

We Will Go Deep in the Gospel Together

Your Joy is My Joy, Pt. 2
John 4:5-30

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I. INTRODUCTION

a. **This morning, I want to begin the sermon by telling you about a man named Gary.**

- i. Gary has been a serious Christian for many years.
 - If you were to meet Gary, you most likely would have a very favorable first impression.
 1. He's kind. Personable. Seems like a very devoted husband and father.
 2. He's faithful to God and the church.
 3. Gary is like many of you...whenever the church has a need, he's one of the first volunteer his time.
 - But what many people don't know about Gary is that he is an addict.
 1. In fact, no one in the church knows he's an addict.
 2. When Gary was in college, he did a lot of partying and drinking...his party days are over...but the drinking wasn't so easy to stop.
 - And over the years, as he got married, had kids, excelled in his career, joined a church, Gary became a professional at living two lives.
 1. He doesn't want to live two lives, but he's stuck.
 2. He doesn't want this demon of his addiction to continue to haunt him, but he's given up hope that it will ever go away.



- Gary wants to change! He's been attending AA meetings for years.
 1. He has long periods of sobriety and disappointing relapses.
 - He loves his family and does everything in his power to make sure this addiction does not affect them.
 1. And so, he's figured out, that it is just easier for everyone, if he keeps it a secret.
 2. If he just tries to manage it.
 3. If he closes off this dark area of his life from all of the people he loves, his church, and even God.
 4. And lives two lives.
 - I mean, let's be honest, what is the church going to do if he begins to tell people his addiction?
 1. It's just easier not to go down that road.
 2. It's easier to wear a mask.
- ii. **But one day, Gary wanted to talk to his pastor.**
- Because His Pastor said something in a sermon that just rubbed him the wrong way.
 1. See, his pastor was preaching about the freedom that is available to us when we follow Jesus!
 2. This wasn't an unusual truth for the pastor to preach on...but this time...when Gary heard it....he felt tired.
 3. He felt tired of hearing about freedom and never experiencing freedom.



- And Gary finally decided to talk with his pastor because he didn't understand why he all of the sudden felt so frustrated with God.
- And after talking to his pastor for about 30 minutes, Gary finally took the mask off.
 1. He told his pastor about his addiction.
 2. He told his pastor about how hard he had worked to ensure no one ever knew about it.
 3. He told his pastor how much he feared people finding out.
 4. Gary was also really apologetic about telling his pastor all of this and putting this burden on him.
- And they talked a little bit longer...
 1. And this pastor also learned from Gary that he grew up a home where his parents got divorced and he was raised by a single mom.
 2. And he learned at a young age that his problems, his struggles, his feelings are too heavy of a weight for his loved ones.
 3. And it's better for him to mask his real self and not be a burden to everyone else.
 4. Gary didn't realize it, but he had been trained from a young age to wear a mask and medicate his feelings.
- And it wasn't until Gary finally took the mask off with his pastor...that he finally grasped the saving power of the gospel and how it can truly set you free.



iii. Aren't we all like Gary in some sense?

- Some of us have a story just like Gary...some of us have a different story...
- But we've all learned how to wear a mask.
- We've all learned how to compartmentalize the grief, the sin, the insecurity...and pretend it's not there.
- The mask is easier...
 1. You don't have to risk being rejected with the mask.
 2. You don't have to burden others with your problems with the mask.
 3. Some of us have been wearing the mask so long and have gotten so good at it...we forgot it's there!

b. Now, full disclosure...Gary is not real. I made up that story...but I actually didn't.

- i. Because Gary represents the dozens and dozens of people that I have met over the last twelve years of ministry who for an incredibly long time lived their life and went to church with a mask on.
 - Until one day they got tired and took the mask off and let me in.
 1. And they opened their heart to the healing that the Gospel brings.
- ii. But here is the question that does not have an easy answer:
 - Is the church, is Grace Hill Church, a safe place to take off the mask?
 1. Honest question...



c. We're currently in the midst of a series called YOUR JOY IS MY JOY.

