

Being Known

Show Up, Pt. 4

1 Timothy 1:12-17

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I. INTRODUCTION

a. As we begin this morning, let me paint two different pictures for you...

- i. And these two pictures are going to depict two different kinds of church cultures.
 - Every church has a culture...kind of the unwritten social rules that guide the way the church feels and how each of us interact with one another within the church.
- ii. Here is church #1...
 - Church #1 from the outside looking in appears as if it is very successful.
 1. It is growing...it has abundant resources...great teaching...great worship...great kids and youth programs...great facility...good doctrine...it seems that everyone in the church is serious about reading their bibles and learning about the faith...
 2. It really seems that this church has some energy and is going somewhere.
 - But, if you were to really dig into the quality of relationships in this church...there's something off...no one in this church is actually known by anyone below the surface.
 1. Conversation is mostly small-talk chit chat or impersonal discussions on theology and doctrine.



2. If someone were to ask you “how you were doing” In the lobby - It would not be normal to be honest. Everyone says - ‘Great, how are you?’ no matter how you are.
 3. When people actually gather for community - there is very little honest sharing.
 4. People will share their struggles with their work or being consistent In their quiet times (which are legitimate BTW, but It stops there).
- There are people In this church who are walking around carrying all kinds of guilt and shame from their past or from what their Involved In right now - yet at this church, the culture Is we hide that stuff.
 1. We don’t want to bother one another with that stuff.
 2. We don’t trust each other with that stuff.
 3. That stuff will taint my reputation In this church.
 - People are walking around with anxiety about what people think about them...
 1. Because everyone at this church has It all together...
 2. Everyone at this church has the same perspective on everything...
 3. At this church It Is not good If you stick out...It’s better to blend In...
 4. It Is not safe to be known here.
 - And even though the people at this church show up physically every single week...and they all see each other...there Isn’t a culture of showing up relationally...



1. Therefore, everyone is together but they're actually all alone because no one is really known.
 2. This is church #1.
- iii. **Now, church #2 might look the same from the outside looking in.**
- It might have all those great things like a facility and great programs...or it might be a small, quiet church.
 1. The externals don't really matter...
 2. But, church #2 is different in that at this church, it actually IS safe to be known.
 3. Like, really known...
 - Like when you're struggling with doubt...and you're struggling if you even believe in God or not...and if you buy all this...and you haven't read your Bible in months because you don't see the point...(EVERYONE GOES THROUGH SEASONS LIKE THIS)...
 1. Your church is the first place where you want to reveal that and let other people care for you.
 2. Because you know that if you are honest about that with your church...they won't leave you or treat you like some weird Christian...
 3. But they'll walk with you through that...
 - Or when something really hard happens and you're just struggling...your grieving...and any smile that would be only our face would just be fake...
 1. That at church, you don't feel the need to dress up and pretend everything is fine.
 2. It's safe to be going through a hard time.
 3. It's safe to be known.



- Or when you have a legitimate question or opinion on something.
 1. Maybe It's theological. Maybe It has to do with something like politics, culture, or other hard subjects.
 2. That at church, it's safe to ask questions.
 3. It's safe to share.
 4. It's safe to not only reveal areas of knowledge but also areas of Ignorance.
 5. Because It's safe to be known.
- I could keep going on examples of being known...but this Is church #2.

b. Last week, Nick preached for us on the rest that God provides for us in and through Jesus Christ.

- i. And when the church gathers together, that we should at some level experience a taste of that rest.
 - And here Is what Is obvious...
 1. Church #1...although It may be a great experience...although It may be comfortable...at this church, there Is no rest...at least the kind of rest that Nick was talking about last week.
 2. But Church #2...even If It's a small community with no bells and whistles...that's a church where you will experience rest.
- ii. Because here Is the rest that God provides your soul in and through Jesus...
 - That you can be fully known...everything...every thought...every motive...everything...and yet fully loved and accepted.



