

# Language

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All life originates in the language of God (Creation).

Remember when Jesus said, "I am the bread of heaven"? He was revealing who he was as the "I am." Some of his disciples couldn't take stomach what he was saying and Then Jesus said, "my words are spirit and life."

If life is what happens when God speaks, then recovering the language of God and becoming fluent in the language of God is what gives life to disciples, grows the life of disciples and sustains the life of disciples.

Additionally, if disciple-making was a model of learning that employed all of culture and life as props and utilities then we must consider how language can be used to grow as disciples.

## Language as cultural formation

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Languages create cultural possibilities, express cultural values, and elaborate on cultural realities:

- ❖ German and Hopi: Physics created and understood
- ❖ Romantic and Nordic: Romance and Violence
- ❖ European Sami People, an indigenous circumpolar group, have "hundreds of words for snow" and Hawaiians have 139 words for rain.

Even on a sub cultural level:

- ❖ Southern drawl can reflect and perpetuate the value of family spending time together and not being rushed with things.
- ❖ A northerners to-the-point and fast-talk reflects and perpetuates the value of time, getting things and projects done, achievements over relationships.

Think about how pop-culture defines and makes words/phrases latent with meaning, with story:

- ❖ "Houston we have a problem."
- ❖ "We're not in Kansas anymore, Dorothy."

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*"Language, Fluency and the 'Ego Eimi'"*

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- ❖ "Go ahead, punk, make my day . . . "
- ❖ "I have a dream"
- ❖ "Eat my shorts"

Families and friends within languages redefine words and terms and give them a meaning that is laced with experiences, rich meaning and carries on memories and depth of relationship.

- ❖ "Ken, tell them why I'm angry" (Second Residency at Gordon Conwell)
- ❖ "Its an omen" "the universe is conspiring . . . " (A season of life with some friends who embraced taking risk and venturing out.)
- ❖ "I like this one!" (Freedom from the tyranny of lies and deceit)
- ❖ "You gotta plant that seed. Get thee behind me Satan!" (a reminder of the joy of ignorance)
- ❖ "The Village" (conjures up about 30 years of my life and others that have seen the movie came from the communities that were fear-driven)
- ❖ "Ordinary People." (to my wife and I that has heavy meaning and deep experience behind it)
- ❖ "Its business time"

## The Gospel as Language

*Eph 6:19 Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel (NIV)*

We have found as a community a whole new world of meaning and one that generates followership, dependence on God and conforming to the image of his son in the word 'Gospel' and its cognates—Gospelling, Gosselled.

In a nutshell 'to gospel' means to bring "Good News" to light on bad situations and sinful habits, community issues and anxieties and stresses. We are discovering and uncovering little by little that disciples are never seen in the singular in Acts because **one (1)** cannot be a disciple, it takes two or more to speak and have community.

There are three assumptions one must embrace at a heart level if he/she is going to become fluent in Gospelling.

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1. Humble Minds. Gospeling flows with poetic rhythms in disciple-learners. We are humbled by what God has done for us. We deserve death since we lived in disobedience. He has given us life and is teaching us obedience. Humbling ourselves with the knowledge that we are all learners, not teachers and not Masters is necessary to the green-zone of Gospel language. Here is the truth: We sin. To act like we don't is just an act. We remind ourselves that this is his story, he is the hero. We are the stubborn clay, the broken image, the weeded garden. He is the hero. And the Hero has chosen to speak to us through the brokenness of each other. ("Let this mind be in you ...!" And "Humble yourselves before one another in the fear of the Lord")
2. Contrite Heart. Gospeling anthems are sung from the hearts of the contrite. When our hearts are so absorbed with grace and gratitude and love for how far the arm of God reaches to save us we cannot help but repent, and repent over and over and over. We realize disciples are growing more and more in their understanding of who Jesus is and what that means and as they grow they shed layers of sinfulness and brokenness. We are not trying to prove our worth or merit on the basis of our good works. One look at the *hesed* and *emet* of God as seen in the face of Jesus Christ and we run back to the safety of Jesus and flee from the insecurities of obstinate sinfulness, masquerading pride, and our own idolatrous bobbleheads.
3. Boldness. The Good News that Jesus does the work and Jesus gives us his Word frees us. Our love for one another emboldens us to speak the truth in love. When we see sin, disobedience that is killing our discipleship, we speak with grace and truth, with tears and compassion. To not speak, to be silent, is to be indifference. And indifference is the antithesis of love—not hate. God shows us that he was not indifferent to our sin, to the mess and problem of our own making.

