



Gospel Threads

Thread 5: The Hope of Transformation

Key Question: *How can we weave our own experience of transformation into conversation as a way to share the gospel?*

Review: Why “Gospel Threads?”

- **God’s Word commands us to make disciples.**
 - Disciples Receive & Believe the Gospel (Delight)
 - Disciples Display the Gospel
 - Disciples Declare the Gospel
- **Evangelism is Not an “Event”, but a Way of Life**
- **Overcoming Obstacles:** How can we overcome obstacles to evangelism consistently and habitually?
- **Active and Passive Fields** - There are many “fields” of evangelism in which we can proclaim the gospel. They can be grouped into two categories:
 - **Active Spheres:** We intentionally alter our life to be around non-believers.
 - **Passive Spheres:** We engage with non-believers in everyday settings.
- **The Key:** *We need to develop habits of intentionality in our speech and actions that open pathways to share the gospel.*
- **The Method: Weaving Gospel Threads**
 - **The Threads:** Gospel themes.
 - **The Fabric:** Our everyday lives.
 - **The Needle:** Our obedience to display and declare.
 - **The Process:** Keep weaving threads until a door opens to take the next step.
 - **The Goal:** Share the gospel as an overflow of your already-established connection and friendship.

Gospel Thread #5 - The Hope of Transformation

• Why Focus on the Hope of Transformation?

- **Question:** What does it mean to “witness”?
- Negatively, the law is useful in causing people to see their need for Christ.
- Positively, the transformed life of a believer can powerfully attract people to Christ.
 - Remember: In the Old Testament, the nation of Israel was intended to experience God’s blessing as a testimony of God’s goodness to the nations around them. They were supposed to glorify God by reflecting his goodness.
 - Similarly, believers who’ve been transformed by the gospel testify to the goodness of God and become beacons of His glory in the world.
- Scripture describes lost people as hopeless.
 - **Ephesians 2:12** ...Remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.
- Scripture testifies to the transformative power of the gospel.
 - **1 Corinthians 6:9-11** ⁹ Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.
 - **2 Corinthians 5:17** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.
 - **Question:** Why might focusing on “transformation” be an effective evangelistic tool?
 - “The most powerful apologetic is a transformed life”. You can’t argue against it!

• Four Connected Gospel Realities

- The Word of God is what the Spirit uses to transform hearts.
 - **Hebrews 4:12** For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
 - **John 6:63** It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.
 - **Isaiah 55:10-11** ¹⁰ For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, ¹¹ so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me

empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

- Jesus is the incarnate Word of God, modeling what it means to display God's word even as we declare it.
 - **John 1:14** *The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*
 - **John 5: 19-24** ¹⁹ So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. ²⁰ For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel. ²¹ For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. ²² For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, ²³ that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. ²⁴ Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.
- We are called to not only declare the truth, but display it in the pattern of Christ.
 - **Ephesians 2:10** *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*
- As we show the transformative power of the Word, we share the transforming message of the Word.
 - **Matthew 5:14-16** ¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.
 - **1 Corinthians 5:16-17** ¹⁵ For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, ¹⁶ to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life.

○ **Question:** What are some ways we can "smell" like Christ to others?

- **Scriptural Examples**

- **Healing of the Gadarene Demonic**

- **Mark 5:18 - 20** ...¹⁸ As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him. ¹⁹ And he did not permit him but said to him, "Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." ²⁰ And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled.

- **The Samaritan Woman**

- **John 4:28-42** ²⁸ So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, ²⁹ "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?" ³⁰ They went out of the town and were coming to him. ... ³⁹ Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did." ⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. ⁴¹ And many more believed because of his word. ⁴² They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world."

- **Paul At His Temple Arrest**

- **Acts 22:6-21** [Paul shares how Christ transformed him as a means to getting to the gospel.]

- **Paul Before Felix**

- **Acts 24:14-15** ¹⁴ But this I confess to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets, ¹⁵ having a hope in God, which these men themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust.

- **The Man Born Blind**

- **John 9:24-32** ²⁴ So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, "Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner." ²⁵ He answered, "Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." ²⁶ They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" ²⁷ He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" ²⁸ And they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. ²⁹ We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." ³⁰ The man answered, "Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. ³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. ³² Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind."

Weaving the Thread of the Hope of Transformation

- **Rehearse how God saved you.**
 - Rehearse how the gospel has transformed you. This is good practice, but also good for your soul!
 - Adopt a 1-5-10 strategy: What is your 1-minute, 5-minute, and 10-minute testimony?
 - What did God do to bring you to a knowledge of himself?
 - What did your life look like before coming to Christ? What does it look like now?
- **Recount how God is working in you now.**
 - What are you learning in the Bible?
 - How has God shown himself faithful this week?
 - What need has God met for which you can praise Him?
 - What challenges have you faced in which God helped you?
- **Obey 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 evangelistically.**
 - **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18** ¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
 - How can you display your other-worldly joy in Christ today?
 - For whom can you offer to pray today?
 - For what can you give thanks that testifies to the goodness of God?
- **Identify with people in their weakness.**
 - Show compassion for the situations of the lost; they are “without hope and without God in the world” (Ephesians 2:12).
 - Show that you’re not “better” than them, but share that you too have been saved from sin. It’s not the healthy that need a doctor, but the sick! (Mark 2:17)
- **Serve others...especially when they don’t deserve it.**
 - What are some ways you can serve the lost around you unconditionally?
 - How can you demonstrate the compassion of Christ through actions?

Case Studies for Consideration

- **Antagonistic Andrea**

- Scene: You've been working alongside Andrea, an atheist who thinks Christians are foolish, at the office. You've mentioned that you're a Christian, and she engages in conversation about Christianity over lunch – albeit antagonistically. It seems like she enjoys arguing, but what you're sharing isn't getting through.
- **Discussion Question:** In what way could you show Andrea the gospel in addition to sharing it? What could you *do* that helps tear down barriers?

- **Regular Attenders**

- Scene: You frequent the same coffee shop every week with a friend from church. You always sit at the same table, and you always order the same drink. Some of the staff – and even some of the patrons – see you every time you're there.
- **Discussion Question:** How can you (and your friend) intentionally show the love of Christ even as you share it? What Christian disciplines, for example, could you put on display that would be intriguing to onlookers?

- **Answering Common Questions**

- Scene: You're in the community (either at work, school, the playground, etc.) and someone asks "how was your weekend?"
- **Discussion Question:** What aspects of a normal Sunday testify to your transformed life, priorities, and mission? What could you bring up and what questions could you ask that humbly show a contrast between your priorities and theirs? What are some things you could mention to surprise them with "upside down thinking compared to the world?"

Lesson Summary

- Those who are in Christ have been transformed by the power of the gospel, and God has given us an ambassadorial role wherein we represent Christ and his kingdom.
- We testify to God's power in salvation by *showing* how Christ has transformed us even as we *share* how Christ has transformed us.
- Our personal testimony of hope is *not* the gospel, but it is a powerful vehicle for gospel proclamation.
- Sharing how God saved us can "authenticate" the message of the gospel to a watching world.

...In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

2 Corinthians 5:19-21