

One Hope Many Strange Vessels

Ephesians 4:1-13

January 20, 2013

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14 in our series on Paul's letter to the Ephesians

[The worship leader sings "One" a song by U2

Is it getting better
Or do you feel the same
Will it make it easier on you now
You got someone to blame
You say...

One love
One life
When it's one need
In the night
One love
We get to share it
Leaves you baby if you
Don't care for it

Did I disappoint you
Or leave a bad taste in your mouth
You act like you never had love
And you want me to go without

Well it's...

Too late
Tonight
To drag the past out into the light
We're one, but we're not the same
We get to
Carry each other
Carry each other
One...

Have you come to raise the dead
Have you come here to play Jesus
To the lepers in your head
Did I ask too much
More than a lot

You gave me nothing
Now it's all I got
We're one
But we're not the same
Well we
Hurt each other
Then we do it again
You say

Love is a temple
Love a higher law
Love is a temple
Love the higher law

You ask me to enter

But then you make me crawl
And I can't be holding on
To what you got
When all you got is hurt

Prayer

Father, we ask that you would help us to preach through the power of your Holy Spirit in the name of Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen

Message

In Ephesians 4, I think Paul is saying what Bono is singing, "We're one, but we're not the same." We're "one" but just look at the strange people in this room. Everybody is different. And how do we handle our differences?

A Clip from *Dumbo* is shown in which Dumbo is embraced and accepted by the elephants at first. Then, once his large ears are revealed, he is rejected and mocked by the very same people who were praising him moments before.

Elephant 1: *OH, DO HURRY, DEAR.*

Elephant 2: *I'M ON PINS AND NEEDLES.*

Elephant 1: *ISN'T IT THRILLING?*

Elephant 3: *AH... THIS IS A PROUD, PROUD DAY.*

Elephant 2: *HURRY AND OPEN IT, DEARIE.*

Elephant 3: *I'M DYING TO SEE.*

All Elephants: *OH! OH! OH!*

Elephant 2: *LOOK AT HIM!*

Elephant 3: *LOOK AT HIM!
OH, WHAT A...*

Elephant 1: *OH, LOOK!*

Elephant 2: *OH, YOU SWEET LITTLE THING.*

Elephant 1: *HE IS CUTE, ISN'T HE?*

Elephant 2: *HE IS A DARLING LITTLE BABY.*

Elephant 3: *ADORABLE. SIMPLY ADORABLE!*

Elephant 2: *DID YOU EVER SEE ANYTHING SO CUNNING?*

Elephant 1: *ISN'T HE A DARLING?*

Elephant 3: *KOOOOTCHY, KOOTCHY, KOOTCHY, KOOTCHY.*

Dumbo: *AH... AH...AH...AH...*

AH-CHOO!

All Elephants: [Concerned exclamations from the elephants.]

Elephant 3: *IS IT POSSIBLE?*

Elephant 2: *ISN'T THERE SOME MISTAKE?*

Elephant 4: *JUST LOOK AT THOSE...THOSE...E-A-R-S.*

Elephant 1: *THOSE WHAT?
OH, EARS!
THESE.*

*AREN'T THEY FUNNY?
OH, MY GOODNESS!
WHAT A TEMPER!
WHAT DID I DO?
PERFECTLY HARMLESS REMARK.*

[Dumbo's mom smacks Elephant 1]

Elephant 4: *THEY ARE FUNNY.*

Elephant 1: *THEY CERTAINLY ARE.*

Elephant 2: *WHO CARES ABOUT HER PRECIOUS LITTLE JUMBO?
JUMBO?*

Elephant 4: *YOU MEAN **DUMBO**.*

Elephant 3: *DUMBO. HA HA HA HA!*
All Elephants: *HA HA HA HA HA!
DUMBO. HA HA HA HA HA!
DUMBO. THAT'S GOOD! HA HA HA!*

Elephant 4: *HERE HE COMES.*

Elephant 3: *PRETEND YOU DON'T SEE HIM.*

[The elephants turn their backs on Dumbo.]

Elephant 3: *SHH!*

Timothy the mouse: *HOW DO YOU LIKE THAT?
GIVING HIM THE COLD SHOULDER, POOR GUY.*

In Paul's words that's a "*dividing wall of hostility*." We're all born into the world with differences, and not just physical differences but psychological, emotional, and temperamental differences. If you're a parent of more than one child you know this about your children, even if you forget it about everyone else.