- i. Over the month of August, we are taking some time to talk about what we believe God is calling us to focus on and do as we enter our third year of ministry.
 - And one of the things that I have called on our church to do this month is to pray and ask God that He would give each of us a YOUR JOY IS MY JOY attitude.
 1. We see this from Paul in 2 Corinthians 2:3. Where Paul says that what motivates him to serve the churches is that he finds his joy in the joy of his brothers and sisters in Christ.
 - A YOUR JOY IS MY JOY attitude is when every one of us takes responsibility and ownership for each other's joy and freedom in Christ.
- ii. **And Grace Hill, over the next three weeks I am going to be telling you very practically how we are going to live this out this year...**
 - And here is the first way...I believe that God is calling us to be a church where people take the mask off and we go deep in the gospel with one another.
 1. Where the Gospel isn't this theoretical, theological, idea that we celebrate.
 2. But, rather, the gospel is water to thirsty souls.
 3. It's a balm to the wounds and the shame that we are so determined to make sure no one ever sees.



iii. Let me show you what I mean from the Gospel of John.

- Turn with me to John 4 where we will read of an encounter that Jesus has with a woman where he digs deep...

II. JOHN 4:5-30

a. Read John 4:5-15.

i. Now, let's stop here for a second and get our bearings.

- Jesus is on his way from Jerusalem back up to Galilee.
 1. And between these two regions in Israel was the region of Samaria.
- Now, we just read here in v.9 that culturally, Jews and Samaritans did not interact with one another.
 1. Here's why. Back during the times of the Kings, the King of Assyria brought in many foreigners to settle in this region of Samaria.
 2. And over time, many Jews intermarried with these Gentiles.
 3. And it was against Jewish law for Jews to intermarry with Gentiles.
- And so, this region of Samaria that sits in between Galilee and Jerusalem became a place that conservative Jews avoided because it was populated with ethnically mixed people.
 1. And the Samaritans developed their own version of the Scriptures, their own temple on Mount Gerizim, and their own version of the history of Israel.



- So, Jesus needs to travel from Jerusalem up to Galilee.
 1. Most devout Jews would have taken the long route to the east, across the Jordan River in order to avoid passing through Samaria.
 2. But Jesus wanted to go right through it because He had some gospel work to do.
- ii. **So, Jesus encounters this Samaritan woman at the well.**
 - And of course, this woman is skeptical as to why Jesus, a Jew, would be talking to her...much less asking her for a drink.
 1. This is a Jewish man that is willing to drink Samaritan water...something weird is going on.
 - On top of her skepticism, Jesus begins talking to her about the gospel but he is talking to her about the gospel in this veiled language using the analogy of water.
 1. And Jesus is saying that as the Messiah, He has the ability to bring salvation and joy to her thirsty soul.
 - But this woman isn't picking up what Jesus is laying down...she just assumes he is still talking about literal water...
 1. So, of course she says...**read v.15.**
 2. She thinks when Jesus is talking about thirst...he is talking about physical thirst...not soul thirst.



iii. And I think where we are in this story so far might be a good example of the kind of way we talk about the gospel in church today.

- It's easy to talk about the gospel in a way that is dressed up in spiritual and creative language.
 1. It's easy to use metaphors when we are talking about the gospel so it sounds profound.
 2. But, like the woman, do we really grasp the kind of divine power the gospel has to transform our lives and quench the thirst of our souls?
- I think of Gary...who represents all kinds of people who have attended church their entire life...
 1. People who can explain the gospel.
 2. People who read their Bibles.
 3. But people who never have truly grasped that the gospel isn't just a great truth that we claim, but it is the cure to the fear, the hurt, the pain, the shame, and the grief that we have tucked away in our hearts for so long.
- And when Jesus was talking about living water that would eliminate your thirst, he was talking about those deep places of our heart and this is where he wanted to go with the woman at the well.

b. Read John 4:16-30.

