

What is the True Gospel?

Scripture texts are from the King James Version of the Bible

What is the true Gospel? There is no question of greater importance facing the world today. This is so because only the true Gospel will provide the answer that can save us from spending eternity under the wrath of God. Therefore, as we seek to identify the true Gospel, we will endeavor to discover answers to the following questions: What is the authority that structures and determines the true Gospel? What is the message of the true Gospel? What is the mandate of the true Gospel?

We hear sermons of various kinds; we read the Bible here and there; we generally hear a lot of good things about the Gospel. We hear about how we are to walk as Christians; we see rules in the Bible that God has given to us for the good of mankind. But, we begin to wonder, what is the essential structure of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ? Can we strip away the peripherals and get right down to the very substance, the inner core of the Gospel?

In order to know what the Gospel actually is, we must first of all determine the authority that structures and determines what it is. This is necessary because the nature of the true Gospel is defined and established by its divine authority. In fact, the nature of every religion, gospel, and ideological system is defined and established by its recognized authority.

A Mohammedan, for example, may wish to know how to live as a good Mohammedan. So he carefully consults the Koran, a book in which Mohammedans believe God has spoken. The Koran, therefore, is the written authority that establishes the Mohammedan gospel, that is, the Mohammedan religion. An orthodox Jew has a different authority. It includes what we call our Old Testament, along with the writings of the church fathers that are considered to be divinely inspired. That is the authority that establishes the nature and character of the Jewish religion. On the other hand, a Mormon has as his divine authority the Bible, plus the Book of Mormon, which is believed to be divinely inspired. Because the Book of Mormon came later than the Bible, it has become a shadow that lies over the Bible. That is, someone who follows the Mormon gospel examines everything he reads in the Bible in the light of what is found in the Book of Mormon.

Similarly, the Roman Catholics follow still another gospel. The authority that structures and determines their gospel begins with the Bible. But the Apocrypha books are also a part of that authority, as are the visions of Joan of Arc, the visions of Fatima, and the infallible utterances of the Pope. All of these are looked upon as divine, and together they make up the authority that establishes the character of the Roman Catholic gospel.

Likewise, the charismatic gospel has its authority. It believes that the Bible is the Word of God, but it also believes in divine revelation through visions, voices, or tongues, which expands their authority beyond the Bible. Therefore, it has as its authority the Bible, plus the messages presumably received from God through dreams, visions, and tongues. This widened authority structures and determines the character of the charismatic gospel.

Bear in mind that every time we have a different authority, we also have a different kind of gospel. In other words, every gospel is structured and determined by its authority. So when the authorities differ, the gospels themselves differ.

But what is the true Gospel of Jesus Christ, who alone can save men and woman from their sins? What is the Divine Authority by which it is structured and determined? These are some of the most insistent questions facing the church today, because we are living in a day when gospels are proliferating. Every place we turn we find different kinds of gospels. Indeed, we wonder, how can I really know I am following the true Gospel?

One definition sometimes offered to describe the true Gospel is set forth in I John 4:2. There we read that if we confess that Christ has come in the flesh, then we are of God. Yet as we read in Luke 4:34, the demons also admit that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, and they are still under God's wrath. So that particular definition standing alone may not be adequate in every case. We have to know more about what defines and establishes the Gospel. We must, therefore, discover the divine authority that structures and determines the character and nature of the true Gospel.

The Bible indicates that it alone and in its entirety is the authority that establishes the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Revelation 22:18-19 says it best: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophesy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophesy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

By that statement God established the parameters of the true Gospel. It is circumscribed by the Bible alone.

The Bible, therefore, is the true divine authority. It is the only complete authority that establishes the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because it is the divine authority, because it is from God, is it to be entirely authoritative in our lives.

We must eagerly read it; we must eagerly study it with a view to being obedient to it. And if we discover in our lives any kind of practice, or any kind of doctrine that is contrary to the Word of God, then as children of God, there will be within us an earnest desire to change that practice or that doctrine so that we will become more faithful to the Word of God.

