

Martyrdom 2: The Gospel is Offensive

(9/21/25)

Christians aren't murdered for what we DO.

- Not because we feed the poor and clothe the homeless.
- Not for being nice, loving, or generous.
- Not for doing outreach, not for a robust kid's program, not for having a systematic approach to theology.
- Not because our pews are full or empty, not for our youth groups, not for the dynamic worship coming from our stages.
- Not because we have a weekly prayer group or Bible Study.
- Not because we Baptize.
- Not because we lay hands on people to pray whether to prophesy or because they're sick.

Christians are attacked (verbally or physically), arrested, jailed, assaulted, tortured, and murdered because of what we SAY.

[Heb 4:12 ESV] 12 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

And the most offensive and provocative thing we can say is the Gospel.

It's more offensive than coming against abortion, the LGBT lifestyle, or Marxism. It will trigger people more than talking about immigration, taxation, gun rights, or anything else.

TODAY I'm going to explain why.

Our understanding began last week when we revealed that *Jesus first coming AND His preaching of the Gospel was and still is the first step in an invasion*. God's Kingdom is invading the Devil's. Light is shining into the darkness of this world and the world can't absorb/comprehend it—it's being driven back.

The Devil realizes he's going to lose everything he's worked for. Despite killing Jesus, the Apostles, and millions more, he's still going to be defeated when the final stage of Jesus invasion begins: **the Second Coming of our Lord and Savior.**

When He comes back **He will no longer be the Isaiah 53 suffering Messiah**, He will be a Davidic King and Lord, riding forth to physically conquer all the nations of the world! He will be the Revelation 12 Rod of Iron Who shatters the nations like they were potter's vessels! Just before that the Devil will be thrown down to earth and he will be very angry, because he knows he only has a short time left before he's reduced to nothing.

The Gospel message is offensive to the devil and everyone who still listens to him because *it's the recruitment phase of the heavenly invasion*. Every person who repents and receives Jesus Christ as Lord becomes part of His invading army.

Yet there's another reason, a very personal one, that the Gospel is offensive and here it is:

It tells us that we need to die.

Here in the west, we exalt ourselves. We're proud of who we are, what we've accomplished, our identity. We don't want anyone else to tell us who we are or shape us in anyway. We pridefully want to be our own creations, made in an image that we created for ourselves and we want everyone—including God—to love us for our image. We desire and falsely believe that we're unique from everyone else.

Here is what the Gospel does, when it's shared the right way: **it displays the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ and reveals the absolute lack of it in us.**

Yes, you heard that correctly. Before repenting and receiving Jesus, **humanity has NO righteousness, NO goodness, and NOTHING that's redeemable.**

[Rom 3:23 ESV] 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

[Isa 64:6 NKJV] 6 But we are all like an unclean [thing], And all our righteousnesses [are] like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.

[Isa 53:6 NKJV] 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him [Jesus] the iniquity of us all.

The Gospel is offensive because it destroys our entire paradigm of life. It upends everything we believed to be true about ourselves and how the world works. The Gospel is offensive because, if that's true, we're presented with the biggest problem we've ever faced in our lives.

The problem is this: ***we've been deluding ourselves (and others have affirmed this delusion) that we're basically good people and that, if there is a God and heaven, we're likely going there.*** It dashes that to the ground and shows us the opposite: that we've been living in darkness for our entire lives and that our destiny lies not with God, but with the devil. It reveals that we're untethered from God and live separate from Him.

What's more is that if a major change doesn't happen, **we're going to follow Satan into destruction from which there is no return.** That we're on a sinking ship that's slowly going under, and we don't have a spot on the lifeboat like we thought. We're on a plane that's about to crash with no parachute.

If all that isn't enough to trigger us into Gospel Derangement Syndrome against the person verbally sharing it, this next part will: ***all of us must DIE to the self.*** The one we and others and society and our parents created. The one we thought was decent...not perfect, but good enough. The one we we're so proud of or even if we aren't proud of it, we told others they could take or leave it. The one we defend so passionately to the point where if anyone criticizes or corrects us, we accuse them of being "judgy" and tell them to leave us alone.

The Lord in His Bible calls this our **"old self" or "old man."** Who is our old self?

It's who we are up until Jesus forgives and saves us.

The Lord's Gospel says this part of us has to die.

[Rom 6:6-7 ESV] 6 We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. 7 For one who has died has been set free from sin.

[Gal 2:20 ESV] 20 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.

If we REALLY want to be Saved, forgiven, righteous, one with God, go to heaven, be resurrected then who ***it begins with the revelation that our old self was in sin, separate from God,*** and not a good person. That all the work we and others did to create and build it up is now dashed to pieces in the face of the holiness of God and the standard He puts forth.

We go on to realize that the only Person that can be called good, righteous, and holy are God and His Son, Jesus. That we don't come anywhere near them and never will. That all our efforts to prove we're good (before being Saved) amounted to NOTHING.

Let's pause for a moment. **Anyone confronted with this alone can and will be triggered:** whether to anger and hostility or being cut to the quick: humbled, afraid, and full of Godly sorrow that leads to repentance and therefore Salvation. Everyone will have 1 of those 2 responses and no one is ambivalent.

The person reacting with anger and hostility is that way because who likes being told they aren't good people? Who wants to hear that their old selves must die in order for them to pass from death to life? Who enjoys having a mirror held up to us because mirrors are brutal: they point out ALL our flaws.