- i. After Jesus initial interaction with this woman about the water, he plunges the depths of her life in one statement: *"Go call your husband."*
 - And the woman initially responds to Jesus with the mask: *"I have no husband."*



1. But this woman doesn't realize that she is talking to the Son of God who is all knowing...
- So, Jesus of course says...**read v.17b-18.**
 1. And Jesus removes the mask from her.
 2. Her soul is now exposed. The true thirst in her life is now front and center.
- ii. **Now, we need to be clear about something here. The text does not tell us the circumstances behind this woman having so many husbands...**
- Is it possible that this is a pattern of sin in her life? That she has been unfaithful?
 1. That she is looking to men in her life to quench that thirst...and it's not working?
 2. It's possible.
 - Is it possible that five men have left her, divorced her, or died while she was married to them?
 1. I mean, this is a patriarchal society and to be an unmarried woman was to not be in a good position in society.
 2. Was this woman's circumstances not so much sin but survival or tragedy?
 3. And that her soul was thirsty because of all of the abandonment or loss that she's endured?
 - See, what's beautiful about the ambiguity of the exact circumstances is that for Jesus in that moment, it didn't matter.
 1. The mask was off, her heart was exposed.
 2. And whether she was trying to mask her sin or mask her pain, the gospel is what she needed.
 - And that's exactly what Jesus delivers to her...the gospel.



- iii. And I believe that one way a church family cares for one another...is we go deep in the gospel with one another in this way...
 - We become a place where we can take the mask off and let the gospel bring healing and wholeness to our lives.
 - But the biggest threat to being a church that can do this...is the mask.
 1. Jesus had an advantage...he already knew everything about this woman.
 2. But we can't do that for one another.
 3. We have to take the mask off and let each other in.
- iv. And so, pulling from the rest of Jesus' conversation with this woman, I want to show us three reasons why we need to take the mask off.

III. REASON #1 - THE MASK MAKES US UNKNOWN

- a. I think that point is fairly obvious, but I want us to understand the consequences of being unknown.
 - i. Prior to Jesus removing this woman's mask, their conversation stayed on the surface.
 - There was a limit to the depth that they could go when talking about the gospel.
 - And if Jesus had not revealed that he already knew the depths of her heart, they probably would have stayed at that level.
 1. The woman would probably have concealed her true thirst.



- ii. And we do this with one another all the time in the church!
 - We are so concerned about protecting our image, we're so ashamed of our past, or we just don't want to bother others with our baggage...so we conclude that it's easier to remain unknown and to wear the mask.
 - The problem is, you're unknown.
 1. And you'll feel unknown.
 2. And you'll have to pretend that you're okay when you're not okay.
 3. You'll have to pretend that you have deep relationships with people in the church when you really don't.
 4. You'll hear the word of God preached and it will pierce your soul but you'll have to pretend that it didn't pierce your soul in order to keep the mask on.
- iii. You'll be like Gary...living two lives.
 - Proclaiming the gospel...but not really believing the gospel is for you.
 1. And that leads to...

IV. REASON #2 - THE MASK MAKES US UNDERESTIMATE THE GOSPEL

a. Read John 4:19-26

- i. And so, as Jesus reveals to this woman that He is the Messiah...this is what He tells her He is going to do... Jesus is going to do something that will transform the way people worship God.
 - Before, you worshiped God by going to a specific place.
 1. For the Jews, that place was Jerusalem...at the temple.



