

# The Gospel of Self - 3

by Anton Bosch

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*The true gospel requires sacrifice and surrendering our lives to Christ, while the gospel of self emphasizes personal gain and ignores the concept of personal sacrifice.*

**Scripture:** Luke 9:24, John 12:24, Romans 12:1, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 2:20

**Topics:** "Sacrificial Living", "True Gospel"

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## Description

Anton Bosch delves into the dangers of the modern gospel of self, emphasizing the absence of the concept of sacrifice and the focus on personal gain. He contrasts this with Paul's exhortation in Romans 12:1 to present our bodies as living sacrifices, highlighting that true sacrifice involves doing the hard things and giving up what we cherish most. Bosch stresses that only those transformed by the true gospel can make selfless decisions and surrender their lives for Christ, as Jesus taught in Luke 9:24 and John 12:24-25.

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## Transcript

Thus far we have spoken about how the gospel of self is a false gospel and some of the ways that it is manifest. Today I want to look at a few more things that are symptoms of this modern gospel.

The word "sacrifice" has no place in the gospel of self. The sacrifice that Jesus made on the cross is barely mentioned and the concept that Christians should make certain sacrifices is not mentioned. Not only do they not mention personal sacrifice, they regard that notion as heresy. That is not hard to understand when you realize that the gospel of self is all about personal gain which is the opposite of sacrifice.

Yet Paul says that it is only reasonable to present our bodies as living sacrifices in the light of the fact that everything is of Him, through Him and to Him (Romans 11:36-12:1). In other words, because Christ is the center of our lives, being a living sacrifice (being continually offered) is the only rational and logical response. That obviously means that those who are not willing to make sacrifices do not have Christ as the source, the enabler and the purpose of their lives (Romans 11:36). Paul says those who live for themselves and not for Christ are not saved - they live just like the rest of the world (Ephesians 2:3). Those are strong words but Paul is explicit that selfish living is an attribute of the "children of wrath".

Sacrifice means doing things that we do not want to do and giving things that hurt to give. Doing the easy things and giving the things that we can spare are no sacrifice. Sacrifice is doing the hard things and

giving the things that we cherish most. It means doing things when we don't feel like doing them and giving the things we cannot do without. Let me be honest, I know very few Christians who really make any sacrifices to serve the Lord. For most modern Christians going to church when it is perfect beach weather is a sacrifice. That is no sacrifice. Leaving home and family and living in the mountains of China to preach the gospel at the risk of your life is sacrifice. Giving 10% is not sacrifice - giving 100% is sacrifice. There is no provision in the Law for giving half or portion of an animal as sacrifice. The whole animal was laid on the altar just as Jesus was fully crucified on the cross.

When Paul speaks about presenting our bodies as living sacrifices and that that is our "reasonable" service, the word "reasonable" refers to a logical and rational decision. This is not an emotional response but a decision of the will, having taken all the facts into consideration. But that is just where the problem lies - with our decision making. The unregenerate person can only make decisions that are self-centered. It is impossible for him to make self-sacrificing decisions since his mind is just not wired that way. Only the truly born-again believer can make those kind of decisions because his mind has been changed by the power of the Gospel.

Every decision of the self-centered person is flawed; he is just not capable of making godly and righteous decisions. Only those who have been transformed by the true gospel can begin to make right decisions. However, they also need to grow to maturity and constantly put off the fleshly desire to make decisions that are based on personal desires rather than on the will of God.

Jesus was very clear when He said: "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it" (Luke 9:24). These words are repeated five times in the Gospels making them extremely important. To lose our life means to surrender it and to die to it. "Our life" means everything about "self". In order to gain eternal life, we have to give up our lives in this world. Which means giving up everything, especially our desires, goals, ambitions and ego. Yes, I know you think that is rather extreme (yet more evidence of the impact of the gospel of self). But Jesus said: "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life" (John 12:24-25). What does Jesus mean by the word "die" and in what context was He speaking? The context was Jesus speaking about His death and He was saying that His disciples should die to themselves just as He would die on the cross. To die in this context means to lose everything the same way as a corpse owns nothing and has no more personal goals, feelings or desires. That is the only way to eternal life!

Yet those who preach the gospel of self have turned this whole principle on its head and teach that the gospel is the means of "finding yourself". No, the true gospel is not how to discover yourself. It is about losing yourself and discovering Jesus Christ. It is about me dying so that His life can begin to manifest itself through me (Galatians 2:20). It is not about me, it is about Him.

One of the things that plagues the church of the twenty first century is that many have joined churches after believing the gospel of self. The problem is that those who have believed the gospel of self cannot be part of a church. Theologically, they are not part of the church because only those who are born-again are placed (by God) into the church. Practically, many join a church but just do not fit in. This is because those who have trusted the gospel of self are not willing to surrender personal rights for the corporate good. They demand and insist on their rights, and require that everyone run around their eccentricities and moods. A congregation made up of a majority of self-centered people is a terrible place. Everyone wants

to be the center of attention, everyone makes demands and everyone is pulling in a different direction. Only those who have died to self are able to work with others for the corporate good and the glory of God.

Those who are born-again by the Gospel of Christ have surrendered their rights and make no demands exactly because they are dead. Such people do not push their agenda and do not require constant attention. They willingly seek the good of the church over their own and do not hesitate to make whatever sacrifice are necessary to serve others and their Lord. Unfortunately this is not behavior that can be learnt, even though many have tried. It is only the fruit of the true Gospel.

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