

# What's Wrong With the Gospel? Part 1

by Keith Green

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*The gospel being preached today is often watered down and lacks the power to transform lives, leading to a lack of spiritual growth and a failure to reach the lost.*

**Duration:** 59:32

**Scripture:** Psalm 139:23-24, Matthew 11:28, Mark 8:34-35, Romans 3:20, Romans 6:23, Galatians 3:24, Hebrews 10:31, James 2:10

**Topics:** "The Gospel", "Conviction Of Sin"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the importance of not diluting the gospel message, emphasizing the need to address the missing parts in modern preaching. It highlights the significance of the blood of Jesus, the cross, the threat of hell, and the law of God in convicting sinners. The speaker challenges the trend of avoiding tough topics like sin, hell, and the law, urging a return to the full counsel of God's Word.

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## Transcript

We're going to study tonight part one of what's wrong with the gospel and it's called section one the missing parts. You know we really had trouble titling it, we couldn't call it part one the missing parts and part two the added parts, it just had too many parts in the title. So, what this sermon or teaching or for those of you watching on video counseling instructions is four years of my life preaching the same message night after night, adding a little bit more, refining a little bit more in concert.

It burned on my heart and the thing that burned on my heart is when I got saved I saw the world lost and I saw the church excited to win the world that was lost for the most part, especially new Christians, they're always excited to win others. And I saw this big green canyon between the two. I saw the church over here with brand new baby Christians going, wow, yippee, we want to get people saved.

And I saw the world over here going, you know, Christian, P.U., you know. And never the twain shall meet, you know. And I'd leave my friends to the Lord and when I led my friends to the Lord I led them to the Lord the way it was taught me that I should lead them to the Lord, by either example or Bible study.

When I got saved I went to seven Bible studies a week, well six plus church. I wanted to get as much of the gospel, it didn't matter good, wrong, bad, fundamentalist, charismatic, it didn't matter. I just wanted to feed on the word of God.

I was saved. I mean, damn. It didn't happen overnight.

It took me two years, in fact, to really get saved. And I don't, you know, I prayed to Jesus in seventy-three but I put all kinds of conditions on it and in seventy-five I unconditionally surrendered to Jesus. That'll be seven years this spring, being 1982 right now.

And I went to Bible study after Bible study and I started adopting, of course, I mean I was like a sponge. You ever seen a dry sponge refuse liquid? You know, I was, you know, whatever was poured into me, yeah, you know. And I just received, you know, I went to Bible studies by pastors and Bible studies by Christians that were just Christians three or four years.

Bible studies by rebels, Bible studies by boring people, it didn't matter. If I could go to one every night, it didn't matter who was putting it on. I wasn't particular.

I just wanted to hear the word of God preached. I was naive, I was ignorant, a little stupid, foolish would be a better word. And I sucked in as much as I could, like a plant.

Well, needless to say, I learned a lot of garbage. And when I learned this garbage, of course, being influenceable, we'll pass that word away, being easily influenced, I started preaching and disseminating the knowledge that I gathered, just like anybody else. Whatever goes in the air comes out the mouth, as long as it gets in the heart somewhere.

And God blessed my foolishness, just like he does every new Christian. People got saved left and right. But the problem was, I didn't know how to keep them saved, nor really authentically get them saved.

So many, many, many of them fell away. It was like planting, it was like somebody giving you a big bag of styrofoam potting soil. Looks like it, you know, and it was real dark and rich.

Put it in, wow, this is great, it's light, you know, you put the water in, it just sucks it right up. Put your plant in it, it looks great for a couple of days. All of a sudden it starts drooping, you know, what's the matter? You put plant food in and the plant kind of sticks up for a while, but there's nothing to hold the plant food.

It goes right up the hole in the bottom of the planter. I had the wrong ingredients. And then, of course, like every new Christian, I got bitter.

I started going, why isn't this working? Why isn't this working? And I started studying the Bible. Dangerous thing to do. Don't ever study the Bible unless you want to have your thoughts and minds changed about the truth.

Dangerous to do. If you just want to go along with the status quo and what everybody else is saying about the gospel and Jesus, just listen to what everybody else says, listen to teaching tapes. You know, today we've got a new scripture.

When you and a teaching tape is gathered, I will be there in the midst of you. Our fellowship now is with a cassette player and a television set. But just, you know, listen to everything, let it go in, and you will be what I call a spiritual schizophrenic.

You will lead people to the Lord, and you really will with little seeds of truth, because remember, anything that anybody says about Jesus in the Bible, even use those words, there's a little bit of truth in this and a little bit of truth in that. People swallow it. Some effect happens.

They go through the right motions. But it doesn't take. It doesn't take.

It doesn't take root. It doesn't grow. So I got bitter, and I started reading the Bible, and I found, wait a minute, they didn't talk about this part.

In fact, they skipped from there to there. Why did they leave out? Wow, that's heavy. You know? And so then I started blaming the church.

Well, don't ever blame the church. I did that for a few years and got in a lot of trouble with God. You can't blame the church.

The church is a victim. And just like any victim, just like Patty Hearst when she was kidnapped, when a victim is a victim long enough, they start identifying with the person victimizing them. They start disseminating the same garbage that they start taking in.

So the church becomes a victim of a lack of truthful knowledge being presented as a whole, and then it starts propagating it. Remember what I said the other night, that whoever you hang out with, you start talking and acting like them. Well, to make a long story short so we can get to the meat of what I have to say, for three or four years I did concerts and I preached and I shared what was wrong with the church and what was right about the truth and how my heart was struggling with the lack of fruit that I was seeing in evangelism and in the church.