Humility, contrition, and boldness are conditions of the heart. They are not rules, principles, steps ... but dispositions of a Gossiped heart. This can only come by hearing, over and over what God has done for us. ("Listen, O Israel ..." and "I am the Lord your God who rescued you ...")

# Fluency

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Part of what we as followers are surrendering to is becoming more and more fluent in speaking the Gospel to each other and hearing the Gospel in each others voice and in the world around us.

*Ephesians 4:14* **We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. <sup>15</sup> Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ . . .**

Who is the truth? [Jesus, "I am the way, the truth, the life . . ."] To speak the truth in love is to speak the Good News of Jesus into each others' life and do it with love.

Paul said the way the body is built up is when each part is ministering to each other. We are seeking to become more and more fluent in reminding each other what God has done for us in Christ and how that fits into every nook and cranny of our lives and how it fixes every worry and fear, doubt and sin we struggle with day in and day out.

As the areas of deficiency in our belief in the Gospel creep up, we are called to Gospel each others hearts.

This can only happen when we are living in community, working on mission together, and our lives are rubbing up against each other every day.

**YOU MUST HAVE A COMMUNITY OF DISCIPLES WHO HAVE GIVEN EACH OTHER PERMISSION TO SPEAK THE GOSPEL TO EACH OTHER REGULARLY.**

**Every sin that stands in the way of our faithfulness to obey Jesus commands is a Gospel issue! If we are going to make disciples we must:**

1. Know the Gospel, intimately, in the depth of our heart. Our love for Jesus will be seen in our passion to listen and study the Gospel. We cannot speak what we do not know. We must allow the Story to shape us so deeply that that we dance and

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- sing like a charismatic. We must know it so well that we passionately are consumed with its knowledge—meditating, studying it like the desert fathers.
2. We must apply it to our lives. So that we can see where the Gospel intersects with our lives.
  3. We must give permission to others to speak it into our lives. We must speak the Gospel in love into other disciples lives.

## ***Ego Eimi***

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Developing a language and fluency means we need to get some words into our vocabulary that reflect the work of God.

We are discovering that salvation is so much more than what we were told.

- ❖ Its coming to trust Jesus to save our future body.
- ❖ Its trusting that God has forgiven our past sins because of what Jesus did on the cross.
- ❖ Its learning to depend and trust on him day, after day, after day.

Jesus refers to God's role in the drama of our salvation when he says, "I am he who is, who was and who is to come."

## ***"I AM"***

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In the Gospel of the Beloved Disciple the Tetragrammaton (YHWH) is here, not merely raging in a fiery bush, not merely symbolized in a bloody Passover lamb, not merely displayed in the aftermath of *Hesed* and *Emet*, and not merely tabernacled in a holy tent. YHWH is here enfleshed in mortal clay. The "I AM" was made flesh.

This is made plain in these texts:

- ❖ "I am. Be not afraid." (John 6:20)
- ❖ "Unless you believe that "I AM" you will die in your sins." (John 8:24)
- ❖ When you lift up the son of man, then you will realize that "I AM" (John 8:28)

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- ❖ "Before Abraham came into existence, I AM" (John 8:58)
- ❖ "When [my prediction of Judas betrayal] happens you will believe that I AM" (John 13:19)
- ❖ "I AM." (John 18:5)

The Beloved Disciple's chief concern in conveying the Gospel to us is to expose us to who Jesus (And by relation "The Father") really is.

***"These things are written that you believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you might have life through the power of his name."--The intentional result of belief for the Gospel of the Beloved Disciple is to show us how to possess life, speak life, and live life.***

Jesus came to show us who the Father really is and by so doing to help us trust God again, and when we believe in who God is (name) we will have life through the power of who God is (name).

