

Mission sermon
September 2018
Romans 1:1-15

1. Introduction

- a. GCF was founded by Bill Farley in the Spring of 2002 with five families...
 - i. Within a few years GCF grew to 130 people. My dad needed help, so the elders hired me.
 - ii. In the fall of 2013 we grew to around 400 people while we were meeting near GU.
 - iii. At that point, over 150 people drove to GCF from north of Francis.
 - iv. It seemed like the right time to launch GCF north. So we did!!!
- b. GCF north celebrates five years this October.
 - i. At one point we were pushing 250 in attendance...
 - ii. But, in the last year we have lost over 60 people (all members or children of members).
 - iii. Most of these people moved away from Spokane for jobs.
 - iv. This was challenging...
- c. Planting a church is a lot of work...
 - i. Set up and tear down for five years (showing up at 7am and staying until 12:30pm at our latest facility).
 - ii. No place to call home for five years. This is our 4th or 5th location depending on how you count.
 - iii. Some of you left loved ones at GCF central.
 - iv. Some of you live closer to GCF central.
 - v. Some of you have family at GCF central.
 - vi. Many, many people have visited GCF north over the years, but not many stick around... there are many reasons for this...
 - vii. Sometimes planting a church is very discouraging.
- d. All of this (the work load, the money involved, the discouragement, etc...) forces us to ask an important question?
 - i. Why plant a church in N. Spokane??? Are we crazy? Are we masochistic?
 1. There are a few things that are worth sacrificing everything for...
 2. What are those things?
 3. I want to talk about three of those values this morning.
 - a. Gospel
 - b. Community
 - c. Mission
 - ii. Are these the only things that matter? No.
 1. Are there other things that we think are very important? Yes.
 2. But I think these three things sum up what GCF is all about...
 - a. Mission statement...
 3. These three things are worth sacrificing everything for.
 4. These three things are the foundation of GCF and have been important from day one.
 5. Unfortunately, these three things are rare in the American church.
 6. The apostle Paul was also passionate about these three things...
- e. That brings us to Romans 1:1-15.

- i. In the introduction of his letter to the church in Rome we see these three values or themes... what are they?
 1. Gospel
 2. Community
 3. Mission....

1. Gospel

a. The content of the gospel!

- i. What exactly is the gospel??? A gospel is literally a proclamation or announcement of good news. But what is the content of the gospel?
- ii. **According to verse 3, the gospel includes Christ's birth.**
 1. **Romans 1:1-3 (ESV)** — **1** Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, **2** which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, **3** concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh
 2. Jesus was born of a human mother in the line of King David.
- iii. **According to verse 4, the gospel includes Christ's resurrection.**
 1. **Romans 1:4 (ESV)** — **4** and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord,
- iv. **According to verse 4, the gospel includes Christ's death.**
 1. If he rose from the grave than he died.
 2. When he died, he died in our place as our sin bearing substitute.
- v. **According to verses 3-4, the gospel includes Christ's ascension.**
 1. V. 3-4 allude to the fact that Jesus now reigns in power from David's throne at the right hand of God the father.
 2. Someday, he will return to make all things right.
- vi. Summary...
 1. The gospel is the good news of the birth, life, death, resurrection, and return of Jesus Christ...
 2. Application...
 - a. the gospel is not good advice it is good news.
 - b. The good news is entirely out side of ourselves.
 - c. It comes from God and it has nothing to do with our behavior.

vii. *The content of the gospel*

b. The centrality of the gospel!

