

Truth Bombs – Only One Gospel

10/24/21

Galatians 1

Sunday AM

What is TRUTH? LBH – in our world of spin, truth has fallen on hard times. In fact, there are those in the “know” who believe you can’t *handle the truth*.

Yet, *truth is essential to life*. Jesus said, *the truth sets people free*. It serves as a light to expose *darkness*, provide *guidance*, and inspire *hope*. Truth is what we hang our lives on; so, it must never become relative – that is, *left up to each person to decide for themselves*.

So, yes! *Truth has fallen on hard times*. For whatever reason, too many of us struggle w/ truth. Whether it’s accepting/telling it, truth has become way too elusive.

Consider the Covid debacle. B/c of the political spin and personal agendas, conspiracy theories abound. All b/c it appears the truth has been tampered w/ leading to ½ truths – **½ truths are always viewed as full lies**.

This is why in a courtroom the bailiff asks the persons taking the stand to put their hand on the Bible and *swear to tell the truth, the WHOLE truth, and nothing but the truth, so help them God – b/c for truth to be truth, you have to have the whole truth*.

By definition, truth is a fact, belief, or experience that can be verified/substantiated b/c there’s clear, credible evidence to validate the claim.

Truth is the single currency of the mind that helps us to discriminate b/w objective/subjective reality – that is, what is true/false. But also, what’s right/wrong, and what’s good/evil – b/c incumbent to truth is a sense of morality. *This is why truth is so important*.

In philosophy, there are (4) factors used to determine if something is true – *congruence, consistency, coherence, and usefulness*. That is:

- Is this fact, belief, experience *congruent w/ other experience*? IOW – does it fit the facts. In principle, it is verifiable w/ what we know to be accurate.
- Is this fact, belief, experience *internally consistent*? IOW – Is it free of contradictions w/in itself? Does one part of the story contradict another part of the story?
- Is this fact, belief, experience *coherent w/ other external things considered true*? That is, does it stand up to scrutiny against what is known to be established truth – whether scientific, moral, relational, etc.
- Is this fact, belief, experience *useful* – that is, is it helpful? Does it work for the whole or just for me?

WTM – today, we’re starting a new series entitled, *Truth Bombs*. A **TB** is a fact/piece of knowledge that has the potential to rock a person’s view of the world. It’s a truth so profound, you need to take notice and consider its impact. A **TB** can often be a truth we don’t want to hear/see b/c, if true, it’ll require that we change the way we view and live life.

In Paul’s letter to the churches in the region of Galatia in Asia Minor, he addressed a number of **TB** worth our attention. **The first TB is there’s only ONE Gospel**.

There’s only **ONE** way to God – and only Jesus is God’s way for salvation. Any other way is a false gospel!

Grace/peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God, to whom be glory forever. I am astonished you are so quickly deserting the One who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel – which is no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God’s curse! Galatians 1:3-8

As Paul opens this letter, he offers w/ a clear/concise statement of what we call the **Gospel**. The term **gospel** means **good news** referring to the good news that God so love the world He gave Jesus to die on the cross so that all of mankind could be rescued/redeemed by His loving/sacrificial death on the cross – if we’d believe and receive God’s gift of grace.

But before we look at the TRUE Gospel given to us by God thru Jesus – we need to consider the different gospels that continue to get in the way of God’s truth.

I **ANOTHER** Gospel

I’m astonished you’re so quickly deserting the One who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel, which is no gospel at all

Contextually, Paul was troubled some false teachers, known as **Judaizers**, were leading God’s people astray by spreading a bad gospel contrary to the true Gospel.

Sadly, this occurs too often. **SEE** – in any false gospel, 1 of 3 things occurs: (1) The truth is **twisted** to make it say what it was never meant to say. (2) Something is **added** to the truth to distort/change the truth into a lie; or (3) Something is **subtracted** from the truth leaving out essential elements.

In this case – the Judaizers were **adding** to the truth. They’d say – *Faith is needed, Jesus is good, the cross is the starting line, but it’s not enough to cover your sin or get you into heaven. You ALSO need religious accessories like baptism, circumcision, fasting, and Sabbath worship.* They were spreading a conflicting gospel of **legalistic grace** – which is no gospel at all.