2. For the Samaritans, that place was on Mt. Gerizim.
 3. And the reason you had to travel to a specific place to worship God is because this is where God was.
 4. His presence was curtained off in the most Holy place.
 5. So, to worship God, you need to travel there...and to be worthy to worship God...you needed a sacrifice to offer as an atonement of your sin.
 6. Because you are not worthy to enter God's presence.
- But Jesus says He is going to change that.
 1. Read v.23.
 2. What does it mean to worship God in Spirit and Truth versus worshipping God at a specific location?

ii. **Allow me to let the writer of Hebrews explain [Hebrews 10:11-18]...**

- ¹¹ Under the old covenant, the priest stands and ministers before the altar day after day, offering the same sacrifices again and again, which can never take away sins.
- ¹² But our High Priest (Jesus) offered himself to God as a single sacrifice for sins, good for all time...¹⁴ For by that one offering he forever made perfect those who are being made holy.
- ¹⁵ And the Holy Spirit also testifies that this is so. For he says, ¹⁶ "This is the new covenant I will make with my people on that day, says the Lord: ¹⁷ "I will never again remember their sins and lawless deeds." ¹⁸ And when sins have been forgiven, there is no need to offer any more sacrifices."



- iii. **So, what it means to worship in Spirit and Truth means...**
- That what makes us worthy to worship God is not traveling to a certain place and doing the religious dance...
 - What makes us worthy is the *TRUTH* that the *HOLY SPIRIT* testifies about us...that we have been covered once and for all by the blood of Jesus...and by Christ's sacrifice, we have been perfected...
- iv. **So, worship the old way...I have to make myself worthy before God...**
- It makes sense to put a mask on.
 - In fact, under the old way, I could only get so close to God...I had to be curtained off...even with all the religion and ritual I still had to keep my distance lest I be killed.
- v. **But, worship the new way...Jesus is who makes me worthy.**
- Jesus rips in two the curtain that separates me from God.
 - Jesus gives me His Spirit so that I can worship God any time and in any place.
 - It is Jesus who says to me that I may now approach the throne of God with boldness and confidence because I have been made clean.
 - No mask required.
- b. See, the gospel penetrates down to the deepest and darkest places of our hearts.**
- i. **And we can worship in Spirit and Truth.**
- But when we still keep the mask on, we underestimate the Gospel.



1. We don't agree with the truth that the Spirit declares about us.
 2. We think we are the exception.
- Jesus was telling this woman, even in the midst of your shame or your hurt, this gospel is for you.
- ii. **And one of the ways that we become a church that is a safe place for us to take the mask off...**
- Is we have to be a church that believes this for one another.
 - We have to be a church that believes there isn't anything the gospel cannot redeem.
 - Wives, you need to believe this for your husbands.
 - Husbands, you need to believe this for your wives.
 - Men, we need to believe this for one another and draw each other in to take the mask off so we can minister to one another.
 - Women, you need to believe this for one another and draw each other in to take the mask off so you can minister to one another.
 - When the Gary's of our church finally reach that point of taking the mask off...they need a church family who believes in the power of the gospel for them.
 - We should not be surprised by sin and brokenness. IT IS ALL OVER THIS CHURCH.
 1. But that's okay, because we have a Savior who is stronger.
 - And when people take the mask off, we need to celebrate and point them to their Savior...and not wince and get all awkward.



- iii. We are a church, which means we are all about redemption...and not all about a “who is the best Christian” competition.
 - And the reality is, it is when we take the mask off and we allow the gospel to shine light on the darkest places...that is when we have a testimony to share...

V. REASON #3 - THE MASK LIMITS OUR TESTIMONY

a. Read John 4:28-30

- i. It's fascinating to me that the very thing this woman wanted to conceal from Jesus is the main detail in her testimony when she goes back to the town.
 - Her mask is off! She has encountered the grace of God.
 - She doesn't need to have a mask with anybody anymore...even people who do not yet know Jesus.
- ii. It's difficult to share a testimony with people of how Christ has changed your life, if you still have this mask on, and there are parts of your life you won't let him touch.
 - See, when we share the gospel with people...
 1. People can tell if you really believe and have really been impacted by this message.