And little by little, God softened my heart. Little by little, he took the bitterness out and he started putting discernment and gentleness in. Not that I've become the gentle giant that I want to be as a Christian, but I'm not bitter anymore.

I really am not. I am really compassionate about the state of the church. And I really see that we need to gently speak the truth in love, but still speak the truth, not ignore it, not put it off because it's going to hurt somebody, but try like a doctor who has to hurt you to operate on you, put as much anesthetic called love as he can before he has to do the deep cutting.

And recovery will hurt too. And the doctor prescribes pain pills for that too. He's a good doctor.

Not too much, not too long, so you don't get addicted to those things, but enough to keep the pain from really affecting the way you live. And so that's what we need to do tonight. Now, before you can learn what's right, you have to unlearn what's wrong.

Before you can fill a glass full of sparkling clean water, you need to wash the glass out. And if there's a little residue of Kool-Aid, you've got to wash the glass, pour it out. You can't pour clean water into a little bit.

You ever seen that? You drink hot chocolate and you get up in the morning and there's this scum on the bottom. You've got to wash it. There's scum in our hearts.

There's residue of old, wrong teachings that have stayed in there. Never got washed completely clean, some of us. And you've got to be emptied before you can be filled.

And now what I want to say before we start is that some of these things are going to be sensationally impressive to you. In other words, they're going to shock you. Some of these things are going to be, what? No one ever told me that before.

You're going to have two reactions. You're either going to think, this is terrible and I don't want to listen to this anymore. Or you're going to go, this is the greatest teaching I ever heard.

Wow, you know, Keith Green's really a great Bible teacher. Don't do either of the two, please. Just say the word of God is true.

Let it change your mind. Let it change your heart. Let it change your life.

And then you will change lives in return for what God will do in you. Now what we're going to do, it's kind of an experiment in teaching for me. I've got this whole teaching written out in track form.

We printed it in April of 81 in our newsletter. And we hope to, anybody seeing the tape, we're going to send a packet of these so you can read along with me. I'm going to read a paragraph or two or even a whole section.

Just read it verbatim. And I'm going to stop and expand a little bit and tell of my experiences that led to me writing such things. I might even say, well, if I was to write this again today, I wouldn't be as harsh.

Or I wouldn't be as black and white. Because I've learned more since, you know, almost a year has gone by since I wrote this. And if you don't learn more in a year about something you wrote a year ago, then you're not learning or growing in the Lord at all.

Even Charles Finney, one of my favorite Bible teachers, who's dead but still alive through his writings, through the Lord, even he said in his book of theology, which is this thick, he says, if anybody can show me where I'm wrong, or if anybody can show me some new light, I'll change like that because I'm not married to my doctrines. I'm not married to my theology. I'm married to the truth, Jesus Christ.

If you can clear off my window and show me that I have a misconception about something I believe, I'm not going to hold on to that. I want to hold on to God. That goes for me, too.

That's why the negative and corrective mail we receive here is very important to me. I mean, sure it hurts. Sure, ooh, ow, ooh.

You know, people go, ooh. But I read it and I take it to heart and I pray about it. And sometimes it changes my mind very profoundly.

That's what the body of Christ is all about. When this elbow itches, this hand must scratch it. This hand can't scratch this elbow, you know? Can't do it.

It needs this hand. That's why God says, were two or more gathered, I'll be there. One Christian alone cannot grow straight and narrow.

He cannot grow perfectly straight in the Lord. And the more that are following God with their whole hearts, the better, because they all check and balance each other. No one man has a corner on the market of truth.

Not Billy Graham, not Oral Roberts, not last days, not anybody has a corner. God enlightens a certain group of people or a certain denomination or a certain preacher about one particular truth, and then from that one man will hammer away at that truth so the whole church gets it. And then he'll lead them to something else, and he'll lead this guy in the church to teach on love, and this guy to teach on judgment.

And you'll find that sometimes you'll find that some of the teachers will sound like somebody playing a one-string fiddle, but that's the string God wants him to pluck. In his own life, he's not out of balance necessarily, but in his preaching, he might just be playing one chapter of the Bible over and over again. This is the missing link.

This is the missing part. So tonight we're going to go over my one string that I played for four years that I'm not playing now, but it's important. If you're going to work with me in any concerts or crusades, that you understand what has led me to where I'm at now so that when I preach the gospel in a concert or a crusade, that you will know what formed my opinions or my positions about what needs to be preached.

Otherwise, if you're going to counsel, you will not be able to back up what I'm saying. And it's important if we're going to work together, if God has led me into your city or led me into your area to preach, that you can back up at least what God is leading me to say. And if you don't believe that he is leading you to come to your town, then you shouldn't be helping us, and that's okay too.

We're not going to send you a nasty letter if you don't want to. Any time during these counseling Bible studies or crusade meetings or anything, you want to pull out of the program, that's fine. And I won't blame you if you can't trust with your heart and follow the program that God is leading us, that we believe God is leading us to preach and promote during these crusades.

Okay. This is an introduction. You have to open it up.

Look for the big white I. That means beginning. I. I know that the title of this article probably raised some worried eyebrows. What's wrong with the gospel? Okay.

At first glance, some might say to themselves, oh no, Keith has gone too far this time. But let me quickly put those possible reactions to rest to the question, what's wrong with the gospel? I can easily answer absolutely nothing. Okay.

Now the reason I wrote that was because by the time I wrote this article, I'd already gotten a reputation for being somewhat of a troublemaker. We had just finished printing the first three installments of the Catholic Chronicles and had gotten a lot of negative mail, about 20%. One out of five letters was negative back then.