This happens w/in some denominations today where there are some fishy ideas being added to grace that are twisting/distorting to the truth. One denomination requires water baptism, while a few others require good deeds. And don’t get me started on cults like JW, the Mormons, or Christian Science.

W/in the Christian faith, I think there are (3) gravely misleading teaching leading people away from God.

A **PROSPERITY** Gospel

Better known as **name-it-claim-it** – where God gets treated like He’s a *divine vending machine* whose sole purpose for existence is to serve at the beck/call of His creation. It’s the belief that if you exercise enough faith and give enough money, God will bless you w/ earthly wealth, possessions, and influence. **After all, don’t those w/ the most toys win – isn’t that Biblical?**

This brand of gospel consumes many good-hearted professing Christians who’ve been duped by the desires of the flesh, the American dream, and a handful of charlatans – who’ve manipulated them so they can line their own pockets – all in the name of Jesus! But it’s all a lie! It’s all a false GOSPEL!

B QUID PRO QUO Gospel

Quid Pro Quo – means *something for something*. It's used to describe a fair/equitable trade. It carries the idea of trying to bargain w/ God. **It goes like this** – *God, if you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours. If you'll get me out of this mess, get me this job, give me a mate, help me win the lottery – I'll do this for you.*

Come on! Who needs a sovereign, holy God when you can beg/barter w/ the Creator for your place in life.

C CHRIST W/OUT COMMITMENT Gospel

This is the oxymoron of *convenient Christianity* – and it's running rampant in the church today. In too many churches, *the gospel is getting dumbed down to help people feel good about themselves in their lostness and carnality*. It's a brand of Jesus that allows churchgoers to hear the **Word** on Sunday, but live like the **world** Monday thru Saturday. It's a *bad* gospel that caters to religious whiners.

It reminds of a WY State Park – *Bridges Wilderness Area*. It's a wilderness area for hikers/campers. The park service, hoping to provide a better experience for their visitors, made the mistake of soliciting comments. Here are some actual comments hikers turned in: (1) Trails need to be wider so people can walk while holding hands. (2) Please avoid building trails that go uphill. (3) Can you do something about the bugs, leeches, spiders, and spider webs. (4) A deer came into my camp and stole my jar of pickles. Can I be reimbursed? **REALLY!**

Folks – Christ is COMMITMENT! If anyone tries to tell you differently – it's a lie from the pit of hell. Do you remember what Jesus said to His disciples?

If anyone wants to be my disciple, they must deny themselves, take up their cross daily, and follow me.

II The ONE True Gospel

who gave Himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God...

So, Paul writes to set the record straight and to insure they understand the simplicity of the ONE true gospel. His objective thru-out Galatians is to help us see:

Jesus + Anything = **NOTHING**
Jesus + Nothing = **EVERYTHING**

Notice the last 1/3 of the sentence – *according to the will of God* – it tells us that salvation is God's idea.

A God THOUGHT It

Salvation isn't some scheme devised by man, it's the *initiative* of God from all people. See Ephesians 1:4-7:

For (God) chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love, He predestined us to be adopted as His sons thru Christ, in accordance w/ His pleasure and will – to the praise of his glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the One He loves. In Jesus, we have redemption thru His blood the forgiveness of sin...

This tells us that salvation was **PLANNED** by the Father. God decided the cross was to be the single means by which He'd reconcile His fallen creation.

- The Father Chose **HOLINESS** as the Measure

IOW – God chose that those who’d receive Him would become holy/blameless in His sight thru the finished work of Jesus on the cross. Thus, *we are set apart to live as those who’ve been set apart.*

- The Father Chose **ADOPTION** as the Method

From the start, God planned at salvation that His followers would be adopted into His family. Paul’s word choice refers to the ***Roman adoption*** process.