Raymond Brown goes on to say, that seven times in this Gospel we are exposed to "a revelation of the divine commitment involved in the Father sending of the Son."

- ❖ I AM the bread of life [living bread]
- ❖ I AM the light of the world
- ❖ I AM the [sheep]gate
- ❖ I AM the noble shepherd
- ❖ I AM the resurrection and the life.
- ❖ I AM the way, the truth, and the life
- ❖ I AM the real vine.

Each time after Jesus reveals the Father to us he will either ask his followers if they believe and trust this or he will upbraid the religious elite for not believing and trusting this.

***What happens in the story when The Nothing hears and obeys the voice of God in creation? [Life]***

See, the Beloved will say, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. ... All things were made by him, in him was the life ... And the Word became flesh"

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***See the problem isn't knowing it up here (head). We all know it up in our heads. Or we have heard it over and over and we say we know it. There is a gap between what we know in our heads and what we believe in our hearts. Becoming a follower of Jesus is taking the journey of connecting the truth we have come to accept in our heads and coming to believe them in our hearts.***

Gospeling is coming to believe and trust who God declares himself to be (I Am) and what he has done for us in Jesus Christ and who he declares us to be and what he calls us to do.

## **So what's the problem?**

***Where does death and sin come from?*** [Adam and Eve]

- People are given over to sinful desires because '***they exchanged the truth of God for a lie***' (Romans 1:24-25).
- We sin because we believe the lie that we are better off without God
  - ❖ that his rule is oppressive,
  - ❖ that we will be free without him,
  - ❖ that sin offers more than God provides.

***Behind every sin is a lie about God. Learning to speak the truth in love, is being fluent in bringing Good News to the lies we are believing about God and consequently ourselves and our world.***

- IF I get angry when I am stuck in traffic it is because I do not trust God. I believe the lie that God is not in control or that his purposes for me are not good.

- IF I overwork it is because I don't trust God to provide for me, perhaps because I believe the lie that I need to prove or justify myself.

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- Whenever we are depressed or bitter, it is because we believe God is not being good to us or that he is not in control.

***"Everything that does not come from faith is sin."*** (Romans 14:23).

This is a radical view of sin. It means many of our negative emotions are symptoms of unbelief – the greatest sin and the root sin. It means that life and its abundant potential are held at bay by sin.

As Christians, many of us don't think of ourselves as unbelievers... But when our lives don't match our beliefs, we are unbelievers in those areas. We are coming to realize that more and more of our lives are still being brought under the rule & reign of King Jesus).

### ***The truth shall set you free***

Recognizing that behind every sin is a lie not only gives us a radical view of sin, it points us to the road out of sinful behavior and emotions: That road is trust in God.

Typically when we get angry we try to control the anger by controlling the anger. We try to control sin by controlling behavior. Jesus teaches is a radical corrective to this. Sin cannot be controlled by will power. It is something we are in bondage to. Sin begets more sin.

<sup>28</sup> So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man on the cross, then you will understand that I Am. I do nothing on my own but say only what the Father taught me. <sup>29</sup> And the one who sent me is with me—he has not deserted me. For I always do what pleases him." <sup>30</sup> Then many who heard him say these things believed in him.

<sup>31</sup> Jesus said to the people who believed in him, "You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. <sup>32</sup> And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

<sup>33</sup> "But we are descendants of Abraham," they said. "We have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean, 'You will be set free'?"

<sup>34</sup> Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave of sin. <sup>35</sup> A slave is not a permanent member of the family, but a son is part of the family forever. <sup>36</sup> So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free.

Just as lies about God lead to the slavery of sin, so the truth about God leads to freedom (Galatians 5:1, 13).

Slavery and bondage are believing the lies that we are our own hero, that we are independent and don't need anyone or anything, that we have to make a name for ourselves if we really want to count and that we are entitled to life, freedom and happiness

The truth that sets us free is the gospel ("if you hold to my teaching"). Freedom comes when we believe in our hearts that we were designed to worship God, to be dependent on God, to bring glory to God's name. Freedom comes when we accept the truth that we are responsible for the mess we have made of our lives and that we deserve God's judgment.

