

The Gospel of Self - 1

by Anton Bosch

The modern gospel has changed from the gospel of Christ to the gospel of self, which is a false gospel that promises happiness and material blessings but leads to eternal damnation.

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 11:4

Topics: "Christ Centered", "False Gospel"

Description

Anton Bosch emphasizes the gradual shift in the Gospel over the years, where the true Gospel of Christ has been replaced by a man-centered, self-serving message. He highlights the importance of focusing on Jesus Christ as the center and object of the Gospel, as seen in Paul's explicit definition of the Gospel in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. Bosch warns about the dangers of accepting a different gospel and a different Jesus, stressing the need for a Christ-centered message rather than a self-centered one.

Transcript

We seldom take notice when things change very slowly. I am sure you know the story (probably an urban legend) that if you threw a frog in a pot of boiling water, it would immediately jump out of the water, but if it is put into the pot when the water is cold and the water is gradually heated, it will stay there until it is dead.

The Gospel in the western world has gradually been changed over the past 50 (or more) years so that what is believed to be the gospel today is no longer the true Gospel but a false gospel which differs substantially and dramatically from the true Gospel. But because the changes have been brought in gradually, no one seems to have noticed.

Paul mostly just refers to the Gospel as "the gospel" meaning that there is no other gospel and assuming that his readers understand what the term means. But about 30 times he calls the gospel "the gospel of Christ" (Romans 1:16; 1Corinthians 9:12 etc.) or "the gospel of God" (Romans 1:1; 1Thessalonians 2:2 etc.). In fact, Mark opens his gospel with... "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mark 1:1).

By calling it the "gospel of Christ" the writers of the New Testament are saying that the gospel is about Jesus Christ, it is founded in, and by, Him. It is completed in, and by, Him. And He is the object and center of the Gospel. Nowhere is this clearer than in Paul's explicit definition of the gospel:

"Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved... For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:1-4 NKJV).

This is about Jesus Christ, not about anyone else. Yes, we happen to be the beneficiaries of His atoning work but the only role we had to play in this great work is that He died "for our sins". But it is He Who died, Who was buried and Who rose from the dead.

So, how does the modern gospel differ from the gospel of Christ? It differs in that Christ is no longer the center and object of the message but man is. It is no longer the gospel of Christ, it is the gospel of self, and it is another gospel entirely.

Just think about how the "gospel" is normally communicated. Those who preach the modern gospel talk about you, God's plan for you, how much He loves you, how you can be happy and fulfilled, how He wants to bless you, make you rich and make you healthy and heal your marriage etc. While many of these things are true, the emphasis is in the wrong place. They feel the need to sell people on the benefits of salvation and so it becomes a man-centered message.

Right through the book of Acts we find that they preached "Jesus the Christ". That was their message beginning at Pentecost (Acts 2:22) and ending at the last verse (Acts 28:31).

Some may say that this is merely semantics and splitting hairs and that all that matters is that people come to accept Jesus. No, this is fundamental to the Faith. There are different gospels that each presents a different Jesus. Paul warned that there would be "another gospel" and "another Jesus": "For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted--you may well put up with it!" (2 Corinthians 11:4). On the surface this other gospel and Jesus appear very much like the real Gospel and the real Jesus, but they are counterfeits empowered by a very different spirit - the spirit of Antichrist (1John 4:3).

The gospel of Christ and the gospel of self have different messages: The object of the first is Jesus Christ, His person, His work and His glory. The object of the second message is self. This message concentrates on what man can get from God and how everything Christ has done and does, revolves around blessing man. Responses to these gospels produce dramatically different results. The gospel of Christ is unpopular and few respond to it while the gospel of self is popular and many flock to it (Matthew 7:13-15). They also produce very different attitudes in their followers. Those who obey the Gospel of Christ, worship Him and their lives and doctrine revolve around Him - they are Christ-centered. Those who choose the gospel of self worship themselves and their lives revolve around themselves - they are self-centered. Not only do these messages produce very different followers, but they produce entire congregations that are either self-centered or Christ-centered.

These differences are more than a slight difference in emphasis. They are complete opposites. The true gospel produces repentance and faith in Christ alone. The gospel of self produces arrogance and self-righteousness. The gospel of Christ leads to eternal life while the gospel of self leads to eternal damnation. Those who have been attracted by the gospel of self are not saved - they have put their trust in a false message with a false savior.

Nowhere are these two gospels more clearly illustrated than in the ministry of Jesus. The Jews preached a Messiah who would fulfill their political, economic and ego-centric goals. Their message was one of self and ultimately no different to the message so popular today. They had no time for the suffering Servant who would not dance to their tune. They had formed a gospel that had nothing to do with God and His purposes, but that had everything to do with their goals, plans and ambitions. In the process they crucified the Lord of Glory (Acts 2:23) and brought God's judgment on the whole nation.

What people wanted from Jesus 2000 years ago is exactly what they want from Him today: Happiness, health, material blessings, problem solving, ego boosting, political dominion, in short - heaven on earth. When Jesus refused to give them those things and rather, offered them the cross and eternal life beyond the cross, they crucified Him and chose Caesar as their king (John 19:15). Modern christianity has not crucified Him, but they quietly ushered Him out the back door of the church, locked Him out (Revelation 3:20), and crowned self as their king.

"All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence." (Colossians 1:16-18).

In the next article I hope to show more specifically and practically how this works.

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