In Roman adoption, the person adopted had all the rights of a legitimate son in his new family and lost all rights in his old family. In the eyes of the law, he was a new person w/ a new identity. So new, all debts and obligations connected w/ the previous family were abolished as if they’d never existed.

This is what God has done for us. As people born into the family of Adam, we were born into the power and penalty of sin – dead in our trespasses – condemned to eternal separation. That is, **UNTIL God**, thru Jesus, took us out of Adam’s family and adopted us into His family – wiping the old away, making all things new.

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. The old is gone; behold all things become new. 2 Corinthians 5:17

It’s b/c we’ve been adopted into God’s family!

- The Father Chose **JESUS** as the Means

In Jesus, we have redemption thru His blood the forgiveness of sins...

From the start, God decided **Jesus on the cross was God’s sole means of forgiveness** – there is no Plan B.

Salvation is to be found thru Jesus alone; in all the world there is no one else whom God has given who can save us. Acts 4:12

B Jesus **BOUGHT** It

Christ bought us w/ His blood to set us free from the Law... As it is written, “Curse is anyone who hangs on a cross... b/c of the price Jesus paid, the good things God promised to Abraham are now available to all.

In the Roman Empire, slavery was an accepted institution. Slaves were bought and sold like livestock. It’s believed that at the height of the empire, there were some 6+ mil. slaves. In Roman law, there was a provision for any slave to be set free so long as the buyer paid the purchase price. This was called ***apolutrosis*** – the word Paul uses here for ***redemption***.

Spiritually speaking, we’re all slaves to sin and prisoners of condemnation. Sin is our master and we can’t escape its bondage. **To be released, someone willing, worthy, and able had to pay our ransom.**

Enter Jesus – *For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.* Mark 10:45

IOW – For our sake, Jesus stepped out of heaven into flesh to pay our ransom in full – and the price of our redemption was His blood shed on the cross.

God made Him, who knew no sin, to become sin for us, that we may be made right w/ Him. 2 Corinthians 5:21

So, **at the cross**, Jesus purchased our redemption w/ His blood. He bought us back from our sin and set us free into His forgiveness thru grace.

And this is the GOSPEL – God the Father sent His Son (Jesus) to die on the cross so we all can be forgiven of our sin and rescued into an eternal relationship w/ Him. Nothing more – nothing less.

C Faith CAUGHT It

The question is – what are you going to do w/ this good news? How are you going to respond to this Gospel?

For it is by grace you've been saved, thru faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast. Ephesians 2:8-9

Grace is God's free gift of life we neither deserve nor can earn. Faith is our response to God's offer of grace. Each of us must decide for ourselves what we're going to do w/ Jesus and His cross. ***For either the cross is everything or the cross is nothing.*** Either the work of Jesus on the cross is the ONLY thing that can save us, or we're hopeless and nothing can save us.

But make no mistake – there's no other mechanism other than the cross than can exchange God's wrath on sin for His forgiveness. There's no amount of good works, there's no amount of religious activity like baptism or circumcision – there's nothing other than His sacrificial death that can rescue a lost sinner from eternal condemnation. Either the cross is sufficient or we have no hope. Jesus is the only way, the only truth, and the only life – and no one, not even one, can come into a relationship w/ the Father except thru Jesus!

There is only **ONE** Gospel. God THOUGHT it. Jesus BOUGHT it – the question is – by faith... have you CAUGHT it.

TAKEAWAYS

While there appears to be several ways to know God, there is only ONE Gospel – and only Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life.

Always remember that Jesus plus anything equals nothing – but Jesus plus nothing equals everything.

NEXT STEPS

1 Spend time this week in your quiet time or with another person discussing these GROW questions.

G – What is your definition of truth?

R – Read **John 14:6**. What does it mean that Jesus is the only way, the only truth, and the only life?

Q – Discuss the following question – If you can get to heaven by any other means than the cross, then why did Jesus have to die on the cross?

W – Take time this week to reflect on the meaning of the Gospel in your life. When did you first hear it? When did you accept it and put your faith in it?

2 Take time to pray for a family member, friend, or colleague that you know has either never heard or receive the good news of the Gospel.