- i. **Romans 1:13-15 (ESV)** — **13** I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles. **14** I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. **15** So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.
- ii. Paul was eager to preach the gospel to the Christians who were in Rome. Paul is writing to the church in Rome, a Christian audience, and he tells them that he is eager to preach the gospel to them. But Paul, they are already Christians they don't need the gospel. They need to move past the basics, move on to other things.

iii. Paul never moved on from the gospel-

1. **1 Corinthians 15:3-4 (ESV) — 3** For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, **4** that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,
2. **Galatians 6:14 (ESV) — 14** But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.
3. **1 Corinthians 2:2 (ESV) — 2** For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.
4. Now of course Paul addressed other topics- Marriage, Sexuality, the Trinity, Work, Divisiveness, etc.. But they were all explained in light of the person and work of Christ.

iv. The gospel is our central message and only hope... this is why we have a passion for gospel centrality.

c. **Trends...**

- i. Trends fascinate me...
- ii. Do you remember the swatch watch trend?
- iii. Do you remember the keds shoes or Stan Smith shoes trend?
- iv. Do you remember the cabbage patch kids' trend?
- v. Birkenstocks...
- vi. Bell bottoms, boot cut, skinny jeans...
- vii. Cabbage patch dolls???
- viii. How about the Kendama trend? I could not find one... they sold out everywhere...
- ix. Gospel centrality is really trendy...
 1. Gospel centered parenting, small groups, emotions, etc....
 2. Everyone wants to get on the gospel centered band wagon...
 3. Schools, para church ministries, mission agencies, and publishing houses are all claiming to be gospel centered...
 4. But what does it actually mean to be gospel centered? Gospel centered churches are very rare...

d. **Illustration...**

- i. There are many types of churches in Spokane....
- ii. There are gospel denying churches.
 1. I'm thinking of various cults... or churches that flat out deny central doctrines of the Christian faith... Liberal churches that deny penal substitution...
 2. LDS, Christian Science, JW
- iii. Gospel redefining churches.
 1. These are church that redefine the gospel...
 2. The gospel is the good news that God wants to make you healthy, happy, and materially rich...
 3. The gospel is the good news of social action, building peace gardens, building houses for the poor, feeding the hungry, helping orphans, etc...
- iv. Gospel assuming churches.

1. These churches are doctrinal orthodox
 2. The gospel is left out of the sermons, since the leaders assume that people already know the gospel.
 3. Instead, they address felt needs.
 - a. Five steps to a better marriage
 - b. Three steps to financial freedom...
 - c. Practical teaching about life.
 4. When Jesus is mentioned he is a means to an end, he is there to help you meet your life goals.
- v. Gospel embarrassed churches...
1. Believe the gospel.
 2. Afraid to talk about it for fear of making seekers feel uncomfortable...
 3. Wrath, blood, and repentance are rarely mentioned from the pulpit.
- vi. Gospel committed churches.
1. These churches are committed to defending the gospel.
 2. They can define it very carefully using all the right theological terms.
 3. But...
 4. Once the gospel is explained to unbelievers, the pastor moves on to other things...
 5. These churches may have a theological conviction that Christ should not be preached from the OT because that would violate authorial intent...
 6. By the way... Making an alter call or evangelistic appeal at the end of a sermon does not make one gospel centered...
- vii. Gospel centered churches.
1. Gospel centered churches assume....
 - a. The unbeliever needs the gospel...
 - b. The believer needs the gospel...
 2. The gospel does not just get us right with God, but it shapes our entire life moving forward.
 3. The gospel is the engine for sanctification.
 4. The gospel reshapes our ethic
 5. It is the power that drives our lives (marriage, parenting, giving, serving, evangelism, etc...)
 6. Unfortunately, true gospel centrality is rare...
- e. Application...
- i. This means that the gospel is not the ABCs of the Christian life it is the A to Z of the Christian life...
 - ii. We are saved by believing the gospel, and we are transformed by believing the gospel. We grow as we increasingly apply the gospel to every area of our lives.
 - iii. If someone asks one of our members, "what is GCF all about???" I hope they say, "the gospel of Jesus Christ."
 - iv. As a Christian, you will never reach a stage in your life when you need to stop applying the implications of the gospel to your life.
- v. *We need help to do this. This brings us to our next point...*
- f. *Gospel.....*

2. Community

- a. Paul loved community!
- b. You can hear the word community in the word communion.
- c. Paul saw his great need to commune with the saints.

