

## Whatever Happens...

### A Word about Showing up Well in Culture

Today, we want to revisit another significant word which the Lord has given to us. This word has to do with realignment. We want to show up well in culture.

***Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ (Philippians 1:27).***

#### 1. Introducing the [He Gets Us](#) campaign.

- a. You might have seen these ads as you watched sporting events.
- b. **About us:** [He Gets Us](#) is a campaign designed to create cultural change in the way people think about Jesus and his relevance in our lives.
- c. **What is “He Gets Us” all about?** Our mission is to create opportunities for people across the U.S. to take a fresh look at the “real” Jesus and consider his radical teachings and claims documented in the Bible. We want to be open and approachable, so everyone feels comfortable asking questions, including the difficult ones. We want people to see that Jesus isn’t some irrelevant historical figure who doesn’t relate to them in the modern world. He has experienced every human frailty and vulnerability. He’s for everyone. He has the answers to life’s most pressing problems. He understands us. He “gets us.”
- d. **What do we hope to achieve?** We hope to create a revived interest in Jesus in our culture—a culture that’s increasingly confused about who Jesus was. Christianity in America—and, by association, Jesus—has been getting a lot of negative press lately. Somehow, Jesus’ message of love has been distorted in the minds of many who now view Christianity as a “religion of hate” that’s against them—not for them. When people see who Jesus really was, we believe they’ll be open to exploring his teachings and claims—especially when they see Jesus’ authentic followers in the church living out radical compassion and forgiveness and loving others as Jesus loves them.
- e. **Why is this so important now?** American culture is at a tipping point. Jesus is becoming less known and less relevant to the majority of Americans—especially the under-40s. His reputation is being battered and tarnished by those who view Christians as “hate-filled” and “against everything and everyone.” It’s time for people to meet the “real Jesus,” the radical Jesus of the Bible—the one who loves the “unlovable” and understands our human frailties because he experienced them all. He “gets us.”

## 2. Thanking God for this gift to our culture.

- a. **He Gets Us campaign:** **engaging culture by building bridges.**
- b. Kevin Palau: “Many people have had negative experiences with Jesus followers who didn’t make them feel loved or accepted. Bridges invite people to take small steps because some people just want to know and understand that they are loved by God.”
- c. To have meaningful conversations and to build bridges, you need:
  - i. Humility
  - ii. Listening well
  - iii. Behaving well
- d. Kevin Palau: “I hope we will try new things in how we behave, in how we listen, and in being very humble. Unfortunately, we are known for what we are against rather than what we are for.”
- e. For the **He Gets Us** campaign, they did months of research in 2021.
  - i. Research: there are 2 bridges.
  - ii. **Divinity bridge:** You can’t get to the divinity of Christ until we can deal with the respect and personal relevancy of Jesus.
    1. Historical models of evangelism focus on getting people across the “divinity” bridge—trusting in Jesus to go from “unsaved” to “saved.”
    2. But spiritually open people don’t reach that bridge without first crossing the “respect” bridge. They have to see Jesus before they get Christ.
  - iii. **Respect bridge:** We need to spend a lot of time cultivating mutual respect out of the fact that they are created in the image of God, and that Jesus reveals how God feels about us.
  - iv. So, we want to be respectful of people and their journey. It can take a decade to do that bridge building.



**Prayer points:**

1. Thank the Lord for the [He Gets Us campaign](#) and this gift to us as a nation.
2. Pray that we would show up differently in culture.
  - a. Here is how Jesus tells us to show up in culture.
    - i. *Matthew 5:43-48. "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46 If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? 48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."*
    - ii. *Matthew 22:37-39. Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"*
    - iii. *John 13:34-35. "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*
    - iv. *1 Corinthians 13:1-3. If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.*
    - v. *1 John 4:7-21. Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 11 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. 13 We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given*

us of his Spirit. 14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. 15 If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. 16 And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. 17 In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. 18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. 19 We love because he first loved us. 20 If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. 21 And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