Some children are passive when you'd like them to be active. Some children are active when you'd like them to be passive. Some take risks, some play it safe, some get angry, some get depressed.

We all make choices, but the nature of the chooser is hardwired into this body of flesh, this "earthen vessel." You know, in his letters, Paul refers to people as "vessels." In Romans, he asks, "*What if some are vessels of atimei* (that's dishonor) *and some are vessels of timei* (that's honor)?" "What if some are vessels of wrath, prepared for destruction or prepared to hold destruction and some are vessels of mercy, made for glory or to hold glory?" What if? Well, whatever the case, we all are, or all have earthen vessels—a body made of earth.

Now, check this out. These are all earthen vessels. [Peter points to various types of containers: glass, carafes, etc. on a table.] You know that pottery is made of earth, and glass is also made of earth—primarily sand. We each are...or we...have an earth vessel. And we are each different like these vessels here on the table.

Soon after we're born into this world, we each become aware of a problem. We use different words to describe it, but we each realize: "I'm not right, and I need to be righteous," "I'm not worthy, and I need to be worthy," "I'm not good, and I need to be good." We have knowledge of good and know we need to be good. But we don't exactly know what the "GOOD" is. And so, in our insecurity, fear, and shame, we begin to judge. We try to define the good so we can be good and eliminate the bad.

So, I'm an earthen vessel, [Peter picks up a wine glass from the table] and I see that I have a stem, and so I hope a stem is good, and then I look for other insecure vessels with stems. We go to lunch, hang out and then have a meeting and decide: "Stems are good and no stems are bad! Our problem is...those who have no stems."

We create a dividing wall of hostility and put them on the other side. And if that doesn't work, and it *doesn't* work, I make more judgments: "Only vessels with short stems are good." We all do this, and if we do it long enough, we end up totally alone, completely surrounded by a "dividing wall of hostility," which we think is a fortress but is in fact a prison.

That's how we handle our differences, we call the strange elephant "Dumbo," and put him on the other side of the wall. Parents love to show *Dumbo* the movie to their children saying, "You need to tolerate and appreciate your brothers' and sisters' differences." And every good father believes it for his own children. But there's no big rush to show *Dumbo* to Afghani children, Osama Bin Laden's children, our enemy's children. What about Japanese children? "You know what they're like. "

It's fascinating to me that *Dumbo* was released on October 23, 1941, just six weeks before the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. So, while parents were taking their children to see *Dumbo*, Japanese children were being locked up in internment camps, and black people weren't allowed to use the same toilets as white people.

In Europe, Adolph Hitler was gassing six million Jews because they were different. But of course, for four thousand years, the Jews had been saying they were different, and largely because God had said they were different...different from the Gentiles.

You see, the differences can be a lot bigger and a lot more complicated than the size of your ears, and sometimes the differences can be described as sin.

So there are differences and diversities that are not OK...that must be judged and upon which the wrath of God must descend. And yet, we've all sinned. James 2:10 *"For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it."* If we are guilty of one transgression, we become guilty of all: *"The wages of sin (any sin) is death..."*

Already in Ephesians, Paul has written *"You were dead in your sins...by nature, children of wrath, like the rest of mankind."* So we're all different, but that difference is not whether or not we've sinned. There may be a different shape to my sin and your sin, but it's all sin.

So if we put the bad on one side of the dividing wall...and the good on the other...well, we'd all be on the wrong side of that wall...except, of course, for one, And then maybe we could put all the blame on Him. And the blame of all the bad on the back of the One who is Good. Would that be good? What is "the good"?

Well anyway, I was just saying...our differences are more than the shape of our ears. And make no mistake our differences can really hurt. If you, for instance, break down some dividing wall of hostility and include folks that are really different from you...you could get yourself crucified. But for now, let me just point out that according to Paul, we're all earthen vessels like these goblets, glasses, and jars. And we're all different like Dumbo. And we're asking, "How do we handle the differences?"

Ephesians 4:1 *I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called.*

Last week we realized that to "walk in a manner worthy of our calling" is to walk in the realization that we cannot make ourselves worthy but that God alone makes us worthy. "Worthy walking: *"With all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

"Unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace...."

A friend sent me the following quote:

1. Muslims do not recognize Jews as God's chosen people.
2. Jews do not recognize Christ as the Messiah
3. Protestants do not recognize the Pope as the leader of the Christian world.
4. Baptists do not recognize each other at Hooters.

I love that, but it begs a fascinating question: "Do 'church people' express more unity than 'non-church people'?"

