

Vision (P1): We are Restored

INTRO | A Vision for Restoration

When we planted in 2014, we were not called Restoration Road Church. We began as an extension of Damascus Road Church in Marysville. Even though our elders envisioned a transition toward a more independent church, we became one church meeting in two locations. Despite the pragmatic benefits of the model, we quickly found there were great costs. The complexity of shared resources, events, and finances, combined with preachers, staff, and people spread across two cities proved taxing. Additionally, we wrongly assumed that our geographic proximity and cultural similarity would make our cooperation easy and fruitful. With months we realized just how much can change in 14 miles and 25 minutes.

Even though we were on the **same mission with the same message for the same Messiah, Jesus was doing something different** in Snohomish, gathering a different people in a different place. By 2014, we changed our name. We kept our Road Church “last name” preserve our historical identity. As with our children, we changed our first name to communicate something unique about our character. We believe the word “RESTORATION” not only aptly describes the church’s place in Snohomish and fits the antique culture; **it also clarifies our mission and reflects a deep understanding of the whole gospel.**

It wasn’t until 2015, that we realized we had never set a vision for Restoration Road Church. What is the reason our church exists? What makes our church unique? How do we contribute to a better world? Why do we do what we do? Answering those questions is the purpose of two part series. At the conclusion of this series, I hope that every member of Restoration Road Church will feel equipped to have a napkin-conversation about **WHO we are and WHAT we do.** Put simply: **We are restored to restore.**

2Corinthians 5.14-20b - For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; ¹⁵ and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. ¹⁶ From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸ All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation;... ²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. The implication of being a new creation is that you were once an “old creation” of some kind. The fact that we ARE RESTORED means three things: **1) There was a time when we were new. 2) There was a time when we broke. 3) There comes a time when we are made new**

WHAT GOD DID – Who He is

GOD CREATES | So before we can talk about who we are now (or rather who we have become), we need to talk about who GOD IS and who He has always been. Creation begins with a good God who creates a good world. He did not create out of obligation or need, but out of a desire to display and share His awesomeness. There are only two things that are NOT good in God’s creation. It is NOT GOOD to disobey God’s Word (and eat from one particular tree) and it is NOT GOOD for man to be alone.

GOD CURSES | He also creates a man and teaches Him to obey and he creates a woman to help Him. and women whom he says are very good with whom he enjoys fellowship...for a time. All is well until men believe the lie that happiness is found apart from God and His Word. Having been given the job of building a God-glorifying culture, men are instead tempted to pursue their own glory. They rebel, disobey God’s word, sin enters the world, and God curses the creation He loves. The relationship with God is broken. The relationship with others people is broken. The relationship with self is broken. The relationship with the world is broken.

GOD PROMISES | But God has a plan to rescue His creation from their own sin and restore His creation to its former beauty and perfection. Lest they eat of the tree of life and remain in their brokenness forever, out of love, **God sends Adam and Eve out of the garden INTO CHAOS** with the promise of a savior who will one day be born and bring them back into the garden again.

WHAT MAN DOES – Who I was

MAN SINS | It didn't take long for men to forget the promises of their Creator. Even though mankind knew God existed, they refused to give Him thanks or worship Him. Because of Adam's sin, we have been found sinners by nature. Willfully, we have turned our back on God, becoming guilty by choice as we seek to answer questions of identity, purpose, and truth apart from Him. In that pursuit, we are miserable but try to convince ourselves otherwise. Enslaved to Sin, we seek our own glory and fall short of God's. We find we are indebted to God, sentenced to die, unable to save ourselves and unwilling to turn to God.

MAN SUFFERS | Sin made us broken. Sin made us imperfect. Sin made us rebellious. Even though we are weak, we pretend we are strong. We hate as we ought not and fail to love as we ought. Men hate God, reject His authority, and seek to rule their own life. We find ourselves filled with GUILT over what we have done and SHAME over what has been done to us. We feel dead as if life is meaningless. We feel confused as truth changes like waves in ocean. We feel overwhelmed as if we are alone. We feel despairing as if there is no hope. We feel blind as if we cannot see or make sense of anything.

MAN SEEKS FOR SALVATION | So we begin to seek for a savior. We cannot dismiss the God-shaped emptiness we feel in our heart. We long for meaning, satisfaction, and hope. But we avoid the one from whom it can be found—God. There are two different ways to avoid God...be really bad...or be really good. Some men attempt to find salvation worshipping idols. They become self-indulgent in order to avoid relationship with Jesus. They make the gifts of God into gods themselves—pursuing money, power, sex, etc. Other men attempt to save themselves by worshipping themselves. They avoid relationship with Jesus by living out His moral rules in order to earn their own salvation.

