

What gospel are you **really** believing? 7:19

What gospel do you “preach” to yourself and others with your actions and words?

We often say we believe one thing and yet live in a way contrary to what we say we believe. That is - our actions and words often point out or prove - that we really don't believe what we say we believe.

*For example: 1) Knew a little kid once who repeatedly said, “I believe I can fly, I know I can fly, I can fly.” But whenever I said, “ok, I really want to see you fly.” He would say – “oh not now”. Picked him up once and said I will give you some help and he cried. “Put me down.” He said he believed he could fly –but the reality of his life – said he really did not believe that he could fly. 2) Lance Armstrong – said for years, “I believe - my body is too sacred to me to poison it with steroids. He was accused for years and he denied and passed every test – til one day it was proven he had taken PED's or roids for years. He said he believed his body was too sacred for PEDs but the reality of his life over time said – I do not believe my body is too sacred for PEDs. 3) Recently, a famous pastor fell in a sexual scandal. He preached for years – Jesus died for your sins – there is forgiveness in Jesus. After being caught in an affair a good friend said, “there is forgiveness in Jesus. Come back to your family, make things right.” To which the Pastor said, “yes, but not for me.” He said he believed there was complete forgiveness for any in Jesus, but the reality of his actions and life to this day – say, I don't believe there is forgiveness for all in Jesus. **It does matter what you really believe?***

As we begin a new series today called “Broken Religion”, God begins by asking us a question: **What gospel are you really believing?** This is one of the primary questions God is asking in the whole of this book we will be going thru together called – Galatians. And, he is not just asking – what do you say you believe? He is asking – what gospel does your life say you believe? There is an urgency to his question. It is not a simple polite question he is posing; rather; He is shouting a warning – he is sounding an alarm in his question - His words.

Gal 1:6-9 (ESV) 6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— 7 not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed. **Accursed – condemned to hell for eternity**

*Sometimes people flash their lights at you to give you a heads up about a policeman with a radar gun up ahead. That's a simple heads up. No real danger – just a hey slow down if you are going 65 in the 30. But I read about a man in California who was standing on the highway in the fog at the risk of his own life stopping traffic. Why? A raging wild fire had swept down the hill and had consumed the road ahead just over the hill. In the fog – you couldn't tell the difference between smoke or fire and you would have driven right into it. This was a desperate attempt to save lives. This was shouting a warning – this was sounding an alarm. **God is shouting a warning here – sounding an alarm!** Why? **Is he warning us not to be hypocrites or liars?** I don't think so. Those are not actions God wants for our lives - but the warning here is for something so much more dangerous. What is it? We will see. But for now, know this: **God is shouting a warning out of care and love- not a heads up. This is a desperate plea to listen to His words!***

Reality, this whole book is a desperate plea to listen to His warning. And it begins with a question:

What gospel are you really believing? Or said another way: **What gospel do you “preach” to yourself and others with your actions and words?**

We will try to answer one main question today: **What gospel am I really believing? 6**

As we try to answer this question – let's be clear about what the word gospel means so we are all on the same page. We are not talking about a book (the Gospel of John.) We are talking about what that word “gospel” means in that title. **gospel** – (lit.) good news of a completed act that has rescued or redeemed from certain death.

Jesus borrowed the word from their culture to describe God's rescue or redemption of mankind. Gospel refers to how we are rescued or redeemed to be with God. Depending on the gospel we believe – how we are redeemed or rescued can change quite dramatically.

There are many gospels that have risen up over the centuries that are different than the gospel Jesus spoke – but the major distinguishing difference between all other gospels and the gospel of Jesus Christ, the crux of the issue, the main issue that sets apart all gospels – revolves around this idea or word we have already mentioned ...

Redemption *If we are going to answer the question – What Gospel am I believing – we must grasp redemption.* **redemption** (lit.) to be set free from slavery by another who pays the price of one's freedom.

As a slave, you could not set yourself free. Only another could free you by paying the ransom - redemption price.

In vs 3-4, God lays out His idea of redemption in the gospel of Jesus Christ

Galatians 1:3-4 (ESV) 3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age,

gospel of Jesus – God, by his own goodness, redeemed hopeless sinners through Jesus (set us free from the brokenness & judgment upon our sin by putting it on Jesus) - making us completely right & acceptable with God.

- The gospel of Jesus says our redemption is in Jesus alone. *In contrast to the gospel of Jesus ...*
- All other gospels say we can redeem ourselves.

