



A Gospel Tuning

Hunter Hall – November 23, 2014

It's a joy to be able to stand here today and open the Word of God with you. We launched our campus on September 7. We're now in the eleventh week. This is the first time we've had live preaching here at the Plano Campus. So it's exciting to be able to stand here and open God's Word and proclaim the excellencies of Christ with you in person. I love our church, our structure. I love Matt and how we pipe him in live every week, but there's just something unique about being together as family to think about the family, to think about the gospel.

That's where we're going to be today. If you have your Bibles, go ahead and turn to Colossians, chapter 3. When I started thinking about what this weekend needed to look like, I knew that first and foremost we wanted to preach the gospel. We don't want to come here and preach morality. We don't want to come here and preach a "You can do it" sermon. We want to preach the gospel. We have been a people, the church, set apart by God for God's eternal purposes.

Secondly, we wanted to look at what the implications are of the gospel in our home life, with our families, with our spouses, with our kids, with our roommates, if we're single in here. We can't just think about living the gospel out when we find ourselves in a chair on a weekend service here. We can't only think about singing songs about who God is when we come into this room.

The hope would be that in our homes on Tuesday nights when we find ourselves on our couches or on Wednesday nights when we're sitting around the dinner table with family and friends, that we're living, thinking about, talking about the gospel. It's all of life. It's all of our home life. It's all of our church life, believing in, trusting in, the power that Jesus Christ came to save sinners. That's the hope. That's the point of this thing called *life*, that we would live and breathe the gospel.

Parents, when your children disobey, that you would correct and discipline from a posture of the gospel. Husbands, wives, when you're in little tiffs, that you would sort through and work through those things with gospel implications, being motivated by Christ's forgiveness in your own life as

you forgive your spouse. Singles who have roommates, that you would out-show one another in honor, that you would cultivate a culture of repentance in your own home, that you would model the supremacy of Christ in the context of your home life.

All of our home must be filtered through and motivated by the reality that Jesus Christ came to this world to save sinners, and through his death and resurrection we now have the ability to live holy, set-apart, vibrant lives. What I want us to see today is the way we approach discipleship, specifically in our homes, must be evaluated and measured by our understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We've just been asking and praying that the Lord would allow us to hear some things today and leave this place with the renewed understanding of the implications and power of the gospel and how it should affect your home life. You're in Colossians, chapter 3. I'm just going to read the entire chapter. It's not that long. Then I'll pray and we'll get going.

"If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming.

In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality." Let's pray.

Father, I ask that you would move in this service, that you would take these words, that you would stir within the hearts of men and women in here. No matter where we find ourselves today, I pray that we would leave here loving you more, knowing you more. Father, I fully confess and trust that it is only by the power of your Spirit that hearts would be changed.

I put no stock in my rhetoric, in my sermon, in my speech, in my thoughts. I put everything in your hands, God. Help us. Enable us by the power of your Spirit to believe these truths today. We love you and we thank you. In Jesus' name, amen.

I grew up here in Plano. I went to Plano Senior High School right down the road. (Go Wildcats.) I graduated and was set to go to Arkansas to college when some friends of mine called and said, "Hey, what if instead of going to school next year you came on the road and joined our band?" I was like, "Yeah, let's live *that* dream. That's awesome." It took me literally three seconds to go, "I'm in." Then I had the thought, "This is a pretty life-changing decision, so I should probably ask my parents."

So I asked them, and they were gracious. They said, "Yes." In fact, their exact words were, "You can go. We don't care how long it takes you to finish school or where you go to finish school, but we want you to go to college." I took that as, "I'm going on the road." So I jumped in a van with these guys. We hit the road. We traveled all over the US and saw some incredible things. I grew personally and spiritually during that season of my life.

There was one memory that sticks out above all other memories. We were playing a show in Lubbock, Texas, and there were about 500 people at this event. It was a great night. It was a fun evening. The way we started our worship set off was with the song, "We Are Hungry." Does anyone know that song? The chorus goes, "We are hungry, we are hungry, we are hungry for more of you."