***"What evidence is there in my life that I'm not believing this gospel at a heart level?"***

- ❖ Why do I have anxiety? Panic attacks. Bouts of worry and stress?
- ❖ Why do I get angry?
- ❖ Why am I lusting after the flesh of another person?
- ❖ Why am I coveting

Many Christians come up with 4 steps to overcome anger. Jesus did not come to show us how to be a better person. Jesus is not a therapist. Jesus did not say, "here is how you can fix the problem."

Jesus said, "I am ..."

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## **Gospel Jargon**

### ***The 4 G's Liberating Truths about God***

- 1. God is Good. So we don't have to look elsewhere for satisfaction.***
- 2. God is Gracious so we don't have to prove ourselves.***
- 3. God is Great - So we don't have to be in control.***
- 4. God is Glorious - So we don't have to fear others.***

(There is much more to be said about God than is covered by these four truths, but they address many of the problems, sins and emotions with which we struggle. Think of them as the beginning of developing a vocabulary that works with the Gospel to help us grow and mature as believers.")

### ***1. God is Good, so we don't have to look elsewhere for satisfaction.***

"I AM the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again."—John 6

God is good. He has given us Jesus and Jesus satisfies every hunger in our lives.

What are you trying to satisfy yourself with? Material? Fleshly Pleasures?

Samaritan Woman: John 4

- Why did Jesus use the metaphor of water, and thirst?
- What was the woman thirsting for?
- Was she satisfied?
- What did Jesus say the solution was?

The question about the woman's husband leads straight to her heart. She has been looking for satisfaction in men, in sex, in intimacy. There was pleasure for a while, but it kept leaving her empty, thirsty. Jesus says, "Drink of this water, and you will never thirst again."

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Nothing but God satisfies – not in a true and lasting way. If you look for satisfaction or fulfillment, meaning or identity, anywhere other than in Jesus, you will be left empty. There may be a moment of refreshment or pleasure. But you will soon be thirsty again.

### ***Why did God create humans with needs?***

- So we would look to Him to fulfill
- So we'd know we're incomplete without Him or others
- It demonstrates His Goodness
- If you look for satisfaction or fulfillment, meaning or identity, anywhere other than in Jesus, you will be left empty.
- Whatever sin offers, God offers us himself. God is not just good; he is better – better than everything else and the true source of all joy.
- Physical needs are signposts to spiritual needs. They remind us...
- When God fulfills our needs the response is thankfulness.
- Thankfulness should be our posture in everything! Then our meals & relationships..everything becomes an act of worship!
- 1 Tim. 6:17-19 "God, who richly provides everything for our enjoyment!"

What is the result of believing that God is not good enough to satisfy me?

- Pain
- Fear
- Separation
- Perpetual Emptiness & Dissatisfaction (That's the curse..)
- ***Take a good thing & turned it into an ultimate thing = IDOL***
- When we say I must have that thing to be satisfied... that's idolatry
- Alcoholism
- Our understanding of needs is distorted
- Entitlement
- We take what God has given us & misuse it
- We don't want to wait for God

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David committed adultery with Bathsheba, then murdered her husband. After Nathan confronted him he cried out to God, "Against you, you only have I done this sin." How was his sin against God?

What would be the fruit of not looking elsewhere for provision, of believing in the goodness of God?

- Contentment
- No debt
- No materialism
- Put \$ to use for the Kingdom & Mission
- Happy marriages

***How do we turn the good things in our lives into idols?***

- We all have needs... it's not the desires that are the problem... it's who we look for the satisfaction in.
- Idolatry is @ the heart & soul of all the wrong & sin going on in humanity
- The problem is fundamentally that we are not satisfied with God
- Then we go to other things for satisfaction, what make us more thirsty than we were in the 1st place (Alcohol, drugs, sex, relationships, money, comfort, television, food).

Like the Samaritan woman, what are you looking for satisfaction in? What are you trying to satisfy your life with?

"I am the bread." Is not I will show you how to make the dough, so that you can bake the bread! Jesus is what satisfies our thirst. Jesus is what satisfies our hunger.