And the Lord had been speaking to me through the last concert tour in October of 80 to put down my message on paper so that I didn't have to preach it anymore, so that I could go on to other things, so that I could go on to my main calling in life, and that's leading sinners to the throne of God. My main calling is for evangelism. I don't feel that.

I know that. I still have more of a burden for the church than for the world. I still to this day want to shake the church up and go, don't you see what you're doing? Because I see the way to win the world is to make the church holy.

Because as Leonard Ravenhill says, you never have to advertise a fire. When there's a big fire, everybody's driving to see it. You don't have to say in the paper, we'll come and see our fire tomorrow night.

Our church will burn down for Christ. You don't need to do that. So my burden is still to see the church on fire, but God's calling me to preach for the lost.

And I guess the main message for me from God is that he wants me to, by example, do what's right instead of trying to wring the neck of the church. And you won't find a lot of this preaching in my concert crusades, although I will address somewhat the state of some Christians who are not really Christians. My main thrust in the crusades is dealing with how to give your life to Christ and how to follow him and how to turn from sin to a life of holiness and serving Jesus.

So I wrote this as an apology before I start for those that might think that I'm just getting off on a tangent. I can easily answer absolutely nothing wrong with the gospel. That is, of course, if you're talking about the gospel of the Bible, the very message that Jesus preached and what the apostles Peter, Paul, John, and the others devoted their very lives and deaths to.

Now, by the way, there's a lot of scripture, scriptural references in these. We're not going to go into, we'd be here for hours if we looked up every reference, but if you have the time to study this and look up at least the references given in the main text and maybe some of the ones down on the bottom in the footnotes, it would be helpful for you to see the biblical backing of this message, the biblical thrust of this message. I didn't just sit down and try to think up something that would be good to raise the dust of the church.

This is years of study and prayer and being led to preach. So I would, as you go back over your notes or go back over your studies, I'd like you to look up these scriptures, at least the ones in the main text. Okay.

Second paragraph. No, there's nothing at all wrong with this message from heaven. But what about the stuff that's being preached today? Is it truly gospel preaching? Are the evangelists that preach in churches and arenas on radio and television, are they preaching what Jesus called the gospel? What about the mountains of modern gospel literature? You know, the tracts, pamphlets, comic books, newspapers, etc.

Do they really contain the same message, the whole message about the salvation that Jesus offered? How are we answering the awesome question that people are still asking the church as they asked on the day of Pentecost? Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved? People are still asking that. They really are. They might not be asking it outwardly of Christians because Christians embarrass them.

The truth embarrasses people. Have you ever noticed how hard it is for you and your dad or you and your mom to hug? You know, to really give them a big hug. You know how there's kind of like a wall between you? That's not true in some cases, but in a lot of cases it's embarrassing.

It's usually with one parent. Your mom usually who's kissed you and hugged you a lot while you were growing up you might not have had as much trouble with, but your dad, you know, who might have been cold and reserved and everything, you know, when you're a grown-up, when you're 20 or 25, it's kind of hard to hug him, you know, because it's just not usual. Well, that's the way that the world looks at Christians.

We're embarrassing. We're all gushy. We're all vibrant.

We're all alive. We're supposed to be anyway. And they look at us and we say, hey, do you know where you're going when you die? Or, you know, do you know Jesus loves you? Or do you know all these kind of corny ways of witnessing that people use? And they just, you know, it's like kind of scratching your fingers on the blackboard, you know.

It kind of rubs people definitely the wrong way. They're not used to people dealing with things like eternity and death and hell and golly, you know. So people are asking that question, what do I do to be saved from this mess of life? What do I do to get out of this death trap called life on earth? That's what I ask myself, and that's what every one of you who are sitting here tonight ask yourself or you wouldn't be a Christian.

Now, if you're a Christian because somebody else talked you into it, you're probably not a Christian. Now, it doesn't mean that somebody else couldn't have instilled the question into you or made you think about it. But if you're a Christian because mommy and daddy let you go down the aisle when you were five years old and that's your experience with Christianity, then you haven't had your own Waterloo face-to-face with God yet.

And you need to have it. And I'm not going to give an alt-call. We'll get to that next meeting, you know.

But what I'm dealing with here is the difference between the gospel of the Bible and the gospel that is being preached today. There is a difference. If you don't think there's a difference, a big difference, a Grand Canyon as I called it before, between the gospel of the Bible and the modern gospel being preached today, then why aren't we having the results that the early gospel had? I was just meeting with my brother Leonard tonight, Leonard Ravenhill.

He says the only proof of apostolic succession is apostolic success. You know, a lot of churches claim that they're direct descendants of the apostles. He says, well, if they have apostolic succession, then they're going to have to have apostolic success.

All it is is physical succession. It isn't spiritual. That's a little deep.

Okay, is our gospel the gospel? I believe with all my heart that Jesus would be ashamed of most of the gospel messages and sermons that are being preached today, mainly because they lack almost every major point he himself preached on. How dare we try to change the gospel? We remove most of its vital parts and replace them with artificial limbs of our own. Vital parts in medical terms is organs.

Your vital parts is your heart, your lungs, your kidneys, your liver. Isn't Jesus the master evangelist? Shouldn't we judge our evangelism by his example? Was his message anything like what we're hearing today? It is my intention to try and briefly cover in this section each of the major parts of the gospel that have been surgically removed in most of today's preaching, and in section two, we will go over each of the new additions that have become a very part of our modern gospel. Okay? About Jesus being the master evangelist, many people read the Bible with different glasses on.