If we follow an authority that is narrower or wider than the Bible alone and in its entirety, we are not following the Gospel of the Bible. Regardless of how holy it may appear to be, such a gospel will not lead to salvation.

But now that we know that the Bible is the authority that establishes the true Gospel, we wonder what the central message of the true Gospel is. We could say that the Gospel is God's love letter to mankind whereby we can become righteous, know the love of God, come into the more abundant life, or learn to live to God's glory. We can think of a lot of verses in the Bible that describe and perhaps even crystallize the essential nature of the Gospel.

Actually, however, I think we can find summed up in **John 3:16** the core meaning of the Gospel. This verse strips away everything else and gets right down to the essential message. There we read: **"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."** Ordinarily theologians focus on the first part of the verse: "For God so loved the world..." And that is a glorious phrase that introduces us to the amazing truth that God in His magnificent love has provided salvation to all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. But the love of God and the salvation He has so generously provided cannot be fully understood unless we also understand the meaning of the word "perish" found later in this verse. Only too seldom do we hear a sermon on that statement, "...shall not perish..." But the phrase, "shall not perish," is also an integral part of the Gospel. When we search the Scriptures, we find that the word "perish," as it is used in John 3:16, does not mean "annihilation." In our English language when we say, "I will perish," we think of dying, of ceasing to exist. But in the Bible the word "perish" has another definition. The Bible tells us that the wages of sin is death (cf. Romans 6:23). And the living death that God has in view is to exist throughout eternity in hell. That is the predicament of rebellious mankind. That is what it means to perish.

The terrible problem of mankind is that we are sinners. Remember **Romans 3:10-11: "There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God."** The heart of man by nature is desperately wicked, as we read in Jeremiah 17:9.

Because we sin—even a single sin—we will perish. Because we have been created in His image, God holds each one of us completely accountable to Himself for the conduct of our lives. God has appointed a day at the end of the world when we are to be judged. The Bible says in Hebrews 9:27, "...it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment..." And because all of us are sinners without the Gospel, we are all on our way to hell.

This terrible truth cannot be seen with our physical eyes because we cannot look into the future. But what we see with our physical eyes is not the whole story. In fact, it is a very shallow and incidental part of the whole story. For example, we may have had a friend who died. We have seen him as a man who lived out his life well regarded by his fellow man. But then he died. He was eulogized at his funeral as one of the greatest, and then we all went about our business and forgot about Brother Jones. But if Brother Jones died without the Gospel, that is, without being saved, the next thing he will be aware of is that he is standing before the Judgment Throne of God, where he must answer for every sin he ever committed; and these will be multitudinous. Any one of these sins could condemn him to eternal damnation. For him there is no escape; there is no reprieve, no parole. There is no way out.

Every day approximately 200,000 people die all over this earth. When we realize that most of these 200,000 people die unsaved and that the next conscious thing they will know is that they are standing before the Judgment Throne of God, subject to eternal damnation, then we become aware of a horror story of magnificent proportions.

We sometimes hear about an earthquake in which 50,000 people are killed. We hear about wars in which 700,000 or 800,000 people are killed. We hear about man's inhumanity to man. We hear about famines that kill many thousands. But none of these hold a candle to the most dreadful tragedy of all, the dreadful, daily trauma that faces mankind.

The horrors of man's inhumanity to man, the horrors of famine, of war, or of whatever the trauma, result only in physical death. But physical death in itself is not the horror story. The horror story is that after death there is the judgment. God's perfect justice demands eternal damnation as payment for sins.

Unfortunately we do not hear this part of the Gospel preached too frequently. It is so reprehensible, so sorry, so serious. It is so terrible that we want to forget about it. We would rather just talk about the love of God. We would rather talk about moral living. We would prefer to talk about all kinds of things rather than this very important teaching of the Gospel.

