

The Gospel Changes Everything

Philippians 3:17-21

Scripture	<p>¹⁷Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you. ¹⁸For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. ²⁰But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.</p>
Main Idea	<p>The “Gospel Changes Everything” is the central value of Harbor Church. In fact, the power of the gospel to change everything is the central message of the bible. The bible tells the story of the world’s creation, its fall into sin by humanity’s rebellion and its redemption through Jesus. The gospel changes everything because it is God’s power to heal and restore everything in this world to how He meant everything to be. It is the gospel that makes us Christians, that grows us and empowers us to serve. In order to catch a vision for how the gospel changes everything we need to have a ‘big picture’ view of the cross and the resurrection of Jesus.</p>
Discussion	<p>Q1: In our modern world, with satellite tv and the internet, we hear bad news all time. What is your response to the brokenness you hear about in our world everyday? Are you callous, desensitized, burdened? What do you think God’s reaction is to all this brokenness?</p> <p>A1: This question is designed to stir up everyone’s thoughts as to how they handle the ‘bad news’ we are bombarded with on a daily basis. Use the discussion that springs from this question to demonstrate that “everything is broken”. Not one aspect of our life in this world is without struggle, pain, and suffering in some way. Often, we try and insulate or isolate ourselves (because we can here in the US) from all this brokenness. God’s response was to enter the world’s brokenness in Christ, suffer to heal all brokenness, and promise to restore all broken things at the second coming of Christ.</p> <p>It would be very helpful to point to Paul’s attitude in this passage – he talks about the ‘enemies of the cross’ as one weeping. Paul weeps over the world’s sin and brokenness, especially over those who refuse God’s offer of healing in the cross.</p> <p>Q2: Verse 19 tells us what it means to have a mind set on earthly things: It means answering the core questions of destiny (what story do I live in?), god (Whose authority do I live by?), and glory (Where do I seek glory?) apart from the gospel. Did you find yourself challenged by any of these 3 core questions?</p> <p>A2: It was said in the sermon that “earthly things” are not physical things or material things as opposed to spiritual/immaterial things. A mind set on earthly things is seeing everything in life apart from the cross. These 3 questions are questions everyone answers in some way – how we answer these questions forms the basis of our life and all of our decisions in life.</p> <p>It may be helpful to tease out the implication of each questions to help the group. What other “stories” are out there (naturalism/atheism, islam, deism, new age/eastern thought)? What other authorities to we often listen to before God? (ourselves, our families, the pervading thought of the culture, etc). What things to we glory in above God (career, spouse, children, work, money, etc...)?</p> <p>Q3: It was said in the sermon that the cross challenges us to look at ourselves as the problem before we look outside of ourselves. Do you find yourself quick to blame others or other things before looking to yourself?</p> <p>A3: Here is the radical challenge of the cross. Instead of looking at all the problems out there – it tells us to look at ourselves first. It would be great for you to lead with an example from your own life. Examples can be as mundane as ‘road-rage anger’ – blaming all other drivers for your anger, blaming</p>

your neighbors for your bad relationship, blaming your spouse for your lack of passion in the marriage...we think we know who is to blame for international wars, hunger, poverty, etc... The cross says each of us needs to "share in the blame" before anything can be healed.

Q4: A quote from the movie Shawshank Redemption was shared "Hope is a good thing, maybe the best of things, and good things never die." Why do you think hope never dies in the human heart? How does this hope point us to the gospel?

This is an open-ended question with many possible answers. At the core, hope never dies because we were not made for a broken world of death. We were made for a world of life and fullness. Sin has messed it all up. Hope is our longing for restoration – for the way things are meant to be. It is this hope that points us to Jesus' resurrection. The resurrection tells us that God is going to meet our deepest longing by the power of Jesus – he will destroy brokenness and death – he will restore our broken bodies and create a new heavens and a new earth where sin is no more.

Q5: This passage is clear that a spiritual and immaterial heaven is not the end destination for Christians but rather a transformed earth. What is your reaction to this? How does it show us that the gospel is much bigger than just "going to heaven when you die"?

A5: Many Christians have a false view of our eternal state as an immaterial existence in heaven. In order for us to see that the gospel changes everything we have to correct this false view. Heaven is the "intermediate" place for Christians who die. When Jesus returns he is not going to take all Christians away from earth into heaven to join the other disembodied souls. NO! He is going to resurrect all his people and give them glorified bodies like his!! Why? Because we will be living on a glorified, transformed earth! This basic Christian doctrine has been lost but is so important because our view of the future radically impacts how we live in the present.

Q6: What does it look like to be so "heavenly minded that you are great earthly good" (i.e. a heavenly citizen – verse 20)? Do you have a particular burden for some part/aspect of our broken world? What would that broken piece of our world look like if the power of heaven invaded it?

Help each person in the group identify something about this broken world that really bothers/burdens them. Why, what is it about that area of life that really affects them deeply? Help the group dream of what it would like for that area of our broken world to be redeemed if God answered the pray – 'your will be done on earth as it is in heaven'. This could be a great brainstorming session – who knows? The Holy Spirit might call the group to move into an area of brokenness that is shared as partners in mission!

Prayer

Spend some time sharing needs. Pray for the vision harbor to advance in the years to come: The vision of Harbor is ignite a church planting movement that so fills the City of San Diego with the Gospel of Jesus Christ that the people of the city are changed in every dimension—spiritually, socially and culturally. Pray that God would place a burden on your heart for the city to be changed with an openness to serve him to heal and restore.