

# The Carnal American Church

by Jon Couch

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*The American church has compromised the truth of the gospel and prioritized entertainment and man-pleasing, leading to a carnal and worldly approach to Christianity.*

**Duration:** 25:35

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Galatians 2:14-16

**Topics:** "Carnality"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of staying true to the mission of spreading the truth of God's word. He criticizes the American church for prioritizing entertainment and fun over proclaiming the truth of Christ. The speaker warns against the temptation to please man rather than God, as it leads to compromising the truth. He urges believers to stand in the gap and not be casual or carnal Christians, but to actively engage in sharing the gospel and reaching the lost. The sermon references the book of Galatians and 2 Timothy to support the message.

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## Transcript

I think so many of our issues have come because we haven't been straightforward about the gospel. It's so easy to want to be man-pleasers. It's so easy to want to do what man wants us to do.

And what ends up happening is when we want to do what man wants us to do versus what God wants us to do, we compromise the truth. I want to welcome you to another broadcast of This Day in the Word, the teaching ministry of This Day Ministries. We're so grateful that you've taken time to tune into today's broadcast.

And be sure to check out our website by going to [thisdayministries.org](http://thisdayministries.org). Have you ever asked yourself, what is truth? You know, truth is a powerful thing. The truth of God's Word is something that will truly set you free. And in today's message, we're going to see what the truth is all about.

So now let's go to God's Word and let's see what He has to say. Alright, take your Bible. Turn to Galatians.

Galatians chapter 2. Galatians chapter 2. Looking at three verses, 14, 15, and 16. And as you're turning there, I want to read you an article by a friend of mine that is really dealing with the state of the American church. You know, there's so much that goes on in our culture today, in our churches today, that simply are not God-honoring.

And here, Jim Norman, my good friend, he writes this. And he entitled it, The Carnal American Church. The Carnal American Church.

I think most of the American church is largely a carnal church, Jim writes. If you think not, pick up any Sunday paper and go to the section where churches place their advertisements. You will see large display ads touting these churches as places emphasizing fun and entertainment.

They operate like spiritual amusement parks rather than hospitals for the soul. It's as if their primary goal is to entertain rather than proclaim the truth of Christ. By entertain, I mean these churches are purposely trying to draw people in by giving them what they want from a human perspective.

They are succeeding to the extent that the lukewarm and the carnal can sit comfortably next to one another in the same pews week after week. The lukewarm remain lost, the carnal remain unfilled, and a slave to the world and to their flesh. Their pastors keep offering up meatless sermons that tickle the ears so the lukewarm and the carnal may feel good about themselves.

Jesus becomes a supernatural servant who is available to help them realize their selfish hopes and dreams. The biblical principle of Christian suffering is not only misunderstood in such gatherings, it is frequently condemned. Wow, that's powerful.

That's powerful, not just because it uses great language, not because there's great imagery there. It's powerful because there's truth behind what is written here. We're living in a state in 2011, I believe, that we are in a spiral downward.

If we do not do something quickly, I'm afraid that the spiral we're in, the decay that we're in from a moral, ethical, and spiritual standpoint, the decay that we're in, the spiral we're going down towards, if we do not do something quick, I'm afraid that we might never be able to climb out of the spiral. And so here in Galatians chapter 2, Paul gives some great writing here regarding, again, going back to the core of this text, and this text in Galatians is confronting the Judaizers that say, yes, you must have works. Yes, you must have the Mosaic Law.

Yes, you must have all this tradition and this ritual. And Paul's saying, no, no, no, no, no, you're getting it all wrong. It has nothing to do with that.

It has everything to do with the grace and the blood of Jesus Christ. And so here Paul writes in chapter 2, verse 14 through 16, he says this, But when I, Paul, saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, If you being a Jew live in the manner of the Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews? We who are Jews by nature and not sinners of the Gentiles. Verse 16, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, by faith in Jesus Christ.

Even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law. For the works of the law, no flesh shall be justified. Wow, that is awesome text.

You'll hear it says right here that Paul is telling us. He says this, but when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel. What's that word truth in the Greek mean? Very simply the word truth means this, in reality, in fact, in certainty.

What's the gospel in the Greek? Well, it's simply the good news. That's what the gospel means. It's good news in layman's terms.

