

John 14:6 | The Exclusive Gospel

Congregational Reading

Jesus tells about His death and resurrection.

Matt. 16:21-23 'From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you." But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."

Prayer.

Responsive Reading.

Q16: What is sin?

A16: Sin is rejecting or ignoring God in the world He created, rebelling against Him by living without reference to Him, not being or doing what He requires in His law – resulting in our death and the disintegration of all creation. (1 Jn. 3:4)

Q17: What is idolatry?

A17: Idolatry is trusting in created things rather than the Creator for our hope and happiness, significance and security. (Rom. 1:21, 25)

Q18: Will God allow our disobedience and idolatry to go unpunished?

A19: No, every sin is against the sovereignty, holiness, and goodness of God, and against His righteous law, and God is righteously angry with our sins and will punish them in His just judgment both in this life, and in the life to come. (Eph. 5:5-6)

Q20: Is there any way to escape punishment and be brought back into God's grace/favor?

A20: Yes, to satisfy His justice, God himself, out of mere mercy, reconciles us to Himself and delivers us from sin and from the punishment for sin, by the Redeemer, Jesus Christ. (Is. 53:10-11)

Prayer.

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"Jesus said to him "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."

Intro:

Q: Is the Gospel exclusive or is the Gospel inclusive? I would say that if you take the time to consider this, you would have to agree that a person's position on this matter is Essential in their view of Christianity.

Is the Gospel of Jesus Christ an exclusive message or is it an inclusive message.

Let me look at this question with regards to two places in the Bible.

Pre-law and Post-Law.

'they become a law unto themselves'

There are people that are saved in the OT, pre-law, pre-Exodus 20, and there are people that are saved post-law, post-life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Is there a difference in how these people are saved?

1. How does The Pentateuch express God's salvation? Is it exclusive or inclusive?
2. In the Epistles: Do Paul, Peter, James, Jude present an exclusive message or an inclusive message?

The Pentateuch.

Noah. Was the situation with Noah, the salvation of him and his family – was that exclusive or inclusive? Looks pretty exclusive. God saves 8 people and drowns the entire rest of the world. The largest holocaust in human history. Estimated a few hundred million people in the world at that time. That's about as exclusive as it gets.

Abraham.

'Abraham, I am your shield, your exceeding great reward' – out of nowhere God reveals Himself to Abraham and establishes a covenant with Him. That covenant was to create a nation of God's people through Him. Is that exclusive or inclusive. That's pretty exclusive.

Isaac and Ishmael.

Isaac becomes the son of the promise, the son of the free woman as Paul puts it in Galatians. Ishmael is the son of the bondwoman. There is a selection differentiated between the two people. Who makes the selection? God does. God promises goodness to Ishmael but He does promise saving grace.. He promises blessing and protection in common grace but not the exclusive covenant.

Jacob and Esau.

'Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated' Malachi 1. Rom. 9:13

Jacob is established by God with numerous blessings. An incredible blessing is seen in his mid-life between Jacob and Laban where God blesses him with an incalculable amount of live stock. Jacob received the birth right instead of Esau. Was this inclusive? Not at all.

The twelve tribes of Israel/ Jacob's sons.

Completely selective. Absolutely determined.

Moses. Tell them that **'I AM sent you'**

Does God select Moses to co-lead? No. God selects Moses and places this requirement directly upon his shoulders. God selects Moses exclusively for an exclusive mission to lead the Israelite captives free from slavery.

Joshua.

The Promised Land. There is land God has promised to His people. Is this land an inclusive right or exclusive. Apparently it is exclusive. God commanded the Israelites to kill every occupying people group in the land.

2 Kings. 19:35 'the angel of the LORD went out and struck 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians' – was that exclusive or inclusive.

I think it is fairly obvious that the work of God, pre-law was exclusive in its nature and application.

I'm not going to outline the **exclusive nature of Israelite History and Prophecy** because the breath of that would be too much for a sermon, but suffice it to say, the law was exclusively given to the Israelites, exclusively applied to the Israelites, and the blessings that followed were exclusively applied to the Israelites (ref. Deut. 28, blessings and curses).

