

A black Holy Bible with gold text and a red bookmark. The text on the cover is in a stylized, gothic font. The bookmark is a simple red line.

Holy Bible

Which Gospel do you follow?

The gospel of man

Or

The Gospel of God?

What is the true gospel of God?

There are many ideas around about what the gospel is supposed to be; some suggesting it is as simple as having good values which are seen as sufficient for being called a Christian. It means Christians are to be as good as they can manage. Christians are to have a life of peace and wanting positive well being for all. Christians are to obey the law of the land. For many these values become the work we need to do in order to gain favour with God.

For many, Christianity today is more self seeking as more people are committed to a consumer mentality by being more materialistic. It is almost said, what can I get out of God?" It is never put in these terms, but their prayers are mostly to do with getting more for their comfort and enjoyment. This more for me attitude sees God as our domestic attendant who has to keep us happy.

Some believe that because they have been baptised and confirmed into the Church their place in heaven is guaranteed, regardless of whatever else Jesus said He required of His

disciples. Some people say they have accepted Christ but they have never allowed Him to radically change their way of living.

Many believe the individual can have their own opinion as to what is important for them as Christians, and resent anyone telling them otherwise. Some believe Christianity is about being nice, this is very common, encouraging everyone to be thoughtful and kind to others. Some Christians adopt beliefs from other religions and see all religions as equal in standing before God. Many want to say they believe in Christ Jesus which means by saying this they are saved and will go to heaven. This goes easily with those who believe they have been given the opportunity to enjoy life and be successful in all their undertakings.

How has this happened? The Church has for many years made it easier to come to church on Sunday and say, “I love the Lord,” and “Isn’t God good?” And then fail to make a stand for the truth of God as people go and unashamedly contradict what God says in the Bible by the way they live.

This is easy to understand because world wants a Gospel that is easy to cope with; something that doesn't cost anything. Something we can believe in without having to get too radical about changing our hearts and minds. We often give the impression that if we want to escape going to hell we just have to believe in Jesus. All we have to do is say the "sinner's prayer" and we don't have to worry about hell any longer.

To make Christianity easier we remove the danger of God's looming judgment against our sin, against our personal disobedience. We make accepting Christ the most important thing and say nothing of the need of turning from self determination to surrender to God, which is supposed to come before we are able to accept Jesus as Lord. We hide the fact that Jesus has standards for acceptance. We replace the simplicity of the cross of the Gospel with careless encouragement.

Many Christians make the assumption that they're saved simply because they are loved by God. While it's true that salvation is made available through God's loving act of giving

up His one and only Son for our sakes, we need to realise that we have a part to play in that cross. Some think that gaining a good dose of theology and doctrine will renew their minds and be sufficient evidence of being a Christian as in Romans 12:2, but this will have no effect if their lives are not offered as a living sacrifice according to Romans 12:1.

Because we live in a selfish, fallen world, these ideas of believing without personal cost have an attractive appeal for the desires of the flesh of man not surrendered to the will of God. Unfortunately, we often present this easy way of life without even knowing we are opposing the will of God because we are blinded by our own weak sinful humanity.

These worldly values that are held up as proof of being a Christian are not connected to a commitment to the total transformation of the soul in the context of submission to the Holy Spirit in the local Church community.

This is following the gospel of man

Over the last one hundred years, almost without any awareness of what is happening,

we have replaced the gospel of Jesus Christ for a substitute religion which is similar in some ways, but on the whole has changed the intent to something completely different.

We now see a false gospel of many colours which fails to provide the real answers for life by making man Christ centred so that the intentions of the mind and heart are secured in God. Instead of honouring God, the false teachings intentions are to offer man happiness and peace and satisfaction in the world while giving little thought to obeying God who is the Lord and saviour of the world.

The false teaching offers worldly success in a world that the true disciple has been called to leave behind as having any real significance for their life, except as a place to shine the light of God amongst those who live in the darkness of the teaching of men.

