

### III. What does this mean for our mission?

- A. Gospel culture is first because *without it* the rest of the mission is hollow and empty.
- B. It means that learning how to live in love with each other and our neighbors is essential to our mission.
- C. It means that the church must focus on the things that are eternal and not part of the passing, provisional kingdoms.
- D. Developing a gospel culture is essential to our existence.

#### LIVE THE STORY

*The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.*

- How important is a church's witness to the reason for which it exists? Explain.
- How might the story of what was happening in the Galatian churches help us make the distinction between essential aspects of culture verses traditions which are not required?
- Can you think of times in your church life when helpful practices became requirements for acceptance? How did that affect you?
- What do you think of what Randy Alcorn said, "“Sadly, evangelicals sometimes appear as little more than another special-interest group, sharing only a narrow ‘unity’ based on mutual outrage and disdain.”"
- Who is the Spirit by which fruit is born? Explain.
- How might we distinguish between good things that are not essential vs. essential things of Gospel culture? Can you illustrate?
- Read James 3:13-18. Can you think of times when you thought you were wise and right, but you were earthly and unspiritual? How might these verses transform a community's culture?
- Why is forming a Gospel culture essential to our mission as a church?

### Gospel Witness: Gospel Culture

Jerry Cisar — January 8, 2023

Text: Galatians 5:13-26

#### Introduction: Gospel Witness

- A. In John's vision, the churches are represented by *lampstands*.
  - i. Why are the churches symbolized by lampstands?
  - ii. Matt. 5:14-16

*The church's witness as the light of the world for all to see is not an optional extra, but essential to its very existence.*

- B. What are our missional priorities?

- i. Gospel Culture
- ii. Gospel Formation
- iii. Gospel Mercy
- iv. Gospel Outreach
- v. Gospel Unity

- C. Gospel Culture

#### I. What Gospel Culture is not

- A. Paul had nothing to commend in the Galatian churches.
  - i. His greeting (Gal. 1:2)
    - a) Rom 1:7
    - b) 1 Cor 1:2
    - c) Eph. 1:1b
  - ii. Where he normally writes about how he prays for the church, he writes of his concern.

B. The Galatians had confused what the culture of Christ's kingdom was all about.

- i. False teachers had told them that the "culture" of the kingdom was about Jewish traditions (Gal. 2:11-16).

- ii. What things are we tempted to allow to define our culture?

C. What are non-starters for Gospel culture?

- i. The acts of the flesh.

- ii. Randy Alcorn, *Eternal Perspectives*, Nov. 2021

## II. What Gospel Culture Is

A. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control.

B. Who is the Spirit by which this fruit is born.

- i. It is the Spirit of Jesus Christ.
  - a) Gal. 4:4-7

b) Gal. 4:19

C. A Gospel culture is what will exist in the new creation.

Lesslie Newbigin: "The Spirit brings the reality of the new world to come into the midst of the old world that is.... [The Spirit is] the recognizable presence of a future that has been promised but is not yet in sight."

D. James' Perspective on Gospel Culture (Jam. 3:13-18)

E. When the fruit of the Spirit meets someone overtaken by sin, we see is a humble gentleness.

- i. "Brothers and sisters, if someone is overtaken in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual, restore such a person with a gentle spirit, watching out for yourselves so that you also won't be tempted." (Gal. 6:1 CSB)

- ii. It is a culture that feels safe.

F. We could add to Gospel culture: hospitality—which is literally stranger love; care for and protection of the weak and vulnerable; and surely what must be added is a fleeing from the love of money... greed, selfishness... so, positively, generosity. (Heb. 13)