It's what will set you free from the bondage of sin. And it's grounded and rooted and anchored and founded on the son, Jesus Christ. You know, there's interesting comments going around all over our culture today about what's right and what's wrong and what's relevant and what's not so relevant and what's absolute and what's not so absolute.

And, you know, Paul addressed this with Timothy talking about being straightforward about the gospel. I think so many of our issues have come because we haven't been straightforward about the gospel. It's so easy to want to be man pleasers.

It's so easy to want to do what man wants us to do. And what ends up happening is when we want to do what man wants us to do versus what God wants us to do, we compromise the truth. Paul told young Timothy here in 2 Timothy 4, 2-4.

Preach the word. Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and teaching.

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires. Because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers and they will turn their ears away from the truth and be turned aside to fables. Listen here, folks.

If ever there was a time that we're living in, it's right now when people are being turned aside from the truth. They're being turned aside from what is really substance. And that's the Bible.

That's the Scripture. That's the gospel of Jesus Christ. And they're being turned aside to what? To fables, to lies, to heresy.

Oh, God, help us. Convict us. Don't allow us to dabble and play around in the kiddie pool of religion.

Give us courage to stand in the gap and declare and defend the truth of Your Word like never before. Oh, I pray that's our prayer. I pray that this is our prayer.

Oh, Lord. Oh, God, help us. Convict us.

Don't allow us to dabble and play around in the kiddie pool of religion. Give us courage to stand in the gap and declare and defend the truth of Your Word like never before in 2011. You know, what people want isn't always what people need.

What my flesh craves isn't what I need. I may need to be confronted. I may need to be rebuked lovingly.

But my flesh doesn't want that. But maybe that's what I need. People in the world, sinners in the world, churchgoers in the world do not need fables.

They do not need Mickey Mouse. They do not need the Easter Bunny. They do not need Santa Claus.

What people need is the Lord. And it's our job to stay on task with the mission. Mike Huckabee says this.

What's often frustrating for pastors is not the enormity of their role, but rather the smallness of it. A pastor may believe he is leading a warship into battle only to discover that the expectation of the church members is for him to captain the love boat and to make sure everyone's having a good time. Are you okay? Everyone doing well? How you doing? How's he doing? How's she doing? Are you getting what you

want? Come to our church and we'll give you this.

Or come to our church and we'll give you that. Or do this and do this and do this and do this and don't do this and do this. We feed all this stuff through the filter.

Why? Because we're man pleasers and we're not God pleasers. Why are we like that? It's because we have not been straightforward about the gospel of Jesus Christ. We must be straightforward about it.

The gospel is very simple. The gospel is so simple. There was sin.

God needed a remedy for sin. It couldn't have just been any remedy, but it had to be something that was spotless, that was blameless, that could be a propitiation, that could take away the sin of the world. And the only thing that would satisfy that debt is by the blood of his only son, Jesus Christ.

You and I are sinners. Nothing we can ever do. We can't work towards it.

Nothing we do will ever bring us out of that bondage of sin. We can only be removed by the bondage of sin by the blood of Jesus Christ. And because of this, we can no longer afford to sit back with the thought that the only thing that God wants of us is to attend a church service once a week.

90% of the world's population, according to statistics, is eternally lost. We cannot afford just to sit back and play church any longer. We cannot afford to sit back and pretend that everything is going well.

We can no longer afford to sit back and just go through the motions and be casual Christians and be carnal Christians. We cannot do it. We must stand in the gap and we must do it today.

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I can no longer afford to be a carnal pastor. We have people that are in this room today and also listening that can no longer afford to be carnal deacons. We have people that are in this room today and that are listening as well that can no longer afford to be carnal Bible fellowship teachers.

We have people listening and people in this room today that can no longer afford to be carnal Christians. We cannot be worldly. We cannot be of the flesh and then also be sold out to Christ.

It's impossible. We're either for Christ or we're against Him. It's one or the other.

We cannot live life hanging on to God with one hand and the other hand in the world. We must make a choice today. We must choose this day.

Choose this day whom you will serve, Joshua 24, 15 says. Choose this day whom you will serve, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. We must draw a line in the sand and say enough is enough.

We must take a stand. We are going down the tubes quickly as an American nation because we've abandoned God. We've thrown Him out of every institution.

We're trying to take Him off our coinage, off our currency. You can't do the Pledge of Allegiance to some people because it says under God. We're doing all this stuff to kick Him out of our nation and we're going

to pay the price if we're not careful.