Okay? They call it, you know, you've heard that he looks at the world through rose-colored glasses, and everything is groovy, you know? Or, you know, he's a pessimist. He looks at the world through dark glasses. Well, what's called our mindset, or our grid, is the glasses we look through.

And it colors everything we see. If we have a theological bent this way, then every scripture we'll look at through those glasses. If we have a theological bent this way, we'll look at through that.

If you are into grace, you know, you're into, well, it's okay, we can do anything we want to, and Jesus loves us anyway, then you'll see through your glasses, and all the scriptures that don't say that will kind of just disappear. And all the ones that say what you like to hear will be there. And if you're a law freak, you know, well, you've got to work for Christ.

You've got to do everything right, or God's going to come after you with a club. Then all the scriptures that are heavy are going to just jump out of the page at you. Wow! And the other ones about grace, oh, that's cool too.

So what we've got to do is take off our glasses tonight. We've got to take off our grid. Me too.

And look at the gospel. Look at the Bible as a whole. What is God's mindset? What is his attitude? Now, isn't Jesus the master evangelist? What I'm saying is, Billy Graham isn't the master evangelist.

Oral Roberts isn't the master evangelist. Keith Green isn't the master evangelist. Jesus Christ is the master of everything.

He's the master healer. If we want to find out how to heal, we'd better look and find out what his attitude was toward healing. Toward the sick.

Toward restoring people's health. Toward demons or whatever. If we want to find out how to deal with sin, then we've got to look at his attitude toward sin.

Not our pastor's attitude. Not last day's attitude. But Jesus Christ's attitude toward sin.

What was his attitude? That should definitely be our attitude. We should try to have an attitude like him. And so, instead of judging Jesus' word by what the pastor says, we need to judge what the pastor says by what the Bible says.

We need to look at last day's literature. We need to look at our bulletin from church. We need to look at streams in the desert.

Or squirts in the wilderness. Through what the Bible says. Couldn't help it.

Okay. To remove parts of the gospel. The blood of Jesus.

It's a fact that the very word blood scares people. Now, I remember when I was a new Christian, I was brought up in a religion that was what's called metaphysical religion. I was brought up in a religion called Christian science.

It didn't believe that Jesus' physical death had anything to do with salvation. It didn't believe that the devil was real, or that sin was real, or that sickness was real, or that death was real. In fact, every time you'd go to church, you just disappeared.

You weren't there. And, you know, I was a vegetarian for three years. And it wasn't for health reasons.

I thought it was morally wrong to kill and eat animals. And when I became a Christian, well, really the year before I got saved, when I was looking into Jesus, I found out he ate lamb on the Passover. I said, hallelujah.

I went out and had a barbecued pork sandwich. I said, hey, it's my master. And at that time, Jesus wasn't my Lord and Savior yet, a year before I got saved.

But I called him my master. I was into Eastern religions. And I was into gurus.

And I said, well, if all the Eastern religions, everybody in every Eastern religion says that Jesus is one of the gurus. They do. The Hindus, you know, say he was an incarnation of Krishna.

The Buddhists say he was a Buddha. All the cults, every one of the cults, uses parts of the Bible and teachings of Jesus that he's one of the ascended masters. Well, I kind of put like a, you know what acetate is, a kind of clear plastic where you've got building plans and you've got overlays, they call them.

You know, you've got the walls, and then they put the ceiling on, they put the coloring, or it's like a, you know, a four-color separation. Well, I put all the world's, I put all the world's religions down in my mind as an overlay. Right? Hinduism, they said, you know, that Krishna was cool and Buddha was kind of cool.

Even the Mohammedans said Jesus was a prophet. Even the Jews said he was a nice rabbi. They didn't call him a demented liar.

So I put all the world religions down and it all pointed to Jesus. Every single one overlapped at him. You know, the Buddhists didn't say that Mohammed was cool.

The Christians didn't say that Buddha was cool, but they all said Jesus was one of the ways to God. And then I figured, well, what did Jesus say? He says, I'm the only way. You know, they all said, he's one of the ways.

He says, that's right, but I'm the only way. They're none of the ways. So when I put all these things down, yeah.

When I put all these overlays down, it all pointed to Jesus. So I said, well, you know, Todd, one of my best friends at the time, he was following Krishna. I said, well, and he was following Krishna through a guy named Yogananda, who was a modern-day guru, to lead him to Krishna, you know, or Allah, whatever.

And I said, well, you know, I don't feel comfortable with that because Jesus said that he was the only way and Yogananda said he was one of the ways, so why don't I just go with the best bet? You know, go with the winner, right? So I made Jesus my guru. I did. I said that Jesus Christ was my guru.

When I put the cross down, I said, Jesus, you know, all the ascended masters in Eastern, you know, grasshopper, you know, they're all pointing to you and you point to only you, you know. They're all pointing to you and you're going me, you know. So I said, all right, I'll buy it.

You're my guru. So at that time, I was coming out of a Christless, bloodless, crossless religion called Christian Science into Eastern religions, which, you know, was kind of out there in outer space. And I was a vegetarian and I wore a woven cloth belt and, you know, rubber thongs and man-made, you know, leather, the man-made leather, the vinyl stuff, and I had vinyl coats.

And, you know, I just, man, if people made me vegetable soup, I asked them if they used beef broth or vegetable broth, you know. If you couldn't have Mexican food that was cooked in lard, it had to be cooked in Crisco or vegetable shortening. I mean, I was pure, you know, pimples and all.

And so when I got saved, right out of vegetarian, Eastern Christian Scientism, somebody started preaching about the blood of Christ in my hair, you know, and I kind of stood up, you know. Blood! All right, I've got to fix this again. Blood! Are you kidding? Blood, ew! Every time they said it, it gave me the willies.