In the face of this hostility, **the American Church has back peddled because we're so afraid of offending people.** I hear so many Christians say things like: *"unbelievers don't want to come to be Christians because they think they need to give up a bunch of stuff like cussing, getting drunk, and other things. I told them they don't have to, that they just need to accept Jesus!"*

Is that true? Let me clear this up. No unbeliever needs to make a list of all their sins and vices then repent of them one by one in order to be Saved. But they do need to realize that it's their old selves who are the ones indulging in all these things and that old self needs to die. It must pick up its cross, DENY ITSELF, and follow Jesus.

[Mat 16:24 ESV] 24 Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

God works on yours and my Sanctification after we're Saved, yes. It's a lifetime process, yes. Yet I say to you that when the Apostles wrote their letters to Gentile churches who weren't brought up with God's Word and the idea of sin, they were clear that Saved Christians needed to continue "mortifying the flesh" and turning away from sinful practices.

[Col 3:5 NIV] 5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.

We need to stop making the Gospel less offensive, *because its offensiveness separates the wheat from the chaff*, the men from the boys, and the women from the girls. When we leave out parts of the Gospel message, we are changing the Gospel message. Is there anyone in this room who wants to stand before Jesus one day and have to answer as to WHY we watered down, left out, or changed His Gospel?

How about we go Charlie Kirk the next time an unbeliever states they can't get Saved because of all they'll have to give up. Instead of going "no that's not true!" why don't we respond: "*Jesus gave up everything to save you and I, and now He's offering forgiveness and eternal life to us. Why wouldn't we take that? Would we rather remain on a sinking ship or crashing plane?*"

It's not enough to look at people and tell them Jesus loves them.

Conviction of sin makes the unbeliever realize that they're in trouble and in need of Saving. It confronts them with the reality that their old self isn't doesn't have a spot on the lifeboat and doesn't have a parachute to jump out of the crashing plane.

Those who are properly convicted of sin will answer "what must I do to be Saved?" whereas those who aren't will say what we're used to

hearing:

- "Stop shoving your religion down my throat."
- "Stop bashing me with your Bible."
- "I think I'm a good person already and don't need forgiveness."
- "If you're God sends people to Hell for disagreeing with Him, I want nothing to do with Him."

They don't want their old selves to die. They don't want to stop living the way they are. They don't want to change. And that's their prerogative. We're not going to argue or convince anyone into God's Kingdom. We just deliver the message then pray to the Holy Spirit to work on them. Their rejection & hostility isn't about us, it's about God and His Gospel.

Those who are ready will be cut to the heart and want to know how to be Saved. *They will experience what's called a godly sorrow:*

[2Co 7:10 NIV] 10 Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret,

What is this godly sorrow? One that's so powerful that we repent and get Saved?

It's the realization that we put Jesus on the Cross. That an innocent man died for a sinful one: ME.

Here's an example: **you want to go camping**, but the local forest rangers have blocked off the forest because they claim there's a man-eating bear in the woods. The bear has already killed several people and has yet to be caught or shot.

But you REALLY want to camp so you ignore the signs, the fence, dodge the forest rangers and the warnings and head out into the woods with your tent. Your faithful dog Fido comes with you. That same night while you and Fido are sitting around the campfire, the bear attacks! Its sights are set on YOU as its next meal! You can't get away because it's faster than you. You can't fight it: it's much bigger and stronger. As the bear charges and a painful death is imminent, might you think: *"I shouldn't have ignored the warnings! I should have stayed home! What a fool I am, and now I'm going to die!"*

Just as the bear closes the gap, Fido charges forward and throws himself between you and the bear. The dog has always loved you, been 100% loyal and protective, and now he's proving it. Your faithful dog buys you the time to run and escape...but gives his life so that yours would be saved....

Even though you're safe now, **how are you feeling about the fact that your INNOCENT dog**—who never sinned against anyone his entire life and, if anything, was only good to you—*died in your place?* Not just in your place, but BECAUSE of you? You're the one who made a foolish decision to camp anyway knowing a dangerous bear was there. You're the one who ignored the warnings, the fences, the signs and went camping anyway because you wanted to. **Might you feel...convicted of your sin? Cut to the heart?**

An innocent Man Who never sinned and only did good went to the Cross and died because of me. Because of the bad decisions I made, the people I hurt, my rebellion, my ignorance, and my indulgences.

His name was Christ Jesus.

I've heard people say that if aliens ever landed, it would upend all the world's religions, forcing them to rethink and reject whatever they've been taught. That's already happened. When Jesus began His public ministry, He greatly offended people when He said "He came down from Heaven" and "was sent by His Father" to preach His Gospel and do His will. For the last 2000 years, Jesus and His Gospel have already upended everything and forced people to rethink and even reject what they were taught.

Jesus is the ONLY way to God the Father! The only way to be forgiven, saved, and sealed for the resurrection. What about the other religions? Jesus said “I am the way, the truth, and the life and no one comes to the Father except through Me.” (John 14:6). He also said this.

[Jhn 10:7-11 ESV] 7 So Jesus again said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. 9 I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. 11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

Just as my bad decision inspired my loyal dog to throw himself at the bear, **my sin inspired Jesus to choose the nails, the crown of thorns, and death.**

[Rom 5:8-10 NIV] 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! 10 For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

Now, after all that, ***is the time for the unbeliever to hear “Jesus loves you.”***

NOW is when we tell them that, because Jesus is a God full of grace, mercy, and love that **He’s offering us His place on the lifeboat.** He’s giving us His parachute on the crashing plane.

“But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (Isaiah 53:5-6)

“God made him [Jesus] who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Corinthians 5:21)

“He himself bore our sins’ in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; ‘by his wounds you have been healed.’” (1 Peter 2:24)

“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit.” (1 Peter 3:18)

“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written:
‘Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole/tree/cross.’” (Galatians 3:13)

“He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.” (1 John 2:2)