If you grew up in the late 90s, early 2000s, in church culture, you sang that song 3,800 times. It was the hit. It was the go-to song. We started that song off, and the way we started it off was just by me on the bass playing the notes. So I started us off. I was feeling it. I was kind of in the groove. I was looking out, seeing if everyone was feeling it the same way I was.

The singer then started with, "Lord, I want more of you, living water rain." Hands started to go up, and the mood was set. I was going, "Man, this is feeling right." We're in the zone. The way we did that song was I played the whole first verse by myself on the bass with the singer, and then the chorus was the big crescendo. That's where everyone came in. The drums came in. The other guitars came in.

So we get to the chorus, and everyone comes in confidently. As soon as everyone comes in, it sounds like a cat is being strangled. It sounds atrocious. I mean it's not a little bit off. Like, we can't just push through this song anymore. It's bad. Hands are starting to come down. Someone is completely off key. I'm looking around, looking at my bass, making sure I'm playing the right notes. I'm looking at the band. I was like, "What in the world is going on?" Everyone is kind of gazing at each other.

The singer doesn't just slow it down and take a step back. Into the microphone, he just goes, "Okay, stop, stop. Everyone stop." It's just dead silence. He goes, "Hey, Hunter, I think you're out of tune, man." Every eye went to me. My eyes got big, and I just hung my head in shame, like "This is so awkward." I slowly kind of tapped my tuner, and sure enough, I was really out of tune. I was in tune with myself, but I was basically in a different key than the rest of the band. I tuned up, and we started the song off again from the beginning. We played it, and it was awesome, but it was really awkward in the moment.

As awkward as that was for me, I think there's a healthy takeaway from that story that we need to consider today. I don't claim that this thought is groundbreaking. I don't think anyone is going to leave here and go, "I never thought about that before," but I do think it's important. Here's the takeaway: being in tune matters. It certainly matters in music, but that's not what I'm talking about.

Being in tune matters.

Have you ever thought about that, that internal, intentional heart examination to make sure your life is in tune, specifically with the gospel, how it shapes us, how it motivates our decisions? Being in tune matters. We must be a people who are constantly making sure we're in tune with the gospel, that our gaze and focus is fixed on things that are above, not things on this earth.

What happens is when we are tuned into things of this earth, we are going to fall into an exhausting cycle of thinking we're our own problems' solution, of thinking we have the ability to fix our marriages, to fix our kids' lives, to fix our job circumstances. Then we're going to try harder and we're going to fail all the more. All the while, we're neglecting the fact that Jesus has already taken care of this for us in the cross.

That's what Paul says in verse 3, as he's reminding the Colossians to live a holy life, to think and dwell on things that are of God, things that are above. He reminds them and says, "Your life is hidden with Christ. It has already been taken care of." Paul reminds the Colossians, and I think it's a good word for us today, to stop and consider if we're in tune or not.

In verses 5-9, he gives 11 indications that show us we may be out of tune, 11 sins that show us we're not walking with our minds set on heaven, that we're walking with our gaze fixed on the earth, on the temporal. Those 11 are immorality, impurity, passion or an overmastering lust, evil desire, covetousness (which is idolatry), anger, wrath, malice, slander, obscene talk, and lies. That's a nasty list.

No believer in here would say, "Yeah, I want to be known by those things." That's not holy living. That's not what we're called to in Christ Jesus. These things are the old self. These things are not what mark us as believers in Christ. Here are a couple of quick points about these verses. If you're in here today and you read this list and you think and consider where you are in here and you think these things define you, let me just say this as best I can: welcome to humanity.

We all have these wrestles. We all have these struggles. We all have seasons where we struggle with anger or malice or slander or obscene talk or lies. That's just part of this tension and struggle we live in in this world. We have been redeemed and set free by Christ, yet we still live in the flesh and operate in a fallen Genesis 3 world. There's that struggle. There's that tension. So don't let guilt creep in today if that's what you feel. Confess those things to the Lord. Confess those things to a

friend or a spouse. That's not who you are anymore.

