

Real Change Needs to Happen to Others, Right?

Nate and Ruth had been together at First Church since it's beginnings over 10 years ago. They had experienced together the exciting stages of church planting, the momentum of transitions, and all of the growth of this young church. They served on various ministry teams and were integral parts of the church's life. But now that the church membership was leveling off and the church was beginning to experience some difficulties, Nate was bothered by Ruth. He wasn't sure what it was, but something had changed with her. When she came around he found himself wanting to evade her presence. She irritated him by her presence. But Nate was also bothered by the things she said and her timing for saying things. Every time she saw him she wanted to talk about an issue at church. In Nate's mind something needed to change. She needed to change. She needed to change some things about who she was and some of the things she did.

We have all had the experience where we expect others to change. When we are of the mind that others need to change for our own-selves, we're the ones who need to change. The good news is that God sent his Son into the world to change us. It is his grace that changes us from sinful, miserable hell bound beings into new creatures in Christ. But he's not done there. The work he began he continues until we become mature and complete bearers of the image of his Son Jesus Christ. And the Spirit he gives us is the guarantee that he will accomplish his purposes with us. Jesus Christ is the true human being who came into the earth to change us into true human beings in his likeness. Therefore, we don't have to be discouraged with ourselves when we're finding fault with others. God will change his own.

This good news also allows us to take the focus off of others who we think need to change for our sake. One of the ways it does this is by allowing us to see that we are not better than others. When others irritate us it is because in our minds they are not as good as us. We need people to be like us, have our desires, preferences and ways of looking at life. Therefore, we need them to at least be as good as us if not better to meet our needs. But the gospel teaches us to say, "I am the chief of sinners." The gospel allows us to look at what irritates us in someone else and see that same problem magnified in our own lives a 100 x's. The gospel then allows us to see how God loves us, long before our performance good or bad, and shares with us the death of his own Son for our sin and death, and the righteous record and life of his own Son for our life. So, all we have to look at is beauty in the Son and not what irritates us in the lives of those the Son lived, died, and was raised for. The gospel allows us to see ourselves correctly but also to see the beauty of Christ covering ours and others ugly sin.

The grace of the gospel also does not allow us to look at people according to the flesh. The reason their person or the things people have to say bother us is because we look at them according to the flesh. We expect them to know and meet our desires, to satisfy our hopes and dreams, and to be a part of our plan for our life of glory in this earth. But the gospel changes us. We are born again in Jesus and this changes our hopes, dreams, desires, joys, and loves, and how they are met. He is our best portion forever who has and will meet all our needs. We don't need other people to do this for us. Therefore, we don't regard them according to the flesh making them our pawns in our kingdom. We have come into the kingdom of the beloved Son, and there we are beloved children who serve, love, and lay down our lives for others.

Nate doesn't need Ruth to be something for him. He has all he needs in Jesus so he can continue to serve and love her. But he does need to ask himself: 'What's going on in my own heart that is making demands on Ruth in my relationship with her.?' And, 'What's wrong with my heart that I cannot rejoice in her?' He also needs to be ready when he has the log out of his own eye, to ask Ruth: 'We've been through a lot here in the life of this church. How are you doing? How can I pray for you? How can I serve you? What is going on in your life that has you irritated with the issues at church?' Then Nate and Ruth can trust their Lord together for change in their own hearts which will bring glory to himself in his church.



Catalyst Prayer Theme #7 Personal Conversion and Renewal

Catalyst Prayer is a season (April - June) of corporate and private prayer for the Vision and Mission of CCC, and her future planning. Please pray with us privately and corporately by using the weekly "Catalyst Prayer Theme". Also, sign up to pray during the Day of Prayer May 22nd.

The Mission and Vision of Christ Covenant Church are centered in the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are praying through our Vision which is centered in the gospel: *CCC exists to participate in a movement of the gospel that will bring personal conversion and renewal, community formation, and generous lives serving others through humble cultural engagement in Columbia and beyond.*

Let's pray together for a movement of his gospel that will bring about personal conversion and renewal:

- ❖ **Pray that the gospel of Jesus Christ will be lifted up and that God will draw people to himself.** And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." - John 12:32
- ❖ **Pray that non-Christians will be drawn to believe the gospel of Jesus Christ for salvation through preaching.** 14 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? 15 And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" 17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. - Romans 10:14-17
- ❖ **Pray that Christians will be given grace to be renewed by the gospel of Jesus Christ.** I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, - Ephesians 1:16-20
- ❖ **Pray that Christians in the church will be renewed to share the gospel with those yet to be converted.** Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word. - Acts 8:4; For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything. - 1 Thessalonians 1:8
- ❖ **Pray that personal conversion and renewal would be happening each week in the church.** And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. - Acts 2:47; But they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; - Isaiah 40:31