The Epistles. What is the instruction to the church about exclusivity and inclusivity in regards to the Gospel.

The Ministry of Reconciliation.

2 Cor. 5:11-21 'knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. But what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience. We are not commending ourselves to you again but giving you cause to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance and not about what is in the heart. For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died, and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.'

From now on, therefore, we regard no one/evaluate no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded/evaluated/considered Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.'

We evaluate, but it is not according to the flesh. Christianity is exclusive but it is not as the world is exclusive.

How you evaluate has to do with an exclusive position. So how do we evaluate? How do you determine whether

a. **Predestination/Election.**

-Paul.

Rom. 8:29 'those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ'

Rom. 8:30 'those whom He predestined He also called, and those whom He called He also justified, and those whom He justified He also glorified.'

(Called. How was Noah selected? How was Abraham selected? How was Isaac, Jacob, Joseph selected? They were called exclusively by God. How was Moses selected?)

Eph. 1:5 'He predestined us for adoption to Himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will' (pre-destined, this was done previously. Long

before you begin making decisions. Phil 1:6, 'He who began a good work in you')

The Elect. (Selection, Choice, Exclusive)

Rom. 9:11 'though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad – in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of Him who calls'

Rom. 11:7 'the elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened.'

Rom. 11:28

-Peter.

1 Pet. 1 'Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who are elect exiles' (the letter is written as an encouragement and instruction to those who God has selected)

2 Pet. 1:10 'be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election'

Matt. 24:22 'for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short'...'if possible, even the elect'...'angels will gather His elect' (3x in the Olivet Discourse)

-James.

James 2:5 'has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which He has promised to those who love Him?' (God clearly hasn't chosen everyone.)

-Jude.

Jude 1:1 'to those who are called'

Now that's a little bit of a survey of the exclusivity of the Christian faith. Let me circle back to this story that I came across.

Holden Village, Lake Chelan, Wa. 1990.

Religious Pluralism conference with regard to the question of; Is the Gospel of Jesus Christ exclusive or inclusive?

This was a weeklong conference of Lutheran pastors in Holden Village, Lake Chelan, Wa.

Dr. Prasanna Kumari gave the keynote address for the conference. Stating in a sermon 'Christ is the only way to the Father – for Christians; but there are other ways for those who are sincere in other religions and of other convictions. For Jesus is very inclusive in His spirit.' P. 826, Frederick Brunner, Commentary on John

So let's get this straight. For Dr. Kumari, sincerity is the key to the entrance into Heaven.

So let's consider that in light of the past two chapters of John. Was Caiaphas sincere in his private conspiracy to kill Jesus? Yes. Caiaphas was wholly sincere in his desire to have Jesus executed.

Was Judas sincere in his betrayal of Jesus? Yes. Judas was completely sincere in his desire to betray Jesus.

Sincerity does not guaranteed authenticity. Sincerity does not secure accuracy. The statement by the Lutheran pastor is clearly false and a compromise to the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The conference in Holden Village continued in breakout Bible studies where the concept was explored further; is the Gospel of Jesus Christ exclusive or inclusive?

The illustration was given, that Yes Jesus is exclusive in the vertical beam of the cross. His exclusive nature goes directly to heaven in a straightline fashion. But the horizontal beam, oh that is the beam of inclusivity. That is a beam that includes everyone in the whole world.

Well that's additional problematic, because just feet away from that horizontal beam did the thief on the cross, mock, and jeer, and insult Jesus Christ. On the other side was thief of similar sin, sincere in his sin as well.

But a completely distinct submission to the Lord of Heaven and Earth.

Is the Gospel Inclusive. Absolutely not.

It is not inclusive by logic. It is not inclusive by reason. It is not inclusive by circumstantial evidence. It is not inclusive by self-evident means. It is not inclusive in the History of Christian dogma. It is not inclusive in the revelation of Scripture. It not inclusive in the pre-law example of the Patriarchs and it is not inclusive in Jesus expression of the Gospel or the instruction of the Gospel in every single epistle.

The Bible oozes with an exclusive message that there is one way to Heaven, there is one truth of Heaven, and there is one life given to us from Heaven.