Like we asked last time: If you asked someone to describe a Bible-believing Evangelic Christian, what are the odds that they'd use Paul's description? "Oh yes, they're the humble ones, meek ones, patient ones, tolerant ones, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Now it's not just a political or Ecclesiastical question. It's a very personal question.

Do Christians tolerate their children's failures better than non-Christians? Do Christians give up on their co-workers and friends less than non-Christians? Do Christians divorce less than non-Christians, and not just on paper but in their hearts?

You know, Paul expects us to fight and sometimes even separate...but never give up. Do you remember the guy in Corinth who was having sex with his mother in law and bragging about it? At one point, Paul says, *"Don't even eat with him...get together and offer him up to Satan."* But do you remember why? 1 Corinthians 5 *"Offer him up to Satan for the destruction of his flesh that he might be saved on the day of the Lord."* See, Paul wasn't giving up on him...not even him...not even the Jews that whipped him, beat him, and eventually killed him.

In Romans 11 he writes, *"If possible, I'd be accursed for them.."* but of course Jesus had already been accursed for them. Jesus and Paul were that eager for unity in the bond of peace. So *"walk in a manner worthy of your calling."*

Next verse: *"There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—Maybe we don't walk in a manner worthy of our calling because we don't believe the ONE HOPE that belongs to our call. What's the one hope that also belongs to our call? That must be a Hope that encompasses all hope (all real hope). The Bible says, it in different ways, but Paul's just spent three chapters saying it in Ephesians. I think he summarizes it best in chapter 1:10 the *"plan for the fullness of time, to unite—anakephalaio (bring under on sacred head now wounded) all things...to unite all things in Christ Jesus..."**

Ephesians 1:22 *"God put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things, to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all."*

In Colossians 1:20 he says it this way: *"and through Christ to reconcile to himself all things whether on earth or in heaven making peace by the blood of his cross."* That doesn't mean some won't languish in outer darkness for ages, for eons...and some won't be refined by fire.

Peter says it this way in 2 Peter 3:9 *"The Lord is patient toward you, not willing that any should perish but that all should reach repentance."* Jesus said, *"I came to seek and save the lost (literally *"the perished"*) and He said, *"When I be lifted up, I will draw all people to myself."* From the throne He declares, *"Look, I make all things new."**

And now, think about His plan for the fullness of time. There's a fullness of time, which implies an end of time. The plan happens in time and bears timeless fruit, eternal fruit.

Well, if the plan is to draw all people to repentance, unite all things, reconcile all things and fill all things with Christ, there must be a time when all things are not united, reconciled and filled with Christ. And if we lived in that time and through that time...we'd learn something: we'd learn hope and participate in hope—the ONE HOPE. One hope that God will unite all things in Christ Jesus. One hope...and any other hope must be contained in that hope or it's a false hope—a lie.

In other words, you can't honestly say, "God will fill all things, unite all things, and reconcile all things in Christ Jesus and also say, "God will *not* unite some things, reconcile some things and fill some things with Christ Jesus."

Now some things, that are really no things, become different things when Christ fills them: darkness becomes light; death becomes life; disunity becomes unity; division becomes reconciliation; emptiness becomes fullness, and sin becomes grace. That is, every corrupted hope becomes a true hope. All of my desecration becomes God's creation, but all is filled and nothing is wasted; all is refined; all is filled with One God, One Lord, One Spirit, One Faith, One Hope, One Love in many vessels.

Now, if you didn't follow all of that, don't worry. I'm just saying, "There is one hope and it belongs to our call." And the one hope is that God will unite all things, fill all things, and reconcile all things to Himself in Christ Jesus. So if we're not walking in a manner worthy of our calling, perhaps it's because we don't believe in the One Hope that belongs to our call.

I'll try not to belabor this point, but I really want you to know. The Sanctuary was called into being when, five years ago, the institutional church demanded that I publicly confess that this One Hope was an impossible hope...confess...or be defrocked and cast out.

Well, it hurt like hell for me and many of you, and people wondered: "Why does it matter?" And I've wondered, "God why does this matter?" Well, here's a reason it matters: It seems clear to me that if I don't believe in the One Hope that belongs to my call, I can't walk in a manner worthy of my call. I can't truly preach: "God saves," in a word: "*Yeshua*," in English: "Jesus."

In other words, I can't trust that "God is One." Instead I'd have to preach: "Sometimes He's Jesus Christ and sometimes He's anti-Christ." And this isn't just theological mumbo jumbo, it's profoundly practical. I'm not only asking, "Can I hope for me?" but: "Can I hope for people different than me?" Can I hope?"