Secondly, Paul doesn't hold up a mirror and list these things out to show us how wicked we are. No, Paul confidently says, as he's written, "Stop acting that way. Stop living that way. Put those things to death. Take off. Put away." That's pretty strong language to the believers, that he would say, "No longer do you have to wear those nasty hand-me-downs of pride and anger and malice and obscenity." He says, "Take those things off."

Why can he say that? Because he knows, himself included, that it has already been taken care of in the cross. We don't have to live that way. We don't have to find ourselves in that exhausting cycle anymore. It has been taken care of. If you've been crucified with Christ, those things have also been crucified with you. Christ took those things to the cross, and he has given you a new identity. He has given you a brand new wardrobe through his blood.

Paul is not telling the believers in Colossae to muscle through their issues, not in their own strength. That's not what he's doing. He can confidently say that they, that we, that he... No longer are we held captive by these sins. We have a way out. I think, for many of us, we do find ourselves wrestling with these things, and if not this specific list, things like this list. We find ourselves always being lured back by the enticements of these sins.

I think the reason we do that so often is we have an identity problem. I think we have an identity problem, because to know who you are informs your behavior. If you know you're a husband, you know you're not going to spend your days eating ramen and showering every three weeks. That's what single guys do. That's not what husbands do. You know you're a husband. You behave like a husband. You act and live like a husband. You're not going to want to go back to that stale ramen day.

To know who you are informs your behavior. If we forget who we are in Christ, then we'll easily slip out of tune. Again, the solution is not to try harder to be good. The solution is to constantly be reminded of and sit beneath the reality of what it means that Jesus Christ came into this world to save sinners, to save you, to save me.

So who are we, then? If we aren't marked by idolatry and hate and pride, what are we marked by in Christ? Paul affirms our new identity in Christ by reminding us of three things. These three things, if I'm just being honest with you, are easy for us to forget and hard for us to believe. These three

things are in verse 12. Believer, you're *chosen*, you're *holy*, and you're *loved*.

You're *chosen*. I don't know if you maybe didn't get picked in kickball growing up. They didn't choose you to be on the team. Maybe that was just me. I don't know. But that's not what it is with the Lord. He chose you. He sought you out. He looked down and said, "I want that man, I want that woman on my team." Before the foundation of the world was ever created, he took initiative in setting up a redemption plan for you through his Son Jesus Christ. He was determined to have you as his own.

We forget that so often. We think we bring things to the table, that we save ourselves, that we chose to be on God's team. That's not right. That's not biblical. That's not accurate, according to what the Word of God says. The Word of God says you are chosen. That's one of the truths, one of the marks of your identity in Christ. The Creator of the universe, who spoke it into existence, chose you, son, daughter.

Not only did he choose you, he calls you *holy*. This may be more difficult for you to understand. You may think, "No way. God, how in the world can you use the word *holy* to define me, to describe me?" You think about all of the struggles in your life. You think about the many times a day you slap the Lord in his face with your rebellion and sin. There's no way God calls you holy. But hear me. I think that's the point of the cross. That's why God sent his only begotten Son to die the death that was reserved for us.

We can't fix ourselves. We aren't holy. We are messed up. We are jacked up, and we can't fix ourselves. We can't put away that old self. We should have been the ones on the cross, not Christ. We're the idolizers, not the Son of God. We're the criminals. We're the villains. We're the lawbreakers. We're the thieves, not the perfect Son of the living God. That cross had my name on it, but Jesus was the one who was nailed to it.

All of my sin was put on Christ and was washed away by his blood, and he took my rags of death and in its place gave me his robe of righteousness. Because of that, I am now positionally seen clean before a holy God. He now looks on me, looks on us, as righteous, and he sets us apart for his eternal purposes. Oh, that we would marvel at that truth today, church, that in Christ, we are chosen and holy.

Thirdly, we're *loved*. God didn't just choose us, set us apart, and then abandon us. He loves us. He

continues to pursue us with his affections. He's crazy about us. I wasn't just talking to the kids earlier when I said that God loves them. He loves all of us. There's nowhere we can run. There's no sin we could commit that would ever make him stop loving us. Paul in Romans, chapter 8, says that God loves you and there is nothing you can do about it. There's nothing you or anyone else can do to make God stop loving you. He loves you, and his love is real.

