

SYNOPSIS

This message addresses a **strategic opportunity** in your church, and the broader Grace Bomb movement: spurring each other on in creative ways to love our neighbors in everyday life, by the real-life examples of recently dropped Grace Bombs. The Church today is in desperate need of creativity, variety, doable, and practical demonstrations of faith steps from peers, not professionals. The motivation of this message is found in Hebrews 10:24: **And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works...** Yet into this need and opportunity we are simultaneously faced with one of the deeply entrenched misconceptions in Christian culture that works against this: a deep aversion to what may be considered “bragging.” This message dispels this and teaches a biblical balance of letting our light shine for the right reasons and being free to share how God is working through us. We accomplish this by understanding that Jesus was teaching against hypocrisy and selfish motivations of the Pharisees who wanted only to be seen by men in Matthew 6. In their case “sharing” was harmful, yet this is not always the case, because with the right motivations “sharing” is a key consideration of how we can **“stir one another to love and good works.”**

BIG IDEA

Our motivation is critical in sharing our Grace Bomb stories.

KEY TEXTS

Hebrews 10:24
Matthew 5:14-16
Matthew 6:1

SERMON OUTLINE

Leading out with a question: Now that we are about one month into our Grace Bomb launch... For those who have been led to load, listen, and let 'er go! Have you been equally excited to share the idea that God put on your heart?

- For many people, dropping a Grace Bomb is one thing – but to let someone know about it is off limits. You might think:
 - “Well it’s not that big of a deal, and it wasn’t this huge thing.”
 - Or “Pretty sure the Bible says we shouldn’t be bragging about the good we do...”
 - This is a deeply entrenched belief held by many...



Transition: But this thinking actually creates a huge void in the church today: a void of creativity in everyday ways we can learn from each other in how to better love people.

- It is the birthright of the Church to drive the cultural conversation of kindness in the world today – yet we are not looked to in this regard.
 - In fact the majority of the onlooking world reports that Christians come across as cold, judgmental, hypocritical.

But God’s leading edge is kindness, and we are His leading edge!

SLIDE 1

Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? Romans 2:4

- Paul to the Romans here points out that kindness and patience lead out.

SLIDE 2

"But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." Matthew 5:44-45

- Jesus here in the SOTM reminds us that God is sending blessings even on evil people

Now you might agree about this, but the tension is real when it comes to going more public with what we have done. Let's look at where this tension comes from in Matthew's gospel, and seek to understand what Jesus is, and is not, saying...

First there seems to be some contradiction between Jesus' teaching in Matthew chapter 5 and chapter 6...

Starting with a text we saw a few weeks ago:

SLIDE 3

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 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. 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." Matthew 5:14-16

- Jesus reminds us that we are supposed to bring warmth and reality to the world.
 - Our light should feel good, and point to the source Himself.
- Being the light requires putting yourself out there - you are going to be seen:
 - First by the recipient of your good works.
 - And secondly, it is very probable that onlookers will see your shine too. It is hard to hold back light when the sun rises.

One example of this historically is when a terrible plague ripped through the ancient world, and it was seen that the early Christians were putting themselves out there to care for the dying:

SLIDE 4

"All day long some of them [the Christians] tended to the dying and to their burial, countless numbers with no one to care for them. Others gathered together from all parts of the city, a multitude of those withered from famine and distributed bread to them all." Eusebius, Bishop and historian of the early church

- We can't always hide when we are being the light of the world.

But there is a tension when you flip the page to Matthew chapter 6... and this is the primary source of what seems to be a conflict...

SLIDE 5

“Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.” Matthew 6:1

- At first glance it seems that Jesus is building a tight case against letting your light shine before others...
- He addresses 3 areas of “practicing righteousness”: Giving, Fasting, and Prayer

On Giving:

SLIDE 6

“Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” Matthew 6:2-4

On Prayer:

SLIDE 7

“And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” Matthew 6:5-6

On Fasting:

SLIDE 8

“And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” Matthew 6:16-17

It seems like in principle Jesus might also say: *“And when you drop your Grace Bomb, don't run to social media or a website to put your story into the world to be seen by men, truly I say to you, you have received your reward.”*

How is it that Jesus can say let your light shine before men on one page (Matt 5), and don't let men see your good works on the other (Matt 6)? What is the deal?

The answer to the tension between Matthew 5 and 6 is where our hearts are – it is where our motivation lies.

- In Matthew 6 – Jesus is clearly addressing Pharisees and calling out their religious hypocrisy: their goal was not to please God, but to receive the praise of men.
 - Each time Jesus referenced their motivation – to be praised and seen.

*The difference between a story told in humility for the purpose of encouraging others vs. a story being told in pride for attention or acclaim is **EVERYTHING!***

Would it ever be OK for the Pharisees to tell about practicing their righteousness? I think so! If they became teaching moments that edified God's people (you could give examples here of when a story of giving, fasting, or prayer told to benefit others in their own walks with the Lord).



Transition: Here is why this balance is so critical to understand in carrying out a movement of obedience to Jesus today.

SLIDE 9

Because we live in a love-starved world, and in a creativity starved church.

And when we are led by the Spirit of God to let our light shine in a particular way, how can we learn from one another if news never gets out? In fact, the author of Hebrews implores us in this regard:

SLIDE 10

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works... Hebrews 10:24

- The context here is a series of exhortations to: draw near to God in confidence, to hold fast to our hope, to stay connected, and to spur each other on to love and good works, to spur on the saints to let their light shine!

SO If this is needed and if our intentions are pure, then how can we fan the flame of a movement of obedience to Jesus?

SLIDE 11

Load, Listen, Let 'er GO! AND LET US KNOW



Application: Share your most recent, favorite, or perhaps only Grace Bomb story with others today by:

SLIDE 12

- *Describing what happened and how you were led on www.gracebomb.org (writing icon)*
- *If you prefer video – record yourself retelling the story in 60 seconds and text it to: _____ (phone icon)*
- *Post the idea you had on your social media and tag Grace Bomb*

Closing charge: Sharing your faith step today with the right heart can inspire someone else's tomorrow! Let's reclaim our birthright to drive God's kindness into the world.