

Perverting The Gospel Of Christ

Introduction.

I. **Years ago there lived in a little village a man who had lost his health and wife.** All he had left of his family was one daughter and she remained single in order to take care of him. The doctor said it would help him to go to some health resort and stay several months. This he did leaving his daughter at home. On his return trip he sent his daughter a message which read "Papa Well On Board—Have Best Horse To Meet Him." The operator who received the message said: "It has been misspelled, that isn't what it means," so he made this change: "Papa Fell Overboard—Have Best Hearse To Meet Him." When they brought the message to the daughter, who was in poor health, her heart failed her and she died.

II. What caused the daughter to die?

A. The operator who changed the message. You say that is terrible. I agree, but I submit to you that there is something that is far worse than what happened in this story and that is to change the gospel on which man's eternal salvation depends. There are many people who would not think of doing what the operator did who do not hesitate for a moment to change the good news of Christ, the message of eternal life.

B. **Please listen as I read the words** of Paul that address the subject of perverting God's word. (Gal. 1:1-10).

1 Paul, an apostle (not from men, neither through man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead), 2and all the brethren that are with me, unto the churches of Galatia: 3Grace to you and peace from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, 4who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us out of this present evil world, according to the will of our God and Father: 5to whom *be* the glory for ever and ever. Amen. ASV

Listen carefully to what Paul now says.

⁶I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel; ⁷which is not another *gospel* only there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. ⁸But 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. ⁹As 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. ¹⁰For 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. ASV

I. **"Anathema"** - Paul says if anyone changes the gospel, "let him be anathema."

A. The word "anathema" according to Thayer's Greek Lexicon, means "Accursed, devoted to the direst woes." Paul was saying that the man who changes the gospel should be doomed to eternal punishment.

B. **From this we learn it makes a big difference what we teach and preach.**

1. One gospel is not as good as another as many people would have us believe. When we mix a little error

with the gospel, it is no longer “the power of God unto salvation,” but it is a message that destroys the souls of men. Mixing error with the gospel is like mixing a little poison with a glass of water. It will result in the death of those who partake of it.

2. This is why Jesus and the New Testament writers warned so strongly against false teachers. (Matt. 7:15; 24:4; Acts 20:28-30; 1 Tim. 1:3; 4:1; 1 Jn. 4:1; 2 Jn. 9).

II. Perverting The Gospel

A. At the time Paul wrote this Galatian epistle some of the Jewish teachers were attempting to change the gospel by binding circumcision and some of the other commandments of the Mosaical law on Christians.

1. They taught one must become a Jew and keep many of the Mosaical laws to be saved.
2. Paul fought against this perversion of the gospel. Paul said those who would do such are severed from Christ. (Gal. 5:4).

B. Not only did men pervert the gospel in the first century, but there are men today who pervert the gospel of Christ and lead countless souls astray.

1. Some are perverting the gospel by preaching that all men will be saved **regardless of what they do in life**.
 - a. They advocate the doctrine of **universalism**. This doctrine says God is so loving and forgiving that He could not condemn anyone. They believe all men, even those who reject Christ and live abandon lives, will be saved.

MAT 7:13 "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it.

MAT 7:14 "For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it.

b. Matt. 7:21-23; Jn. 3:16; 3:36

c. Hebrews 5:9

2. Others are changing the gospel by preaching that hell is **nothing more than a state or mind or the grave**.

- a. They negate the importance of proclaiming the gospel of salvation by saying there are no consequences of living a life separated from God.
- b. The Bible teaches hell is a place of conscious punishment where men will suffer for eternity. (Matt. 25:30, 41, 46; Rev. 20:10).

3. Others are perverting the gospel by saying **there is no devil**.

- a. They charge that the devil is a myth and joke about his alleged power.
- b. The Bible teaches Satan is a powerful spirit being. (Matt. 6:13; Rev. 12:9; 1 Pet. 5:8; Eph. 6:11).
- c. **One time a man, who denied the existence of the devil**, came up to a preacher and said, “I don’t believe in the devil.” The preacher looked at him keenly for a moment and said, “Don’t you now? Try

to resist him for a while, and you'll soon change your mind." Anyone who has ever really tried to resist Satan cannot deny his existence. He is constantly working on our hearts trying to lead us into sin and condemnation.