- d. We clearly see his passion for communing with the saints in Romans 1:8-12.
- e. **In verse 8, Paul gives thanks for the saints!**
 - i. **Romans 1:8 (ESV) — 8** First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world.
- f. **In verses 9-10, Paul prays for the saints!**
 - i. **Romans 1:9-10 (ESV) — 9** For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you **10** always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you.
- g. **In verse 11, Paul longs to see the saints!**
 - i. **Romans 1:11 (ESV) — 11** For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you—
- h. **In verse 11, Paul longs to strengthen the saints!**
 - i. **Romans 1:11 (ESV) — 11** For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you—
- i. **In verse 12, Paul longs to be strengthened by the saints!**
 - i. **Romans 1:12 (ESV) — 12** that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine.
 - ii. Not only does Paul want to encourage the Romans he also wants to be encouraged by them. Fellowship goes both ways. Fellowship is not watching the Seahawks game, going shopping together, or playing Wii Grand Slam Tennis. Fellowship is sharing life together so that Spiritual good may result.
- j. **The point...**
 - i. Paul realized that the Christian life was intensely communal...
 - ii. Paul does not give us even the slightest impression that he can live the Christian life on his own.
 - iii. In fact, he gives the exact opposite impression.
 - iv. If Paul saw his need to be intimately involved with other saints, how much more us?
 - v. We need community to thrive...
 - vi. Paul did not have Christian acquaintances, he had close Christian friends that he shared his life with.
 - 1. Unfortunately, many Christians see Christian community as optional. Maybe a nice bonus, but not necessary...
 - 2. Paul would have no category for a Christian who was not intimately involved in the life of his church, or whose only involvement was attending church on Sunday morning.
 - 3. This is tragic.
 - 4. When it comes to spiritual conversation many American Christians can relate to the loneliest man alive.
- k. Illustration
 - i. 7.4 billion humans alive on planet earth...
 - ii. Half of us are connected to the internet...

- iii. But there still exists hundreds of tribes that consist of thousands of people who lived like are ancient ancestors lived ten thousand years ago...
- iv. Many of them have no idea that the outside world exists.
- v. Where do these uncontacted people live?
 - 1. Most of them (97%) live in the amazon rain forests.
 - 2. There are over 100 tribes in the Amazons have had zero contact with the modern world.
 - 3. This is mostly due to geography. The amazon rain forest is massive... and very hard to navigate. The forests are incredibly Dense and filled with dangerous wild life...
- vi. There is a man who lives in the amazon rain forest in Brazil known as "the loneliest man in the world".
 - 1. He is believed to be the only living member of his tribe.
 - 2. No one knows the name of the tribe he once belonged to and no one can speak his language.
 - 3. His existence became known in 1996. The Brazilian government sent out various expeditions to find him. They all failed until 2007.
 - 4. When they finally found him, he shot one of the expedition members in the chest with an arrow.
 - 5. His old village was found, but it had been bull dozed by loggers.
 - 6. After this incident the Brazilian government set up a 42 square mile exclusion zone around him.
 - 7. It is illegal for anyone to go into this zone.
 - 8. He is the only human being who exists in this entire area and it is illegal for anyone to visit him.
 - 9. We know he is still there because video was taken of him in 2018 cutting down a tree.
 - 10. The Brazilian government maintains a policy of zero contact with uncontacted people but keeps on eye on these people with fly overs...
- vii. He is totally isolated...
 - 1. He has no community.
 - 2. We were not created to live isolated lives.
 - 3. But some of you live like this spiritually.
 - 4. No one knows how you are really doing.
 - 5. No one knows your language spiritually speaking...
 - 6. You are meant to be in community...
 - 7. Don't be the loneliest Christian on the planet.

I. Application:

- i. How do we do community at GCF?
 - 1. Primarily through our small groups.
 - 2. Our small groups are not a passing fad.
 - 3. They have been part of our DNA from day one of GCF 16 years ago.
 - 4. Community is like food and water.
 - 5. We can't live without it.
- ii. What do we do at small group?
- iii. How does the gospel motivate community?
 - 1. When god saves us through the glorious gospel of his son he saves us into a community.
 - 2. A Gospel centered church leads to a community centered church.
 - 3. Furthermore, the gospel makes community safe.