***Is there a pattern in your life of people or things that keep failing you?***

What is your "if only" statement? If only... I would be satisfied.

If you're in a situation where you're looking for satisfaction in something other than Him, what should you do?

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Realize & Repent & Proclaim your need for God (Gospel yourself)... that will lead to the right attitude in your heart which will lead to proper actions.

Change is about enjoying the freedom from sin and delight in God that God gives to us through Jesus.

### ***What's the answer?***

- Jesus. Look at how good he is.

### ***How do we begin..?***

- Listen to the Story.
- Acknowledge how you are looking to things to save you from boredom or satisfy your lusts.
- Confess this and Repent.
- Make a new confession with you mouth. "God is good, therefore I don't have to look anywhere else for satisfaction." Jesus is the Bread of Life that gives me a taste of the Good God.

### ***[Those who are using these handles] . . .***

- Share with us how you were disbelieving the goodness of God and how this handle exposed the lie and helped you grab the truth.

## ***2. God is Gracious, so we don't have to prove ourselves***

"I AM the noble shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me, <sup>15</sup> just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. So I sacrifice my life for the sheep."

Jesus reveals to us that the Father is gracious when he says I am the noble shepherd. He declares that God knows (intimately) us. We

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do not have to pretend we are something that we are not. We do not have to prove worthy of his noble nature. We see his grace in the voluntary act of sacrificing his life for us.

It is not noble sheep that the shepherd dies for. They simply are his sheep.

**We try to prove ourselves to ourselves.** When we mess up, we feel shame... so we try to distance ourselves from our sin... we think that Grace is like Karma.

***What are some ways we try to distance ourselves from our sin?***

- ❖ It was the other person's fault,
- ❖ it was my circumstances,
- ❖ I had a good reason for doing that
- ❖ I wasn't in the wrong
- ❖ Anger, covering up feelings of shame

***When we sin, we feel it's a sin against our self-esteem & our self-image.***

When we don't believe that God is gracious it can also result in perfectionism. We HAVE to do everything and do it perfectly in order to feel good about ourselves. Otherwise we are overwhelmed by a sense of shame, inadequacy, guilt and fear of being un-loved. We are trying to justify our existence, prove our value to ourselves.

**We also try to prove ourselves to others**

When I try to prove myself to someone in order to feel ok, to feel justified and worthy of salvation, I am essentially trusting in that person for my salvation. I am making that person a functional savior.

- One of the problems in trying to prove ourselves to others, is that they (or we) set the standard.
- We settle for living like we want or like others instead of living like Christ...
- "I'm not as bad as that guy."

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## We try to prove ourselves to God

- ❖ We have a desire to "Self-Atone"
- ❖ We try to do something to make God act favorable toward us...
- ❖ We think God will be more impressed by us or love us more if we are better than we were the day before, if we are really good and are exhausting ourselves with service.
- ❖ We become a slave to religion, to rules . . .

Why?

- ❖ Because we want to take the credit... Y?
- ❖ Because we are not believing the truth that God is gracious.
- ❖ we work our hardest to prove ourselves so we feel worthy

Ephesians 2:1-9

God is always saying, "In my love, I've given you my son who's already paved the path of your acceptance."

What are some personal examples of things in our lives we know we don't deserve... family, healing, breath, salvation... the only thing we've ever earned is death

We don't earn or deserve anything but wrath... it's God's grace that gives us everything...

But I wake up tomorrow & try to prove myself to myself & others & God...

What happens when I try to prove myself? What are some indicators?

- Take criticism & failure badly (defensiveness)
- Hard to relax (workaholic)
- Proud/Judgmental attitude
- Envy of others' successes
- Materialism
- Want to prove we are right
- Feel pressure to perform

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- Serve so we can feel good about ourselves or to impress people.
- Trying to live up to impossible standards set either by yourself or by someone else.
- Enjoyment in hearing of the shortcomings of others rather than grieving.
- Our Christian service becomes a drudgery and a joyless duty.
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I declare myself to be a better savior than Jesus. Here is the shocking truth: all supposed good works that are done without faith in the grace of God are not good works at all, but acts of God-defying pride. 'Without faith it is impossible to please God.' (Hebrews 11:6).

