

Creating Jesus-Centered Culture

Part Two of *The Creature of the Word* focuses heavily on the mechanics of fostering a Jesus-centered culture within your church. The authors remind us that, first and foremost, if we want to build a culture like this, it must be founded upon the clear teaching of the Word of God. From the pre-school to puberty to the pulpit, every member of the church must be taught the Scriptures.

“To form a church centered on the gospel, the church must strategically and seamlessly pass the message of the gospel on from generation to generation,” they write. “The church must be united from the preschool ministry to the pulpit around one central understanding: the gospel transforms” (Kindle location 2228).

Sadly, even in churches where the gospel is heralded as the essential message of the Christian faith from the pulpit, children and students are often pummeled with curriculum designed for behavioral modification rather than gospel transformation. It is foolish to feast on the life-giving gospel in one area of the church while using a placebo in another. Quite frankly, children and student ministries are often a wasteland for well-intentioned morality training. (Kindle location 2222)

They continue:

Churches centered on the gospel aggressively go for the heart, not for behavior. Morality, or good behavior, is not the goal of godly parenting nor the goal of sound children’s ministry. A changed heart is. Obedience or morals may be the result, but a changed heart must be the goal. A change in behavior that does not stem from a change in heart is not commendable; it is condemnable. A church that goes after a child’s behavior and not the child’s heart is shepherding that child in opposition to the gospel. Children can be taught how to behave without hearts impacted by Jesus, but the “good behavior” that results will only last for a season because it lacks the power of inner transformation. (Kindle location 2290)

That’s really what we’re about, isn’t it? We want our churches to be places where people at any age are being transformed by the Holy Spirit as the Word is taught; we don’t need to be told to do better, try harder, or be nice for niceness’ sake. We need to be reminded constantly of the natural state of our hearts and our utter helplessness before God. Imagine what that would do to our children’s and student ministries; to our small groups and pulpit ministries.

Read Part Three [here](#); go back to Part One [here](#).

Read more from Aaron [here](#).