

The Old Gospel Versus a New Gospel

by Rolfe Barnard

The sermon argues that modern gospel preaching has substituted a new gospel for the old gospel of the grace of God, emphasizing human effort and possibility rather than God's sovereignty and actual salvation.

Duration: 23:50

Scripture: Romans 1:16, Ephesians 2:8

Topics: "Gospel"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of judging gospel preaching by its fruit, specifically the kind of converts it produces. He argues that the character of church people today, their lack of Christlikeness and desire for holiness, is evidence that the gospel being preached is not true to the Bible. The speaker distinguishes between the old gospel that proclaims God as the one who saves sinners and the new gospel that presents God as merely making salvation possible. He urges preachers and churchgoers to prioritize the truth of the gospel over seeking results and emphasizes the need for a genuine, Bible-centered evangelistic effort.

Transcript

The next voice that you hear will be that of Brother Ralph Barnard, an old soldier of the cross that's fought a many a battle, now gone on to his reward. We're privileged to get him this morning to speak. The facts of the gospel as presented in the Bible are against the kind of preaching that's turning out the kind of converts that are filling our churches today.

And we suggested as we kind of got lost in the time, last Lord's Day, and did not get to fully come to a climax in our thought because of the lack of time, we suggested that gospel preaching must be judged by its fruit. By the fruit of what we preach, the kind of converts to our preaching, we may faithfully and scripturally judge the content and the character, the truth or the falseness of the gospel as we preach it. And I'm saying that whether I'm right in my premise or not, and whether you may write me off as a crank or not, I'm saying that the character of church people today, the lack of Christ-likeness, the lack of a desire for Bible holiness, and the positive, real, sure enough, God-inspired, Bible-centered, evangelistic effort today, and all of the efforts we have today to get results at the expense of the truth of the gospel, I'm saying those are things that we must not overlook.

We need, frankly, to face the fact that our fruit today does not give evidence that we're preaching the gospel of the grace of God. And I come to take up at that point today and ask your indulgence. I'm earnest

about this.

I'm sincere. I'm sincere as I preach to many preachers who are kind enough to listen. I'm sincere as I preach to many people who in a little while will be going to your houses of worship.

And I do not doubt your sincerity or your devotion. What I'm saying is that we, whether we've meant to or not, have substituted, in your day and mine, a substitute gospel for the old gospel of the grace of God. And I'm saying that we need to recover the old, authentic, biblical gospel and to bring our preaching and our teaching and our practice back into line with the old gospel.

And I say that's our most pressing need. My friends, anything more needful than that now. I say to you that no doctrine is worth making an issue of controversy unless that doctrine backs up and constitutes a part of the very heart of the gospel.

And I am saying that by behearting what we call the gospel today from some of the old flesh killing and yet biblically true doctrines of God's word, that we have not told sinners the truth and that we have not proclaimed the gospel of the grace of God. What's the matter with us today? Well, I'll tell you exactly what's the matter. And everybody who supports gospel preaching needs to hear me now.

And everybody who seeks to preach, I ask you to listen. I don't ask you to agree, but I ask you to listen. I have to act, I have to be responsible to God and you have to be responsible to God.

You're not responsible to me and I'm not responsible to you, but we are responsible to God almighty and to God's revealed truth. Now that is exactly what our trouble is today. The old gospel preach that God saves sinners, that God saves sinners, that God does the saving, that God saves.

He doesn't make possible salvation and that God saves sinners, people just in the shape that we've been talking about for several long days over this broadcast, people who are in the deep mire of their own sin, people who dug a ditch and fell falling into it themselves, people who've been gravely influenced by the satanic demonic powers of hell, people who are willful sinners. I tell you, the old gospel preach that God first, last, in between, all the time he takes the initiative. He is the author and the finish of our faith, the old gospel preach that God saves and it preach that God saves.

He doesn't just make possible salvation, he saves. He transforms, he makes new creatures. He starts with people in the pit they dug and he doesn't quit until he makes them like his son.

The old gospel preach that God saves and that God saves and that God saves sinners. But this new gospel is so popular today, preaches that God makes salvation possible and there is all the difference between a true gospel and a false gospel in those statements. I say to you that whether I can preach it, as it ought to be preached or not, and whether I get mired down by the fact that I'm so ignorant of the great truths of God, doesn't change the fact that the gospel is the proclamation of a God who saves and saves sinners.

It is not the proclamation of a God who's done this or that or the other to make salvation possible. Now that's the heart of the difference. That's the difference.