Wonderfully, the truth that hell is waiting for the human race is not the whole story. If God had written the Bible simply to tell us that we are going to hell, we could still praise God that at least He warned us. But

that knowledge would not do us much good, because we are all sinners. Because of our sins, we would still end up in hell. But woven into the fabric of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, like a golden thread running through the entire Bible, is the message of hope. It is the message that we can know the love of God by trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior. That is the other side of the Gospel coin, the central part of the Gospel presentation: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Now why is it that if we believe in Him we will not go to hell? The Bible tells us that it is because Christ became sin for us! We read in **II Corinthians 5:21: "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."** Or, as Isaiah 53:6 puts it, "the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (that is, all who will hang their lives on Him).

That is the central message of the Gospel. There is no other news that can compare to this. It begins with the terrible truth that mankind is sinful and heading for hell. But additionally it is the wonderful news that all of us who cry out to the Lord Jesus Christ for mercy and hang our lives on Him can know freedom from hell because He became sin for us. Laden with our sins, as our substitute, He stood before the Judgment Throne of God when He stood before Pontius Pilate. He was found guilty for our sins, and God poured out His condemnation upon Him to the highest degree that it was the equivalent of every one of us who would believe on Him spending an eternity in hell. In this way He paid for all of our sins. He satisfied God's perfect justice that demands eternal damnation as punishment for our sin. Since our sins have been paid for, hell no longer threatens us. We are now under grace. By God's grace we have become children of God. We have left the dominion of Satan (which we were in before we were saved), and we have become citizens of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The pathetic fact, however, is that to a high degree, the church of today is no longer aware of this message. This has been true to some degree throughout history, but is particularly true today. Obviously, there are expectations. Praise God for the expectations! But to a high degree, the church has lost its sensitivity to the central nature of the Gospel. Too many preachers no longer talk about hell. In fact, I once heard a theologian from a reputable seminary publicly say that hell is "like being in an airplane and just going round and round." In other words, he was ridiculing hell. He had better read Deuteronomy 28 again. He had better read revelation 14 again, where it says "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever" (verse 11). He had better read Matthew 13, Mark 9, and Matthew 25 again where Jesus says things like, "there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 13:42), and "their worm dieth not" (Mark 9:44), and where He speaks of eternal damnation (cf. Matthew 25:46). The only reason that we do not often read those passages is because they are so frightening. But we had better be frightened if we are not saved, because hell is real.

But you see, if someone does not want to face the central message of the Bible because he does not want to talk about hell, then what is he going to do with the Gospel? Unfortunately, we find that theologians begin to change the message of the Gospel to satisfy their own desires. They begin to make the Gospel political. They say, for example, "Christianity has to do with having enough food to eat and having economic security. Or, they make it a physical well-being gospel by saying that the goal of the gospel is good health and happy lives here on this earth.

These three aspirations- political freedom, economic security, and good health -are sought by every man. All mankind seeks for these in one way or another. We do not have to call ourselves Christians to have these kinds of goals. But the fact is that none of these aspirations has any direct relationship to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, that is, to the true, spiritual Gospel. Let us see why this is so.

In Luke 16 God gives us the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Perhaps you are familiar with that parable. The Bible reveals that the rich man had all that money could buy. Certainly we would assume that, because he had all that money, he must have had a lot of political freedom. Also, he had at his command the finest doctors and the finest nutritionists so that he could enjoy maximum good health. Without a doubt, he had economic security and everything that goes along with it. If anyone appeared to have no need for the message of the Gospel, it was this rich man. He apparently had everything going for him.

On the other hand, God talks about Lazarus. Lazarus had nothing; he was a beggar. He had no economic security. He could not afford a doctor, even though he greatly needed one. Perhaps he slept out on the streets and was getting insufficient food or the wrong kind of food. In any case, his body was laden with sores. He had very poor bodily health. Certainly, as a beggar who would be kicked by everyone who walked by, he had no political security. He was considered to be riffraff. He was nothing. If anyone had a need for an earthly gospel, it would have been Lazarus. As the story continues, we learn that both Lazarus and the rich man died.