It's out of Dracula, you know. Blood, ew, ew, you know. And so I understand.

We live in a bloodless society. You know, you go for Colonel Sanders, you don't see the chicken running around without his head when they cut his head off. You know, we had a cow out here on the thing and he died on us and we took a machete and had to cut him up and serve him for dinner, you know.

And some of the girls didn't want to eat it and I understood why. We pulled his skin off and everything. This is, you know, if you have to leave the room, it's okay.

But it was the same kind of meat that we got in the market but it wasn't with a nice little package with all the blood drained off, all the eyeballs taken out, you know. It was just pre-packaged. Like, you know, they asked these kids in Oregon where milk came from and they said, the store.

Everything in our life is so pre-packaged, including the gospel. And today, we've got a bloodless Jesus. A nice pre-packaged, colorful carton, you know, buy now! Christianity.

And so, when you talk about the blood, which the Bible does over and over and over and over again, people get their willies. Even Christians, because they're not used to hearing about the blood. The pastors usually nicely pass over the scriptures on the blood because it's not as civilized anymore.

And they say it's outdated because the only reason Paul talks so much about the blood is because the Jews were into the blood sacrifice and so they had to keep relating Jesus to the Passover lamb. But I don't agree. Without the shedding of blood, there's no remission of sin.

There must be a blood sacrifice. There must be a blood atonement. It's the law and wisdom of God.

And unless we present Jesus as that Passover lamb of the Old Testament, unless we realize the Old Testament is necessary for the New Testament to come. The type of Christ in the law of Moses is so important. We don't need to preach the law of Moses that much.

We don't need to preach and teach before in a gospel meeting all about Leviticus and start memorizing Leviticus, you know. But we need to at least present the fact that there needs to be required by the law of God a shedding of blood. Jesus did it so you don't have to shed blood.

You don't have to shed animal blood anymore. Isn't that beautiful? You don't have to take your cocker spaniel or your pet pony or something down to the priest and have him slit his throat. Jesus shed the blood but we need to continue to lift that shed blood up as the remission for sin.

Let's read on. It's a fact that the very word blood scares people. It's also a fact that the blood of Christ scares the devil because it is the only cleansing agent for a sin-sick soul.

You know what a cleansing agent is? Bonami, you know. It'll scrub your soul. You better believe it.

Can you imagine what the preaching and writings of Paul would have been like if he had been as squeamish in proclaiming the magnificent power and beauty of the blood of Jesus as our generation of preachers are? What we have now is a bloodless gospel. Today people are afraid to think and preachers are afraid to make them. The whole concept of Jesus being the Passover lamb of the Old Testament has been lost.

Quote, it takes too much time and thought to explain, you will hear some say. Quote, we need to simplify the gospel so that we can reach the masses. Oh, what logic.

Remove the blood from the preaching of the gospel and you remove the power to conquer the devil for the souls of men. You better believe that. I'm not saying you have to stand up and say the blood this and the blood that.

You just have to explain the concept that without the shedding of blood according to the law of Moses which Jesus came to fulfill and you better believe it. He didn't come to abolish the law and he didn't come to say you don't need that. He says, that's God's wisdom and I'm going to fulfill it.

I'm the lamb. What did John the Baptist say when Jesus showed up at the Jordan River to be baptized? Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. He lifted Jesus up as what? As the Messiah? As the Savior? No, the Lamb.

Quiet, docile, sad to be butchered and slaughtered and bled for you and me. And it wasn't the physical death so much but the offering of his soul to God. Sure he physically died.

Sure he was mutilated and beaten but that wasn't the greatest pain. He offered his soul it says in Isaiah 53 as a perpetuation which means taking away the curse as an offering to God so that God's anger could be turned from each and every one of us and you and I both know that God has every right to be angry with you and me for hurting him and for turning away from ripping our lives off. We have stolen our lives from God.

They belonged to him from the day we were born and we grew up and we learned the ways of the world do your own thing if it feels good do it watch out for number one and all that other secular garbage and we ripped our lives away from the Savior. He died before we were born. He already had it all taken care of before you and I walked on the earth almost 2,000 years ago he had taken care of it.

You just needed to find out about it believe it have faith in it and walk in it and you're saved. Okay, the cross of Jesus also is a missing part of the gospel. Paul said, I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Hallelujah. I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. Why not just Jesus Christ? Why not? Because Jesus Christ's death.

Why did Jesus come to the earth? To die. He didn't come to live he came to die. Anybody can live but not everybody can die for the sins of the whole world and then raise in conquering death.

That was his whole purpose for coming. The Reverend Moon has the blasphemy to say that he missed his calling by dying that he should have gotten married and set up a celestial kingdom like he's doing on his learjet. What blasphemy.

Jesus came specifically to die. And he told his disciples over and over again I'm going to die and be raised in the third day. I'm going to die and be raised in the third day.

I'm going to die and be raised in the third day. And what was the saddest day of Jesus' life? The day that we all say hallelujah for he is risen. The resurrection morning.

He told all these dentists he was going to raise in the third day and nobody was there to meet him when he came out of the tomb. Not one. And he told them blank, point blank literally word for word I'm going to raise in the third day.

Now what is the cross of Christ? What does it mean Jesus Christ and him crucified? Let's go on. Nowadays it isn't Jesus Christ and him crucified it's Jesus Christ and what he can do for you. You cannot have more exact opposites than the Bible's Christ-centered gospel and our modern cross-less me-centered gospel.