This substitute gospel has man at the centre of life and relegates God to the sidelines as the one who exists to make him happy in the world. This human wisdom ignores the fact that natural man is blind to the truth of God; it

wants to forget man cannot save himself from himself; it is ignorant of the fact we can bring nothing with us to please God.

By presenting a message of life with man at the centre of a material world, is at best a half the truth, and half of God's truth is in fact not true at all. The substitute gospel suggests that Christ died to make us happy on earth and possible for us to save ourselves by believing He died for the world. We present a God who is willing to receive anyone who feels the need for a better life in line with their own expectations. This distorted message about man and God is a human fabrication designed by Satan to deceive many so they remain under his control.

Man centred Christianity is like a man writing himself a ticket to heaven, unaware God is not sending a bus to take him to heaven. And to make it worse, many Christians today feel like they should not or don't want to impose their beliefs on others. What does the Bible say about what happens to Christians that don't spread the gospel or partake in the Great Commission? Jesus said "*If you deny Me*

before men, I will deny you before My Father."

Matt 10:33

Today there are many people living a watered down version of Christianity to whom Jesus says: "*I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.*" (Rev 3:15–16) A more literal translation of the word "*spit*" would be *vomit*.

Man's thinking is that it is still possible to have a relationship with God as Saviour and Lord and hold onto personal individual preferences. However, if God is to be God at all, He is the one who sets all the necessary requirements for those who want to enjoy His presence. If we have a God who should do our bidding we are destined for destruction because we deny the testimony of God in the Bible.

The Gospel of God is Christ centred

There is no other way to say it, to be authentically Christian is to be Christ centred. *'For from Him and through Him and to Him*

*are all things. To Him be the glory forever.
Amen.'*

Rom 11:36

The good news of God is for all who through true repentance and faith, leave behind the beckoning of the flesh and the world, and give themselves entirely to God the Father, Son and Spirit, as their creator, redeemer, and becoming reconciled children through the blood of Christ receiving pardon from their sin, along with the Holy Spirit as their sanctifier to obey until eternal glory, if they persevere until the end of their life on earth.

The only way to heaven is by seeking first the kingdom of God that accepts God's rule and dominion by embracing Jesus Christ and His cross.

This is the life of the Christian. *"For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory."*

Col 3:3-4

In order to be Christ centred we have to die to self interest. As Christ sacrificed Himself, we are to sacrifice ourselves if we are to follow

Him. *'Present your bodies as a living sacrifice.'* (Rom 12:1) *"It is enough for the disciple to be like his Teacher, and the servant like his Master."*

Matt 10:25

Offering ourselves as a sacrifice is to deny the ways of men of the world. *"put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness."*

Eph 4:22-24

The suffering of Christ for the world is to be the example for our suffering with Him. *'The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.'* Rom 8:16-17

"But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."

Gal 6:14

The person who is in Christ is no longer the centre of their life, for we have died to the world so that Christ can be the centre of life. If Christ is the centre of our life, then we are compelled to do as He commands.

Failure to do as He requires is to deny He is Lord of all. "*Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?*" Luke 6:46

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter." Matt 7:21

The Gospel and the Christians life

Jesus was clear about the real cost of following Him. '*And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it."*

Luke 9:23-24

The Cross of Christ is God's power to those who are being saved by self denial in order to obey Jesus as Lord. Therefore we must not

water it down. Only the full power of the Gospel can save us, and watered-down crosses will never be accepted in heaven.

Jesus shows us the way of the Cross, and He expects His disciples to follow His example. In love Christ sacrificed His life for us, and now He calls on us to sacrifice our life for Him because we love Him more than life.

The love of God has two crosses, Christ first and foremost, and then the cross of all who follow Him by obeying His word. *"Have this attitude among yourselves, which was also in Christ Jesus." "Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."*

Phil 2:5, 8

Instead of Christ being the centre of the Christians life through self sacrifice, many put the emphasis in other places because they misinterpret the meaning of the gospel of Love. After all, the greatest commandment is love. *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first*

commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself."