- And the truth is, it's hard to take the mask off...but when you do...when you trust God with the most sensitive place of your heart...the transformative grace of God upon you will change your testimony...
 1. And people will see, that this message you are sharing...oh this is living water to your soul...it is a kind of water that will make you never thirst again.

VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS

a. And so, let me return to a question I asked all the way at the beginning...is Grace Hill Church a safe place to take off the mask?

- i. Do we have a YOUR JOY IS MY JOY attitude and are we prepared to minister the living water of the gospel to people when they take the mask off?
 - Because this is critical to our discipleship and this is critical to our mission to reach our neighbors.
- ii. If you are a follower of Jesus in this room, you have been called to minister to people in this way in a local church.
 - You have not been called to be a part of a church for just your own benefit, you have been called to be a part of a local church because others need you.



b. And at Grace Hill, we want this to be a focus for us this year.

- i. Therefore, starting the week of September 9, we will be starting our Community Groups again after the summer break but with a couple of changes.
 - The first change is we are going to have our groups start to meet weekly together instead of every other week.
 1. In the past, our groups only met twice a month and we have determined that that rhythm is not good when it comes to people developing trusting relationships with one another.
 - The second change is we are going to focus the groups time together, this year, on building relationships. This is so our groups will create a context where people feel they can take the mask off and we can truly care for one another.
 - And for those of you who are unfamiliar with Community Groups...these are smaller groups of people who meet in someone's home every week for the purpose of getting in the word together, encouraging one another, and prayer.
 1. We'll be starting Community Group sign-ups in just a couple weeks and so I think it is important that all of us prioritize being a part of a community group this Fall as a way of caring for others and also being cared for.



- ii. However, as great as Community Groups are, becoming a church where we can take the mask off and go deep in the gospel also means that we need to be a church that provides intense discipleship.
- This is why starting in January, we will begin offering a comprehensive discipleship program called Journey to Joy.
 1. We have been developing this program over the last year.
 2. We are currently training leaders for the program and will be doing through the Fall.
 - But Journey to Joy is a discipleship program designed to teach you not only the depths of the gospel, but also apply it to the deepest parts of your soul.
 1. It is a nine-week experience comprised of large group teaching, small group discussion, one-on-one discipleship, and guided meditations at home.
 - And our desire is that everyone who calls Grace Hill their church would eventually go through Journey to Joy...and for two reasons...
 1. That they would have a place where they truly can take the mask off and experience the healing power of the gospel at the deepest levels.
 2. That they would be trained in how to minister that gospel to others.



- Because our desire as a church is to be a place where it is natural and a part of our culture to take the mask off and have the gospel ministered to your soul...and for each person to be equipped in how to do that.
 1. To be a church where we believe in the power of the gospel for one another.
 2. So, stay tuned, toward the end of Fall we'll be starting sign-ups for our first session of Journey to Joy.

VII. COMMUNION

a. But I would like to end our time together, this morning, by inviting those of you who believe in and trust in Jesus to the Communion Table.

- i. Because what the Communion Table represents is that Jesus has made each of us holy in the sight of God...pleasing in the sight of God.
 - That there is no sin, no secret, no skeleton in our closet that is stronger than our Savior.
 - And through His body being broken and his blood being shed on the cross, Jesus has invited each of us in to a close relationship with God where we are loved and accepted.
- ii. **This meal represents the living water our souls thirst for.**
 - It represents what the Spirit declares to be the truth about you.



- iii. And so, I encourage you to take a few minutes, after I pray, to reflect...
- Are you wearing a mask?
 - Are there things in the deepest part of your heart that you'd prefer stay there?
 - Would you ask God to help you see the gospel as powerful enough to forgive and heal even that?
 - And when you're ready come forward, take the bread and take the juice, and be reminded of Christ's love for you as you remember the cross.
- iv. And then we'll close with a couple of songs where we have the privilege of worshiping God in Spirit and Truth.

VIII. PRAY

