



“The Sent and Scattered Church: Displaying and Declaring the Gospel”

(1 Timothy 1:12-17, Titus 3:4-7)

3-13-2022

Ice Breaker:

What is your favorite Costco sample item?

Discussion:

Have someone in your group read out loud the article: The Gospel Isn't a Cul-De-Sac by Brad Watson. Link to article: <https://saturatetheworld.com/2019/11/05/the-gospel-isnt-a-cul-de-sac/> And then discuss it as a group.

The Gospel Isn't a Cul-De-Sac

ALL THINGS MADE NEW

By Brad Watson November 5, 2019

The cul-de-sac was a phenomenal invention for the suburbs.

It created a safe and peaceful place for families to raise children.

No one passed through. In fact, the only time strangers can appear is after a wrong turn and they find themselves at the dead end. The design made it simple for those who don't belong to quickly turn around.

It also kept everyone who belonged there in one place. Once you came in, you didn't have to leave. You could remain the rest of your days with likeminded folks, playing games in your asphalt sanctuary.

The cul-de-sac is the epitome of the suburban life and values. However, the gospel is not a cul-de-sac. **It isn't a safe sanctuary that separates you from the dangers of the world—it throws you into the world.** It isn't your private enclave to secure your values and doctrines. It ushers you into a hospitality for the other—the not like you. The gospel is doctrinal, changing what we believe. It also is personal, changing who we are. But it is more than that.

The Gospel is Mission: It Changes Where and How We Live

If we just focus on the doctrinal and personal aspect of the gospel, we will neglect its missional aspect. If the doctrinal gospel changes what we believe, and the personal gospel changes who we are, then the missional gospel changes where we live and what we say. It is the hopeful announcement that God is making all things new in Christ Jesus! **The gospel ushers us into a new kingdom and new world.** We no longer live in a world dominated by death and deconstruction but one of life and re-creation!

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.” —Luke 4:18-19, Isaiah 61

The Gospel Changes Everything

The gospel changes everything. It is not only good news for us, but also for our neighbors, the poor, our city, and the world. It affects the social, cultural, and physical fabric of the universe. In Luke 4, Jesus preached the gospel to the poor, marginalized, and oppressed. It is good news for them because through his death and resurrection he has defeated sin, death, and evil (1 Jn. 2:13; 3:8). The gospel announces the in-breaking reign of Jesus, which is in the process of reversing the order of things. The poor become rich, the captives are freed, and the old become new.

The Gospel Sends Us on Mission

Those who follow Jesus join his mission by making disciples of all ethnic groups by going, teaching, and baptizing (Matt. 28:18-20). We are sent to teach, speak, counsel, discuss, and proclaim the gospel to others so that they might be baptized into God's new creation and join his mission of making all things new. We are called “ambassadors of reconciliation” and given the privilege of sharing in Jesus' ministry of reconciling the world to himself (2 Cor. 5:17-20). Those who have been changed by the gospel share its life-changing power with others. We should announce and embody the good news by caring for the poor and rebuilding cities (Is. 61:4). In fact, the future for the people of God is an entirely new city in a new creation (Rev. 21). **The church should be a movie trailer of this grand, coming attraction, when all things will be made new!**

Remember, This Is Who You Are

The result of the church—you, us—being sent is that we live as a community of disciples—not only devoted to Jesus and to one another—but devoted to our neighbors and our city, too. **When we come to Christ, we are all sent on his mission.**

We are new and have a new purpose. Christ reconciled us to himself and we are a new creation. Our old way of finding identity and our broken ways of finding meaning are over. We are reconciled and ushered into a vibrant and living relationship with God. This is the gospel, that Christ has reconciled us to God through his death and resurrection and is making all things new—even us. **We are recipients of the gospel, messengers of the gospel, servants of the gospel, and are representatives of the gospel's work.** See, you cannot separate our identity in Christ from our purpose in Christ. That identity and purpose requires some sort of expression of gospel-focused community on mission:

- We live on mission because we have received the gospel.
 - We live on mission because we are messengers of the gospel. He is making his appeal to the world through us.
 - We live on mission because we are ministers of reconciliation—servants of the gospel.
 - We live on mission because we are ambassadors—representatives of the gospel.
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How are we tempted to treat the gospel like a Cul-De-Sac?

Read 1 Timothy 1:12-17

How does knowing what you know about Paul impact these verses?

Do you lean toward “displaying the gospel without declaring it” or “declaring the gospel without displaying it”?

What does it mean to be part of a sent and scattered church?

Give your group sometime to do the Fruit to Root exercise. Make sure you start with the Fruit to Root side then share, then do the Root to Fruit side.

(please attach that PDF below.)

What does "getting out of the Cul-De-Sac look like for you? What about your group?

Encourage each person in your group to think of how they can intentionally be displaying and declaring the gospel.

If someone specific comes to mind, have them share and then pray for that person as a group.

Finally, brainstorm ways your group can be on mission together.

