

The Church *In the City* and *For the City*

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Darren Patrick, The Journey, Saint Louis, MO (www.journeyon.net)

The gospel is for you, for the church and for the city.

In Romans 1:14 Paul is eager to preach the gospel and not be ashamed of it.

The gospel is for you.

Challenge: Make the gospel the center of your life and theology. The most important thing for you is apprehension and application of the gospel. When we talk about walking in the reality of Colossians 2, we are talking about being full of sin, but completely accepted. The gospel humbles us. That humility works in and through you. Your confidence comes in the acceptance of the love of God.

The gospel is for the church.

Colossians 2: The same way you became a Christian is the way you grow as a Christian. Same way you got saved is the same way you get delivered.

The gospel is for the city.

If you want to impact the city, you have to understand it.

Matt Chandler, Village Church, Flowermound, TX (www.thevillagechurch.net)

The church is in a panic. There is so much talk about transforming communities that we have forgotten basic gospel truths.

You don't shape a city programmatically; you shape it by transforming individual lives.

This comes through progressive sanctification by the gospel.

We have no battle plan for progressive sanctification, which is sometimes seen as old school.

As you grow, there does need to be a programmatic discipleship. What is your church producing in the end? Be steadfast in the gospel. You're biblically responsible to push your people into deep waters. You'll know they're growing when they handle sex, money, time, and jobs differently.

Matt Carter, Austin Stone Community Church, Austin, TX (www.austinstone.org)

There are four types of churches:

1. Churches apathetic toward their city—a church that happens to be in the city.
2. Churches with animosity toward their city—we're right and they're wrong.
We're good, they're evil.
3. Church that imitates the city—trying to assimilate into culture. The church of Ephesus had lost its first love. They were no longer salt and light.
4. Church for the city—seeking the welfare of the city.

Jeremiah 29:7 says to pray for the welfare of the city—shalom. Shalom means universal flourishing. It embraces all of the aspects—education, business, politics, etc.

Is the gospel changing the city through you? If you closed the doors of your church, would the city grieve?