As real as Mount Everest is, God's love is more real and grander. As real as the Indian Ocean is, God's love is deeper and vastly more real. His love for you is real. Believer, you're chosen, you're holy, you are loved. These are the realities of our identity in Christ, and I think if we keep these three things before us each and every day, they'll keep us in tune with the gospel and how we live our lives and how we interact with others.

To bring this back to my initial hope for our home life, discipleship in the context of the home is too important for us to approach being out of tune. Discipleship is too important for us to approach if we're out of tune. We have to make sure we're in tune. We have to make sure we're believing these truths every single day, because when we do that and we think about God's love for us, then and only then can we truly love our spouses, love our kids, love our roommates.

When we understand how kind God is to us to choose us, to redeem us, to forgive us, we can then be kind to others and extend forgiveness to others. When we trust and believe that the fullness of joy is found in the right hand of God, then and only then can we have joyful marriages. When we believe and trust in his provision for us, trust in his goodness, then and only then can we trust others. See, it's all connected. It's all woven together in our identity with Christ Jesus.

We understand love because we're loved. We understand compassion because he was compassionate. We understand kindness because he was kind to us. We understand forgiveness because he forgave us. Do you see how it plays out? If we're out of tune, we're going to miss all of those things. We're going to think he's an angry, bitter God who's not near, who doesn't care for us, who has left us alone by ourselves.

We're chosen. We're holy. We're loved. If we forget our identity in Christ, if we're out of tune, if we don't have Jesus at the center, then, wives, you won't submit to your husbands as it's fitting to the Lord. You'll become bitter and frustrated and view yourself as a slave in your home. Husbands, you won't know what it looks like to truly love your wife and to lay your life down. Your motivation to love her will be for your own selfish gain, what you get in return from her.

Parents, when you discipline your children, you'll do it to protect yourself from embarrassment when they act up in public rather than understanding your child's disobedience is ultimately against the Lord. Singles, you'll be so consumed with finding a spouse you'll forget what a gift you have to be in a place where you can wholeheartedly serve the Lord.

Do you see what I mean, how it's all connected? We cannot forget who we are in Christ. We have to make sure we're in tune. As I mentioned earlier, our home life, our life outside the walls of this church and inside the walls, must be evaluated and measured by the gospel of Jesus Christ. Here's how I want to close our time out today. I want us to do some evaluation. I want us to take a few moments and just ask the Lord.

Here's what I'm going to ask. Just go ahead and close your eyes right where you are. I just want to ask you a list of questions, as you evaluate honestly where you are today in this place. If you took a self-examination, would you be able to say that you're in tune with the gospel today? Are you living your life confident of your security in the Lord? Do you believe you're holy in God's sight? Do you know you're loved?

If you say, "Hunter, no, I'm having a tough time believing those things," then go ahead and confess that to the Lord. Lay those things down. Ask him to remind you that you're chosen, that you're holy, that you're loved. Husbands, are you loving your wife from an understanding of how loved you are in Christ? Wives, are you submitting to your husband as unto the Lord, or are you submitting just so he'll stay off your back?

Parents, are you knowingly or unknowingly discouraging your kids by placing your expectations on their lives instead of the Lord's? Singles, how are you doing serving and encouraging your friends and roommates? Kids, are you obeying your parents today just so you won't get in trouble, or are you obeying because it pleases the Lord?

I think it's important that we really search our hearts and slow down and, if we need to tune up, that we tune up this morning, because we're about to step into a season where our culture is going to scream at us to set your mind and affections and your wallets and paychecks toward things of this earth. It's about to get chaotic here in America.

The slogan is about to be it's all about you and your happiness and your joy, that you're satisfying

your own desires, when the gospel's call is that they've been satisfied in Christ, because Christ has satisfied the wrath that was due toward you through his cross. So maybe today we would leave here and have some honest conversations with our families and friends on our way home.

Heavenly Father, I ask that you would move in this time, that you would continue to remind us of your great love for us, being chosen by you, being set apart by you for your eternal purposes. We love you. In Jesus' name, amen.

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