

Surprised By The Gospel

Long Beach Alliance Church • Easter Sunday • April 5, 2015 • Pastor Chris Lankford

For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

~Matthew 24:37-39 (English Standard Version)

1) Remember Record Players?!

- A) The past 50 years have been a time of radical change for the music industry in the world. Vinyl Records and 8-Track Tapes gave way to Cassette Tapes, and then to Compact Discs in the early 1980's. More recently, CD's have transitioned to digital music formats, like MP3 and MP4 recordings, used by digital music players, such as the iPod.
- B) As each generation of new technology has been introduced, someone in the previously dominant format has made an all-out effort to preserve their dying industry, losing even more millions!

2) We Often Need A Jolt To Produce Change

- A) What can we learn? We are creatures of habit. We prefer what we know to change. Change is often difficult, sometimes only coming after we have been jolted into action by shocking ongoing events: For example: Sandy Hook, Ferguson, Religious Freedom Acts, Isis and Boko Haram, just to name a few
- B) Even around our own homes, we often assume all is well – until (of course) things are not “all well.” Bad grades from a child, or even a neighbor throwing a loud-n-rowdy party that keeps you and your kids up into the wee hours of the morning can jolt us into change.
- C) And sometimes, the things that jolt us aren't even bad things! Think of how unsettling a wedding can be! Or a new job. Or a new child being added into your family. The fact is, we really like it when things are normal, and we go to great lengths to keep things as balanced and as normal as possible. Change is almost always avoided!
- D) Like a frog that has been placed into a kettle with cool water, we do not notice the gradual and subtle change in the temperature of the water. We all have a temperature we prefer. But, like the frog, by the time we realize things are boiling, it's too late – we are soup!

3) The Surprise Of The Gospel

- A) Jesus Christ spoke to our tendency to want things to be “normal” and “predictable” when talking to His disciples about the days which were soon-coming in the world; days when people would live their lives “unaware” of their peril (Matthew 24:37-39).
- B) Jesus came to offer people hope in the midst of their lives (John 3:17), but most people looked around themselves and wondered, ‘what’s the big deal?’ Let’s face it, the Good News of the Gospel seems pretty lame when many people don’t believe in bad news.
- C) This is why I find God’s story in the Bible so surprising. You don’t expect the story to go the way it does. But it’s His story, and quite honestly, you couldn’t possibly make this stuff up. No one would ever do it this way. Only God could do this, He is the only one with the knowledge, patience, love, and care to do all this -- for us.
- D) Oddly enough, the story of life pivots around death. First, there is the death that people choose because they sin. Sin results in death (Romans 3:23), it’s the way God created His universe. Because we sin, we die. No sin, no death. But we do sin, so we also die.
- E) But the real kicker is that sin doesn’t just kill your body, it kills your soul. Sin doesn’t just put you into the grave, it also results in eternal separation from God, eternal judgment! Just as the story looks hopeless, in steps Jesus Christ to, literally, die to save the day.
- F) Because God loves us, He offers to reverse the curse of sin in our lives, by allowing a substitute (2 Corinthians 5:21). He not only allows for the substitute, He provides Jesus Christ, God in the flesh!
- G) Jesus dies for the sins of others, and through His sacrifice provides a full-payment for sin (1 John 2:2). We gain access to His sacrifice and its results by trusting our lives to Jesus, a faithful receiving of His undeserved love and grace into our lives (Ephesians 2:8-9).
- H) Our response is not without reason! Jesus did not simply die, He was also resurrected from after His capital punishment death (1 Corinthians 15:1-11), confirming the accepted payment for sin!
- I) You want a surprise?! Death conquers sin and death. Authentically putting Christ in control of your life (death to yourself) now results in eternal life (in Christ, Romans 6:23). You were lost and hopeless, but now you are an adopted child of the King (Romans 8:14-17). He was buried, but now He is Risen! He is Risen indeed!