Matt 22:37-39

But what is Biblical love? Jesus says, "*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.*"

John 13:34-35

Many read this and believe they are Disciples of Christ, thinking they are Christians simply because they "love one another." However this is not biblical love. The love of God is not an emotion or a feeling. Love is not receiving, and it's not getting something out of a relationship. Love is not peace at any price. And love is not accepting or tolerating sin. The way Jesus showed us His love was by dying for us who deserved death so we can be delivered from the darkness of sin to live in the light of God.

Jesus shows us love is sacrificing, giving, and seeking the best for someone as directed by the Spirit, even at great cost to self. The greatest example of love ever demonstrated to

mankind was Christ's sacrifice on the cross for our sins. Why did He do this, because God loves us. John 3:16

The love of Christ for us could only become a reality when He obediently obeyed the Father. Obedience was at the centre, for the Father sent the Son. For anyone to believe in Christ we must obey Him or the wrath of God remains active on our behalf. John 3:36

When God accepted us in Christ He did not accept our sin, or accept us for "who we are," if He did there would be no need for justice to settle the matter of wrongdoing. God has made it clear; the wages of sin is death. (Rom 6:23) Christ died for our sin so we can live.

God did not receive anything from us for His sacrifice on the cross in our place. Paul says, *'For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.'* Eph 2:8-9

The sacrifice of Christ was truly an act of willing personal selfless sacrifice. Jesus

demonstrates unconditional love from God to all who would repent and believe in Him.

The church cannot just teach the idea of love alone without the cost of receiving what Jesus has done on our behalf. God's love made forgiveness for the condemned people like us possible, so the Church must teach the whole truth of God, including His righteous judgment and wrath against those who will not repent and obey Jesus Christ the Lord.

The Gospel is the way of the Cross

God was not to be frustrated in having children who reflected His life as Adam was supposed to do. God sent His only Son who was just like Him to pay the penalty for our sins as a holy sacrifice and redeem us from the darkness and transfer us into the light of the kingdom of God.

Jesus is the Son of God who is the highest representation of mankind, who alone revealed God's intentions for all His children. Therefore Jesus is God's image of what man is meant to be as a child of God. The Son of God came to ensure He had many brethren,

(Rom 8:29) who born again in the image of God and would follow His example.

Jesus includes us with Him when He says: "*Follow Me*" Followers are always trusting in Christ and working to become like their Master when they live with Him. (Matt 10:25) "*I am the way*". (John 14:6) Jesus is the only way for Christians to live to go to God.

Jesus includes us with Him when He says: "*Abide in Me*". (John 15:4) Without remaining in Christ we can do nothing. Without living according to His teaching we cannot call ourselves Christian. Jesus Christ is our example of how to live before God. '*So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine."*' John 8:31

There is no other way to be a Christian than to live the Christ life as Jesus lived and taught. There is no other way to heaven but to follow the example of Christ. It is His way, before the followers of Jesus were called Christians they were known as the people of the way.

The way was Christ; Christ is one life for all to follow in order to enter the kingdom of God. This way of Christ was the way of the cross, this meant entering through a narrow gate, personal preferences were reserved for a broad way that leads to destruction and many walked that way.

When the apostles began teaching they added to our understanding by stating doing the will of God is possible by the power and governance of the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul taught us we needed to put on Christ. *'But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.'* (Rom 13:14) We put on Christ because we have received the Spirit of Christ. *'You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.'* Rom 8:9

Paul went on to say believers have Christ in them. *'To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.'* Col 1:27

We no longer live but Christ lives in us. *'I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.'* Gal 2:20

Walking as Jesus walked was only possible by God making it possible for us to walk by the Spirit. *'But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.'* Gal 5:16-17

If we are in Christ and His Spirit is in us we are able walk as Jesus walked. *'The one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.'* 1 John 2:6

When Jesus taught His disciples He wanted to make sure they had no doubt about what life was to be like for those who followed Him. The Sermon on the Mount is the Lord's instructions for His disciples giving them guidance as to how to live as He lived with

the power of the Spirit of God. Our Father has not left us without adequate instruction and power to live as sons of the one and true God of all creation.