Galatians 1:6-7 (ESV) 6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel – 7 not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. **grace – gift or favor given by one’s own accord – not earned, not to be repaid.**

- All other gospels say our situation is not hopeless. *Because of this evaluation of the situation ...*

- All other gospels say we just need to do a few things to make us and our situation better. *We may believe we need God’s help to make things better, but we functionally believe it is up to us to make things right with God – to make us acceptable.*

*After Eli throws an interception to put the Giants in a deep hole today, some announcer will say – let’s see if Eli can redeem himself. We say this in our culture – redeem yourself, myself - **because we all believe we can do something good to right a wrong - to make us good in our own eyes, before others eyes, and even before God’s eyes.***

* **The gospel of Jesus Christ says – our situation is so hopeless, we can only be redeemed or made completely right & acceptable before God by Jesus work.**

* **All other gospels say – our situation is not hopeless – I can redeem myself.**

How do you answer our question?

What gospel am I really believing? What gospel are you really believing? 11

How do you know which gospel you believe? *Here are 2 situations to help examine what you really believe.*

- This is a new year and you want to get closer to God (read below) – what do you do?
- you have been living your way, you know you haven’t been following God’s ways, you feel far from God -

Do you begin making a list of things you see as a sacrifice that will make you closer to God.

*1) You sacrifice your time: coming on Sundays again, joining a group. 2) You sacrifice your comfort: trying to love your neighbor and eating lunch with that guy at work. 3) You sacrifice your stuff: even thinking about giving/tithing. All of these things aren’t bad things. But, they are things when done only to get / earn God’s closeness and presence - are attempts at redeeming self. **This gospel – sacrifices to get God and His presence.***

The gospel of Jesus – says, it is by Christ’s sacrifice alone that we are brought close to God. Jesus Christ, 4 who gave himself for our sins to deliver us Our sacrifices don’t make us good or close to Him. Only when we rest in His sacrifice, his life and death for us – are we brought to God. This is how we are made right – become Christians, and this is how we taste and touch his ongoing presence. BELIEVE – His sacrifice brings me into his presence. Reading, praying, giving – are all things we do to enjoy His presence given by His sacrifice.

Which of these actions describes you? 1st) I believe I can redeem myself & my problems by my sacrifice. 2nd) – only Jesus sacrifice can redeem – bring me to God.

Let me give you another situation that may help us see which gospel you and I are believing.

- **What do you do when you hurt another person? What do you do first?**

Do you start doing things to make up for it? You punish yourself – you mope, you talk about how awful you are, and you start doing things you don’t like or want to do to make up for it. You don’t really confess and repent to God or them – you just start trying to fix it yourself (redeem it). Hoping your actions of punishing yourself will make you feel better before God and the one you have hurt. This is a tenant of a culture that believes in other gospels beside the gospel of Christ – that tenant says I have to be punished to make things right. Kid in the corner. Mom “what are you doing?” I was bad. He had punished himself. Cute – but a pic of our culture.

This pastor I previously spoke of – has spent the last two years, really beating himself up. He has recently come to the place where he said, “I think I have suffered enough for what I have done. It is time to move on in God’s grace.” Do you hear what he said? HE SUFFERED – so now he can move on. Is this your gospel – you suffer so you can make things right.

That is one way to respond. OR – We can respond by asking God's forgiveness trusting (believing) He will give it bc **Christ already** gave himself to deliver you from your sin? **Truth** – Jesus suffered – so we can have his grace, forgiveness, acceptance, love – so we can live and move on in His presence and love, so we can ask for God's forgiveness knowing he will give it – I'm forgiven bc of Christ's suffering. And we can ask others – knowing we can truly say we are sorry when we have been forgiven by **HOLY God.**

Which of these actions describes you? **The 1st – says I believe I can redeem myself and my problems.**
The 2nd – only Jesus redeems. 1st-another gospel / 2nd Jesus

Do you see the difference in the two now?

1st) All other gospels say we can redeem ourselves.

2nd) The gospel of Jesus says our redemption is in Jesus alone. **How do you answer our question**

What gospel am I really believing? You may say – well I see I am mostly believing another gospel – but what does it really matter? Isn't this just about me having a better understanding of theology or a better grasp of what God wants me to do? If it was that simple – wouldn't God just be saying – hey, heads up. Instead he is sounding an alarm. He is shouting, "Lookout – warning!" So ... **21**

Why is God shouting a warning – sounding an alarm?