1. Jesus went to the cross to pay off all of our sin and everything that we do, say, or think that could separate us from God.
 2. He gets rid of It.
 3. He makes us whole.
 4. And he gives us rest from our constant striving to be loved by God and others.
- And we experience this rest within the church...when the church as the body of Christ...ministers this rest to one another by being a people where you literally can be fully known and fully loved and accepted.
 1. It makes It easier for me to believe In the gospel and this truth that God knows me and also fully loves me...
 2. If I am a part of a church...and In that church my actual physical and felt experience Is...these people really know me and fully love me.
 3. I can believe this about God because this Is how His people treat me.
 - When everything falls apart In my life...and I go to church #1...and It's not safe to Invite people into what's going on in my life...how am I going to believe this gospel?

c. We are in pt. 4 of a sermon series called SHOW UP where we are looking to the Scriptures to understand why God wants His people show up and assemble together every single week to worship.

- And this Is all In preparation for when our church will come back together for In-person worship starting March 21.



- i. **And over the first three weeks of this series, we have been talking about the importance of showing up physically as the church.**
- But for the final three weeks of this series, we are going to be talking about what it means to show up, relationally, in each other's lives.
 - And how we build a culture where our church is like church #2...where it is safe to be known...where we remind each other of God's love for us through how we love and care for one another.
 - Because I don't want to be a part of church #1 and I don't want Grace Hill to be like that.
 1. My desire is that we would be a church where all of us help each other find true rest in the gospel.
- ii. **And as I say that...I feel the need to acknowledge publicly that over the last couple of months, a few of you have come to me to let me know that you don't quite feel safe at our church.**
- And the primary reason for that is because of the some things that I have said in regards to politics and culture from the pulpit and the way in which I have said them.
 1. Some of you have said that you don't feel like it is a safe place to express your perspective, contribute to the conversation, and for us to grow together as a community in these things and how God calls us to engage our culture.
 - And I wanted to say that I have heard you and I am sorry.



1. This was a tough year of political tension and Isolation due to the pandemic.
 2. Many of us have strong opinions...I am one of those people.
 3. And as a church, we are at our best when all voices are Invited and respected.
 4. We are at our best when It Is safe for all for all of us to speak and for all of us to grow together In Christ-likeness.
 5. And if I have said anything to silence people, I want to own that and do better.
- And I am committed as I lead this church to grow In the way In which I address these topics.
 1. I am never going to be the pastor who will Ignore the culture around us.
 2. We will be a church that tries to apply the Word of God to what Is happening In our world.
 3. But I want to grow In leading us to do that with a culture where It Is safe for all of us to speak.
 - And so, If you have felt that way over the last couple of months...
 1. I would love to connect with you about this If I have not already.
 2. I miss meeting with people and seeing all of you In-person anyway.
 3. So, I would love to meet with you virtually or In-person.
 4. You can schedule a meeting here:
<https://calendly.com/pastorallan>



II. THE EXAMPLE OF PAUL

a. But how do we build a church culture where we can be fully known and fully loved?

- i. That is the question that I want us to answer this week and next week.
- ii. And let me give you the short answer now and we'll unpack it in detail...
 - Here's the short answer: If we want to be a church where everyone can be fully known and fully loved - **then we all need to show up willing to be known and show up seeking to know others.**
 1. Repeat.
 2. Pretty simple, right?
 - And so, this morning, we are going to talk about that first part - what it means for each of us to be willing to be known in the church.
 1. I would like for us to look to the Apostle Paul as an example of someone who was willing to be known and to use his own story - even the most shameful parts of his story - as a part of his ministry.

b. Read 1 Timothy 1:12-17

- i. So, here in 1 Timothy, Paul is writing a letter to one of his pastoral apprentices.
 - And in this letter, Paul is reminding Timothy of the responsibility that they have been entrusted by God - that is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - And as Paul is explaining this, he very naturally uses his own story in order to illustrate the redemptive power of the gospel. *[Review v.13 & v.15]*



ii. Do you remember Paul's story?

- Maybe It Is most concisely described In Acts 7.
 1. This Is shortly after the ascension of Jesus and the early church Is just getting started.
 2. And there were many Pharisees - Paul, who was formerly known as Saul, was one of them - who saw those In the church as heretics and sought to destroy It.
 3. And this one day, a man named Stephen, a deacon In the church who was filled with the Spirit began to preach In Jerusalem.
 4. In his sermon, He was explaining how Jesus Christ Is the fulfillment of all the prophesies In the Old Testament.
 5. Yet, the crowds did not want to hear It.
 6. And so, we have Acts 7:58 - *"Then they cast [Stephen] out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul."*
 7. Meaning that Saul was the one leading the charge and approving this execution.
- This Is a part of Paul's story. He was directly responsible for the murder of one of the churches first leaders - and likely many others.



