

The Gospel of Self - 2

by Anton Bosch

The sermon contrasts the self-centered Gospel of Self with the true Gospel of Jesus Christ, emphasizing the need for a Christ-centered life and community.

Scripture: Matthew 12:34

Topics: "False Gospel", "Christ Centered"

Description

Anton Bosch preaches about the dangers of modern 'Christianity' that revolves around self, contrasting it with the true Gospel of Jesus Christ that centers on Him. He highlights how the false gospel of self leads to death, while the true Gospel leads to life. The sermon delves into how these two gospels are manifested in what individuals think about, talk about, and even in their worship practices, emphasizing the importance of focusing on Christ rather than self.

Transcript

Modern "Christianity" has taken us back to the dark ages and beyond. In those days everyone believed that the universe revolved around the earth. It was only around 1610 that Galileo discovered that the earth is not the center of the Universe, but the Sun is the center of our solar system and that Earth actually revolves around the Sun. (Galileo was declared a heretic by the Roman church and spent the rest of his life under house arrest.) Modern Christianity teaches that God revolves around the Christian and that we are the center of His Universe. This is even worse than believing that the universe revolves around the earth.

This is the result of the false gospel - the gospel of self. By contrast, the true Gospel - the Gospel of Jesus Christ teaches that He is the preeminent One and that our lives should revolve around Him. These are not variants of the same gospel but they are total opposites - one emanating from and terminating in God, the other in self. The one leads to life, the other to death. But how are these two gospels manifested? Let's look at some of the fruit of both.

The first evidence of these gospels lies in what the person thinks about. Is self the center of their thoughts - how things benefit them, what they plan to do, how they feel etc.? Or is Christ, His Word (and His body) the preeminent subject of their private thoughts? Do their thoughts revolve around earthly things or heavenly things? "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:1-2).

What we think about most is evidenced in what we talk about. Jesus said: "How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things" (Matthew 12:34-35). If our heart and thinking revolves around ourselves, that is what we will speak about. Even some preachers speak about themselves more than they do about the Lord and his Word! It is very hard to have a conversation with such a person since they are not interested in you, or what you have to say. They can only think and talk about themselves. Most people in the world are like that, but when "Christians" exhibit these traits, there is a real cause for concern. Those who have truly discovered the wonder of the Lord Jesus and His Word, cannot cease to talk about the things that really matter. I don't mean we should never express our feelings, needs and joys, but when "I" is the word used most often, there is a real problem.

The prominence of the personal pronouns "I" and "we" are also evident in much of modern worship. This is symptomatic of the gospel of self. Those who have been touched by the true Gospel will want to speak and sing about the Lord Jesus Christ and He is the theme of their songs, praise and worship. The very fact that people choose one church above the other because they "enjoy the worship" better is a blatant statement that their worship, and therefore their lives, revolve around themselves and not around the Lord. They worship so they can have a great experience and not in order to bless the Lord! Sadly, entire churches are built around the worship "experience" - plainly declaring that they preach the gospel of self.

Many people assume that only believers pray. But unbelievers also pray and, they pray in churches. Their prayers are very much like those of the Pharisee of Luke 18:11-12 who used the pronoun "I" five times in his two sentence prayer! Jesus commented that "he prayed thus with himself". James says that your prayers are not answered because "you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures" (James 4:3). Yes, we have needs and it is right to express those needs before the throne of grace. But when our lives revolve around ourselves, we only see our own wants and not the needs of others, nor the will of our Father. Many Christians have been taught that prayer is how we get God to do what we want. That is not real prayer - it is the prayer of the gospel of self. True prayer helps us discover, and do, what God wants - "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). Jesus Himself prayed "not as I will, but as You will." (Matthew 26:39).

The gospel of self produces people who choose whether, where, and when they go to church based on their own desires and not the will of God. I don't know how many times I have heard "I want a big church" or "I want a church with a youth group", or "I like a church that serves good coffee" or any dozens of other selfish desires. Very seldom do we hear people praying for the Lord to lead them where He wants them or where they are needed. It is always about what people get from the church and not what they can contribute. For that reason big churches get bigger and small churches decline. The very existence of mega churches is evidence of the gospel of self!

I once knew a lady who had a beautiful voice and who, for a while, made a real contribution to the singing in a small church. But she chose to go to another church in the next city because the singing was better at that church. What the small church needed and what the Lord's will was had nothing to do with her decision. She was not serving the Lord, but herself. Sadly, there are millions of people in churches today who choose "their" church based on selfish desires and not on God's will for them. And when that church no longer serves their wants, they will move on to the next one that will serve them better. Such churches and their ministries revolve around the selfish desires of the people and have very little to do with true Christianity.

True church is where people meet to serve, not be served; to give and not to receive. It is where they go to worship, not be worshiped; and where they seek God's will and not their own. True Christianity is where the focus and center is the Lord Jesus Christ, not individuals, programs, entertainment or any other human endeavor. The true gospel, church and Christianity seek to please and glorify the One who bought us at a great price. The counterfeits are pleasing to man and the flesh.

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