Everyone who wants to go to heaven must understand that heaven is reserved for those who have denied themselves to put on Christ. No one will see God unless they are born again by the Spirit of God. Jesus answered and said to him, "*Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.*" (John 3:3) The born again life is the life of Christ made alive by the indwelling Spirit of Christ.

Since God has done everything we need to live a godly life, we are required to do everything to put off the ungodly life we once lived, but still stains our soul. When God says "*you shall be holy for I am holy,*" (1 Pet 1:16) He is not asking us to be something we're not, for He has given us the life of a son of the living God. He is asking us to be true to Him.

When Jesus said "*I am the way, the truth, and the life*" we are supposed to understand that

we can only share this way of His by putting on Christ Jesus our Lord and saviour. I am *the truth*. There is no other knowledge about God apart from Christ that will satisfy God. I am *the life*. There is no other life apart from the life of the Son of God who is the light of men.

John 14:6 John 8:12

While there are many who claim there are other ways to be good Christians, the Lord Jesus makes it clear that His one sacrificial life as the representative Son is made to fit everyone who would follow Him. One size fits all. To refuse His example is to die in the outer darkness.

The Bible insists Christ is our example

“For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in His steps.”

1 Pet 2:21

“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.”

Eph 5:1

God is not asking us to live by a standard which is inconsistent with our nature, for we

have received a divine nature. *"His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire."*

2 Pet 1:3-4

Jesus is our perfect example, no exemptions

His example is as a servant. *"I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you."*

John 12:15

We follow His example in suffering. *'To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.'*

1 Pet. 2:21

Following Jesus' example is not glamorous but necessary if we intend to follow Jesus' life. Are we willing to follow His example in laying aside our sense of entitlement? Are we willing to follow His example of an obedient life?

Phil 2:8

Are we willing to follow His example of a dependent life? Since He never spoke on His own initiative, (John 12:49) and only did what He saw the Father doing. John 5:19

Are we living a humble life by not claiming what is rightfully ours as He did? Phil 2:5, 8

Are we content in poverty as He was? He paid taxes with a coin out of the fish's mouth. (Matt 17:24–27) He wore the seamless tunic of the poor who couldn't afford stitching. (John 9:23–24) He had nowhere to lay His head. (Matt 8:20) External things are not important.

Being in the presence of God is what counts. God's intent is for us to be "*conformed to the image of His Son*" (Rom 8:29) In order to be Christ-like, we must follow His example in all areas of life. Following Jesus' example, involves the transformation of our inward being to walk with God, it's not just our outward actions which can be replicated by mere men. Are we following Jesus' example in making the will of God know to the world?

We need to examine ourselves. Are we willing to let His example affect us to the core

of our being? Are we willing to follow Jesus' example in all areas of our walk with Him, in the way we serve, in the way we live and how we suffer for Him? Are we willing to yield all of who we are and have to Him to use as He desires?

The false gospel offers an abundant life on earth to all who will call on Jesus, as if God is at their beck and call to make them happy in the world, but this is a 'no fault gospel' it is sending people straight to Hell. No repentance, no cross, no obedience = no life.

If your church doesn't condemn sin, and require obedience to God's word and only preaches God's love without responsibility; and offers happiness in the world and says nothing of taking up your cross to follow Jesus' example; you should speak up. At least you can promote what the Bible teaches in your own relationships.

To be a real Christian means Christ must be the centre and the purpose for all our life.

Living Water Resources

Come to the River

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