

## Message Notes

"Include everyone all the time!"

The Greatest Showman

### SERMON SERIES

The Waters in which we Swim

#### Today's message:

The Inclusion Narrative

Topics intersecting with the Inclusion Narrative

What the Bible says about inclusion and exclusion

The gospel message is, at points,

- \_\_\_\_\_
- And \_\_\_\_\_

John 14:5-7, Acts 4:8-12, 1 John 5:11-12

Leviticus 19:34, 2 Peter 3:9, Galatians 3:28, John 1:12-13

**In summary: Romans 3:22b-24**

Swimming in these waters at Hope Community Church

<https://hopec.com/files/HCC-Elder-SOF.pdf>

Swimming in these waters in your world

Matthew 5:46-47, John 1:14

## Scripture Passages

(taken from the New International Version)

John 14:5-7

5 Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" 6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

Galatians 3:28

28 There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

John 1:12-13

12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

Romans 3:22b-24

22 There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

Matthew 5:46-47

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 own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even Gentiles do that?

John 1:14

14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

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THE  
GREATEST  
SHOWMAN





Actor Paul Sparks as  
James Gordon Bennett



Actor Hugh Jackman as  
P. T. Barnum

Barnum: If you had come to gloat I wouldn't.

Bennett: They caught the thugs who started the fire.

I thought you'd like to know...

I never liked your show. But I always thought the people did.

Barnum: They did...

They do!

Bennett: Mind you, I wouldn't call it art.

Barnum: Of course not.

Bennett: But...Putting folks of all kinds on stage.  
All colors, shapes, sizes. Presenting them as equals.  
Another critic might have even called it  
'a celebration of humanity'.

Barnum: I would have liked that.



The  
Waters  
in which we  
Swim

Cultural Dogmas &  
Gospel Responses

# The Cultural Dogma: The Inclusion Narrative

Being excluded is a painful human experience  
we can all identify with.

Consequently, we need to become inclusive in all things.

# Topics intersecting with The Inclusion Narrative

Standing for the national anthem

Baking wedding cakes

Discussing immigration

Adapting to food allergies

Responding to changing gender and sexual norms

Addressing historic issues of race, power, etc.



The gospel message is, at points,  
unavoidably exclusive.

The gospel message is, at points,  
radically inclusive.

# The gospel is unavoidably exclusive

## John 14:5-7

<sup>5</sup> Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

<sup>6</sup> Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup> If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

# The gospel is unavoidably exclusive

## Acts 4:8-12

<sup>8</sup> Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, <sup>9</sup> if we are questioned today because of a good deed done to someone who was sick and are asked how this man has been healed, <sup>10</sup> let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead. <sup>11</sup> This Jesus is ‘the stone that was rejected by you, the builders; it has become the cornerstone.’ <sup>12</sup> There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.”

# The gospel is unavoidably exclusive

## 1 John 5:11-12

<sup>11</sup> And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. <sup>12</sup> Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

# The gospel is radically inclusive

## **Leviticus 19:34**

<sup>34</sup> The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God.

# The gospel is radically inclusive

## **2 Peter 3:9**

<sup>9</sup> The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

# The gospel is radically inclusive

## Galatians 3:28

<sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

# The gospel is radically inclusive

## John 1:12-13

<sup>12</sup> Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God — <sup>13</sup> children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

# The exclusive/inclusive gospel

## **Romans 3:22b-24**

<sup>22</sup> There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.



HOPE COMMUNITY  
CHURCH

# The vision of Hope Community Church:

To honor God,

by helping as many people as possible  
become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

# The exclusive/inclusive gospel at Hope

## 1 Peter 2:6–8

<sup>6</sup> For in Scripture it says: “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” <sup>7</sup> Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, “The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,” <sup>8</sup> and, “A stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.”

# The exclusive/inclusive gospel at Hope

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## Isaiah 57:14

<sup>14</sup> And it will be said: “Build up, build up, prepare the road! Remove the obstacles out of the way of my people.”



# HOPE COMMUNITY CHURCH

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## **THE HOPE COMMUNITY CHURCH ELDER STATEMENT OF FAITH**



HOPE COMMUNITY  
CHURCH



# Questions to consider and discuss:

What are historical examples of barriers that the Church has unnecessarily added resulting in people being separated from the gospel or from the church?

What are examples of obstacles that the church can and should remove so that others might hear the gospel message?

What are examples where the Church needs to maintain distinction (i.e. exclusivity), though it may result in cultural pushback and even persecution?

**YOUR  
WORLD**



**MY  
WORLD**





## Matthew 5:46-47

<sup>46</sup> If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? <sup>47</sup> And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even Gentiles do that?

This debate poses the question of whether one is willing to yield, even an inch, to the impulses of empathy and inclusivity and cultural relevance at the cost of faithfulness to an orthodox Christian vision of sexuality and desire, and thus ultimately an orthodox Christian understanding of sin and salvation in Christ.

Brad Littlejohn, President of The Davenant Institute,  
and Visiting Assistant Professor of Political Theory at Patrick Henry College  
[https://bradlittlejohn.com/2018/08/07/revoice-the-culture-war-and-the-friend-enemy-  
distinction/](https://bradlittlejohn.com/2018/08/07/revoice-the-culture-war-and-the-friend-enemy-distinction/)





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