Suddenly God strips away the curtain and gives the true picture of these two men as they are to live throughout eternity. What do we find? We find that Lazarus, who had none of the essential desires of mankind, is resting forever in Abraham's bosom. This figure of speech indicates that he is in the place of the highest good, the highest blessing. It is a picture of being saved and being forever in the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

On the other hand, where do we find this rich man who on earth had everything a man could want? In this parable, we see him in hell, piteously crying out to Father Abraham to "send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame" (verse 24). It is a

picture of the terrible nature of hell, and this rich man is to be there forever. Which of these two men really needed the Gospel? Which of these men was really in need?

If you had come to Lazarus with a political gospel or a social gospel, trying to give him medicine and offering him economic security, would that have changed his position in Heaven? The answer is no. He had no need insofar as the true, eternal Gospel is concerned. Surely, as a human being, he could have stood a little food. As a human being, he could have stood a little compassion. But insofar as his relationship to God was concerned- that is the real need of mankind- he himself had no need.

Identifying the Gospel message with political, economic, or cultural aspirations has caused the "Christian Gospel" to be especially reprehensible to the leaders of many nations. When we send a message forth, tailored after the desires of mankind, which has nothing to do with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, we enter into areas of activity that threaten political rulers. I am sorry to say that in the past (and it is still happening today), missionaries often went to China and to many other countries spreading a gospel heavily flavored by their Western culture. Thus the gospel message they brought became identified to a great extent with the physical prosperity or some kind of political freedom. But that is not the Gospel of the Bible. These missionaries, unfortunately, were giving the wrong signals altogether. They had begun meddling in the affairs of the nations to which had nothing to do with the true Gospel message.

The fact is that the Gospel is unconcerned with the kind of rulers that a nation has. It is unconcerned with the political system under which a people lives. It does declare, however, that it is God who puts up and puts down rulers. It does warn that the citizens of any country are expected to be obedient in all things to those who rule over them. But it does not indicate that one kind of government is to be obeyed more than another.

The Bible is not concerned about the economic situation of those who hear the Gospel. In the day that Jesus ministered, and as the disciples went out, did man's inhumanity to man exist? Indeed, it did. There were slaves who were piteously beaten and mistreated. Was there economic uncertainty? Indeed, there was. It was a day when there were no mercy ships. Certainly there were people dying of starvation. Were there people who desperately needed a healing who did not receive it? Indeed, there were.

Some people misunderstood Jesus' mission when He healed the sick. Christ did not come with a gospel that promises good health. He simply did those miracles of healing as proofs that He was God and in order to give us historical parables through which we can see the spiritual nature of the Gospel. They were earthly stories with a heavenly meaning. Once Christ went to the cross and the apostles died, we do not find any further statements in the Bible regarding physical healing. The Gospel is concerned with spiritual healing: "...by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray..." (I Peter 2:24-25). The Gospel has to do with the healing of our sin-sick souls.

So the message of the Gospel is that mankind is on its way to hell, but that anyone can know God's love by trusting in Christ. When we become saved, we are transferred out of the dominion of Satan, which encompasses all the unsaved people of the world, wherever they are found, in whatever political system they are found. We are translated into the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is a spiritual nation made up of those who are born-again believers, regardless of political ideology, or cultural differences, or whatever. Salvation has nothing to do with political nations.

Many theologians fracture the truths of the Bible concerning the nature of the Gospel when they attempt to understand the meaning of the Christian unity. Ephesians 4:4-5 teaches us that: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;" One Lord kind of unity does God have in view? Well-meaning but misguided theologians, in attempting to explain this unity, have tried to introduce concepts into the Gospel that are foreign to it. They effectively believe we are one in faith and one baptism when we have equal political freedom, or equal economic prosperity.

But the true Gospel has nothing to do with political activity. It has nothing to do with economic desires or desires for good health. It looks far beyond all of this. When we have the true Gospel, whether we live in Russia, China, Germany, South America, the United States, or any other country, there is **one Lord, one faith, one baptism**. It is a **spiritual unity**. It is a faith wherein we understand that our sins are washed away. Spiritually we have become right with God. Spiritually we know that we are not sentenced to hell and that we have eternal life. Spiritually we have become one body, even though politically or economically or culturally we have no relationship at all to each other.