Why is God shouting, "Do not believe another gospel!"

1) You cannot redeem yourself - and trying will leave you under God's eternal judgment. **No one – absolutely no one can be good or right or acceptable before God on their own.**

Galatians 1:3-4 (ESV) 3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age,

*** No matter how you sacrifice – you cannot make yourself right or acceptable before God.**

You could spend your whole life reading your bible, praying, giving, loving your neighbor, and doing countless other sacrificial things. They will look good – but they cannot make you good before the Father.

*** No matter how you punish yourself – you cannot make yourself right or acceptable before God.**

No matter how often you feel bad, no matter how much you admit you are not doing well, no matter how many times you try to punish yourself – you will not make yourself right or acceptable before God.

No amount of white paint can make a termite infested fence strong and healthy. No amount of make-up can make a cancer riddled mouth be healed. Our sin has left us broken and guilty before God. No amount of good sacrificial deeds can make our bad heart good enough – acceptable to God. No amount of personal punishment can make our guilty heart innocent. Beating yourself up – does nothing but leave you in pain – it doesn't make us acceptable before God and we know it. That's why God is shouting and this is not a heads up. God is shouting – all are accursed who preach another gospel – because all other gospels condemn you and I to hell – a life of eternal judgment a part from God.

Are you believing another gospel that says – your religious life will make you good? Do you really believe that you can redeem yourself? Answer the question – please! If you say – yes I do ...

GOOD NEWS – great news – Jesus was punished for you. He sacrificed his life so you could have his perfect and good heart and be made acceptable and right before God. Jesus alone redeems.

****"By a life I did not live, and by a death I do not die, I am redeemed." – C.H. Spurgeon****

BELIEVE in Jesus alone to redeem. How? 1) Confess 2) Trust

One of the reasons we exist as a church is for you. To help you know the acceptance & love of God thru the gospel of Jesus. You don't get his acceptance by changing or doing more – or not doing something bad. You get his acceptance by Christ's life & death on your behalf. Do you believe this gospel?

There is another reason God is shouting this warning – sounding this alarm ...

2) If you are redeemed by Jesus – deserting the gospel – will leave you full of consuming fear.

Gal 1:6, 10, 3 (ESV) 6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ

Note: You can desert Him, but God will not desert you. He rescued by His goodness (grace) – not yours! Believers need the gospel – just as much as unbelievers! Other gospel – earn-get / bad-lose!

Paul wrote this letter for God. We will learn more about him as we press into this book. He was a Jew who killed Christians because other men told him this would please God. Now – in the gospel of Christ, he is being hunted by those he was leading to kill Christians. Look at how the gospel is freeing Paul.

Galatians 1:10 (ESV) 10 For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.

His warning – when you desert the gospel – you will live in fear / approval of men – because you will return to believing your redemption your acceptance comes from what you do – not God. You will fear those in the body of Christ most – believing they affirm we are doing the right things to be redeemed.

Is this you? *Is your life marked by fear of others? Living for their approval, affirmation,atta boys!* God doesn't want you to live in this paralyzing fear. He wants you to know the peace of the gospel he talks about in Galatians 1:3 (ESV) 3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

How do you get this peace? Can we live in peace as fear comes?

It all depends on what gospel we really believe. What will you preach to yourself?

Believers need the gospel – just as much as unbelievers. WHY?

1) Confess – *(I am bad, I need to do better - I will not let this happen again.)*

- God I believe others approval is better than yours.
- God I believe you don't really approve of me.

2) Believe – *(I am stronger than others, I don't need their approval.)*

- God help me believe – that because of Jesus' sacrifice and punishment for me – it was enough for you to approve of me. Why? 1- Jesus took all my guilt. 2- I get all Jesus' perfect life.
- God help me believe as you love and approve of Jesus – you love and approve of me.

It matters – what we really believe. The pastor I told you about – He preached for years – the true gospel of Jesus – He alone redeems and His redemption gives us complete acceptance and forgiveness – no matter what.

He is struggling now to believe what he preached forever. He doesn't believe – no matter what.

This is the good news of the gospel – if this pastor has trusted Jesus with his soul (and I think he has) – then God is not done pursuing Him. The gospel that reached out and redeemed, rescued this man is still reaching and rescuing. If this is you – God will not give up on you.