WHAT JESUS DID – Who I am

We know what God did—Who He is. We know what MAN DID—who we became. But we must focus on WHAT JESUS DID—who I am. **The gospel changes everything. The Gospel is the good news that God became man in Jesus Christ. He lived the life we should have and died the death we should have...in our place. Three days later, He rose from the dead proving that He is the Son of God offering the gift of salvation to all who will repent and believe in Him.** By grace, God reaches out to those who refused to listen and loves them. By grace, he sacrifices His sinless Son to rescue me a sinner. By grace we who were slaves to our sins, defined by our sins, captivated by our sins, and dead in our sins, are given a new life with a new identity. I am no longer defined by who I was, what I did, what I did not do, or by what was done to me. **I am defined by what Jesus has done for me.**

Having been formed in the image of God, men were designed to reflect God's greatness. When men rebelled, the image of God in them was shattered and deformed by sin. Even though the image remained recognizable, it reflected an incomplete picture of God. In **Christ, that image is restored.** By grace, through believing in the person and work of Jesus Christ, we are restored to who God created us to be.

And though it can be said that we are BEING RESTORED, in truth, there are things that are definitively and permanently transformed right now. Trusting in Jesus' death on the cross means we are spiritually "born again" as Jesus teaches in John 3. We do not have an IMPROVED life, or a BETTER LIFE, but an entirely new one—the old is GONE the NEW has come. When we become Christians, we are baptized. And our baptism is a picture of this dramatic transformation. Paul teaches in **Romans 6.4: We were buried**

therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in the newness of life. Through faith in Jesus: *I am restored to a new relationship with God, a new relationship with others, a new relationship with myself, and even a new relationship with the world.* **We were old. We have been made new in Christ.**

We were idolators; we are worshippers | Sons & daughters of God

All of life is worship and everyone worships something...or someone. We were created to worship God. Because of sin, men have a worship disorder—they make idols of creation. Whatever we worship is the supreme governing force in our lives. We were idolators, seeking whatever we could find to save us from whatever hell we might imagine. The cross of Christ captivates our hearts and restores our worship through His Word by His Spirit. Instead of turning good things into god things, we worship Jesus through all things. The deeper the gospel goes into our hearts, the wider our worship goes into our lives. We worship God rightly when we Him know rightly through His Word. **We live for Jesus (v. 15)**

We were lost and alone. We are family | Brothers & Sisters in Christ

We were alone. We were self-centered, self-focused, self-reliant, self-concerned, and self-seeking. But Jesus saved me from my-self. The gospel of Jesus has not only saved us; but He brought us into a universal and local family known as the church. Through faith in Christ, we are adopted into the household of God. Community is not optional, it is necessary. We are the body of Christ, needed and in need, to be built up together. Jesus not only saves us to Himself, but also to His people. **We love like Jesus (v. 16)**

We were followers of men. We are disciples of Jesus | Men & Women of the Way

We were like children tossed to and from by the waves...lost, confused, and following whatever was popular, pleasurable, or convenient. As Disciples of Christ, we are deeply committed to following Jesus' life and teaching. Motivated by the Cross and the Resurrection, we make use of the power of Christ's Spirit in us in order to live out His character and example. Over time, we submit more and more aspects of our lives to the Lordship of Jesus. And the more we behold who He is, the more we are changed into His image. Our identity in Christ transforms the way we think, act, and perceive. In time, we become in practice (e.g. as husbands, wives, friends, workers, etc.) who we already are in position through Christ. **We display Jesus (v.14)**

We were citizens of the world. We are ambassadors of the King | Missionaries to the world

We were those who believe this is all there is. We lived in the world, with the world, and for ourselves. But God sent his son away from Home to dwell in the world in order to see it redeemed. He worked, ate and interacted among the people; living in such a way that those around him could see and experience what God was truly like. Jesus was sent on mission into the world in order to restore man's relationship with God. In the same way, we are ambassadors. This is not our home. We are called out of the world and sent into it. In Christ, we are missionaries sent into our culture to restore all things to God through Jesus. What begins in our homes must extend into our city and beyond. **We serve Jesus (v. 20).**

Essentially, all that God desired for us has been fulfilled in Christ and given to us. Through faith in Christ, we are a people, are becoming more of a people, and calling other people to do two things LOVE GOD and LOVE OTHERS in, through, and for Christ. We are restored.

CONCLUSION | We are restored to restore

Revelation 21.5 describes the day when Jesus establishes the New Heavens and the New Earth. He is recorded as saying, **"Behold, I am making all things new."** We will never be perfect worshippers, or family members, or disciples, or ambassadors in this life—our final restoration will come. But even if we are still being refined the rest of our lives, WE ARE RESTORED right now. We are new creations right now. We are new. The old is gone. The guilt is gone. The shame is gone. The loneliness is gone. The poverty is

gone. The purposeless is gone. The hopelessness is gone. **What I have done (or not done) has been overcome by what Jesus has done for me. I need only believe.**

By grace through faith in Christ, God has made us worshippers. We are His Sons and Daughters. By grace, God has made us family. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. By grace, He has made us disciples. We are men and women of the way. By grace, He has made us ambassadors. We are missionaries to the world. **It is time for us to stop listening to who the world or our flesh tells us we must be; and believe God when He declares who we are.**