- b. **Unfortunately, people claiming to be Christians have begun to believe in a different gospel:** the gospel of gaining power and destroying our enemies.
  - i. Oh God, forgive us.
  - ii. And, we define an enemy as someone who doesn't think, feel, and believe like me, especially in politics (power), economics (money), or religion.
- c. **Like Jesus, we have come telling and showing the gospel of the kingdom of God** (Mark 1:14-15; Isaiah 52:7).
  - i. *Isaiah 52:7. How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!"*
  - ii. Not just the gospel of salvation. We are not just saved from sin and for heaven. We are saved for a purpose, to become part of the King's family and the kingdom of God. Salvation is the first step into an eternal relationship with God and into participation with the King on his kingdom agenda for the world and universe.
  - iii. Not the gospel of the moral majority, but the good news of the kingdom of God and his righteousness, that reaches out to the least, the last, and the lost.
  - iv. Not just the gospel of health and wealth, but wholeness through Jesus who heals and who also enables us to endure suffering.
  - v. Not just the gospel of prosperity, but the ability to be content and flourish whether we abound or are abased.

- vi. Not the gospel of politics which today preaches accumulating power and destroying our enemies.
  - vii. Not the gospel of domination, but of overcoming evil with good (Romans 12:21).
    1. We are called to be salt and light to influence and infect the sectors of society, redeeming and restoring them to God's intended design (Matthew 5:13-16).
    2. We are not here to take over the sectors and to dominate, but to wield the weapon of love, wooing and winning others like God does with us through Jesus (John 3:16).
    3. *For though we live in the world, **we do not wage war as the world does.** 4 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 5 **We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God,** and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 6 And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete (2 Corinthians 10:3–6).*
3. **Pray that we would conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.**
- a. *Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit [steadfastness], contending as one for the faith of the gospel [unity] 28 without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you [courage, even in the face of suffering]. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. 29 For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him, 30 since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have (Philippians 1:27–30).*
  - b. *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! 5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:4–7).*
  - c. To conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ-- no matter what happens, no matter what we face, no matter what we go through, no matter what comes our way-- **calls for steadfastness, unity, courage, and joy, even in the face of opposition and suffering.**

- d. We want to grow in four capacities of alignment:
- i. **Steadfastness**: *stand firm in one spirit (Philippians 1:27). If you don't quit, you win.* He who endures to the end shall be saved, and God is able to help us to endure and persevere. We are invited to partner with God in his ministry and message of reconciliation.
  - ii. **Unity**: *contending as one for the faith of the gospel (Philippians 1:27).* God is inviting us to show up in a way that promotes unity and expresses humility. We need to develop the skill of differentiation of self, where we grow in our capacity to be defined and to stay connected. Watch out or we will bite and devour one another. A house divided against itself cannot stand.
  - iii. **Courage**: *without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you (Philippians 1:28).* Fear is not supposed to rule our lives. In the face of brokenness, trials, tragedies, trauma, lies, opposition, attack, and evil, **we have the capacity to choose courage and faith rather than fear and doubt... with God helping us.** One practical way to grow in our capacity for choosing courage is through **having frequent transformation conversations.** It takes courage to walk in the light with others (1 John 1:7).
  - iv. **Joy**: *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! (Philippians 4:4).*
    1. Whatever we go through and whatever we experience, we are a people who choose to respond in joy, to express joy, and to live from the place of joy in Christ.
    2. We can even choose joy in the face of big emotions that want to knock us off our center in Christ.
    3. We can practice ways to increase our joy.
    4. Joy is the fuel which our brains need to run on; that is the way God created us.

**Invitation:**

1. *Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ (Philippians 1:27).*
2. With God helping us, let's choose to show up like Jesus wants us to in this complex culture, not out of fear or anger, but full of love and joy.
3. And, let's wield the weapons of the kingdom of God in this hour, especially love, prayer, and the gospel of the kingdom of God.