

Evangelizing the Western Mindset - Part 6

by Winkie Pratney

The sermon explores the dangers of materialism and communism, highlighting the importance of obedience to God and the need to avoid adopting a dialectical approach to truth.

Duration: 57:54

Scripture: Proverbs 3:5-6, Matthew 16:24, Galatians 2:20, 1 John 4:19

Topics: "Christian Worldview", "Gospel Message"

Description

This sermon delves into the comparison between the philosophy of communism and the radical message of Christianity. It explores the concept of selfishness, the need for a fundamental change, and the difference between legalism and the gospel. The speaker emphasizes the radical nature of Christianity, which calls for a complete surrender and transformation through trust and love in contrast to the legalistic approaches of other ideologies.

Transcript

We have been looking at Kraut's perception of John the Baptist and we've so far examined one some detail, the read, and we've looked at people with collectic ideas, those who just borrow freely from anything going down and have no real lasting commitment to anything except that there isn't anything solid there anyway. There are no absolutes and they're absolutely sure of it. We have begun to study now on a second perception, we call them the materialists.

Why don't you go out in the wilderness to see, Jesus said, man dressed in soft clothes. And we have looked at one whole division of people who have accepted as fundamental truth that there is nothing in the universe but time and chance and matter and that is all there is. One whole division of that comes out in a philosophy called hedonism, some have called this the playboy philosophy, immortalizing Hugh Hefner.

Hedonism accepts this as a base and just says since there is nothing in the universe after we die, there is no life after death, there is no God, there is no heaven, no hell, then we must just pack as much as we can into this life because this is all you've got. Early days, grassroots had a song, we're never meant to worry the way that people do and I don't mean to hurry as long as I'm with you, we'll take it nice and easy and use my simple plan, you be my loving woman, I'll be your loving man. In other words, since there is nothing else in life and who knows, a bomb may drop tomorrow and we all may be gone, let's just eat, drink and sleep together because that's all there is.

Peggy Lee sang that sad song too by that same title, if that's all there is my friend then let's keep dancing, let's break out the booze and have a ball, if that's all. And a great chunk of people just live like that. We are now however going to look at a philosophy that has been applied with great power to society so much so that some two-thirds of the world have come under the domination of this philosophy that works with exactly the same base, materialism, but has been married to another philosophy and that is communism or Marxism or Maoism or the various forms of this.

Now I mentioned to you earlier that communists in the early days especially were young, deeply dedicated, they saw themselves as revolutionaries in a very real sense, they saw themselves as moral changers of the world, they saw themselves as people who had a fundamental answer to the problems of the world. And when we think in terms of this that the claim of communism is to eliminate selfishness from society, it is really and must be properly called a Christian heresy. Communism in its very real sense is a Christian heresy, just like Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormons, communism is one of the most powerful of all of them.

I believe the closer you come to the real thing the more power you get out of the thing. And God has designed man, He knows the way man is designed to function and so anything that matches or comes close to it will draw tremendous power from its model. The zeal of many young communists in the early days completely surpassed those of Christians in the church.

Here is a letter, Billy Graham read this letter out one time by an American college student who had been converted to communism in Mexico. The purpose of the letter was to explain to his fiancée why he must break off their engagement. He said, We communists have a high casualty rate, we are the ones who get slandered and ridiculed and fired from our jobs and in every other way made as uncomfortable as possible.

A certain percentage of us get killed or imprisoned. We live in virtual poverty. We turn back to the party every penny we make above what is absolutely necessary to keep us alive.

We communists don't have time or the money for many movies or concerts or T-bone steaks or decent homes or new cars. We've been described as fanatics. We are fanatics.

Our lives are dominated by one great overshadowing factor, the struggle for world communism. We communists have a philosophy of life which no amount of money could buy. We have a cause to fight for and a definite purpose in life.

We subordinate our petty personal selves into a great movement of humanity. And if our personal lives seem hard or our egos appear to suffer through subordination to the party, then we are adequately compensated by the fact that each of us in a small way is contributing to something new and true and better for mankind. The communist cause is my life, my business, my religion, my hobby, my sweetheart, my wife and mistress, my bread and meat.

I work at it in the daytime and dream of it at night. Its hold on me grows, not lessens as time goes on. Therefore I cannot carry on a friendship, a love affair or even a conversation without relating it to this force which both guides and drives my life.