- d. When Satan tries to tempt us we should be **like the little girl** who was asked how she was able to resist Satan. She replied, "When Satan knocks at the door of my heart I just say, Jesus, won't you go to the door? and when Satan sees Jesus, he runs away every time." The strongest man that ever lived is not strong enough to meet Satan alone. Through Jesus we can conquer him. (Heb. 2:18).

4. Others alter the gospel by **denying the resurrection**.

- a. Some deny Christ's resurrection. Others accept Christ's resurrection, but deny the resurrection of Christ's followers. There were some in Christ's day who said the resurrection was already passed. They perhaps believed that the only resurrection is the one believers experience at baptism. (2 Tim. 2:18).
- b. Paul was very upset by this perversion of the gospel. He taught such should be delivered to Satan. (1 Tim. 1:20).
- c. He also wrote these words in 1 Corinthians 15. (1 Cor. 15:3,4).

1CO 15:12 Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

1CO 15:13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised;

1CO 15:14 and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain.

1CO 15:15 Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we witnessed against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised.

1CO 15:16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised;

1CO 15:17 and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.

1CO 15:18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

1CO 15:19 If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.

1CO 15:20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.

1CO 15:21 For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead.

1CO 15:22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive.

1CO 15:23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming,

5. Others change the gospel by maintaining the **living can be baptized in behalf of the dead**.

- a. They lift 1 Corinthians 15:29 out of context to teach this doctrine of vicarious baptism.
- b. Paul said, "If the dead are not raised at all, why then are they baptized for them?"
- c. In this chapter Paul was discussing the resurrection and refuting the arguments of the false teacher who

were teaching there was no resurrection.

- d. Paul was saying, “If there is no resurrection, why are they (the false teachers) being baptized in place of the dead ones.” It does not make any sense to take the place of the dead Christian soldiers in the army of the Lord if there is no resurrection and we are fighting a lost cause. He was not discussing baptism in behalf of someone.
 - e. This doctrine of vicarious baptism for the dead is clearly refuted by the New Testament. (Rom. 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:10).
6. Still there are others who change the gospel by **making laws where God has not made them.**
- a. For example, some argue that it is wrong to divide up into classes, such as we have on Sunday morning, because we have no example of it in the New Testament. This teaching is based upon the assumption that all examples are binding upon us which is not true.
 - b. **Not all examples are binding.**
 - a. There are optional examples in the Bible. (Acts 14:1; 17:28; 20:8, 9).
 - b. There are also binding examples in the Bible. (Acts 5:29).
 - c. Someone might ask, “**How do we determine what examples are not binding?**”
 - 1) It is very simple what was binding on the early Christians is binding on us and what was optional to them is optional to us.
 - 2) It regard to the Bible school question we have examples of Christians teaching in the homes, jails, synagogues and other places. There is nothing in the New Testament to indicate this is the only way it could be done. The Lord has simply commanded us to go into all the world and preach the gospel. We have the scriptural right to teach in any way the elders deem expedient. The Bible classes are an excellent way to teach everyone the soul-saving gospel on their own level.

III. **Pleasing God** - Paul closed our text by saying. (Gal. 1:10).

- A. Paul’s words remind me of **a musician who played before a great audience.** His sweet music thrilled the crowd so that everybody in the audience cheered - except one man. That one man’s failure to applaud caught his eyes and he went off stage, and wept like a baby. In an effort to console him, someone asked, “Sir, how is it that you have let one man’s failure to applaud bring you to tears?” The musician cried out, “That man was my teacher!”
- B. **Friends**, if we should gain the applause of the whole world, and fail to receive the applause of the Master Teacher and the Master of our lives, we are miserable failures. Our aim should be to seek the applause of God even if all men mistreat and blaspheme us.

Conclusion.

- I. Are you seeking to please God in your life? Are you a child of God? Are you walking in the newness of life?

II. If not, come and be baptized into Christ for the remission of sins. Come as we stand and sing the hymn of invitation.

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