The converts of the new gospel say, I decided for Christ. The converts of the old gospel say, praise God, I can glory and nothing save the cross of Christ. The converts of this new gospel say, if it hadn't been for Calvary, I couldn't have been saved.

The converts of the old gospel said, on Calvary's cross, the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished that which saves me, and I look to him and on nothing else do I base my hope of salvation. Today, my friends, our minds have been conditioned to think first of the cross, the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, as a redemption which does less than redeem. What we have preached today is not that Christ has redeemed us by his blood, but that he's made possible our redemption.

Now that's what we hear. And that's not so. The Bible doesn't talk about Christ having made our redemption possible.

The scripture says we have redemption through his blood. The scriptures speak of he hath redeemed us. He hath redeemed us.

He hath made possible our redemption. There's no gospel in that. The gospel is not in a possibility.

It's in the proclamation of something that has taken place. It's so. The gospel talks about a God who's saved and saved by the cross.

But today we've heard it preached until we believe it, that on the cross the Lord Jesus didn't actually redeem people, he just made it possible for people to be redeemed. Today our minds have been conditioned to think of a Christ as a Savior who does less than save. Did you get that? The gospel today proclaims a Savior who does less than save.

On earth we have preached today nearly years that Christ has done something that makes it possible. If you knew something, forgot the Savior. But the old gospel preached a Christ who was a Savior, not a possible Savior, but an actual Savior.

Our minds have been conditioned by present-day preaching to think of God's love, wonderful love, as a weak affection which cannot keep anybody out of hell without help from somewhere else. We preach that God loves you, but if you so-and-so and so-and-so don't do so-and-so and less thus and that, you'll go to hell. Our minds have been conditioned by present-day preaching to think of saving faith as the human help which God needs to help him save sinners.

These are serious charges, but bless God I'm telling you the truth, and I'm lifting up my voice against it, and I'm not trying to make anybody mad. I'm pleading for a recovery of preaching about a God who doesn't make possible salvation, but a God who saves. I'm not preaching a Christ who makes salvation possible but a Savior who saves people.

I tell you there's good news in that if I can be a sinner to look to a real Savior, not somebody who made salvation possible. I'm preaching the gospel. I say to you, my friends, that faith that we hear so much about now, it's an act of man, and yet it's a gift of God.

We tell sinners that they do it themselves and we lie to them. It is their own act, and a sinner must believe. But praise God the old gospel preached that in virtue of what Christ was and did on the cross, God has secured there in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ the gift of faith for those for whom my blessed Lord died.

Now my friends, here's the situation how it's come about in this way. Why is it that we preach a God who doesn't save but a God who possibly might? Why is it we preach a Savior who does less than redeem and a Savior who does less than save? Why is it we preach of God's wonderful love as if it is just a big stream

and we hope that we can get our little dipper and find that God's able to save? Why is it we preach faith as a human help that God needs and he can't save us unless we come to his rescue? Well, I think it's come about somewhat this way. We who are earnest at least want to magnify the saving grace of God.

Everybody that preaches today talks about preaching that men are saved by grace and they mean it, and as honest as they are, I do not doubt their honesty or question their motive. But I say that we who want to magnify the saving grace of God and the saving power of the Lord Jesus Christ, we really want to do that. You couldn't find a preacher anywhere in this country who doesn't want to magnify the saving grace of God and the saving power of Christ, and so we got that right motive.

But we declare in an effort to do what we think ought to be done, we preach all over this country that God's redeeming love extends to every man. And we further preach, and brother you can get in a fight about this, we further preach that Christ has died to save every man, and we further proclaim that the glory of divine mercy is to be measured by these facts. And then, having preached that, in order to avoid what that naturally assumes, that is, that everybody will be saved, we have to turn right and deny all that is said, and then go on to explain.

Now, here is the damning part about this. We have to go on and explain that after all, nothing that God and Christ have done can save us unless we add something to it. Now, my friends, if I'm not telling the truth about what's called the gospel today, I want you to write me and straighten me out.

We thus preach that the decisive factor which actually, what we really say is, Christ saves us with our help. And if you think that out, what that really means is, we save ourselves with Christ's help. But my friends, if we start, as is done now, by affirming that God has a saving love for everybody, and that Christ died a saving death for everybody, and yet we do not preach that everybody will be saved, we just show how foolish we are.