- 4. In addition, the gospel helps us get along in our community.
 - 5. Finally, the gospel motivates love for others in our community.
- iv. If you are not involved in a small group, we encourage you to check one out... you need community.
- m. We have looked at two values so far...
 - i. Gospel
 - ii. Community
 - iii. This brings us to the last one...

3. Mission.

- a. Some of you love the first two values (gospel and community), but the third value makes you uncomfortable... but you can't have gospel centrality without mission... let's look at Paul's passion for mission.

b. Paul had a passion for mission.

- i. **Romans 1:3–6 (ESV) — 3** concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh **4** and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, **5** through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, **6** including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,
- ii. Paul wants to bring about the obedience of faith to the nations for the glory of God.
- iii. In other words, Paul wants as many people as possible to live righteous lives as a result of their faith in Jesus Christ.
- iv. The obedience of faith is better translated by the NIV as the obedience which comes from faith.
- v. Paul endured great hardship in order to take the gospel to the nations...
- vi. We read about his four missionary journeys all over the Mediterranean world in the book of Acts.
- vii. All Christians are meant to have a passion for mission.
- viii. Not only did Paul have a passion for missions...

c. Paul had an engine for mission.

- i. Paul's engine for missions was the gospel...
- ii. Not only was the gospel the message that Paul shared it was also the motivation for sharing the message.
- iii. We will only share the good news with others if we are captivated by the good news.
- iv. For instance,
 - 1. The gospel compels us to share the good news out of generosity and love not guilt or obligation.
 - 2. The gospel frees us from the fear of being ridiculed by others since we have freely received the acceptance and favor of God.

3. The gospel motivates us to deal humbly and gently with those who disagree with us because that is how God relates to us in the gospel.
4. The gospel gives us real hope for the "Hard cases" because we were all hard cases when God saved us.
5. The gospel frees us not to push or coerce people because only the grace of God can open hearts...

v. The gospel is the engine of mission....

d. Illustration

- i. Talking to Richard on the canoe...
- ii. It is never going to be easy... you just have to jump into the conversation with both feet.
- iii. The gospel frees us up to kill fear of man!

e. Application

- i. Do you share Paul's passion for mission???
- ii. For many of us the challenge is getting to know, really know, non-Christians...
- iii. How can you do this?
 1. Take walks in your neighborhood
 2. Good to the same coffee shops and talk to people
 3. Haircuts, clubs, etc...
 4. Join your HOA
 5. Find a hobby
 6. Join a sports league (not a Christian one).
 7. Get involved in your child's sports teams, schools, etc...
 8. Watch sports with neighbors or coworkers...
 9. Start a book club with coworkers... does not even need to be Christian...
 10. find ways to build relationships and pray for boldness.

iv. Meaningful relationships are the key...

v. In Michael Green's seminal study of evangelism in the early church he makes this point...

1. "Christian lay people- not trained preachers and evangelists- carried on the mission of the church not through formal preaching but informal conversation in homes and wine shops, on walks, and round market stalls.... They did it naturally and enthusiastically." (Keller, quoting Green, 277 of CT)

vi. How many of you came to Christ through a personal relationship???

1. This is almost always how it happens.

vii. GCF demonstrates its passion for mission

1. By encouraging each member to reach out to his or her friends.
2. by supporting five pastors involved in church planting...
3. by planting churches in Spokane that are built around gospel, community, and mission...

4. Conclusion:

a. Gospel, community, and mission.

- i. All three are critical.
- ii. An emphasis on the Gospel leads to an emphasis on community and mission.

b. Colin Kapernick Nike ad campaign

- i. "Believe in Something even if it means losing everything"

- ii. Colin Kapernick played quarterback in the NFL.
- iii. Nike is implying that he lost his job because of the stand he took on police brutality...
- iv. He is a very controversial figure.
- v. I'm opposed to police brutality.
- vi. I'm not showing this because I support kneeling in the NFL. I love the NFL and I love our military...
- vii. I'm showing this because of the slogan...
- viii. It is true... there are some things worth losing everything for.

- ix. Gospel, Community, and mission are worth losing everything for... that is why we planted GCF north.
- x. Lets pray...