Today if anyone preaches self-denial as a condition of discipleship you can hear the comments afterward old-fashioned harsh legalistic I dare say that our Lord would have as much trouble finding acceptance among our preachers as he had among the religious leaders of his own day. When Jesus preached the cross when he said you must take up your cross and follow me he was talking about denying your self-seekingness denying looking to yourself to its needs to its wants to its lusts to its desires to its ambitions to its plans to its future to its past to its present and look to him. Let's read what A.W. Tozer said about the cross.

The cross is the most revolutionary thing ever to appear among men. The cross of Roman times knew no compromise it never made concessions it won all its arguments by killing its opponent and silencing him for good. This is the Roman cross.

It spared not Christ but slew him the same as the rest that's including thieves and murderers. He was alive when they hung him on that cross and completely dead when they took him off of it. That was the cross the first time it appeared in Christian history.

With perfect knowledge of all this Christ said if any man will come after me let him deny himself take up his cross and follow me. So the cross not only brought Christ's life to an end it also ends the first life the old life of every one of his true followers. This and nothing less is true Christianity.

We must do something about the cross and there's only one of two things we can do. Flee it run away from it or die upon it. Now when we preach the cross of Christ we're not supposed to just talk about the cross that Jesus died on when we mention the cross it's wonderful it's beautiful yes Jesus died on the cross but we need to understand because Jesus mentions about us taking up our cross.

Now if he hadn't said that then we could just tell about the death and resurrection story without even mentioning how it applies to us. But Jesus took away our excuse for doing that by mentioning we must take up the cross and when Jesus mentioned that when Jesus said you must take up your cross he was talking to people who had a visual knowledge of what the cross meant. They had been to the Passover they had been to Jerusalem they had seen the Romans time after time after time take religious zealots and murderers and rapists and arsonists and nail them to a cross and he saw them just like Jesus carry their cross being whipped and beaten out of the city being nailed to it hung up until they rotted there.

You know Jesus only got taken down because it was the night of the Sabbath. Usually they left them out there. They left them out there to have them have their bones picked by birds.

They took them down because it was not right according to Jewish law to keep a man up on the Sabbath. Now when the disciples heard Jesus say you must take up your cross that must have put a shutter down their spine because they knew that everyone who took up their cross in Jesus day for them it was a one way trip. There was no coming back from that taking up your cross.

See today we say take up your cross well you think of that nice little silver thing around your neck with a diamond in it or a ruby or a piece of turquoise or a piece of jewelry. If Jesus would have died in an electric

chair would you be wearing an electric chair around your neck? I don't think the cross is an appropriate symbol of jewelry personally. Everybody is hiding their jewelry.

I don't care what you wear as jewelry personally but I'm saying that the cross needs to be a symbol of death because that's all it is. It's not a symbol of resurrection. It's a symbol of death.

It's a symbol sure of Jesus crossing out our sins. Sure it's canceling out the debt. Sure it means that he crosses out the old life.

But what it really means is death. Death to him and death to you. And if you haven't heard that message, if you haven't accepted it, embraced the cross, taken it to heart and see that you need to die and you need to deny yourself and you need to take that one way trip carrying that big beam like Jesus did and have everybody shudder because they know you're not coming back unless you go through what Jesus did, a resurrection, a new life, and you don't have a resurrection before you have a death on the cross.

Jesus didn't have a resurrection until he fully died and was laid to rest. We want to quickly pass over the cross. Yes, yes, you have to die and deny yourself, but there's a resurrection.

We want to present the resurrection, the resurrection. Jesus didn't. He suffered for 33 years on earth knowing the day of his death.

How would you like to know the day of your death? How would you like to walk around for 33 years knowing you're going to be beaten and mutilated, not be able to get married, not be able to enjoy any of the things of this world that God created for men and women to enjoy? And you knew exactly that you were going to have to die on that Passover, on your 33rd year. I think he knew that. Maybe not when he was two, but for sure when he started his ministry he knew it.

He knew he had a limited time. And he knew he was going to die and it bothered him. It saddened him.

It troubled him. You better believe it. He didn't walk around going, you see, I'm going to die.

He didn't do that. Although we like to see that, we like to present Jesus that way. It's heavy.

When Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane and he sweat drops of blood, when it pained him, when it hurt him, when it tormented him, that presents a Jesus none of us are comfortable with. Nobody likes to think of God suffering. Nobody likes to think of God weeping drops of blood and sweating drops of blood and being troubled.

Well, if God's troubled, then he must not have everything under control. But they forget that Jesus was not only fully God but also fully man and that he had to go through the suffering and the fear so that he would understand what we go through when we suffer and have fear. He doesn't blame you for being afraid.

He was afraid. He doesn't blame you for wishing it was different. He wished, God, if there's any other way, let this cup pass.

The cross isn't easy. He didn't say it would be. He said you had to take it.

Sure, you can have your moment of doubt, your night of fear, that cup of pain, but then you need to say with Jesus, but nevertheless, not my will, but thy will be done. And go through it because on the other side of the cross, there is a resurrection. And it says Jesus endured the cross for the joy set before him.

He looked through the cross. He looked through the trial. He looked through the death to the other side of the cross.

And for the joy set before him, he endured the cross. Okay. The threat and terrors of hell and the guilt of sinners.

Oh, is this a heavy subject. How we have made the gospel impotent. We often hear people say, I'm tired of the hellfire and brimstone preaching.

Well, I often reply to them, when was the last time you ever heard any? It is the last time people preach on hell. It's no longer in vogue, you know. We shouldn't scare the poor sinners.

No, we shouldn't. That wouldn't do. They're just poor unfortunate misguided souls.