I evaluate people, books, ideas and actions according to how they affect the communist cause and by their attitude towards it. I have already been in jail because of my ideas and if necessary I am ready to go

before a firing squad." Now that was the zeal of the earliest communist party. Now over the years of course, except where people have heard this for the first time and grabbed hold of the same kind of zeal, communism has proved to be what some people have called the God that failed.

It was a wonderful idea, we will eliminate selfishness from society and fortunately it has not worked and the reason it has not worked is because it is not true. We will look at that in a little bit more detail but you can see there are many good things about communism. They were angry with people who were rich that held power over the poor and were unjust to them.

The lazy ruler who lived on overworked subjects. They hated superstition, empty religious tradition being used as a tool to control people. They were ready to be interested in people's needs and teach others what they believed.

They were willing to sacrifice time, money or even their lives in order to change society. Now all of these things you could see are really borrowing the same basic purpose. The early church lived like that.

But I want to give you first of all, and this is again a very Mickey Mouse level, I want the basis of this. All Marxism, Maoism, whatever forms, operate on one fundamental principle, it's called the Diamant. It came because Feuerbach, who was a materialist, married his philosophy to Hegel who came up with this idea that we talked about in our last session.

Remember the thing, the idea that there's no real opposites in the universe, the truth came like this. One came this way, that which something that was the opposite to it, when the two connected they combined and formed a new thing and called this one movement thesis. This way the thing that came against it, antithesis or antithesis, and the combination of these two became synthesis.

Now it's a simple idea, you can see it was only possible with a materialist thing, there's no God, no heaven, no hell, no absolutes in the universe, therefore this thing operates. So what Marx did is he married the materialism of Feuerbach with this concept of Hegel together and he believed he came up with a discovery of the way that history evolves. He believed he discovered a law on how to change society and he believed in this just like a Christian believes that God answers prayer.

It is the fundamental underlying principle by which all of Marxism and all of its various forms operates. Without this you really haven't got Marxism at all. In practice he believed that society progresses by a series of conflicts which result in a combination that always takes the world one step closer to world communism.

In other words society progresses by a series of conflicts. And in practice he made it very simple to apply this to society. What you do is you, if you want to, here's a society and it's got problems.

People don't share, they don't do any of this stuff. So what you do is you create a pressure on that society. You attack it one way or another.

Now you can do it violently or you can do it with challenges or you can do it with demonstrations. You can do whatever it is. You put pressure on that society this way.

Out of the society will come an opposing force. You create student riots. They will call out the National Guard.

And then when these two meet there will be a conflict combination that will take place and then the consequence of that is that the whole society will be moved one step closer to your ultimate goal. Now you don't even have to know what that antithesis will look like. You only have to create the pressure.

And it's a very powerful thing because it works on human selfishness. Classic example would be Kent State in the United States. A group of people kept pushing, pushing, pushing the administration.

Administration gets more and more frightened, finally calls out the National Guard. There's a confrontation between students and the National Guard. Some young National Guardsman freaks out, pulls the trigger, next thing there's a whole bunch of college students dead.

And the whole college which just before was mildly interested now becomes deeply sickened with existing policies and everybody takes one step closer. Now the power of this thing is you don't really have to ask what this new world will look like. It can be moved off like heaven.

Actually world communism is like heaven. It's promised but it never arrives. And this is the whole power of the thing.

And there's all different forms of this and many, many mutations of it. And over the past century when it's roughly been operating it's had various changes and it doesn't work actually. There is no society in the world where they can say it's worked.

They thought China would be that society. The excuse for Russia for the longest time is that we had too many, you know, people said we have too many ideas that aren't truly communist in here. We need to start with another society.

So Mao thought he could do it. But when they let the Red Guards loose they raped over 5,000 women and did not eliminate selfishness. The idea was to take selfishness out of society.

Marx thought the reason why people are selfish is because of their economics. In other words, it's the way they use their money that makes them selfish. How fast? Lenin said with a handful of dedicated people who give me their lives I'll control the world.

It sounded a rash statement to those who heard it but it did not prove an empty boast. In 1903 this one man with 17 followers began his attack on the world using this. By 1918 the number had increased to 40,000 and with that 40,000 he gained control of the 160 million people of Russia.

The movement is gone now and controls over one third of the population of the world. So I want to explore with you a little bit today. There are two kinds of communism.