The people asked Jesus, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent." (John 6)

What would be the result of not needing to prove ourselves because we believe in our hearts that God is gracious?

- Humility
- Spiritual growth
- Correction is welcome
- Mutual admonishing/accountability
- Putting others first
- Peace
- Ability to show grace to others
- Prayer for each other, because we know we live by His grace
- Rest, joy
- Serving out of freedom instead of obligation
- Ability to say no, because our works do not justify us
- Openness about our sin, because we believe we are forgiven

I guess many of us confidently believe that we will be justified on the last day - acquitted before God through the death of Jesus. But what about justification today and tomorrow? Are you still trying to prove yourself?

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Jesus said,<sup>24</sup> "I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life. (John 5)

### ***What's the answer?***

- Jesus. Look at how gracious he is.

### ***How do we begin..?***

- Listen to the story of his grace.
- Acknowledge how you are making an idol out of whoever you are "proving" yourself to.
- Confess this and Repent.
- Make a new confession with your mouth. "God is gracious, therefore I don't have to prove myself."
- When faced with the temptation to "prove" myself don't say, "I mustn't do this!" But rather, "I don't *need* to prove myself." To say I mustn't do this is legalism, to say I need not do this because God is bigger and better" is Good News. Jesus is the Noble Shepherd that shows me the Father's sacrifice for me.

### ***[Those who are using these handles] . . .***

- Share with us how you were disbelieving the goodness of God and how this handle exposed the lie and helped you grab the truth.

## **3. God is Great, so we don't have to be in control.**

Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died. ... Jesus told her, "I AM the resurrection and the life ... "Do you believe this?"

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## ***How is God Great?***

- Good right & perfect
- God provides for needs before they arise
- He creates all
- He has authority over all

Death is the holy grail of what no one can control.

Martha puts conditions upon God's greatness—"if you had been here". Jesus says, "I AM the resurrection."

It's unbelievable how much we know in our head about God's greatness, yet how little it takes to freak our hearts out... like Martha we put conditions on God's greatness, and this leads us to attempting to control things in harmful ways through manipulation or domination.

If you are worn out with "busyness" and stress it may well be because you do not trust God's control.

God's rule is not good enough or great enough so you are pushing him to one side and taking control yourself... Our security and our wealth will become our priority instead of God's kingdom.

## ***What areas of your life do you find yourself trying to control?***

(Everything? Finances, Future, Relationships, Time, Impressions)

***What do you obsess over? What things do people do that drive you nuts? What do you try to manipulate or cover-up? Does someone else's behavior or attitude give you anxiety and you are trying to control it?***

## ***Trying to take control produces what?***

- Fear
- Anxiety
- Impatience
- Stress
- Anger

***We become:***

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- Overbearing
- Un-flexible
- Manipulative
- Micro-managers
- Not letting God be King & Reign in our lives

IF you don't trust God's control, you will find yourself trying to take control of everything!

### ***What's the answer?***

- Jesus. Look at how great God is in what he has done for us in Jesus Christ. He has conquered death, which was the human dilemma that confounded every human.
- I need not worry and stress, but live in the rest, work in the rest of Jesus.

### ***How do we begin...?***

- Listen to the story of his creation and recreation (esp. through Jesus Christ).
- Acknowledge how you are making an idol out of yourself for trying to control everything and be your own God.
  - o We tend to want to control the things that are in God's control and refuse responsibility for the things that we have been given control over. Lk 12 "Who of you, by worrying can add even 1 hour to his life ..."
- Confess this and Repent.
- Make a new confession with your mouth. "God is Great, therefore I don't have to be in control."
- "Do not be anxious about anything," says Paul, "but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6-7)
  - o Prayer is a recognition of God's greatness.
  - o Prayer is directing our dependence and praise to God for what only he can do.

- When faced with the temptation to control things that are outside the scope of my stewarding responsibility I don't say, "I mustn't be in control!" But rather, "I don't *need* to be in control." To say I mustn't do this is legalism, to say I need not do this because God is bigger and better" is Good News. Jesus is the Resurrection that shows me the power of God.