Right? Wrong. The Bible clearly shows that there are criminals who have robbed and dishonored the living God, infinitely offending him. They have no right to look at themselves in any other way.

Listen, that's harsh. I got to admit. That's really harsh.

That's black and white. It is. The law of God that condemns sin is harsh.

The law is very harsh. You know, it says that there are two, justice and mercy, and mercy rejoices against judgment. The law of God is black and white.

The justice of God is black and white. The condemnation of the law is black and white. But the mercy of God is not.

The mercy of God will reach out into the black to try to bring somebody over to the light. The love of God will go into hell. Remember what David said? David said, even if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

That's heavy. That means God is trying to reach people. Why did Jesus go to hell and preach to the sinners? In hell.

It says he did. Because he had mercy. They were condemned.

But you see, God's mercy doesn't mean a hill of beans to anybody out there listening to the gospel, unless you show them what God needs to be merciful toward them about. What if the judge says to the guy who is guilty of murder, well, I'd sentence you to death, but I don't want to freak you out. So, I'm acquitting you.

But, does that mean the same? If the guy is sentenced to death and he's waiting two years on death row, and he's coming up to the last minute, and he's waiting and he's praying God to have the governor or the president grant a state of execution, and he's waiting and he's sweating, and the priest comes, and he leads him off to the chamber, and he's got his last meal, and he's walking toward it, and at the last minute, the guy's about to pull a switch, and they say, wait a minute, the governor just called. You're free. That's the gospel.

The law has got to condemn. We're going to get to the law in a minute. We cannot remove the threat and terrors of hell.

Jesus, oh God, Jesus preached about hell. He talked about, remember the sheep and the goats? He preached about this almost awful picture of how the ones on the left are going to go to everlasting damnation. What about the guy in Matthew 24 where it says that this guy will be cut into pieces and assigned to his place with a hypocrite? In another place, with the five foolish virgins, he says they will be kept out into the outer darkness where there's weeping and gnashing of teeth.

He didn't wince from talking about the penalty of not serving God. But we do. We need to have people see themselves as criminals, not poor misguided souls.

Now we might be able to look at them as poor misguided souls. We can go look at that poor sinner. He doesn't realize what he's doing.

But you can never let them look at themselves that way. You know, you can't. A person needs to be convicted.

Nobody can be convicted of being a poor misguided soul. You know, poor baby, oh yeah, that really convicts me. I really am pouring this guy to G. I need to repent.

When your little three-year-old boy does exactly what you tell him not to do, you don't pick him up and go, oh poor baby, don't understand. Now you might say, well maybe he doesn't understand or maybe he doesn't understand. But man, that'll help him understand it.

He'll understand quick enough a few of those. That's the law's way. That's what that, remember there's a two-edged sword.

Behold the goodness and severity of our God. I'm going ahead of the teaching. I just want to say that we don't have any right to remove what Jesus didn't remove.

We don't have any right not to talk about hell because I want to let you know Jesus talked about hell almost as much as he talked about everything else. If not as much. I haven't taken a scale and cut up the Bible and put this verse here and this verse here.

But I can honestly say that when I read the Bible there is verse after verse after verse about the threats and punishments of being disobedient to God. And I'm not talking about the law of Moses. I'm talking about the gospel of Jesus Christ.

He was scared for sinners. That's why he warned them. But we're scared of scaring them.

So we don't warn them. He was scared for their ultimate fate. We're scared for the instant fear and that we might produce in them and we don't care about their ultimate fate enough to be able to scare them a little bit.

You know how you hate to go to the dentist? Everybody hates to go to the dentist. I don't want to go to the dentist. You might find you need a root canal and I don't want a root canal.

I knew a woman who died of breast cancer. She wouldn't go to the doctor. She was afraid that she had breast cancer.

And so she wouldn't go to the doctor. Until her chest was throbbing. And boils were starting to show up.

They started breaking out and bleeding. And she went to the doctor and the doctor says you have breast cancer and she says well I didn't want to come to you because I was afraid that I had breast cancer. He says if you would have come to me even three weeks ago I could have saved your life.

But I can't now. It's too late. She was afraid of finding out what was.

Because it was. And all the fear in the world that people have that they're going to hell won't keep them from hell. All the fear in the world that they need an operation.

Now he would have had to save her life by removing her breast. A horrible thought. But she had children.

Five, ten years old. And she died within six months. Some people are afraid like I said to go to the dentist because they're afraid they're going to have to get their teeth drilled and they can't think of anything worse than having their teeth drilled.

So they don't go to the dentist and then they lose their teeth. Fear of having something does not make you not have it. And our fear that we're going to hurt somebody isn't going to help them at all.

I told my wife, I know there's a lot of problem with peer pressure today with kids, but my kids are going to have something stronger than peer pressure. They're going to have father pressure. It's going to be stronger than peer pressure because I love them more than their peers do.

I love them enough to make them not like me for a little while so that they'll eventually love me because I watched out for them. And that's what God does. He'll hang you on a cross that hurts until you're squirming and screaming.

But when he's done putting you through the washing machine you're going to be clean. And part of that washing machine is saying you need to get into that horrible machine. Call repentance for your sin and self denial and be made into the image and likeness of Jesus.

It will spit you up and chew you out and you will hurt. And part of it is first telling you that you're a wicked, rotten criminal. I love you but you're a wicked, rotten criminal.

It's that simple. I realize you may not even realize that but you've had it unless you turn from your sin. Why is the Bible full of stories about hell? Because God cares enough to tell people the truth.