There is paper. There is a theoretical communism. That's what this idea is and its various forms.

And there are different kinds of thinkers today. I've got a picture here of Marx. He is seated of course and rightfully so is one of the... You can actually... He is buried here in London in Highgate and that's his, it's a bit hard to see, that's his face.

A very impressive looking guy, a thinker. He was exiled from Germany. What may interest you about Karl Marx, and here's an important principle, whenever you find a philosophy study the life and the consequences of the life of the person who adopted the philosophy.

That's a very important thing because ideas have consequences. That was the name of a famous book and it's true. If you study the kind of life the person who came up with the philosophy is you'll usually see this.

When a brilliant man comes up with an idea he usually sees the consequences of his idea a lot sooner than other people who follow him. He may go crazy straight away. But a society that follows him that does not see the implications of that may take an entire generation to go crazy.

So it is always good when a person comes up with an idea to analyze their own lives. Now it may interest you to know these things. First Karl Marx was a person who went to a Christian school.

His parents were Jewish, he was German, and he lived in Germany and his parents were Jewish. Now it was a bit of a hairy thing to live in Germany and be Jewish even in those days. And his parents through no spiritual conviction sent him off to a Catholic school.

So he grew up exposed to religion, but not out of any great sense of conviction from his parents. I mean it was sort of good for business and for the community and you sent your child off to the thing. I actually have a copy of the last essay he wrote in that high school, the final product of the four years of Christian teaching that had been given.

The title of that essay is On the Union of the Believer with Christ. And it is quite a nice little essay. It talks about how the yearning for truth is deadened by the sweet flattery of the lie.

He talks about the only way that real rest from the pressures of life come is by having that union with Christ. Now it is very nice and he never experienced it. Karl Marx was a counterfeit convert.

He was one like thousands and thousands of young people who sit in church who hear all the words about Christianity and never experience the union they write about. It was five years later from that time that he began to pen these words. Man makes religion.

Religion does not make man. Religion is indeed man's self-consciousness and self-awareness as long as he has not found his feet in the universe. That man is not an abstract being squatting outside the world.

Man is the world of man, the state and society. The state, this society produces religion which is an inverted world consciousness because they are in an inverted world. Religious suffering is at the same time an expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering.

Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless world and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of its people. The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of man is a demand for their real happiness.

Five years after graduation from that high school, I think one of the most dangerous places in the world today is the Christian church and the Christian high school when it is filled with people who have the information without the reality. And again what we said, our kind of culture today with its emphasis on information without corresponding obedience. Our tests are based on information without corresponding obedience.

When I went to Bible college, I had one professor that everybody thought was weird. This guy taught on the history of revivals and you could not get a test grade from this guy based on your paperwork. I mean

he'd give you a test but your grade was not based on your test.

He graded you by your interest during the semester and your willingness to really get into things. And people thought, boy he's really weird this guy, what a strange dude he is. You can get a hundred percent on your test and you'll still get a C if you weren't very interested during the course.

And people thought that's really strange but he died the year after I was there. He was one of the original teachers and I thought that guy wasn't strange at all. He understood what revival is.

It's a new beginning of obedience to God and what he was grading on was the reality of the thing. There's some people that just could care less about anything. They had good memories or something, they'd write down stuff but their heart was far from God.

He graded on hunger and interest. So I thought, boy that guy grades like God. God said you can come grade for me now.

But tremendously dangerous. Do you know that Karl Marx had a sister who was saved in a revival in Germany? That in Rhineland there was a real awakening and it was not there that he wrote the Communist Manifesto. It was here in London in the British Library.

He sat there, he was bitter and fat and covered with boils and he sat there writing it. He wrote that out of real hurt and real bitterness. And you can feel that coming through.

I have a little clip again in this book from the Communist Manifesto. I'll read a little bit of this. It opens up, it was written in 1848, it says the history of all hitherto existing society is a history of class struggles.

It's born out of battle and fighting. The Communists, it ends with these words. The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims.

They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communist revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains.

They have a world to win. Working men of all countries unite. And that's a battle cry.

This is a military declaration. Now to look at this thing, and remember this is called, the philosophy of communism, paper communism, is called dialectical materialism. And remember it's a synthesis of those two thought forms, Feuerbach, Ludwig Feuerbach, the materialist, and Hegel, the guy with this dialectic.

