

In the Middle: The Gospel (Resident Sunday)

05.21.2023

Welcome

In the middle of in the middle

Bill Clark teaching Billy to catch...

Put a pin in that a second

I want to pause the message

And introduce you to some special guests this morning

In just a minute...

Would you help me welcome

Our 2023 class of residents at WellSpring!?!

Abi

One the amazing things about being in ministry is how the legacy of one minister begins the journey for another. Who is someone in ministry that influenced you and why?

Jordyn

What area of ministry are you serving in for the residency and why?

Meredith (Video)

You have a fresh perspective and youth on your side. As people who will be influencing churches for this next generation, what is a hope you have for the local church?

Carly

This will be your 2nd summer here

Why are you *still here*?!?

If you read thru the pages of the NT

You get the picture of an urgent church

People were being arrested

Property was being confiscated

Thousands of people were coming to faith in Christ

The Gospel was spreading over the known world

I really believe

That most church leaders of that day

Thought Jesus would return

In their lifetime

They didn't own buildings

They had no political clout or leverage

They didn't have the books, resources, colleges or seminars we have

And yet

The Gospel was spreading over the known world

It was within this mindset

That Paul wrote these words

To Timothy

2 Timothy 2:1 (NIV) - You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

Be strong in grace

How do you do that?

He tells us in the next verse

2 Timothy 2:2 (NIV) - And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.

This is how the Gospel was

At the beginning

In the end

The Gospel leads to Jesus making everything new

In the end

The Gospel leads to Jesus wiping away every tear from every eye

But we're in the middle

And in the middle

Things don't feel new

And in the middle

We still have our fair share of tears

And in the middle

With all of our freedom

All of our affluence

Technology and communication

The early church could only dream of

In the middle

The church universal is not thriving

The Gospel is not spreading over the known world

And I think

Its because in the middle

We've lost the simplicity

Of this

2 Timothy 2:2 (NIV) - And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.

Do you see the 4 generations there?

You have Paul

The mentor

Instructing Timothy

The pastor

Who entrusts the Gospel to reliable people

The congregation

Who teaches others

The world

Paul – Timothy – Reliable people – others

Mentor – pastor – congregation – world

The key question in all this... is

Am I reliable?

When the Gospel is passed down to me

From my family

From a church

From a friend

When the Gospel is passed down to me

As a child

As a teen

Or as an adult

When the Gospel is passed down to me

Am I reliable?

Amy's been watching some show

It has a British monarchy feel to it

I've not kept up

But in one of the recent shows she watched

There was a scene where the queen finds out

That her son & daughter-in-law

Are expecting

Their first grandchild

My testosterone went down 10 points

Just for knowing that

So, the queen goes to her husband

The king

And she tells him the news

She says to him

Your legacy lives on

Because he has an heir

That's a little bit the way

The early church saw the Gospel

They didn't own buildings

They had no political clout or leverage

They didn't have all our resources

So, if the Gospel had been entrusted to them

They best be reliable

Because they had nothing... but... the Gospel

Can you imagine going to a hospital

With a terminal disease and lots of symptoms

Facial... spa... massage... gift shop

The early church had the Gospel

And that's all they had

They didn't own buildings

They had no political clout or leverage

But they had been entrusted with the Gospel

And that's all they needed

That's the beginning

Look at how it'll be at the end:

Revelation 12:7-12 (NIV) - Then war broke out in Heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in Heaven.

This is describing Satan

Being kicked out of Heaven

The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

Then I heard a loud voice in Heaven say: “Now have come the salvation and the power and the Kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.

Satan is described

As an accuser

One who accuses

Many of the nasty things you say to yourself

About yourself

Are inspired by the accuser

Who wants to take you out

We are living in the time

When salvation has come

We are living under the power
And the Kingdom of our God
And under the authority of Jesus
Our Messiah

It says the church

They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.

Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short."

When Jesus won
And Satan lost
And he was hurled down
He was filled with fury
Because his time was short

If he was filled with fury 2000 years ago
What kinda mood... do you think he's in now?
He's an accuser
Filled with indescribable fury
Who knows his time is short

We should not expect *the middle*

To be easy

But let me go back one verse

Revelation 12:11 (NIV) - They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.

They triumphed over the accuser

By the blood of the lamb

What's that talking about?

Jesus' death & resurrection

The Gospel saved us

But there's a second part of this sentence:

They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb

AND

By the word of their testimony

We are called to be witnesses

Not experts

Not prosecutors

Certainly not judges

But witnesses

Paul might say

Reliable witnesses

Of what we have seen and heard and experienced

Jesus told us plainly:

Luke 12:48b (NIV) - From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been *entrusted* with much, much more will be asked.

(Same word)

Are we reliable... witnesses?

We're in the middle

We have far more freedoms than the beginning

We have far more resources than the beginning

We have far greater ways to communicate than the beginning

But in the process

Many of us have become *less than* reliable

Look in the mirror

Me too

Am I a reliable witness?

So, my friend Bill went in the house...