

Church Matters

“The Church and Its Call to Risk”

Philippians 1:18b-30

Matt Ross / August 9, 2015 / Grace Fellowship Church

“One of the most lamentable symptoms of today’s emotionalist Christianity is its tendency to inaction and aversion to risk. We can trace this symptom to any number of causes, and most of them are theological. Many Christians suffer from warped understandings of the will of God, the nature of true discipleship, and the character of the Christian life.” R. Albert Mohler Jr., *The Dangerous Calling of Christian Missions*

Risk-Exposure to the chance of injury or loss; a hazard or dangerous chance. (Dictionary.com)

I. When the gospel is precious to you, Christ is your life and death is your gain (vs. 20-21)

-In the gospel, we have an identity, transcendent joy and an eternal security that no amount of suffering or loss can take away from us.

-As desirable and rewarding as the American Dream is, the fulfillment that comes in knowing Christ does not compare.

-The gospel should never cease to astonish us because it was God’s choice to save. (Acts 9:1-8)

II. The gospel will always drive you into the church (vs. 27)

“God alone has the wisdom, power, and grace to weave the tangled threads of different people, with different cultures, customs, and languages, into a single tapestry of glorious beauty.”
Dennis E. Johnson, *The Message of Acts in the History of Redemption*

-The gospel pushes you outside of your comfortable circles and into people you might have little in common with outside of the gospel. (Acts 16:11-40)

-If you do not like seeing different kinds of people of different skin colors, backgrounds, socioeconomic status, whatever inside the church you will not enjoy heaven. (Revelation 7:9)

“This side of heaven, relationships and ministry are always shaped in the forge of struggle. None of us get to relate to perfect people or avoid the effects of the fall on the work we attempt to do. Yet, amid the mess, we find the highest joys of relationship and ministry.”

Timothy S. Lane, *Relationships: A Mess Worth Making*

-Risk loving people who are different than you are because you share a bond in the gospel that runs deeper than anything.

-Christians can desert you, do you great harm, and not support you. The Lord will always stand by you and you are still called to love and be a part of the church. (**2 Timothy 4:10-18**)

III. The gospel calls you out of fear and into mission (vs. 27b-30)

-You will sacrifice, suffer and even die for what you consider most precious.

2 Corinthians 11:24-28- Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.

-We must not break under the pressure of opposition, but instead exert pressure of our own striving to proclaim the gospel we have believed and living in a manner worthy of it.

“Fearless faith results from holding on to Christ as our treasure. Gospel courage comes from gospel preciousness. If we truly believed that our reward in heaven far surpasses all the comfort and convenience and collections of the world, we, too, would be willing to consider them all as loss.”Matt Chandler, *To Live Is Christ, To Die Is Gain*

“We must flee the temptation to bury the wealth of the gospel under the rubble of a safe, comfortable, and unexamined lifestyle. Rather, our Lord summons us to diligently invest this gospel treasure in the lives of the lost, from our neighborhood to the ends of the earth.”Bruce Riley Ashford, *Theology and Practice of Mission: God, the Church, and the Nations*