

Assurance of Salvation
Part 25

Love for God
(#6)

Teaching a "half-truth" about God is one of the worst evils we can commit.

- A "one-sided" emphasis on God's nature and character will influence
 - our views of reality,
 - our values, and
 - ultimately every aspect of life.
- Teaching it will cause this to happen to others.

(We will illustrate this below.)



(Background information)

HOLINESS is the *foundation* for all of God's attributes.

- God's **primary** characteristic is holiness.
- This refers to:
 - His majestic glory as absolute creator over all things.
 - His moral purity and perfection.

(Background information, cont'd.)

- Holiness defines the nature of God's other characteristics.
 - INCLUDING the nature of his *love* and *forgiveness*.
 - Without the "holiness" concept, all these other characteristics become distorted and filled with error.
- Holiness is the reason that there **MUST** be judgment for sin.

WHAT MOST PEOPLE PREFER

- Today, many people would rather:
 - De-emphasize (or totally ignore) holiness and judgment.
 - Focus on God's love and forgiveness.
- Such a one-sided emphasis (a half-truth), will ultimately influence every aspect of life.



Our Example – We will look at:

2 of the CONSEQUENCES of this one-sided emphasis

1. It tends to influence one's conduct.
2. It results in a distortion of the gospel – the way the "good news" is proclaimed.



CONSEQUENCE #1

Most* people with this emphasis become **COMPLACENT ABOUT SIN.**

- Just look at all the sin in the typical church.
 - "After all, if it's forgiven, it has no impact on my eternal destination!"
- Some organizations actually *teach* that a Christian can live in sin.
 - They call it being a "carnal Christian."

* (Though a few people might *not* have this result, the majority do.)



They ignore God's warning:

Make every effort ...
to be holy;
without holiness
no one
will see the Lord.
(Hebrews 12:14b, NIV)

You can't make the truth more plain than this!

CONSEQUENCE #2

It influences the way people proclaim the "GOOD NEWS."

**** It becomes a "false gospel" ****

- Those who hear it tend to think that the *half*-truth is actually the *full* truth!
- This influences *their* views and the way *they* live.



The word "GOSPEL"

- In the Bible, it simply means "Good News"!
- Unfortunately, when it's *false*, it is NOT "good news."
 - Even when it's *half true*.

Which would you prefer?



The genuine?



- or -



The false?

(Even if it's just HALF false?)



The false gospel may have many "good" things about it

- It may contain truth
 - (half truth)
- It may look good
 - (counterfeit)



Proclaiming the FALSE GOSPELS is as foolish as promoting this dumb idol... and just as damning.



It may contain some good things...

BUT IT IS STILL FALSE

And it leaves people **unchanged**.*

- This is the reason that so many people (especially teenagers) depart from the faith.
 - Since they never really had any change, there was no reason for them to stay around (once the excitement has worn off).

*[They may get religious, but they are still spiritually dead.]



The FALSE GOSPEL

- Focuses on what we want to hear.
- Appeals even to the sinful nature, because it doesn't require a change.



The TRUE GOSPEL

- Focuses on honoring God.
- Requires death to the sinful nature; results in actual change.

EXAMPLE:

The FALSE GOSPEL

- "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life!"
 - A wonderful life *now*, and fun in heaven *forever!*
 - = As presented, it becomes a HALF-TRUTH (at best)
- "Sin has gotten in your way." / "Take Jesus as your 'Savior.'"
 - Almost *never* explained in Biblical terms.
 - = Because of the way it's presented, this tends to be associated with "praying a prayer" or "walking an aisle," etc.
- (Not always stated) "Later, if you want to obey him, you can take him as your 'Lord.'"
 - Implied: You can keep on sinning and still make it to heaven.
 - = A DISTORTION & LIE



Concepts like "repentance" and "obedience"?

- They are often completely omitted.
- When present, they tend to be hidden in the middle of a paragraph near the end of the "presentation."



EXAMPLE:

The TRUE GOSPEL

- The holy, righteous God created you.
 - = An accurate understanding of who God is
- You rebelled, and placed yourself under God's wrath.
 - You now deserve to die, both now and eternally.
 - = An accurate description of our condition
- In love, God offers pardon to those who repent, surrender to him, and trust Jesus for their salvation from eternal death.
 - He also offers the power to make this change.
 - = Includes both our obligation and our dependency on God

The GENUINE GOSPEL results in a VISIBLE change!

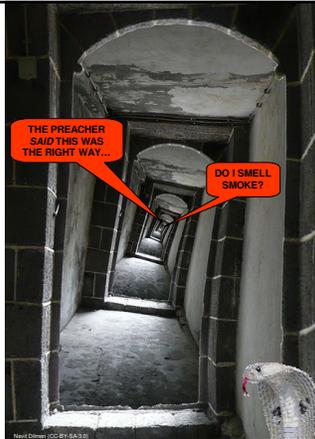
1 Thes. 1:4-5a (NIV)

For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you **not simply with words,** but also **with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction.**

[Read further for more about their change.]

The false gospel promises a lot – an "open door" to salvation.

- It sounds so wonderful...
- Unfortunately, it doesn't get you anywhere good.



The genuine gospel so different!

- The genuine *isn't* what most people want to hear...
- But the end result is so much better!



There are many ways to distort the gospel, but **ALL HAVE THE SAME DEAD END.**

Matthew 23:15 (NIV)

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are."

A special place is reserved for those who preach false gospels. (And it comes with a "double" guarantee!)

Galatians 1:8-9 (NIV)

But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!

As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!

YOUR MISSION – Aware!

- ALL of us have heard the false gospel somewhere.
 - The most popular version has been around for 60 years.
- We need to be aware of the *difference* between the genuine and the fake.

YOUR MISSION – Beware!

- Even if we try to resist it, the false gospel may have *some* influence on us.
- We need to constantly fight its potential influence.
 - EXAMPLE: We need to be on alert for ways that we could become complacent about holiness.

YOUR MISSION – Resist!

- We need to evaluate what we teach to others.
 - Make sure that what we communicate is genuine!
- Otherwise, we bring God's judgment upon both them and us.
 - God was not joking, when he gave us the warnings.

Credits (1)

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