We must not fall into the snare that many fall into. In the Old Testament they read about all the gold and the silver of Solomon, and they read about the riches of Abraham, as well as many other statements about great physical prosperity. They conclude, "You see, that is what happens when we become saved." But they fail to realize that God has set up types and figures in the Bible. **Old Testament Israel was part of an earthly story, an historical picture pointing to the spiritual meaning of what the New Testament church was to be, that is what it means to be a child of God.** The physical property of Old Testament Israel was an earthly story pointing to the heavenly meaning that believers in Christ become spiritually prosperous, copiously feeding their souls on the Bread of Life, which is Jesus Himself. The wine vats that were filled to overflowing in the Old Testament were a dramatic earthly story pointing to the plenteous flowing of the blood of Christ, for the complete payment for all of our sins. Whatever historical freedoms ancient Israel had represented the fact that in Christ we are free from the bondage to sin and Satan.

The problem is, however, that our sin-tainted minds prefer to go to these historical antecedents (which are meant by God to be just figures and types) and make them the very essence of the Gospel. That caters to our sensual nature. That caters to what all men want: political freedom, economic freedom, and good health.

But that is not the Gospel! If we try to make the Gospel fit the physical characteristics of the Old Testament figures, then we must also offer the sacrifices that were to be offered by the Old Testament believers. In other words, we are affectively denying the fact that Christ has come! In the New Testament we do not find any references teaching political freedom, economic security, or good health. The whole essence of the Gospel is spiritual freedom in Christ. Freedom from what? It is freedom from the wrath of God! It has nothing to do with the politics of this world! Simply stated, we have been translated out of the dominion of Satan. The law no longer can send us to hell. We are free in Christ. We have eternal life. That is the nature of the Gospel. That is the only message that we are to proclaim.

Now we have come to the third point that needs to be examined. We have already looked at the authority that structures and determines the Gospel, and we have looked at the message of the Gospel. Now we should examine the mandate of the Gospel.

In the most lucid fashion, God has decreed that we are mandated to bring the Gospel message to all the world: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). Jesus commanded this; it is not an option. It is not something we can do if it is convenient, or if we feel like it. It is an imperative command of the Bible that we are to go out into the world and preach the Gospel. We are Christ's ambassadors to this sin-sick world—Christ, as it were, making His appeal through us.

Remember, Jesus said that He came to seek and to save that which was lost (cf. Luke 19:10). He has people in China whom He has come to seek and to save. He has people in America whom He has come to seek and to save. He has people in Germany and Russia and in every nation of the world. We do not know who they are, but we know from the Bible that they are people who were already named in the Lamb's Book of Life from the very foundation of the world. So we know that God has obligated Himself to save these people.

The true ambassadors for Christ are the born-again believers. They are the only ones who understand the real nature of the Gospel. They have come face-to-face with the reality of hell, because they have learned to trust the Bible implicitly. They are the ones who have been given the marvelous task (which is a mandate as well as a fantastic privilege) to send the Gospel into the world. There are to be no alibis. We must do it by whatever means the Lord has made available to us.

But let us be very certain that we are bringing the Gospel of the Bible, and not the Gospel of Europe or the Gospel of the United States or the Gospel of Mexico or any other perverted Gospel. As long as we focus on the basic fundamentals, the true Gospel is absolutely common to every nation. It makes no difference what nation we are in. We all have the exact same spiritual need for the exact same spiritual antidote. We need to be set free from sin through the blood of Christ. Once we are free from sin, knowing that Christ has endured hell for us, then, even if we must live out the rest of our lives in a concentration camp, dying of beatings and starvation, we still have everything. Whether we are to merely exist like Lazarus as a beggar with only the dogs to lick our sores, or whether we live in a palace with all the blessings of this world, it makes no difference. If we are saved, we know that we have the greatest good that we could ever have.