The man who preaches that Christ died in a saving way for everybody has got to preach that everybody must be saved. The man who preaches that God has a saving love for everybody has got to preach that everybody must be saved. But we say, Brother Barney, we don't believe that.

I know, but that's what you preach. You get an awful stew. Oh, how we rant about it.

Oh, these folks running around here limiting the purpose and love of God. Wait just a minute. We are simply saying that the old gospel limited the work and love of Christ simply this way, that the love of God accomplished all it was sent to do, and that the love of Christ dying for our sins means that those whom it was meant for are to be saved.

Now, we need to be clear here in this kind of preaching as it is the popular preaching of the day, instead of exalting the grace of God and magnifying the cross of Christ, we cheapen them. People who preach that way limit the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ. People say to me, Brother Barney, you believe in the atonement? I say no, but most all the preachers in this country do, for they preach that Christ didn't actually accomplish what he set out to do.

He just made possible something that he hoped might accidentally take place. My friends, the old gospel says of Christ's death that Christ's death saves all whom it was meant to save. The new gospel says that Christ's death as such actually saves nobody.

What's good news about that? What's good news about that? No wonder, my friends, you can go into most any church in this section today, and in three or four nights of the line, 95 percent of the people in the congregations will be saying, if that fellow is preaching the truth, then I'm not saved. No wonder, my friends at Baptist, who have always said we believe in the eternal security of the believer, it's hard to find a Baptist now who feels any security. Why? Well, we have believed the gospel about a God who has made salvation possible, not a gospel about a God who actually saved.

Dear old Brother Spurgeon, whom the preachers quote today but hate his gospel, they accused him of preaching the limited atonement. He answered them this way, as I quote him, Brother Spurgeon said, we are often told that we limit the atonement of Christ because we say that Christ has not made a satisfaction for all men. Or all men would be saved.

Now, our reply to this is, Brother Spurgeon says that on the other hand, our opponents limit the work of Christ. We do not. Our opponents say Christ died for all men.

Ask them what they mean by him dying for all men. Ask them, did Christ die so as to secure the salvation of all men? They say, no, certainly not. We ask them the next question, did Christ die so as to secure the salvation of any man in particular? They answer, no.

They are obliged to admit this if they are consistent. They say, no, Christ has died in order that any man may be saved if and then follow certain conditions of salvation. Now, says Mr. Spurgeon, who is it that limits the death of Christ? Why, it is you.

You say that Christ did not die so as infallibly to secure the salvation of anybody. We beg your pardon when you say we limit Christ's death. We say, no, my dear sir, it is you that limits it.

We say Christ so died that he infallibly secured the salvation of a multitude that no man can number who through Christ's death not only may be saved but are saved, must be saved, and cannot by any possibility run the hazard of being anything but saved. You are welcome to your atonement, says Mr. Spurgeon. You may keep it.

We will never renounce ours for the sake of it. I thank God I have the privilege of pointing every center I can get in distance of to the Lamb of God, and I can say to every center there on the cross, salvation was made possible. Salvation was accomplished.

I bid you to look at not somebody who may be conceived, but look at the Savior. He died so that everyone believing in him is assured of salvation. So what I'm talking about is not just to be dismissed.

I'm comparing the old gospel. We're going to start preaching pretty soon if you don't all go away. I'm comparing the old gospel that bad men looked to, a real Savior, to the new gospel that just can't possibly point anybody with assurance to Christ the Savior.

Oh, the sinner may still have his good opinion of himself and all his supposed abilities. We deheart repentance and deheart saving faith in order to make this plausible. It's very simple, we tell sinful men, just open your heart to the Lord.

In so doing, we have first denied God's sovereignty. Second, we've undermined the very basic conviction of religion itself. I know this is so, that sinful man is always, always in God's hand.

We've lost a great deal, and it's no wonder that our preaching begets so little reverence and humility, that our converts are so self-confident and so deficient in the true knowledge of themselves and in the good works which scripture regards as the fruit of true repentance. My dear brother, the old gospel said Christ died to save a certain company of helpless sinners upon whom God had set his free saving love. The old gospel says Christ's death ensured the calling and the keeping.

Christ's death ensured the present and the final salvation of all whose sins he bore. That's what Calvary meant in the old gospel, and that's what it means today. The old preachers said the cross saved.

The old preachers will preach today, the cross saves. They'll quote that verse, dear dying lamb, thy precious blood shall never lose its power till all the ransomed church of God be saved to sin no more. Only God knows how this glorious gospel of a real savior needs to be preached today.

My time's gone.

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