I really hoped that the Broncos would win the Super Bowl, and that's not an entirely bad hope: It's hoping that diverse people would come together as one and, united in orange, we could conquer any foe. It's not an entirely bad hope, and it anticipates the One Hope. It's just an incomplete and unrefined hope.

Well anyway, I hoped the Broncos would beat the Ravens last week. Saturday night, I recorded the game on our DVR because I had to preach at Sanctuary Foothills. I was planning on going home after the service, grabbing a beer, and watching every play...actually enjoying every play because my hope would be secure. But...at the end of the service, Susan whispered the bad news (the anti-gospel) into my ear. I went home and erased the recording without watching one play. It was too painful to watch.

You know...hope hurts. Hope is like an empty space in your soul...yearning to be filled. Without Hope, we die; we cease to move. And *with* Hope we hurt...we ache, and for some reason, God wants us to hope even more than we do. He meets some hopes and then makes us hope for more. As if He's expanding that empty aching space in our soul...expanding our capacity for Hope. Well, as soon as I heard my Bronco hope was an impossible hope, I erased the recording—lost interest in the Broncos. I gave up hope, and that's just a stupid football game.

In 1 Corinthians 13:7 Paul wrote, "*Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things.*"....."*Love hopes all things!*" And to hope what can never be isn't hope...but...despair. And so better not to hope, which means better not to love, which means it's best just to be alone, which is a great description of Hell—alone without Hope, which means, if I'm Satan, I'm going to spend all my time convincing folks: "God doesn't want to save, and God can't save." In fact, "God is not salvation. In a word, God is not Jesus. So don't hope, and don't love. Just surrender to Hell—desecration, darkness, the void."

If you didn't follow all of that, let me put it this way: If I think there's even a chance that someone I love is someone that God doesn't love, but in fact, someone that God will torture without end, well, I'll immediately dissociate and do my best to erase the tape and pretend that person doesn't exist and never existed. For to love someone is to weep their tears, and bear their pain, and endure their hell. If, on the other hand, I know that God loves that someone, I know that God hopes for that someone...for: "*Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things,*" and Scripture says, "*God is love,*" so God bears them; God believes for them; God hopes in them; God endures hell for them and with them if necessary, and then Paul writes, "*Love never fails.*" That is "Love wins!" "God wins!"

Well, if I believe that, I won't erase the tape; I won't dissociate; I won't disengage; I'll totally engage, not terrified of differences but fascinated by differences, not terrified of others' failures but engaged in their failures, even willing to bear their pain as God bears their pain. In other words, I'll hope. And Paul writes, "*Hope will not disappoint us.*"

Have you ever hung around a bar after the Broncos won a close game? Or were you in Denver on January 25, 1998, after they won their first Super Bowl. Who were the happiest people at the bar, the happiest people in Denver? They were people who said stuff like this: "All these years, and I've never left a Bronco game early-never gave up hope." "I used to wear my jersey to Raider games at the LA coliseum. I suffered for the Broncos, got beat up for the Broncos, and they were bad. Remember when Elway lined up behind the left guard? He looked like Dumbo. Remember when everyone gave up hope? I didn't give up hope." Those that suffered in hope were the happiest people at the bar.

I'm not sure we can talk this way, but who do you suppose are the happiest people at the great banquet in Heaven? "Hey, do you remember when you almost drank yourself to death? I was praying." "Peter, do you remember when you denied Jesus? I never stopped hoping." "Paul, do you remember when they locked you in Rome and everyone deserted you, but I came before winter and brought you the parchments? I still hoped."

And now here's a deep question: In whom will those happy people have truly hoped? They will have hoped in Jesus, in Paul in prison...writing the Bible. They will have hoped in His Spirit in Peter even as He wept in the dark. They will have hoped in Jesus...dying in another and rising in another. "*We die with him and we rise with him*" and He makes us worthy. That's our hope. Our hope is in Him. We're not to be full of ourselves but hope to be filled with Him.

Ephesians 4:3

...eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. ONE! But grace was given to each one of us (who are many and different) according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions of the earth? He who descended is the one who also ascended far above the heavens, that he might fill all things.) Fill ALL things! Jesus has or is fixing to FILL ALL THINGS.