The Bible also says that we are to love our neighbor as ourselves (Luke 10:27). But what does it mean to love our neighbor as ourselves? In John 13:14 Jesus said, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." That establishes the nature of the love we are to have for others. We are to love our fellow man as Christ has loved us.

What was the nature of Christ's love for you and me? Did He come to bring us economic security or political freedom or good health? Did He do any of those things for Lazarus (cf. Luke 16)? The answer is no. Absolutely no. In His love for us, He laid down His life. He endured the wrath of God, the equivalent of spending an eternity in hell, in order that we might have eternal life and not go to hell ourselves.

Jesus exhorted, "...love one another; as I have loved you..." (John 13:14). If Christ has desired eternal life for me to the extent that He went to the cross and endured the wrath of God that I might be saved, if that desire was the focal point of His love, then that desire must be the focal point of my love for others as well.

As we look at the world, the one thing we should see, the one terrible specter that should grip our souls, is hell grasping out for the lives of the unsaved of the world. Because most people die unsaved, at a rate of almost 200,000 a day, hell is getting its due. That is the truth that we should see. That is the truth that Christ saw when He went to the cross. In our love for our fellow man, we want to warn them: Don't you see it? Because of your sins, hell is coming and hell is real. But there is a wonderful way of escape through the Lord Jesus Christ. In my love for you, I want the very best for you. Sure, I could spend some money to help you in many ways. But if you die unsaved, even though your life may have been extended because you were given some antibiotics, or whatever, what difference does it make? You are still going to die, and after death comes the judgment. Can't you see it? If you will only become a believer in Christ, then your physical situation, your political situation, your health situation, is altogether unimportant. You are like Lazarus. You can still have the very highest good. You, too, can have salvation. To desire this for others is true love.

Notice that Jesus said, "Love your neighbor as yourself." But how do I love myself? What is the highest good that I could possibly desire for myself? Is it that I might have more physical prosperity? Is that the highest good for me? Not in any sense at all. In fact, it may even tempt me away from serving the Lord the way I ought. Well then, is it to be famous? Is it to have a name? Is it any of the things to which the world aspires? The answer is no. None of those things are the highest good. The highest good for me is what I should desire for others. So what is it? The one thing I need to be sure of is that I have been saved. That is, I must be sure that my sins have been paid for, so there is no possibility of going to hell when I die.

Can anyone living on the face of the earth possibly think that they are going to escape death? This world has been around for 13,000 years and, with only two exceptions (Enoch and Elijah), every human being that has ever walked the face of the earth has died-everyone. No one has escaped. This is in accordance with the Biblical rule that it is appointed unto men once to die and then comes the judgment (Hebrews 9:27). So this means that that is going to happen to me- unless, of course, the Lord comes first.

Therefore, if I truly love myself, I am not going to aspire for more of this world's goods. I am not going to aspire to have a little better place in this world. Because, in the measure that I desire those things, I am going away from the path that is the very best for me. My first and all-important concern must be that I am a child of God, that I am saved. Only then will I realize that all these other things are unimportant. It really does not make any difference how many clothes I have, what kind of car I drive, whether I even own a car, or what kind of situation I live in. These things really do not have any kind of lasting value at all.

As a matter of fact, God declares in **Romans 12:1**, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." In the Old Testament the Israelites were commanded to tithe, that is, give 10 percent of all their income. That is the way the priestly offices were supported. But in the New Testament God wants everything. The Old Testament tithe was just an example to us pointing to the fact that God wants everything. God is simply saying, "I want all of you, all of your possessions, all of your money, all of your energy, in order that your task as ambassadors of Christ may be done." That task is to present this precious Gospel of salvation to the world that is headed for hell.

