

Sharing Christ

Getting Started

⇒ *What are a couple of your favorite insights from your reading this week?*

Sharing Christ . . .

The Big Story: Why We Need It

- *The Kingdom of God is Near*

...the gospel Jesus taught was not just that he died for the penalty of my sins so I could go to heaven when I died. Instead Jesus preached, "The time has come....The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"
(Dallas Willard)

The kingdom was marked by a new kind of people with a new kind of relationship with God and each other, living out a new kind of life – one that exuded love for God and neighbor. This love needed to be expressed through evangelism, world missions, social justice, financial stewardship and vocational calling, among others. The kingdom of God was meant to heal the planet. To me, this finally felt like good news, not just for Christians but also for the world.
(James Choung *True Story: A Christianity Worth Believing In*)

"The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"
(Mark 1:15)

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Three Movements: The Direction of the Big Story

1) *From Decision to _____*

First, we need a gospel summary that moves away from a one-time decision. With God's grace we train to become like Jesus and grow in him so we can be his expression of love here and now. We become the kind of good we want to see in the world. Our faith is then real and practical, one that allows us to interact with God on an everyday basis and be changed by his presence. Sure, we still mess up. But for many of us who have no other way to describe our lives except as a living hell, this is welcome news, possibly even good news. Thus, the gospel should include a call to transformation in the present.

(James Choung *True Story: A Christianity Worth Believing In*)

The revolution of Jesus is in the first place and continuously a revolution of the human heart and spirit.
(Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*)

And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.
(2 Corinthians 3:18)

2) *From Individual to* _____

Christian faith is expressed in community – it’s not an option. In fact, no faith exists without community. The reflection of the kingdom of God shines through God’s people when they’re gathered and reconciled. Paul compares Christians to different body parts: though we’re different, we all make up one body.
(James Choung *True Story: A Christianity Worth Believing In*)

Spiritual formation cannot, in the nature of the case, be a ‘private’ thing, because it is a matter of whole-life transformation. You need to seek out others in your community who are pursuing the renovation of the heart.
(Dallas Willard)

Only if you are part of a community of believers seeking to resemble, serve, and love Jesus will you ever to get know him and grow into his likeness.
(Tim Keller)

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. (1 Corinthians 12:27)

3) *From Afterlife to* _____

Our gospel presentations may have allowed people to think they’re part of the kingdom without needing to embrace the purpose of loving and blessing others.

But Jesus enticed people into a kingdom mission from the outset. “Come follow me and I will send you out to fish for people.” His initial invitation included a selfless call to love and influence others for the sake of the kingdom. And his kingdom is near. We are invited into a space where God is really in charge, where what he wants to happen actually does happen. What’s more, we can enter into it now, before we die. That’s good news – the gospel. As citizens of this kingdom, we’re called to spread this kingdom outward.
(James Choung *True Story: A Christianity Worth Believing In*)

But Jesus’ own gospel of the kingdom was not that the kingdom was about to come, or had recently come, into existence. If we attend to what he actually said, it becomes clear that his gospel concerned only the new accessibility of the kingdom to humanity through himself.
(Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*)

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.
(Matthew 28:19-20)

[TABLE TALK]

1. What do you think is the difference between training and trying when it comes to our spiritual transformation?
2. What do you think happens when the gospel message focuses more on what we can get in the afterlife instead of our need to embrace the purpose of loving and blessing others?

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A Walk-Through: Explaining The Big Story

1) *Introduction: Aching for a _____*

No normal person thinks suffering, violence and oppression are good things. All of us long and ache for a better world. And our universal ache speaks of something more. Just like hunger points to food and thirst points to water, so our ache for a better world means that a better world either once existed or will one day exist.”
(James Choung *True Story: A Christianity Worth Believing In*)

He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.
(Ecclesiastes 3:11)

Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. For we live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.
(2 Corinthians 5:6-9)

2) *Designed For _____*

- *Design for the world.*
- *Design for each other.*
- *Design for our relationship with God.*

You were made by God and for God and until you understand that life will never make sense.
(Rick Warren)

You were designed to know, serve, and love God supremely – and when we are faithful to that design, we flourish.
(Tim Keller)

Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.
(Genesis 2:25)

3) *Damaged by _____*

- *Damaging the world.*
- *Damaging each other.*
- *Damaging our relationship with God.*

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.
(Ephesians 6:12)

For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.
(Romans 1:21)

He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”
(Genesis 3:10)

4) Restored for _____

- Restoring the world.
- Restoring each other.
- Restoring our relationship with God.

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.
(Colossians 1:19-20)

And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. (Matthew 6:12)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!
(2 Corinthians 5:17)

5) Sent Together to _____

- Healing our relationship with God.
- Healing each other.
- Healing the world.

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.
(2 Corinthians 5:18)

You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.
(Matthew 5:14-16)

Sharing Christ . . .*Response*

At some point I ask, "Jesus is inviting you to life and join his healing movement for the planet. Will you trust him and allow him to take charge of your life?"

If they agree, I ask them to pray with me.

Then I say, "Welcome to Jesus' community! You're now a part of Jesus' family. You're forgiven, and Jesus now wants to live in you. Jesus wants you to have the resources for this mission. Would you like to receive his Holy Spirit?" Then I place my hands on them and pray for the Holy Spirit to show his reality and presence in their lives.

(James Choung *True Story: A Christianity Worth Believing In*)

Next Steps

- *Join his mission.*
- *Join his community.*
- *Join his life.*

Your Assignment

- Read handout from *A True Story* (James Choung)