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, (literally: "to the finished man,") to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Well, like I was saying at the start, you really can't understand Paul until you understand how Paul understands you. He claims that we are vessels. So, what's the problem with your vessels. [Peter walks over and looks at the variety of different vessels he has on the table at the front.] Well, it's not that it's too tall or short, slender or fat. It's not that it has a long stem or no stem. It's not even this particular sin or that particular sin. It's not what you call your bad deeds or good deeds. It's the fact that our vessel is empty. In other words, it's full of yourself, which means it's full of ego, pride, illusions and lies, which means it's full of *atimei*—unworthiness and dishonor, which means it's full of sin, which must be destroyed.

Well, how do you get the emptiness out of a glass? How do you get the hot air out of an earthen vessel? You can't empty the glass with the glass. You have to fill the glass with something else. [Peter picks up a glass and shakes it around to no avail.]

If you think you are the emptiness in your glass. If you think that you are the ego in your earthen vessel. The liquid that fills that vessel feels like wrath and burns like fire. But...if you know you're empty and you long to be filled, if you hope...that liquid will feel like grace and taste like wine.

Do you remember what's poured out of those seven bowls of wrath in the Revelation? It's blood, and it comes from a Lamb standing on a throne...blood that burns like fire and tastes like wine. One liquid, one life, and He is good. God alone is good.

Verse 6 *"One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift."*

In other words, the measuring cup, the measure which God uses to dispense His grace, that measure is Jesus Christ and Him crucified. That's as small and comprehensible as one man hanging on a cross, and it's as infinite as the very heart of God. So each of His children can ask, "Father, how much do you love me?" And He stretches out His arms as they're nailed to the wood and He answers, "This much." "I love you with all my heart—*Jesus from the bosom of the Father.*" In other words, our Father loves each of us with all He is and has, and all of Him is more than enough for all of me.

He loves each of us with the same measure, and yet each of us is different. [Peter pours wine into three different vessels equally.] Each of us is uniquely different. So the shape of my unique emptiness (the contours of my personality) becomes the shape of His fullness in me, that is, the unique shape of my disobedience becomes the unique shape of His mercy in me, the new me, the vessel of mercy that is me. The unique shape of my sin becomes the shape of His Grace. the shape of Christ in me.

See, it's no mistake that John (the son of thunder) became the apostle of love. Simon (the coward) became Peter the rock, and Saul of Tarsus (Pharisee of Pharisees—supreme legalist) becomes the apostle of grace. (And I doubt we've seen the end of a guy like Judas.)

But you see, Paul no longer needs to feel intimidated by Peter. And Peter no longer needs to feel threatened by Paul. And John and Peter no longer need to compete. Once they're filled with Mercy, their differences are no longer threats but blessings. Even if I'm filled with mercy and someone else isn't filled with mercy, even if I'm partly filled but trust God does the filling, then I'm interested in another's sorrows, fears, and longings. I care about the shape of their emptiness because it reveals the shape of God's glory in Grace. I not only care about it, I suffer for it, I hope for it, I know I can't fix it or fill it, but I can pray, "God if it be your will, use me to fill it with your mercy." When I hope for another person this is what God is doing.

[Peter pours wine from one earthen vessel to another. Then he takes the pitcher, which is filled with communion wine and fills the vessel that was just emptied.] When I pour my glass into another glass, God pours more into me. When I hope for another, I suffer for another and I rejoice with another. Actually, I hope for Jesus in another, which means I suffer with Jesus and rise rejoicing with Jesus in another. See? God is expanding your capacity for hope, which is expanding your capacity for suffering, which expands your capacity for endless joy!

He's expanding your capacity for Him. He's love, a river of love. See? When you love another the blood begins to flow, and then you're no longer a lonely earthen vessel. You're a blood vessel in a great body where all is for One and One is for all.

Now, if you didn't follow all of that, this is what I'm saying: You are sitting in a room filled with Dumbos, and you can be threatened by the differences or you can hope in Christ in all the differences. In other words, you can be Timothy. Timothy in Greek is *Timotheos*. It means worthy of God. At the end of Paul's ministry, imprisoned in Rome, when he felt like a failure and so many had deserted him, Timothy came to him with pens and parchment so he could write.

See? Paul was imprisoned because God gave him big ears, and it was what He heard God say that got him in trouble. Paul was Dumbo, but Timothy would not give up hope.

