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Churches of Christ Salute You with a

Preaching Another Gospel

James W. Nichols  February 8, 1953

Herald of Truth
Not many months ago while talking to a friend of mine, he said, "I want you to hear a certain preacher. He really preaches the gospel. Now I don't believe everything that he teaches. In fact I believe that he is wrong on what we have to do to be saved, but he surely preaches the gospel." Strange conversation, wasn't it? Quite a paradox. A preacher preaching the gospel but not preaching God's plan of salvation correctly. Yet such thinking characterizes the belief of millions of our friends and neighbors.

There are millions of people who believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God. They also believe that this side of the cross we must follow the teachings of the New Testament, but they believe that it matters little what a man may teach just so long as he believes and teaches that Jesus is the Son of God and that He died for our sins. In fact, they say that so long as he doesn't preach a completely different gospel it doesn't make any difference what he teaches. And hence that attitude has made fertile ground for the growth and development for the hundreds of religious doctrines that divide people from one another and men and women from their Lord.

About nineteen hundred years ago the apostle Paul was facing the same situation. Paul writing to the Churches of Galatia said in Gal. 1:6-10, "I marvel that ye are so quickly removed from him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel; which is not another gospel: only there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema. As we have said before, so say I now again, if any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema. For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? or am I striving to please men? if I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ." Notice that Paul did not accuse these perverters of the gospel of completely changing the gospel or substituting another. By preaching other than that which had been preached, it became perverted gospel which would not only condemn the preacher but all of them that followed. He did not accuse them of denying that Jesus

Paul continued by saying that if anyone taught anything other than that which had been taught, he was condemned; even, Paul says, if it were an angel or those who had first preached the gospel.

This therefore, is a tremendous responsibility upon every person involved in the saving of not only his own soul but the souls of others. It is not enough just to preach the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ accurately, but we must declare the whole counsel of God, accurately and completely. As Paul said in Acts 20:26-27, "Wherefore I testify unto you this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God." James also reinforces this truth in James 2:8-10 as he wrote, "Howbeit if ye fulfill the royal law, according to the scriptures, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well: but if ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin, being convicted by the law of transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all." The power of the gospel is as a liquid. Put water in a bucket that has just one hole and it will eventually leak out as surely as if it had half a thousand; so it is with the gospel. Its power can be contained so long as it is presented in its fullness and completeness. Notice again that Paul places a special condemnation on those that would preach anything other than that which had already been preached. He said even if an angel or those of us who preached the gospel first to you should preach anything other than that which they received, let him be eternally cursed.

Christ said in John 17:17 praying the Father, "Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth." Christ also said that he would send the comforter and that he would guide the apostles in all truth. The comforter of the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost and guided the apostles as they declared the whole counsel of God.
Therefore, anything other than that which is in the word of God, the whole truth, the whole counsel must be an untruth or a lie. John in Rev. 22:15 tells us, “Without are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and everyone that loveth and maketh a lie.” Then, the condemnation comes not only to the one that makes the lie but also to ones who follow after it. In view of these things, it is exceedingly important that we pause in a busy and confused world to examine that which we believe and practice as to whether or not we preach and follow after other than the pure gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ further shows that when we worship Him according to the traditions of men that we worship in vain, for He said in Matt. 15:9, “But in vain do they worship me, Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men.”

I want you to ask yourself today, “Is the gospel that I hear the gospel of Christ or is it a perverted gospel?” Have you been baptized according to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ? Or have you been according to a perverted gospel? Have you been buried as Paul tells us we are buried with Christ, Rom. 6:4? Or have you obeyed a perverted gospel by sprinkling or pouring? Is the name you are wearing given to the followers of Christ in New Testament times? The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch, Acts 11:26. And Peter tells us, “But if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name.” I Pet. 4:16. Is the name of the religious group with which you are affiliated wearing the name given to the body of Christ? Paul said in Rom. 16:16, “The churches of Christ salute you.” Are you worshipping after the New Testament order? Worshipping God in spirit and in truth? If you are not doing these things are you not following after another gospel? Then remember the words of John as he wrote in II John 9-11, “Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. If anyone cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting: for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works.”

The choice is yours whether to follow as Christ and God would have you to or whether you want to follow after men. Paul said, “Now do I persuade men or God or do I seek to please men? For if I should please men I should not be the servant of Christ.”

Remember this, my friend, that it matters not what I say, nor does it matter what some other man will say, but the question is, “What does the word of God say?” It hurts me; it hurts me deeply when I realize that there are hundreds of thousands of people who sincerely are being led astray. If there’s anything that I would seek to imbed in the hearts of those who are being led astray, it is to study and read the Bible, the word of God. I don’t want you to believe anything that I say, or do anything I say, merely because I say it, but because it’s right and founded upon the scriptures. Then, and only then, will we be saved. But I, with all my strength and all my being, must push forward; must preach the truth; must “preach the word in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke and exhort with all long-suffering.” That’s my responsibility, because God has commanded it, and because I’m concerned with the souls of mankind.

Have you obeyed the gospel of Christ? Have you believed that Jesus is the Christ, repenting of every sin, and then confessed your faith in Christ before your fellow man? Have you been buried with your Lord in baptism? Will you not obey these simple commands of Christ today? Why don’t you decide that “today is the day of salvation: saying I’ll render complete obedience unto the Lord’s command”? And I’m concerned with you, Christian friend, who has stumbled and fallen. Why don’t you pick yourself up? Confess your sins, repent of every one of them. Confess them to your fellowman, pray unto God that He might forgive you.

Christ died upon the cross of Calvary that the gospel might be preached, and your soul might be saved. I love that gospel because it tells the story of Christ. I love that gospel because it’s the hope of salvation. I’m willing to preach the gospel, for I am not ashamed of it; for I believe that it is the power of God unto salvation. And it just stirs my heart as I read time and time again the pleading words of Christ: “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” And to think that these loving words are falling upon deaf ears this morning. Won’t you follow Christ? Won’t you resolve to do that which God has commanded you to do, this day? Won’t you follow in His steps? Softly and tenderly, He’s calling us home.