iii. **Yet, this is important, Paul's story is not defined by his terrorism.**

- Just a few chapters later in Acts, Paul is on his way to Damascus to crush the church even more when Jesus Christ Himself confronts Paul and changes his life forever by redeeming him from his sin and setting him on a new trajectory - not to crush the church but to be the very catalyst of its expansion throughout the entire known world!
- Paul encountered the radical grace of God through the cross of Jesus Christ.
- And he went from being the public face of the destruction of the church to being the public face of the expansion of the church!

iv. **So, let me ask you this question - even though Paul was completely and miraculously changed by Christ - how often do you think Paul was racked with shame as he remembered his former life?**

- How much do you think Paul's story haunted him?
 1. As he remembered the face and testimony of saints like Steven whom he murdered.
- How many times did Paul have to endure the understandably skeptical looks he got from people in the church who knew what he had done in the past.
 1. After Paul was converted to Christ, he went up to Damascus and was proclaiming Jesus and we read in Acts 9:21 - *"And all who heard him were amazed and said, 'Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those*



who called upon this name? And has he not come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priests?"

- Then Paul made his way back to Jerusalem and we read In Acts 9:26...

1. *"And when he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples. And they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple."*

v. I believe that one of the struggles Paul endured throughout his entire ministry was the feeling of guilt and shame from his past.

- It's why Paul says In 1 Corinthians 15:9 - *"For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."*
- I don't think this was just pious self-deprecation.
 1. I believe that Paul's story was an Incredible source of pain and anxiety for Paul.
- And how tempting would It have been for Paul to try to forget that part of his story?
 1. To never talk about It.
 2. Never bring It up.
 3. Stuff It down, hide It from his brothers and sisters In Christ, and never talk about the weight of shame in the pit of his stomach.
 4. Even though it Is keeping you up at night.
 5. Even though you have times of wondering If God really loves you.
 6. Even though every time you preach you have this voice In your head telling you that you're a hypocrite.



- Hide your story.
 1. Just grin and bear it until the Lord brings you home.
- vi. **Paul had a choice here - he could decide to be known or he could decide to hide.**
 - To be known is risky. You don't know how people will react to your story.
 1. It's possible people could abandon you.
 - But Paul, rather, used his own story as a part of his ministry as we just read here in 1 Timothy.
 1. And Paul was known for using his story in other places such as Galatians 1, 2 Corinthians 12, and Philippians 3 among others.
 - Paul decided to be known. Paul was WILLING to be known by others.

III. APPLICATION

a. And my question for all of us here at Grace Hill is are we willing to be known by others?

- i. Like really known. The good, the bad, and the ugly.
 - All the way known - not just half-way.
 - Are we willing to let people know our stories - even the parts that cause us the most shame?
 - Are we willing to let people in on what we are currently struggling with, right now?
 - Are we willing to be known? Are we willing to tell our stories.



- ii. Because if we want to be a church where it is safe to be known, then each of us have to be willing to be known.
 - And so, as we close, using Paul's example this morning, I want to give all of us three reasons why it is worth the risk of being known (like really being known) in the church...

b. Reason #1: Being known allows others to invite you to rest in the gospel.

- i. As we said earlier, the gospel invites us into true rest because Jesus Christ has already taken care of all of our sin.
 - God fully knows us and yet, In Christ, fully loves and accepts us.
 1. We can rest from our striving to be loved.
 2. And we experience this rest within the church...when the church as the body of Christ...ministers this rest to one another by being a people where you literally can be fully known and fully loved and accepted.
 - And your brothers and sisters cannot minister this rest to you if you do not allow yourself to be known.
- ii. Earlier, we read In Acts 9:26 how all of the disciples were afraid of Paul In Jerusalem.
 - You could Imagine the insecurity and shame that Paul felt in that moment.
 - But look at what happens In v.27:
 1. *"But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to*



them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus.”

- Barnabas stood up for Paul. Can you imagine the rest that Barnabas invited Paul into in that moment?
 1. How Barnabas melted away the shame that was welling up inside of Paul.
 2. Paul here had a brother who inserted the gospel into the shame of his story in front of other people.
- And church, this is what we are called to do with one another.
 1. To fully know each other and also fully love one another.
 2. And therefore, we make the gospel of Jesus Christ an actual physical experience for one another.
 3. And it melts away shame.
- iii. And if we do not allow ourselves to be known, if we are not willing to tell our stories, if we're not willing to share our struggles...
 - Then we cannot help each other rest in the gospel.

c. Reason #2 that it is worth the risk of being known in the church: Being known clarifies the gospel to others.