So in short, I just call it the diameter. But it is the underlying theoretical base of all true communism. Now I want you to notice something about this.

It survives, it works, by having an enemy. It must have an enemy in order to proceed. You see, if you do not have opposition, it cannot precipitate the conflict which leads to the synthesis of the next step.

In other words, the only way communism stays alive is to continually have an enemy. It cannot survive without one. So what that means is, if everything is going nice within a communist state, you will very shortly see that enemies are created within it, even in the leadership, and people from the West looking on think, boy, that society has fallen apart, you know, they keep shooting their leaders, and the guy that was the hot one this time, now he's out.

You have to understand, without an enemy, this thing can't survive. It is based on fighting, it is based on conflict, it is based on selfishness. It must have an enemy to survive.

There are some well-known Christians today, as a matter of fact, one guy who is deeply involved in cult research, who mentioned to me, he said, my theology is a dialectical theology, and by that, I think he probably meant this, I attack a cult, and they defend themselves, and then out of that I find out what the truth is. And I suppose that really would show you what people really believe. The only trouble is, you'd have to keep having an enemy, or you wouldn't have a ministry.

And there is a danger in that. I am concerned about Christians adopting a dialectical approach to truth, simply because you've got to have an enemy, and that enemy may not be spiritual wickedness in high places, it may be flesh and blood instead. And I don't really like a ministry based on reaction.

You know, there are some people that whenever there is a problem, they preach against it, and that's their whole ministry. You've got to have something solid to say that it's not reaction just to whatever is going on in your culture and time. We're not just dealing with these problem ideas and thought forms here because we happen to like fighting things.

We have something to say that is the original from which most of these are perversions that have been cloned off that real. Now, paper communism then, this dialect, works with theories of economics in all kinds of different forms. It proposes in its simplest form to eliminate selfishness from society.

It is the logical result of rationalism and materialist science, and it is based on three fundamental ideas. Number one, there is no God, and with no God, no absolutes. Two, there is nothing in the universe but matter in motion.

Religion then is an illusory. Nothing in the universe but matter in motion, like St. Elmo's fire. And man is wholly made what he is.

Man is a product of his environment, and we'll put economic here in brackets because that's what we mean, economic environment. So a communist or Marxist or whatever facet of this would interpret everything he sees through those glasses, everything. The way you live would be interpreted through those things.

These are fundamental premises. So there's no spirit, there's no supernatural, there's no life after death, there's no absolutes, all of those things. Then communism then is a fusion between complex theories of economics and sociology, or the mechanics of how people live together in society, and there is a series then of class wars going on in which ultimately the whole world will become unselfish.

Now, mentioned the way that they did this in the old days was create tensions. You could see that Herbert Marcuse and these early guys, they did it with absurdity. Jerry Rubin and all the early Chicago Seven and all that, he dressed up like Santa Claus when he went to the trial.

You could do crazy things, like you could demand, say you wanted to change the university, you could demand the right to park your Volkswagen's on the chapel roof, and carry signs and demand the right to read the principal's private files. It didn't matter what you did, it could be absurd. The point is you create the tension.

And the guy just keeps giving in until your demands get crazy, you just keep demanding and you get whatever, until finally he goes, no, we're not going to have that. What do you mean no? And boom, in comes the conflict, flip, chip, and then there you are, it's automatic. You don't think what kind of society will come out, you're working with a belief system that believes everything is going to move that way, no matter what's done.

So you don't even have to plan out a new world, you just destroy the existing one and out of that struggle will come one step closer to the whole thing. If it doesn't arrive, that's alright, heaven is still coming. You see, and for a hundred years, kids were promised that, heaven will come, heaven will come, but it didn't come, and what was even worse is that economically, many, many of the countries that had adopted systems that way were worse off than the capitalistic enemy countries around them and even needed capitalistic aid in order to keep them alive, which was an embarrassing situation.

And the reason basically in that is that you can't change society, you can't deliver people from selfishness if you are selfish, you can't do it. Now, just one more little thing on this diameter. Engels, who was the guy who worked with Marx to help develop this, and what's interesting, see Marx had three children die of starvation here, working in the terrible economic conditions that were true in this nation.

At the same time, there were Christians working to change those economic conditions, but Marx, through his mindset of, I was a Christian too, I remember it was just a bunch of religious garbage, do you see that, could not bring himself to accept the reality of what was actually going on and the changes that resulted. For instance, I have pictures in my case there of children being sent into work in the mines here in England, five, six, seven years old. They said they had to use children because the animals were too small to get into those places, and they had to be children because once they became adults, their spines were too set to get into these horrible little places.