***[Those who are using these handles] . . .***

- Share with us how you were disbelieving the greatness of God and how this handle exposed the lie and helped you grab the truth.

**4. God is Glorious:** So we don't have to fear others (we don't have to be controlled by others) and we don't have to live in fear of ourselves and in fear of not making a name for ourselves.

<sup>12</sup> When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

***What is Glory?***

- The way something or someone truly is
- The source,
- The ultimate reality
- Jesus is the "glory" of God
- To Give glory to God is to say what's true & ultimate reality about God
- To live for his glory...
- To manifest the hidden nature of something
- In Hebrew = "Weight, heaviness"

Disciples

***"Language, Fluency and the 'Ego Eimi' "***

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<sup>18</sup> I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, <sup>19</sup> and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength <sup>20</sup> he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, <sup>21</sup> far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. <sup>22</sup> And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, <sup>23</sup> which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way. Ephesians 1

We sin because we crave the approval of people OR fear their rejection

- We see their glory as more glorious than God... they matter more than God does to us
- We "Need" the acceptance of others
- When we do that, we're controlled by them... we "fear them"

### ***What does the fear of man look like?***

- Make fun of others?
- Working for approval? ..or not working..?
- Hiding weaknesses
- Internalizing conflict
- Won't or will say things for approval
- Build ministries for approval
- Susceptibility to peer pressure

### ***What has the "fear of man" produced in your life?***

- Self-hatred
- Self-doubt
- Disingenuous
- Pride
- Bitterness
- Inactivity

Disciples

### ***"Language, Fluency and the 'Ego Eimi' "***

Adapted from Tim Chester and Soma Appellation. Aged in the tradition of the Beloved Disciple by Jeffrey Garner

- Emotional Fluctuation (how they see me affects me & controls me) but our ID is supposed to be rooted in Christ
- Double-mindedness
- Needing More
- Over-committed
- Fear of exposure
- Embarrassment
- Lies & exaggerations to make self look good
- Comparisons to others
- People make us jealous, anxious, angry... control our emotions
- Resentment
- Withholding
- Avoid confrontation
- Craving approval
- Behave differently around certain people
- What you deem to be the most glorious is who or what we will most fear. They are who's most glorious in our lives.
- When we need approval, we have to keep feeding it..it's cyclical
- Regardless of how much we do, we'll still feel unrest
- If we feel accepted or approved, we'll move on to someone else to get more approval
- Frustration with relationships because they cannot provide what we "need."

These are ALL results of not TRULY believing in our hearts that God is Glorious!

We try to overcome this by building more self-esteem... but we become dependant on people or things to boost our self-esteem..like a drug

How do we get free from this? Something must yank our heart free from the 'fear of man' and surrender it to the Fear of God.

Fear of God displaces the fear of man

Isa 40:25 - "To whom will you compare me?"

Disciples

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Or who is my equal?" says the Holy One.

Whoever/ whatever it is that we fear... imagine them, then next to them imagine the Glorious God... how does that compare? Can they lay down their life, pick it up again & hand it to you? Can they form the universe?

Do you realize how much of an offense that is to God (to stand next to anyone/anything and say "yeah...that's more glorious than you God") we need to start by admitting we realize how off we are, and repent... repent by focusing on God's glory and asking him to give you a vision of Him that's greater than anything else.

It's a form of idolatry...

- I'm only nice to you for your approval... means I'm using you...
- I don't need their approval, so I treat others like crap...

***IF this is true, (that God is Ultimate Glory), how would that affect your heart?***

- Giving
- Hospitality
- Loving freely
- Stable people..not double-minded or tossed about
- Authentic
- Interested in each other
- Easier to give God glory

***What's the answer?***

- Jesus. Look at how glorious God is in what he has done for us in Jesus Christ. He has given him the glory of a name and reputation, fame and worth that is higher than any name. His ascension is the perfect picture of this!
- I need not fear, but live in the glory that is already his, work in the glory he has already achieved.