- i. In 1 Timothy 1, Paul uses his story to make the gospel clear.
 - I don't know if you can find a more clear statement on the gospel than **1 Timothy 1:15**.
 - The Gospel is for sinners.



1. The gospel is for those who are messed up.
 2. The gospel is for those who have a hard time believing.
 3. The gospel is for those our society sees as the absolute worst.
 4. The gospel is for terrorist like Saul.
- Every single one of us has sinned against God and deserves his judgement.
 1. We are all narcissists.
 2. We are all selfish.
 3. We are all Inconsistent.
 4. We are all fallen.
 5. We are not different than our neighbors or the rest of the world.
 - And the gospel is for all of us.
 1. Jesus Christ has come to save sinners.
 2. And we are sinners and our neighbors are sinners.
 - And when we are willing to be really known - even with the worst skeletons in our closet- than we help make the gospel clear for everyone that the gospel is for sinners.
 1. And that anyone can find forgiveness and righteousness at the cross.
 2. Anyone is Invited to place their faith in Jesus and find the same grace and redemption that completely changed the Apostle Paul.
- ii. **And so, this morning, if you are joining us and you have not acknowledged the fact that you are a sinner - that needs the grace of God.**
- And If you have not accepted from God this gift of grace and forgiveness that Jesus Christ purchased for you not the cross.



- And If you have not entered a life of true rest where you can be fully known and fully loved by God and His people.
 - Then this morning, I Invite you to place your trust In Jesus.
- iii. **Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, like me, like you, like Paul...**
- And to receive that salvation, all you have to do is confess your sin to God (he already fully knows you so there is nothing to hide) and ask for his forgiveness In the name of Jesus Christ.
 1. Ans God will lavish his grace on you – fully known and fully loved.
 - And so, if you do that this morning, would you do me a favor and send me an e-mail?
 1. Allan@gracehillchurch.com
 2. I'd love to connect with you and walk with you through what It means to follow Jesus.

d. Reason #3 it is worth being known in the church: Being known invites others to rest In the gospel.

- i. Why would the world believe In the gospel, if it does not see a church that is willing to demonstrate through the sharing of their stories how the grace of God has changed them?
- Back In our text In 1 Timothy 1 - let's read together **v.16**.
 1. In other words, Paul Is saying that if God can redeem him than God can redeem anyone.



2. And when Paul is willing to share his story, it invites others to share their story and have the grace of God ministered to them.
- ii. **See, we spend so much time worried about what other people will think about us if we allow ourselves to really be known.**
 - But the truth is, when we are willing to go first and allow ourselves to be known, we knock down the barriers that are preventing others from being known.
 - When we tell our stories, we actually make it safe for others to tell their stories.
 - We are laying another brick upon this culture that we are building that at this church, you can share your story and you can be fully known, and no one will leave.
 - iii. **That at this church you don't have to hide and therefore you can actually rest in the gospel.**
 1. Your relationships with the people of God become an embodied representation of your relationship with your Father In Heaven.
 - iv. **And Grace Hill, that is the kind of the church I desire for us to be.**

IV. CONCLUSION

a. But we're only half way there.

- i. I said that if we want to build this culture, we all need to show up willing to be known and we also all need to show up seeking to know one another.



- When I am willing to share my story, but you are eager to hear my story and are a safe person to entrust with my story...
 - That's when we build this culture where we invite one another to rest in the gospel.
- ii. **And next week, I am very excited for my friend **Dr. Curt Thomson** to be preaching.**
- Curt Is a Christian psychiatrist who has a practice In Falls Church.
 - And he Is going to be preaching on how we can be people who are curious about one another's stories and how we can seek to know one another In the church.
 - And you definitely do not want to miss next week.

b. But, Grace Hill, God has called us not to just SHOW UP every week at church physically but He has also called us to SHOW UP In one another's lives relationally.

- i. Because when we show up as the body of Christ - we literally minister the rest of the gospel to one another.
- And I am praying that God will continue to build that kind of culture at Grace Hill.

V. PRAY