Can we begin to see the truth more clearly? The Golden thread that runs through the Bible is the message of salvation. Any time we get off that thread, or focus, we can be sure we no longer have the Gospel of the Bible. We will have a gospel that has been designed in the minds of men, and we are going to get into trouble as we try to bring it to other nations of the world. A gospel that wrongly talks about economics or politics is going to be resisted, particularly by political authorities who rightly feel their rule is being threatened by political or social gospels.

Obviously, the true Gospel will also be resisted. It is reprehensible to man. Mankind does not like to be told that he is going to hell. No one wants to hear that. It is reprehensible to the mind of natural man to hear that there is nothing he can do to save himself. Such resistance can only be changed in the heart of those who become saved by crying out to God: "O God, have mercy on me, a sinner!" It involves having a child-like trust in Jesus Christ, who walked the face of the earth a couple of thousand years ago. It means my ego must be shattered. It shatters my self-respect. It shatters everything that I am.

But that is the only reason the Gospel should be reprehensible. May it never be that the gospel we present is resisted by the political authorities because we are preaching the culture and politics of a political nation. Such a gospel cannot be the Gospel of the Bible.

When we have become children of God, we have come to know that the highest good in our lives is that we are saved from the wrath of God; hell can no longer clutch at us. We are never going to have to stand before the Judgment Throne of God and answer for our sins. Christ has paid it all. We are covered by Him. We read in **John 5:24** that those who believe on Him do not come into judgment, but have passed from death unto life. And, in our love for others, that is the good we should earnestly desire for them. That is the message God has mandated us to faithfully bring to the whole world.

As we live out our lives as believers, faithfully obeying the command to bring the Gospel to the world, the Bible insists that we are to walk very humbly. Our example is the Lord Jesus Christ; we read of Him that He was meek and lowly. So it is that we should be ready to be reviled without reviling back again, be ready to take whatever is brought against us patiently, and be ready to give credit to anybody who wants it. Let someone else have the worldly honor. The child of God, who has become a citizen of Christ's Kingdom, is to walk humbly.

But why? Why are we to walk so humbly? First of all, because God has so commanded. Jesus, who came not only as our example, but also as our King, was meek and lowly. He emptied Himself of all His heavenly glory and took on the form of man, sinful, rebellious man. Then He became laden with our sins. Nobody has ever humiliated himself like the Lord Jesus Christ, as He established His Kingdom by going to the cross. We, who believe in Him, are in His Kingdom, and He is our King, ruling over us and commanding us to walk honestly and humbly. We also are to be ready to be humiliated. We are to be ready to walk as the most humble people on this earth.

Besides that, we walk very humbly because we cannot take any credit for our own salvation. It is nothing we can boast about. We cannot say, "Well, you know, the real story is that God saw me and saw that I was a little bit better than somebody else, and therefore, He decided to save me." No way! As Ephesians 2:1-3 indicates, we were dead in our sins. We were followers after Satan and after the lusts of the flesh like the rest of mankind.

It is only **God's mercy, it is only by God's grace that He saved us**. So we live out our believers' life saying, "O my, how is it possible that I can be a child of God, that I can have eternal life, so that I fear no man? No matter what happens to me, I know that the moment I die, I am going into the heavenly palaces, into glory with the Lord Jesus Christ, and I have got everything going for me. All I want to do is live out my life in service to Him. I really want to sacrifice my life, to lay it down on the altar of sacrifice. I am consumed with passion that others might hear the Gospel so that they, too, can know the wonderful salvation which God has so richly provided."

Don't we have a wonderful Savior? Don't we have a wonderful Gospel, when we really see what the Gospel is? We can just stand amazed before the glory of God as He glorifies Himself through this kind of Gospel. So let's be sure that we keep this Gospel message in the forefront of our thinking and in our hearts. If we find that at any time the gospel we bring begins to differ from the true Gospel, let us cry out to God, "O God, forgive me that I might have had something else in my head when I was trying to bring the Gospel, that I was trying to tailor it to my own lustful desires." The true Gospel is this: I want this wonderful salvation for everybody else, and because I know I have become saved, there is nothing else in this world I need for myself.

To Him be all glory and power and praise. Amen.

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