If that doctor would have come over and the woman would have been having pain in her chest he would have cared enough to tell her look you might have breast cancer. I've got a relative that's the same way. She will not go to the doctor unless she's near death.

She is so scared of hospitals and doctors. She's had two husbands die in the hospital and she's almost died two or three times. And the reason she almost died two or three times is because she got to the hospital when she couldn't stand to live anymore.

It hurt so bad. If you wait until that long you might lose your life. And we need to stop worrying about... Can you imagine if a doctor was squeamish about operating on people? I don't want to hurt the poor guy.

I'll let you go home and die. I don't want to cut out your cancer man it's going to hurt. He tries to make it feel as good as it can possibly feel.

He puts you under and he tries to take away the pain as much but he's got to get down to the root of the problem. Okay. We smart as we are have decided to help God along.

He doesn't understand our generation as well as we do. The things Jesus emphasized in his preaching were alright for the Jews but our generation needs a more gentle loving tone. Tell them about heaven.

We talk about heaven about the rewards of being born again. But we completely neglect the other side of the two edged sword. What right do we have to remove things from the gospel that Jesus himself gave great place to in his own preaching.

The law of God preached to convict one of sin. Pages could be written on this but there's only room for one brief example. When the rich young ruler came to Jesus he asked a very direct question.

Good master what must I do to inherit eternal life? Now try to imagine what the minister today would say to him if he asked that question. I'll just admit you're a sinner. Accept Jesus as your savior.

Go to church. Pay your tithes. Try to be good and you're in.

Right? I mean really. But what would Jesus answer? You know the commandments. If you wish to inherit life keep the commandments.

The commandments. Commandments. Isn't this the age of grace? Listen.

Try to imagine your average evangelistic service. They're out there guys preaching away. All of a sudden the mayor of the city the mayor of Atlanta the mayor of Los Angeles the mayor of New York City the guy Billy Graham is preaching in New York and the mayor stops him and says brother I've got to repent now I can't wait what must I do to inherit eternal life? Now! That's what happened.

Remember Jesus walking along and the guy came running up on the road and got on his face and says whoa I've got to get saved now. What do I do? All the people are watching. His disciples are watching the multitudes are watching the people he's healed the people he's going to heal.

And say Billy Graham he's in front of 70,000 people it doesn't matter who it is. Some great preacher. Can you imagine somebody today saying have you tried the commandments? Can you imagine somebody preaching the do's and the don'ts of the Bible anymore? I just it burns me up to think that we are so smart that we have removed and we have all these stupid excuses well you know Jesus hadn't died yet so he couldn't preach you know believing in the death of Christ you know.

That's called dispensational preaching right? Well you know the Holy Spirit hadn't been given yet so Jesus had to give him a different answer but you know Paul and Peter and all the other people did a different well listen folks it is no different when Jesus preached don't you remember he also preached what Paul and Peter preached. Remember when he got the blind guy to see he said he says Lord what must I do? He says believe what was the exact words? Oh do you believe in the Son of Man? Right? The blind man says who is he Lord that I might believe in him? He is the one who healed you and the very one who is talking to you. He says I believe.

Now that was after Jesus preaching wasn't it? Jesus hadn't died yet and he could preach that to him why didn't he preach that to the rich young ruler? Because the rich young ruler wasn't ready. Because the rich young ruler needed to have a little lesson in the law. He needed to have the scalpel of God the master

surgeon apply directly at what would stop him from getting saved.

But we don't have the eyes of the law anymore. We look at somebody and we see them as a big fishy that we can mount as a trophy above our pulpit. You know wow man the mayor of New York this would look so good in Christianity today when they talk when they show this on TV the mayor got saved.

The rich young ruler this guy was rich he was young he was a handsome ruler the guy was probably well known throughout the land he probably would have been a main speaker at full gospel businessmen luncheons from coast to coast if he would have gotten saved. This guy this guy was a catch not to be let go. What he could have done for Jesus' ministry why his mailing list could have doubled.

His reputation would have gone up so high if he wouldn't have just let the big one get away. His disciples were going now we'll get accepted. Now they'll let us preach in the synagogue man.

We'll fill up the temple tonight. Then he preaches something that the guys at the seminary in Dallas would rebuke him for preaching because it would have been the wrong answer according to them. But Jesus used the law to dig down to the cancer that was in this man's heart.

Now of course Jesus being God knew what was wrong but probably wouldn't have taken too much to understand. He probably had a ring the size of a basketball and everything else He had a slave to carry his kleenex. I mean the guy was probably a hot and cold running slave left and right and had the mansion of mansions and loved pleasure and loved luxury and loved opulence.

And it was obvious that his righteousness was that he did everything since he was a boy. I haven't committed adultery, I haven't stolen, I haven't murdered, I haven't done anything wrong. Man.

I don't know. Jesus knew what he had done. Well the truth is that Jesus wasn't preaching the commandments to him as the way of salvation.

He was using the commandments to specifically convict him of his particular sin. Greed. That rich old boy loved the bucks and Jesus knew just how to flush them out of the bushes.

Preach the law. And that's exactly what the law is for. As Paul said, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin.

I'll never forget the first time I saw that scripture when I was reading a book called Today's Gospel by Walter Chantry. I couldn't believe it. I said, well I've read that before but I didn't know what the heck it meant.

Through the law comes the knowledge of sin. I mean that just was one of those theological bye-byes you know. The law must be preached.

Not as the way of salvation but as a searchlight put on the sinner's heart so he can see how utterly rotten he is compared to the way God requires him to be. Amen. Amen.

Amen.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/keith-green/whats-wrong-with-the-gospel-part-1/>

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