I have descriptions there of the conditions in the mine. They were horrible things. Engels actually owned one of those mills.

So he wasn't, you were poor, most of the people, the idea is you take the poor people of the world who don't have anything and you mobilize them. In paper, that's what it looks like. In reality, it is often the rich and the powerful that are the ones that implement this thing.

It's not the class worker that comes up. It is the trained and the one with money. Now, Marx lost three children of starvation in the society like that.

So you can see a great deal of what he wrote was in bitterness. At that same time, there were men and women working to see real change in society. For instance, in the time of the anarchists, the anarchists were being around for a long time.

Their thing was simply blow everything up, you know, just that's a fundamental answer. It was not blow anything up for a purpose, just blow it up. It's just out of the ashes will arise a new world.

So they had a very simple answer, just bomb everything. Probably the great granddaddies of the terrorists today. Only they didn't have any hostages.

They were blown up too. Catherine Booth was challenged by the anarchists. Remember, their answer was just kill you.

I mean, that was their fundamental answer. There was some key French anarchists where they had a meeting together. And one of them was a famous map maker.

And they're a very brilliant man. And they challenged Catherine Booth, who was the mother of the Salvation Army. And the Booths began that movement really among the poor people of the world in the name of Jesus, which became such a tremendously powerful thing that when Catherine Booth died, more people came to her funeral and came to the Queen of England.

It was a tremendously... And the same with William Booth. Catherine Booth was challenged by the anarchists. So she went.

She went on her own to their meeting. And everybody advised her not to go. They said, Catherine, they'll blow you up.

That's all I want to do. I just want to kill you. She went there.

She arrived. And you know, they were shocked. Here's this woman walks into the middle of their meeting.

And they look at her. And this key map making anarchist from France looked and he said, so you've come to speak to us about sanctification and redemption. And she said, I haven't come to speak to you about theory but reality.

And she said, you have suffered for what you believe and so have I. You've been thrown into prison for what you believe and so have I. As a matter of fact, she had three simultaneous prison sentences to serve. She couldn't serve the other two because she was in prison in three different countries. And because her work just was so radical and it's touching all levels of society.

She said, you've been thrown into prison for what you believe and so have I. She went on in this vein. And then she said, but there's a difference, gentlemen, between you and I because you're talking about changing the world and I'm doing it. And so the guy even gave her a ride home in his car.

You have to understand when the theory of this was being written, there were Christians doing what the challenge was. So it was not a blind thing. Marx had to filter everything through this counterfeit conversion mindset of his and say it cannot be true.

It can't be real. And the bitterness that he had, I think, colored his whole life. And you'll see that.

Many of the key Marxists in the world were exceptionally bitter people. Marx always thought just by teaching people this that everybody would accept it. But it never worked.

And it came to a young man called Vladimir Ulyanov who, when he was 16 years old, watched his brother hung for treason. He loved his brother. His older brother.

He looked up to him. His older brother was a chemist and working in university, but he was involved in an underground movement. And they caught his older brother and they hung him publicly.

And this young man stood there in the crowd, his eyes filled with tears, angry and bitter. And he said out loud as he watched his brother jerk his life away there on the end of the rope, he said, I'll make him pay for this. I swear to God, I'll make him pay.

And a contemptuous adult looked down at that young 16 year old and he said, you'll make who pay? He said, never mind. I know. And he changed his name later.

He began to work and deeply got hold of Marxist thought and gave himself like that young American communist that I read out. And many years later, and many of the parties, there were the Trotskyites and the Bolsheviks and all these different groups and all mixed up in there. And he came through that convention with all the different streams of Marxist thought.

And one older communist looked at his friend and said, see that young man then? He said, I fear him. He said, why? He said, because there's nobody I know like him. He thinks and dreams nothing but communism 24 hours a day.

And that young man changed his name and called himself Lenin. And what he did is he took Marxist theory and he married it with force. He said, this will not work unless you make people do that.

And when they married the force onto the philosophy, it began to be a world-dominating thing. And that was the growth that I mentioned. They took over finally Russia.

I have to give you just a little bit more of how that diamond works. And according to Engels, there are three main ideas that describe the way the diamond works. One, any change equals progress.