The mission has been defined. The task is great. The workers are few, but for those who will lay it on the line and get out of the country club business and get into the Jesus business, you will have peace that surpasses all human understanding in store for you.

It's not going to be easy. Why? Because being straightforward about the gospel of Jesus Christ, as Paul was right here, he was being straightforward. He confronted Peter.

He said, look, you're actually drawing people away by what you're doing. You're actually drawing people away. You're confusing them.

We cannot do that any longer. We need to lay it out there and say this is the gospel. This is what the gospel does.

It will truly set you free. It will release you from bondage. It will give you a new heart, a new hope, a new future.

But you must deny self, take up the cross and follow Him. It's all or nothing. And that's something that we don't want to hear, do we? Our American culture wants to hear, what can I add on to my life that doesn't make me uncomfortable? What can I add on to my life that doesn't stretch me? What can I add on to my life that doesn't require any faith? We want the easy road, don't we? Many people in church today in 2011, they went microwave Christianity.

Come on, God. Chop, chop, chop. Get it done.

Get it done, God. I got places to go and people to see. I'm going to give you an hour a week, 52 hours a year.

That's enough. No, that's not enough. You know why? Because the Bible says we must give our all to Christ.

The Bible says that it is for Him or against Him. Which one are you today? Are you being straightforward about the truth of the gospel? I pray that you are. I pray that I am.

I'm just as convicted about it. I'm just as convicted about this as anyone. I need to be more straightforward about the gospel.

Oh, does that mean that we're not loving? Of course it doesn't. Does it mean that we'll beat everybody over the head with the Bible? Of course it doesn't. But we in churches need to get in the game.

We can no longer afford to sit back and do nothing. We have to get in the game. Do our work save us? Of course they don't.

But we must take action. We're commanded as we are going. It's an assumptive there in the Great Commission.

The Great Commission, we call it the Great Commission, but can we be just very honest about something? It's really not the Great Commission, is it? And most of our minds and most of the churches really should be called the Great Suggestion. Well, if you get around to it, go ahead and do that. Well, if it

doesn't really bother you, go ahead and do that.

Yeah, don't worry about it. Just kind of live your life like you want to and dabble in the sin that you want to. And that's really OK.

You don't have to tell people about Jesus. He was just teasing when he said that. Bologna, Bologna, Bologna.

He's the way. He's the truth. He's the light.

There's no other name by which we can be saved as 4.12 says, but by the name of Jesus Christ. He's the name of all names. He's the King of Kings.

He's the Lord of Lords. And the tomb is empty. There's power in the blood of Jesus if we just submit to his authority.

And so Paul goes on to say here in verse 16, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. What's this mean here? That we're knowing means seeing or understanding justify. I love this.

It means to render, to declare, to pronounce one, to be just and righteous. Works that which one undertakes to do, to enterprise, undertaking. And then here's the word faith.

And we'll put it all together. Faith in the Greek means this. The conviction that God exists and is the creator and the ruler of all things, the provider and the bestower of eternal salvation through Jesus Christ.

See, we've got to understand that when we put this all together, knowing or seeing or understanding that a man is not rendered, he's not declared, he's not pronounced or declared to be righteous by the works or that which one undertakes or does, but by the conviction that God exists and is the creator of all things, the provider and the bestower of eternal salvation through Christ. Did you catch all that? Wow. See, I can't work my way into heaven.

I can work all I want. I can try to be the best pastor I want to be. You can try to be the best Christian you can possibly be.

And the reality is we can go to hell if we truly have not accepted Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior. Why? Because it says it right there. It's not about working.

It's through faith in Jesus Christ. Understand this, that that word faith, when it's used here in Scripture, is not one of those that says, oh, yeah, I believe in the big man upstairs. Yeah, I believe in mother nature.

Yeah, I believe in that God thing. Yeah, I understand that. I believe in that.

I believe there's some cosmic force up there. No, faith and belief in Scripture is always tied to a trusting belief. I trust it.

I mean, I understand it. I mean, I get it, but I trust it. I mean, I understand it.

I mean, I understand all the details about it, but I truly put all that I am, all that I have on Him and say, I trust you to carry me through. I trust you to do what's best for me and what's best for your glory, God. That's hard to do, isn't it? Why is that hard to do? Well, because genuine faith that's not by works means

that we're truly all in.