You're sitting in a room full of Dumbos, and you could be Timothy. In the movie, Dumbo's mother is locked away, and all the other elephants exclude Dumbo. In fact, everyone makes fun of Dumbo, except for Timothy, a mouse (from the other side of the "elephant dividing wall of hostility"). Timothy hopes for Dumbo and suffers with Dumbo. He tells Dumbo that his ears are "beautiful" and Dumbo is "great." He's not sure why, but he hopes for an idea that will reveal why."

Clip from *Dumbo*

Timothy the mouse: *I wonder how we ever got up in that tree anyway. Let's see
Elephants can't climb trees can they? Nah Nah, that's ridiculous.
You couldn't jump up. Mm Mmm, it's too hard.*

Crow: *Maybe you all flew up?*

Timothy the mouse: *Maybe we flew up.*

Timothy the mouse: *Yeah...maybe we flew up!! That's it! Dumbo, you flew!
Boy am I ever stupid; why didn't I think of this before.
Look at your ears; just look at them Dumbo! Why...they're perfect wings.
The very things that held you down are gonna carry you up, and up, and up!
I can see it all now!*

Clip from *Dumbo* continued...

[Crows are on the edge of a cliff. They are encouraging Dumbo to fly off the cliff.]

Crows: *LET'S GO! LET'S GO! HEAVE HO!*
LET'S GO! LET'S GO! HEAVE HO!

Timothy the Mouse: *LET'S GO, DUMBO! LET'S GO!*
Come on now!
UP, DOWN, UP, DOWN.
One, Two, One, Two

Faster. Get up flying speed.
Retract you landing gear.
Raise your fuselage.
Take off!

[Dumbo persistently flaps his ears, up and down, up and down, creating a cloud of dust.]

It's no use Dumbo...it's another one of their..LOOK!

[The scene pans out and Dumbo is visibly flying!]

Hot diggity!! You're flying!
You're flying!

Crow 1: *Why, he flies just like an eagle.*

Crow 2: *That's better than an airplane.*

Crow 3: *Brother, now I've seen everything.*

Crow's sing:

♪ *BUT I DONE SEEN ABOUT EVERYTHING* ♪
♪ *WHEN I SEE AN ELEPHANT FLY* ♪
♪ *WHEN I SEE AN ELEPHANT* ♪
♪ *FLY* ♪

Timothy: *I knew you could do it!*

Timothy hopes and receives an idea and shares the idea (the *Logos*) and Dumbo's ears are filled with meaning and glory. So the very thing that brought him down lifted him up. And Paul writes, "*Where sin increased, GRACE abounded all the more.*" "*In the very place they were called 'not my people' they will be called sons of the living God.*" Sounds like vessels of wrath *can* be filled with Mercy. Well, Timothy hoped for Dumbo, and who do you think was the happiest animal in the circus? Maybe Dumbo...but probably Timothy, riding in his hat.

You're sitting in a room full of Dumbos, and one day they're going to fly. The Author is telling their story and He wants you to help. He's telling their story, which is your story, which is His story. It is this story:

Communion

On the night He was betrayed, when all of humanity had placed Him on the other side of the dividing wall of hostility, He took bread and broke it saying, "This is my body *given* to you; take and eat, and do it in remembrance of me." And in the same way after supper, He took the cup saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, poured out for the forgiveness of sins; drink of it, all of you, and do it in remembrance of me." And now He calls you to His table. We invite you to His table, and remember: The thing that makes you worthy of this table is realizing that you cannot make yourself worthy of this table.

Tear off a piece of the bread; dip it in the cup and then take that and place it in your earthen vessel, your unique, particular, distinct earthen vessel. And then I want you to open your eyes, watch other people take that same measure, body broken and blood shed and place it in their earthen vessel. Then, Dumbo, I want you to have hope, and have hope for the people around you. I think that Jesus is big enough and strong enough that you can have hope for *everybody* in this fallen world. In Jesus' name, let's believe the gospel and walk in a manner worthy of our calling, Amen

[A few worship songs are sung.]

Benediction

Our God is mighty to save. And not believing He is mighty to save is the emptiness. That's what traps us in Hell: Not seeing Jesus, not wanting to see Jesus. God is *mighty* to save. So in the name of Jesus the Christ...Dumbo, have hope! Paul goes on to say in Ephesians 4 "*Speak the truth in love to one another, and in this way the body builds itself up in love.*" So I want you to tell your neighbor, "Dumbo, have hope!"

Disclaimer: This document is a draft and has not been edited by the author. Therefore, there may be discrepancies. Some discrepancies may be minor; some may have to do with theology. When in doubt, please refer to the audio version of the sermon on this website and don't be shy about informing us of errors.