find hope for the world in any religious systems or philosophies of humankind. The biblical vision is unique. That is why when some say that there is salvation in other faiths I ask them, 'What salvations are your talking about?' No faith holds out a promise of eternal salvation for the world the way the cross and resurrection of Jesus do.'}}

- Christ's transformative work can and will touch the smaller matters of life: #Momprobs, #dadprobs, #familyprobs, #friendprobs, #nurseprobs #docprobs, #studentprobs, #teacherprobs, #parkingprobs (Hello Medford!). It's all going to be rectified in the end, because of Jesus.
- On a more serious level: Sin, Sickness, Disease, Earthquakes, Murderers and Terrorists. Do you think the gospel has any hope to speak to people in Paris and Nigeria and Yemen today. Yes. Yes. Yes.

T: When you get swept up in all of the details and worries of this life, look to the cross and remember that God is making all things new. God has already put this plan into motion through the cross of Christ, but we have not yet seen the fullness of it yet. That will come when Jesus returns to restore all things. Finally . . .

III. Praise God that *we are* his inheritance and receive an inheritance IN CHRIST (11-14).

Read 11-14

*First, notice that **We are God's possession, his inheritance (11)!***

- In studying this passage more closely, I believe (with the majority of scholars) that the phrase "obtained an inheritance" refers to God's possession of us. We are his. We are chosen. We are adopted. We have been predestined to belong to him! An amazing thought for sure.
- But when did this happen? Check out v. 13. 1) when we heard the word of truth, the gospel & 2) believed. If you are in Christ, this your story?
- *Now, because of the Spirit dwelling in us, **We are also receiving an inheritance from God (14)!***

T: If this is how you came to experience all of these blessings in Christ, how cruel would it be for us to never tell others the word of truth, the gospel, so that they might also believe and experience every spiritual blessing in Christ?

- I was so encouraged to see many of us made commitments to take steps forward in sharing the gospel in 2015. That's why I want to encourage us this morning.
- Many of us do not regularly tell others about Christ because we do not feel like adequate or we don't know a natural way. I understand that no one is walking into the office tomorrow or on the T and saying "HEY SINNERS, JESUS LOVES YOU!!" We would *not* recommend that, ok? :) We want to be bold not stupid. :)
- So I think what we need, then, are tools that can help us converse more naturally about Christ, and I want to share one with you that I like and am beginning to use more and more.

Equipping: Build Time - - 2015 Vision Love all people through communicating the gospel with humble boldness.

3 Circles -

1) **God's Design.** Was perfect in the beginning. He designed a world that was perfectly harmonious and enjoyable where man experienced perfect relationships with him and one another. Tragically, God's good design was distorted and corrupted by our <<<**sin**>>> and now

2) **Brokenness.** Has entered our lives and our world. We are now on a quest to discover ways for our brokenness to be healed . . . This usually lead to greater brokenness. BUT brokenness does not have to be an altogether bad thing, because it can show us our need for God, the one who can heal our brokenness. God does it through the . . .

3) **Gospel.** Jesus came to rescue our brokenness. Through his death we can experience life. Through the pain he experienced on the cross, we can be healed. Every person must >> **repent** (change) and **believe** (trust), in Christ's death and resurrection. And for everyone who does, they are to . . .

>>> **Recover & Pursue God's Design**

When God heals us, he sends us back into a broken world to share this good news with other broken people.

Listen, you can take any topic under the sin, because everything, at some level, experiences brokenness: work, relationships, family, sex, finances, leadership, organizations, abuse, justice, dreams. This framework, that you can jot down on a napkin over lunch or pull up as an app on your phone, is a simple way to get into a gospel conversation with someone.

T: Now, someone may say, I get it, but I'm still really, really uncomfortable. I've never done this before, or I haven't done this in months. Let me say this: ***Nothing motivates sharing the gospel like the gospel itself. Let me explain . . .***

1) Be motivated by the truth of gospel.

- This gift God has given us through the gospel, the finished work of Christ on the cross should motivate us to share that same gospel.
- Just look at our 2015 vision statement again concerning this call to tell others the gospel:
 - Love all people. What will move you to love? Experiencing a greater love and grace in the gospel. We love because he first loved us.
 - The picture is of being filled with grace to the point that we are simply overflowing of what God has deposited into us.
 - As Jesus told his disciples in Matthew 10:8: "Freely you have received, freely give."
 - What about humility? The gospel.
 - What about boldness? The gospel.

2) Be moved by the power of the gospel.

- Nothing less than the power of God is required to live the Christian life and to do the work of God. Verse 13 tells us the power of God is available to us because the *very presence* of God dwells in us.
- We have been sealed with his Spirit. We have been stamped, marked, branded if you will. It shows that we belong to God and it carries the idea of protection.
- This seal is permanent. Paul says, the Spirit is the down Payment, the guarantee of our inheritance.
 - In other words, Our salvation is on lockdown. To touch me you have to go through God, and that ain't happening.
- The reward of God awaits us, and it is more than we can imagine.

Conclusion:

How did we get in Christ? It was because of "the purpose of his will." ALL BY HIS GRACE

Why has God brought us in Christ? "For the praise of his glory." ALL FOR HIS GLORY

All of this is for his glory!! All of it. Our salvation. The Restoration of All things. The inheritance that we will receive. It is all for his glory.

Verse 12. "To the praise of his glory." Boom!

Verse 14. "To the praise of his glory." Boom!

He already said this in verse 6.

This truth should *encourage* us because we could have no higher purpose in life than reflect the brilliance of God, but it should also *challenge* us, because we have no greater responsibility.

Simple 7-word prayer: **"God, my life is for your glory."**