Genuine faith is where we're truly out in that deep end of the pool. We have nothing to cling to. No bank accounts, no houses, no cars, no big church buildings, no relationships.

We just have Jesus Christ, God the Father, to hang on to, and we simply put everything in His hands. And when you do that, I promise you this, when you genuinely do that, I promise you, you will have peace that surpasses all human understanding, even in the midst of a storm. Ephesians 2.8 says this, and it gives backup to what I'm saying here.

For by grace you have been saved through faith and not that of yourselves. It is the gift of God. What is grace again? Grace is God's redemption at Christ's expense, right? God redeemed us, but there was a cost.

God redeemed us and there was a sacrifice. God redeemed us and it cost Him His only Son. That He literally, as Scripture says, turned His back on His Son.

Can you imagine that you gave your only Son for sinful people? That's what God did. That's what God did. He willingly gave His only Son so that you could have life abundantly and free.

Not a life of health, wealth and prosperity. God did not send His only Son. God did not sacrifice His only Son.

God did not allow His only Son to be brutally beaten and executed on a Roman cross so that you and I could pursue the American dream. That's not why He did this. He did it because He loved us.

And He did it so that we would be Christ followers of Him. That we would be sold out. That we would be genuine soldiers that are dedicated.

So that we would be bond servants, willing slaves, doulos in the Greek. That we would literally say, God, it's Your game. It's Yours, God.

You lead. I'll follow. We have so many of us so many times think we're leading, don't we? Come on, God.

Let's go over here. Come on, God. We're going this way today.

God, I got some plans right over here. Come over and bless this. Come over and bless this.

Do some hocus pocus on it. Then go back in your cage, God. Oh, we really don't say that, but don't we treat Him like that? Hey, God, this is what I want to do in life.

These are my hopes and my dreams and where I want to go. Now, You bless what I want to do. This isn't how this works.

He's in charge. He's the authority. He's the master.

He's the ruler. The only way to the Father is through Him. The only way to the Father is through Jesus Christ.

And when we come through Jesus Christ, we don't have to work our way there. There's nothing we can ever do. It's simply by accepting the free gift, the grace that was shed on Calvary.

The grace that was poured out there. The grace that came through as His Son hung there on that cruel Roman cross and said, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do, even though when I sin, I know exactly what I'm doing. That's grace.

Amazing grace. How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now I've been found and rescued.

Was blind, but now I see. That's only by the blood of Jesus the Christ. But you must give your life to Him.

See, there's a cost to following Christ. In our carnal American church, we don't teach that, do we? We just say, hey, just come in, give us some money, help us build a big building. We'll all pat each other on the back and talk.

Everything's great. That's not how this works. We are sinners, all of us.

Myself, at the top of the list. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. But as He redeems us, He humbles us.

We are low because we decrease as He increases, John 3, 30. And because of that, we give our all to Him, no matter what He asks of us. So as I close here this morning, here's a perfect example of someone who has it all, yet is missing it all at the same time.

Warren Buffett, investor and also someone who gives millions upon billions of dollars away, made this comment on one reason he's so enthusiastic about his multi-billion dollar charitable donations. And I quote, Warren Buffett says this, There is more than one way to get to heaven, but this sure is a great way. Oh Lord, help us.

Don't allow us to believe in this. Don't allow us to buy into this. There's only one way to the Father, John 14, 6. Jesus said, I am the way, I am the truth, and I am the life, and there's no way, no way to come to the Father but through me, Jesus says.

It's not about giving away money. Giving away money is a great thing. Helping people is a great thing, but it will never save you.

There's only one way to the Father. It's not Muhammad. It's not Buddha.

It's not anything else out there. It's Jesus Christ. That's the only way that you can come to the Father.

And we can give all the money away we want and be eternally lost. Do you know Christ today? I pray that you do. I pray that we know here from this text that we need to be straightforward about the Gospel.

That our works don't save, but it's only by the blood of Jesus Christ. Let's pray. This day ministries.org or feel free to contact us at info at the state ministries.org. All of these messages are recorded at Manhattan Baptist Church in Tampa, Florida.

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Thanks again for tuning in today. We're grateful for your prayers. We're grateful for your listening.

And we're grateful for your financial support. Let's all go out intentionally this day to make a difference for Jesus Christ.

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