Eph. 4:9 'what does it mean that He ascended except that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things'

Jesus Christ is the only eternal being to penetrate the Divine bearer between God and man to give us a direct revelation of God.

'He gets us' movement.

The Rebel.

'a rebel took to the streets. He roamed the hood and challenged authority' – all while videoing the examples of gang behavior and common thuggery. The twisted at the end of the video to be related to Jesus as a means of love. 'He gets us'

They promote videos of various apparent lifestyles in society as if those lifestyles are likened to the same persecution and societal dissonance that Jesus endured.

Heres some of the trouble with this.

1st, Jesus was a first and all-time revelation to mankind of God. He was not a revolutionary. He was not attempting to overthrow the government (the governments are His anyways, Pilate 'you would have no authority unless it came from God')

2nd, its been 2000 years Jesus the revelation of God to mankind. We are not in need of a new revelation of orthodoxy. That's what these movement is subtly suggesting. People of abberant lifestyles are beign judged wrongly. They are beign systemically mistreated, and at the core of it all these people are really just Jesus loving, Christ-like people.

The Dinner Party.

Promotes the idea that Jesus is inviting everyone to a feast and that the reason He invites everyone to the feast is because He is accepting of all people and all lifestyles. And subtle take-away is that Andy religious formality, and religious dogma is to be rejected. Because Jesus was not dogma.

The influencer.

Claiming that if you're cancelled for your views of anti-authority and rebelling against the establishment then you must be walking in the same footsteps of Jesus.

These things undermine the exclusivity of the Gospel.

D.A Carson states the exclusiveness of the Gospel this way.

'The exclusiveness of the Gospel is directed in at least two directions. First, it is constrained by the salvation-historical consciousness of the Evangelist.' In other words, a person's response to Jesus Christ represents their position in the Gospel.

Secondly 'even if John's language utilizes metaphors and images common amongst the religions of the Roman world and the well attested in diaspora Judaism, he does not mean for a moment to suggest that Christianity is one more religion among many. '

Jesus DOES NOT suggest that He is the best way to God. He directly states, He is the only way to God.

'I am the way, the truth, and the Life' – do not let your heart be troubled.

Simon Magus. The Chief Heretic.

I. I Am.

Εγώ εἰμι/ego eimi – an identity statement

This gets at the core identity of Jesus.

a. Exegetical.

b. Biblical.

I am the bread of life.

Jn. 6:35, 41, 48, 50

I am the Light of the world.

Jn. 8:12

I am the door of the sheep.

Jn. 10:7, 9

I am the Good Shepherd.

Jn. 10: 11-12

I am the Resurrection and the Life.

Jn. 11:25

I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Jn. 14:6

I am the True Vine.

Jn. 15:1, 5

c. Systematic.

d. Historical.

II. The Way.

a. Exegetical.

b. Biblical.

The Early Church.

Acts.

c. Systematic.

d. Historical.

There **error and heresy of Ecumenicalism**. The inclusive Gospel. The multiple ways to heaven approach.

The... 'hey were all really just saying the same things, so lets all get along, forget this doctrine stuff. That boring, that's fundamental, that's too dry.' Let's be more into the spoken word than the written word.

By the way, **rhema and logos** are more liken to synonms than they are distinct forms of revelation. Rhema is the Greek work for speaking, Logos is the written word. But heres the trouble, if a message is to be recorded it has to be written and it a message is to be reiterated over time, that written message has to be spoken. It's just illogical to claim to separate the spoken and written word as if they are distinct.

Heresy, Error, and Schisms.

Marcion heresy. Docetic heresy. Gnostic heresy. Montanism.

Each of the NT epistle address these heresies in one way or another. And the early church fathers worked exhaustively to address these heresy.

These heresies exist even today. 'nothing is new under the sun' Eccl.

III. The Truth.

Exegetical.

Biblical.

Systematic.

Historical.

IV. The Life.

Exegetical.

Biblical.

Systematic.

Historical.

V. No one comes to the Father but through Me.

Exegetical.

Biblical.

Systematic.

Historical.