Any kind of change signals progress. So if anything changes at all, it means it's a step forward. Two, retreat is only a part of the pattern of attack.

Retreat is only part of the pattern of attack in advance. Every now and then, you'll see in a Marxist society, people in high levels will say, you know, we have made some serious mistakes in the past. We have deified these leaders.

We've deified their ideas. We've said that they're wonderful. We found out now they aren't.

So they tear down all the statues and, you know, put flags over and burn all the books. And they say, now anybody who, you know, who we hurt in doing this, we would like to apologize to you. So all of the people go, yeah, well, I got sure hurt in that.

They all come out, see? And it looks like the thing's backing up. But next second, all those that have come out are identified and they're all shipped off to concentration camps. And then the next lot are worse than the... Do you see that? So the retreat is part, it's built into the philosophy.

You may deeply apologize simply in order to find further change. You never let a society stay alone. It must be constantly threatened and challenged because otherwise it's not going to move.

And then thirdly, to destroy one existing thing, to destroy something means ultimately the building of a new step towards communism. So just to destroy is a new step. Whatever's broken doesn't matter.

It can be just what you set up. Break it. Any kind of way of creating chaos can be used, from absurdity to violence to, you know, all kinds of things.

And men without God by nature are chaotic and absurd. So it has a great appeal to about everybody. You want to get, hey, do you like the way things are? No, you know, who likes the way things are? So you get a young college student who, you know, is being... You know, his home life isn't together, all kinds of

mess.

He feels like he hasn't got enough money to live on and stuff. And you give him this and he's already got that materialistic mindset. And you've got a built-in time bomb.

And that's why communism has always spread very, very fast through high school and college. They recruit at that level. And it's, you know, it can be a military thing.

Now, I want to give you now some of the weaknesses of this philosophy because... And these are, again, this is a very Mickey Mouse level, you understand. This is no heavy duty. This is ABCs of communism.

Weakness. Here's the philosophy. It sounds very good.

It goes like this. Give according to your ability. Take according to your need.

Okay. This is in economics. If I have 100 cows and you have no cows, then I can give you 50 cows.

Then we each have 50 cows. And then we are all brought to a common level. We all have equal opportunity.

We're all able now to milk and to tease here. And it's terrible if a person has 100 cows and his neighbor has no cows at all. Now, so that's the give according to your ability.

Well, this sounds Christian. Is it not? You know, give according to your ability, take according to your need. And don't we have examples in the Bible of the early church having all things in common and, you know, selling stuff they have? See, that's true.

And that, again, I said, this is Christian heresy. But let me just show you something. It goes like this.

Say we're going to study for a test. We're all going to sit down and study, all right? Now, I study really hard and I get 100 marks out of 100. You don't study at all.

You get zero. So we give according to your ability. I give you 50 of my marks and you take that 50 because you have a need.

Now, we're all equal. We each have 50 marks. There's only one little problem.

What is going to make me study in the future? See, Kalmach thought that if he taught that, everybody would go, well, that makes sense, and they would just share. But they didn't. Just knowing something, and he ran into what counterfeit conversion is all about in his philosophy.

It goes like this. Just knowing something doesn't mean to say people will do it. Just knowing what is right does not mean to say they will commit themselves to it.

The little problem of incentive came into this. How do you get people to do that sharing? Marx just thought by teaching it, it would work. And it didn't work.

And Lenin came along and said, we will have to help you share. And at that point, he married force into the philosophy. And basically, the difference between this and genuine Christianity is simply this.

This thing operates because you have people who have already given up their selfishness. That's how you get to be a Christian. But the other thing operates by fear.

And at this point, I'm going to take a very short digression, just a couple of minutes, and show you the difference between legal and gospel. This is important because not only true important theologically, it's also true when you're looking at the world. Well, in legal control, there are only really two ways to make people behave the way that they're supposed to behave, or you want them to behave in a society without absolutes.

And that is other than force, other than physically taking their hands and making them do that thing. There are only two moral ways, shall we say, of making people behave. One is legal.

This is a fundamental, we could say, it works by reward and punishment. In other words, if you want people to behave in a certain way, you reward them if they do that, and you punish them if you don't. Taken out to extremes, reward becomes bribe, punishment becomes threat.

Now, these are legal means. In Charles Finney's day, he used to call this hope and fear, religion of hope and fear, see? Now, that is legal. By the way, there's nothing wrong with legal.

