

## I. INTRODUCTION.

### A. Scripture text: **Matthew 18:1-3.**

At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" [2] And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, [3] and said, "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.

### B. Jesus said, "unless you are converted." And the idea is that of change! Unless we can change we cannot be fit to enter the kingdom.

### C. You remember the great Serenity prayer:

Lord, grant me the courage to change the things I can.  
The patience to endure the things I cannot change.  
And the wisdom to know the difference.

## II. SOME THINGS YOU CANNOT CHANGE.

### A. The laws of gravity and our natural world.

God has set these in motion and we cannot, change the forces of nature about us. We may temporarily suspend some laws but we never escape their force on our lives. Even in space, astronauts and scientists depend on these immutable laws.

### B. The aging process of all living things.

We don't want to admit it, but everything (including us) is getting older. The laws of entropy, are always in motion. Our Universe is slowly winding down, getting slower (Mt. 6:27).

"And which of you by being anxious can add a *single* cubit to his life's span?"

### C. Our looks, our body.

Yes, with surgery, exercise, or lack thereof we can change our physical appearance somewhat. But we have no power over eye and hair color, height, and a number of other physical characteristics (Mt. 5:36; 10:30).

**(Mt 5:36)** "Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black.

**(Mt 10:30)** "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

### D. The change of seasons, weather, and the earth we live on.

Solomon learned this fact long ago. Everything continues on much as it has for centuries. There are many aspects of our world, we simply cannot control (Eccl. 1:3-7).

## III. SOME THINGS YOU DON'T WANT TO CHANGE.

### A. I don't want to change the Word of God (Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:6; Gal. 1:8; Rev. 22:16).

**(Deu 4:2)** "You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.

**(Prov 30:6)** Do not add to His words Lest He reprove you, and you be proved a liar.

**(Gal 1:8)** But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed.

**(Rev 22:16)** "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star."

### B. I don't want to change the fact that Jesus is the Son of God (2Jn. 7).

For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ *as* coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.

### C. I don't want to change the structure or function of the church (Eph. 4:11-16).

And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, [12] for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; [13] until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ. [14] As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; [15] but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him, who is the head, *even* Christ, [16] from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that

which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

- D. I don't want to change a person's basic personality. (Maybe just the way they function in that personality.) Not everyone is to be molded into one particular personality.

#### IV. SOME THINGS YOU CAN CHANGE.

- A. You may not be able to change the whole world, but you can change your world. You have access to your neighbors, family, friends, work companions, and other social contacts. If you listed them all, what a great goal to do the following for them!

- B. You may not be able to...

preach the gospel to the whole world (Mk. 16:15,16).

And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. [16] "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.

But you can...

**preach the gospel to your world** (1Th. 2:8).

Having thus a fond affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us.

- C. You may not be able to...

teach the truth more perfectly to the whole world (Heb. 5:12-14).

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. [13] For everyone who partakes *only* of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. [14] But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

But you can...

**teach the truth to your world** (2Tim. 2:2).

And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.

- D. You may not be able to...

give material things to the whole world in need (see Mt. 25:31-48).

(Mt 25:40) "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, *even* the least *of them*, you did it to Me.'

But you can...

**give things to the people in your world** (Gal. 6:9,10).

And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary. [10] So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

- E. You may not be able to...

specifically pray for the needs of whole world (1Tim. 2:1,2).

First of all, then, I urge that entreaties *and* prayers, petitions *and* thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, [2] for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.

But you can...

**specifically pray for the people of your world** (1Th. 5:17).

pray without ceasing;

- F. You may not be able to...

change lives for X in the whole world (Mt. 7:13).

"Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it.

But you can...

**change your life** (Rev. 22:11).

"Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and let the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and let the one who is holy, still keep himself holy."

G. You may not be able to...

change the attitudes and emotions of the whole world (Gal. 5:19-21).

Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, [20] idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, [21] envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

But you can...

**change the attitudes of your world** (Gal. 5:22-25).

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, [23] gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. [24] Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. [25] If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

H. You may not be able to...

change the attendance and faithfulness of the world (Eph. 4:17-19).

This I say therefore, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, [18] being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; [19] and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality, for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.

But you can...

**change the faithfulness of your world** (Eph. 4:20-24).

But you did not learn Christ in this way, [21] if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, [22] that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, [23] and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, [24] and put on the new self, which in *the likeness of God* has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

(You can have a tremendous impact on the faithfulness and worship on those in your world.)

## V. CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. Do not be discouraged. Jesus solved the problems of His world, one person at a time.
- B. You cannot change the whole world, but you can change your world.
- C. You begin changing your world by changing yourself.
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.