Disciples

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### ***How do we begin...?***

- Listen to the story of his ascension and the promise of his return.
- Acknowledge how you are making an idol out of things for living in fear to them. Nothing is worth your fear but God.
- Confess this and Repent.
- Make a new confession with your mouth. "God is Glorious, therefore I don't have to live in fear."
- When faced with the temptation to fear things other than God I don't say, "I mustn't be fear!" But rather, "I don't *need* to fear." To say I mustn't do this is legalism, to say I need not do this because God is bigger and better" is Good News. Jesus is the Light of Glory that shows me the weightiness and unfiltered reality of God.

### ***[Those who are using these handles] . . .***

- Share with us how you were disbelieving the glory of God and how this handle exposed the lie and helped you grab the truth.

### ***How would it affect our community?***

### ***How would it affect our city?***

### **Conclusion:**

We are changed when we look at Jesus, delight in Jesus, commune with Jesus. But no-one can embrace Jesus if they are guilty of sin and no-one will embrace Jesus if they still feel the guilt of sin. So change only begins when come 'under grace' with its message of divine pardon and welcome. Only then will we "approach the throne

of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."(Hebrews 4:16)

Change takes place through faith in our great and good God. It takes place as we preach truth to our hearts. This does not mean it is easy. We just have to believe – but that is a big 'just'! Faith is a daily struggle. Lies about God are all around us: the world, the flesh and the devil whisper them constantly to our hearts. It is a struggle. But it is also possible. 'This is the victory that has overcome the world,' says the Apostle John, 'even our faith.' (1 John 5:4)

First, we need to nurture our delight in God's goodness, rest in God's grace, fear of God's majesty, trust in God's control, longing for God's future. We need to do this day by day through the word, prayer and the Christian community (more of this in unit eight).

Second, when we face temptation we need to say not only I should not do this, but also I need not do this.

When tempted to envy another's possession, we say not only I must not envy, but also I need not envy because I have Christ. When tempted to worry, we say not only I must not worry, but I need not worry because God is in control. Whatever sin offers, God is bigger and better.

***Exercise: What truths do you need to turn to?***

***What thoughts are behind your behaviour or emotions?***

- \* Why do you do what you do or feel?
- \* What do you hope to achieve?
- \* What do you think will make you happy in that situation?
- \* What beliefs or thoughts shape your behaviour or emotions?

Disciples

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What do your thoughts show about your trust in God?

Restate your thinking with God included. The following questions may help:

- \* ***IF you want something, do you think it offers more than God offers?***
- \* ***IF you fear something, do you think it is more important than God?***

Restate your thoughts as beliefs or thoughts about God.

- \* What do your thoughts show about your trust that God is great?
- \* What do your thoughts show about your trust that God is glorious?
- \* What do your thoughts show about your trust that God is good?
- \* What do your thoughts show about your trust that God is gracious?

What is the lie that is behind the area you have chosen in your personal change project?

What truths do you need to turn to?

Turn the answer to the last question the opposite way round. If this is the lie, what is the truth? Which of the following truths particularly apply to these lies?

- \* ***God is great - so we do not have to be in control***
- \* ***God is glorious - so we do not have to fear others***
- \* ***God is good - so we do not have to look elsewhere***
- \* ***God is gracious - so we do not have to prove ourselves***

Say the truth to yourself twenty times: 'God is all I need.' Say it slowly. 'God ... is ... all ... I ... need.' Say it out loud. Say it back to him: 'You are all I need'.

## **Gospel Moments**

We have found the following moments to be spaces where we can bring the Gospel to bear in our lives.

### - **Communion and Confession**

***"I am the vine." "I am the bread."***

God is here, now therefore I do not have to live in the past or worry about the future.

He is the only one I need to be connected to have a fulfilled life.

During communion we take the time to share our needs as we break the bread. We may talk about areas where we are broken.

Then as we dip the bread we speak to each other about where we see this new covenant with God through Jesus blood speaks and saves that area of our lives.

### - **Decision and Direction**

***"I am the way, the truth, the shepherd, and the gate."***

When we are looking for direction in our life we speak to each other remind each other that Jesus is the direction we have been looking for, Jesus is the door of opportunity we have been waiting for, Jesus is the guide who leads us with his voice as we walk. We do not need to look anywhere else for guidance. He is enough.