It is not illegal. It is legal, but it is not the gospel. And I'm convinced a great chunk of what passes for Christianity in the churches is not the gospel, it is legal.

It is instead a threat and bribe, sometimes done religiously, for instance, how many of you would like happiness and joy and peace in your Christmas stocking, see? And if not, you may burn upside down for an awfully long time, dangling by your toe, and it'll be hot and dark. Now, is it true that there is heaven and hell? Yes, it is. But Jesus never used these things as the basis for why people should follow Him.

I call this Santa Claus evangelism, and we all understand that one. We probably understand this one better, Frankenstein evangelism. Frankenstein evangelism has a preacher with a black suit, burning laser beam eyes, foot and a half long bony finger, with a radar rangefinder tracking thing on the end of his finger, tuned on your frequency, and he... Some of you are going to die.

I told one young man, you're going to die. And he walked out of my meeting, and a car squashed him flat against the wall. Driven by my chauffeur.

Some churches operate by half and half. You know, a guy with a black suit on his Santa Claus thing. Now, if you come into the kingdom, quote unquote, under these two things, then how are you going to be followed up? In other words, if you come in under the bride thing, how are they going to keep you? Next week, you know, this is the way follow-up goes.

Boy, you missed... Where were you last week? You missed such a great meeting. We had R. Roberts praying for the sick, Billy Graham opened in prayer. Amy Grant sang the special.

We gave out free living Bibles, you know. Boy, you missed a great meeting. You must be there, or you'll miss out on a tremendous blessing.

But how did this lot follow up? You came under under that, there's a knock on your door, there's some guys there with raincoats turned up, and revised standard versions bulging under their coats, and they go, you missed last week's meeting. Terrible things happen to people who miss meetings. See that? In other

words, a great chunk of what it passes on the surface for Christianity is not Christianity, but legal.

It's a legal thing. Now, when you get saved, your whole life is like this. See, a person who comes to Jesus Christ basically lives to please himself.

Karl Marx had one great thing going for him. He saw the problem with the world was selfishness. All the great thinkers.

Buddhists saw the same thing, came up with a different answer for it, which we'll look at later. But he saw the problem of the world is selfishness. Somehow you've got to get rid of selfishness.

He thought it was the money that people had, or didn't have. But as George MacDonald pointed out so insightfully, if it be things that slay you, what matter things you have or things you have not? If it be things that slay you. Now, this is not Christianity.

The hottest this can go is the mountain that smokes with fire, and the law written on tablets of stone. That's as hot as this can go. The gospel proposes a radical, totally transcendental thing to this.

It proposes, quite simply, the elimination of selfishness. See, this is based on selfishness. This whole thing says, if you want what's best for you, then you better do what we say, or you won't be rewarded.

Or you better do what we say, or you'll be punished. So that in any society, for instance, in many Western societies, in the capitalist society, the reward is the dominant note. You want to get ahead in life, boy? Yeah, you've only got three swimming pools.

What are you doing? You do this for us, and we will make sure all the perks come your direction. And it's kept on by that bribe thing. In many Marxist cultures, and some Islamic ones too, this thing comes in.

You do not do this. We have a small place for you in a very cold, remote spot, where your mustache will freeze. You will do what we say.

We have ways of making you listen. So, and then some societies use both. Now, we have modern theoreticians like B.F. Skinner, not Tom Skinner, the black evangelical, but Burrhus F. Skinner, which probably stands for Frankenstein, the behaviorist who suggests that the best possible way to rule people, and the most sophisticated way, is not to threaten them at all, but instead to arrange that the easiest path for them is the one you want them to follow.

And by positive reinforcement, you can lead people much easier than just the negative thing. But here's what we understand. If you went into a church, and everybody was, you know, and you greeted with, Hallelujah! Or something like that, people would realize, boy, this is a legal church, man, you know.

Pastor wore jackboots, and everybody stood on cue, and you'd think, boy, this church is really legal, man. You'd recognize that. But we don't understand that this church is legal, too.

The Santa Claus church is legal, too. This is legal. This is legal.

It is not gospel. The gospel proposes a radically new solution. It proposes that you die.

That's it. That's about as radical as you can get. I remember talking to one young Marxist in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in the mid-60s.

He said, look, he said, my life is such a mess, there is nothing for me left to do but die. I said, that is exactly and precisely what Jesus wants you to do. It shocked him.

He thought I was going to talk him out of it. I was hoping to encourage him into it. I said, yeah, you need to die, but not your body.

Your philosophy is just giving you this idea that when your body dies, that's the end of you. But you're wrong. You'll be locked the way you are forever.

I said, Jesus wants you to die. The only way you can get into this new kingdom is through a funeral. This is radical.

God doesn't even give you business visas in this kingdom. You can't even come in for a week just to see what it's like. The only way you can... Just a bunch of fanatics in this kingdom.

The only people they allow in are those who have been born there. And the only way you can get to be born there is for them to kill you. And that's precisely what entrance to this kingdom demands, an execution.

Now we've told kids too many times, come and join the party. It's not a party, it's an execution. There's a fun party afterwards, but not until you die.

It was Kursev who said many, many years ago, this was his graduating speech to a whole bunch of young communists who were about to go and spread the message through the world. It was early 60s. He said, you are all dead men.

Now go out into the world and prove it. That was the whole speech. And here's what Jesus said.

If any man will come after me, let him deny himself. Take up his cross. And what is that? Is it something you wear around your neck? It's a pretty gold thing that you hang around there.

It's like, take up your gas chamber. Take up your guillotine and follow me, come and die. That, you see, I believe the only genuine answer to the challenge of communism is Christianity, because it's even more radical.

I remember talking to a young Maoist one time. And the reason he came up, he had the armband. He had the whole thing.

And I was speaking right at the end. I talked about there are thousands of young red guards that are marching today for a purpose. You know, he came up afterwards and he said, I am one.

And he said, I don't believe anything you're talking about. I don't believe the Bible. I don't believe any of this stuff.

But he said, I want to see my world changed. You know, it was a challenge. And I said to him, have you ever read the Bible? He said, yeah, I've read bits of it.

And I said to him, you know enough about this then to know its basic message? He said, well, I suppose so. And I said, he said, I don't believe it though. I don't believe it.

I said, you realize what the basic message of this book is? And he said, well, I think so. And I took him a little bit longer. And I said, if you knew this book was book of God, if you knew that it really was of God, would you have to change the way you're living and the things you're doing? He said, yeah, I would.

And I said, it's not really a question whether you believe it. It's a question of whether you want to obey it. And in a short time, he started to weep.

And I said, you know, I understand you. I said, if I were not a Christian, I would probably join you. Because you know, I mean, my background is chemistry.

I'd like to blow up a few things. I don't know why. I'd probably join you.

But it's not radical enough. How do you change society? You want society to become unselfish. And look at you.

If I went and asked your mother if you were unselfish, would she say yes? It would be amazing how to shut people down in universities. Guy goes, when does she change? And she says, I'm going to eliminate the selfishness of this capitalist. Blah, blah, blah.

And I'll wait for a while. And I say, if I asked your mother what would she say, and this is science, I'd say, sit down and shut up. You've got nothing to say.

You can't change your world and make it unselfish when you're not. You're a theoretician, Jack. You're looking at a person whose life was falling apart, whose family was a total mess, who saw the grace of God reach down into that home and clean us up, make us totally different people.

I'm not talking about theory, I'm talking about hundreds of thousands of young people who have met somebody who can really deliver them from selfishness. And they can do that whether they're poor or rich or anything else. So what's the other way? The other way is the gospel, and here's this radical proposal from Jesus.

It goes like this, what you do first is you die, and then instead of operating by bribe and threat, it operates by trust and love. Trust why? Because there is somebody who is absolutely wise. Love because there is somebody who is utterly unselfish.

I follow somebody who can take the system out of people, somebody who doesn't just put new coats on every man, but new men in every coat. And the power of this thing is, without an infinite wisdom you still aren't going to be able to trust. How many leaders do you know that you looked up to that have fallen down? See, Jesus is the only person I know who is utterly trustworthy.

Scripture says trust no man, that's what it says, you girls should listen to that. Trust no man it says, but God is the only one with infinite wisdom, he is utterly trustworthy. And then we love him because he first loved us.

He is. Jesus never did a selfish thing, never has, never will. So he is a worthwhile leader, the best.

He used to say in the 60's, who wants a crutch like Jesus Christ? And I used to say, if you can find another one like him, I'll take two, if you can. Alright, let's close at this point.

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