

The True Gospel: Salvation by Faith Alone in Jesus Christ | Avoid False Gospels

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[0:00] The Gospel. I know at communion time it's a great time to be reminded of the Gospel.! I like to call it the Gospel in a nutshell.

And of course at one recent communion time we saw someone trust the Lord! As the Gospel was articulated, as we heard the Gospel. So it's a great time to reflect upon it and to understand the power of God unto salvation.

Why does the Gospel matter? The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth. It's vital that we get it right then, isn't it?

That we understand the Gospel. Literally the good news is the meaning. The Gospel, the good news. What it is. And it's also good to know about some false Gospels to avoid.

I shared a post on media, social media, about false Gospels to avoid. And I was surprised when I shared this, it was someone else's post. When I shared it, it generated quite a bit of interest.

[1:04] There was around 70 comments. And it's something people can get a bit stirred up about. And you look at these false Gospels which we'll talk to.

There's some good principles here. Good works. That's a good thing. Surrender. That's a good thing. Submission. Lordship. Turning from sin.

They're all good things. Good things. But when it's confused with salvation, it's confusion and error. So just to touch on some of that, to explain what the Gospel is and to know it for sure.

We can badly miss the mark when we teach false ideas about salvation. We want to avoid that. So let's take a look firstly at these false Gospels and then again to underline the true sound Gospel. Number one. Works-based salvation. Such a view teaches that salvation requires good works to earn or to prove salvation.

[2:09] Certain behaviours. Some would say we have to have some kind of works, some moral behaviour to be saved. Of course, lots of religions teach good moral behaviour.

And nothing wrong with good moral behaviour. Absolutely, we want that. But some teach that we need good works like charity, church attendance, moral living to secure salvation or prove it's genuine.

As if it's something that we have to do. Question is though, how do we measure that? How much good works is enough? Of course, we would all agree that good works are important in the Christian life.

But they are not the basis of salvation. Otherwise, there's lots of good people, morally good as they would reckon it. But of course, we know all have sinned. And no one's good enough.

We know that's very clear in the Word of God. And good works are not, not, ever not the basis of salvation. The Bible's very clear that salvation is a gift.

[3:14] It's repeated time and again. It's not a wage that we earn. God wants us to live right, to bear fruit. But as far as salvation goes, our works are not what saves.

Faith is. All right. So I know one of our soul winners likes to demonstrate it. Maybe Brother Rodney, come forward. I'm going to use you as a guinea pig. Let's give Rodney a clap. Here's the bunny.

Oh, no, the guinea pig. And so, Rodney, just pretend I'm witnessing to you about salvation. And I say, look, salvation is a free gift. It's like if I give you this Bible, okay?

You don't have to say, oh, how much do I owe? How much do I pay to buy that Bible? Look, it is worth a lot of money, Rodney. But you can have it for free. Mind you, I want it back afterwards. You can have it for free.

It's a free gift, okay? But mind you, I know someone likes to say this to demonstrate it. You can have it for free, but you've got to wash my car as well, all right?

[4:17] Yeah, I need you to wash my car. It's free, but look, there's GST, you know. I need you to pay a dollar for it, all right? It is free, but you've got to pay for it, all right?

Okay? So there you go. Thanks, Rodney. So I'm just trying to demonstrate the point that with salvation, no, it's free. It's a free gift. There's no strings attached to it.

And you don't have to earn it, deserve it. You don't have to go and wash the car or do some work to deserve it. But as far as salvation goes, our works do not save. It's faith that saves.

That's the point. As you see Romans 4, it tells how it reads, But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

And even as David also described it, the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputes righteousness without works. So God imputes. He declares as righteous without works.

[5:16] Without works, it says, specifically. So notice that God can save a man without works, with no works, zero works. Only faith. God justifies the ungodly who believe.

Not the ones who look righteous or who do good works, necessarily, if they do not have faith. That's the point. That's the point. The faith. And again, Galatians 2, verse 16, says along the same lines, Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ.

Even we have believed in Jesus Christ that we might be justified by the faith of Christ and not by the works of the law. For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

So why then is this gospel false? The gospel of works-based salvation. Really, it's anything outside of Christianity is works-based, isn't it? If salvation depended on works, then it would not be grace. Grace. Grace. Not grace plus you've got to do this or you've got to do that. It's grace. Faith in God's grace. And we could boast in our own human efforts and human pride, but God's plan leaves no room for that.

[6:30] Good works are the fruit of salvation, not the root. So Ephesians 2.10, it tells us that we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.

He wants that for us. But he produces the good deeds. The salvation is not by the good deeds. Those deeds cannot save us, but the salvation produces good deeds.

So why is it false? Because salvation is by faith alone in Jesus Christ, all right? Yet another gospel, according to that little post that I came across, number two gospel here, false gospel, is some would teach faith plus works.

It's saying that salvation also requires works to get it, to keep it, or to show it is real. This view teaches that salvation requires faith plus works to obtain it, maintain it, or prove it.

And it suggests that faith alone is not enough. You must add works to complete your salvation or demonstrate it's real. And some would then even claim you'll lose your salvation if your life doesn't show enough fruit.

[7:42] So it's all about you. It boils down to you. That's what they would teach. Problem is that this subtly shifts the focus from Christ's finished work to our performance.

You've got to do enough. You've got to be enough. You've got to do something. Jesus plus what you do. That's what they would say. And so we know that really what they're saying is that faith in Jesus Christ is not enough.

That's a big problem. We see what the word of God teaches us is that it tells us, for by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.

And it's faith that saves, not works. Again, really a similar theme to the other one, that salvation is a gift. It's not a reward for effort. We actually don't get any credit for it.

There's no deserving of it. There's no earning of it by yourself. There's no worthiness of ourselves to get it. It's a gift simply received, a gift received.

[8:47] As Paul tells about God's righteousness, it's by faith. He writes, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness

which is of God by faith.

It's his robes of righteousness, as we just sung, isn't it? Thank God he gives it to us, and we simply receive it. Some would point to faith without works is dead to argue that works are necessary for salvation, but James there is addressing the evidence of faith, not the means of salvation.

Sure enough, we should have faith that is working, but it's not the means of salvation. It's the faith. That's the point. And living faith will produce works, but it's the works that do not save us.

It's the faith. Look at, for example, the thief on the cross. The thief on the cross, he had no time for works. Yet Christ promised him paradise.

He simply caught upon the name of the Lord and was saved. So why is this gospel false? It's adding works to faith. Undermines the sufficiency.

[9:57] We've just been singing about that. Christ is sufficient. It undermines the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice. The thief on the cross, he didn't get baptized. He didn't go to church.

He didn't do any good works, but he was saved. And so if we must prove our salvation through works, we're, in effect, when you look at it and you boil it down to it, you're trusting in yourself, not Christ.

That's a problem, isn't it? So salvation is secure, not because of what we do, but because of what he did. It's the finished work of the cross. He's done everything. Why is it a false idea?

Yeah, because salvation is by faith alone in Jesus Christ. Others would teach yet another false gospel, the number three here, the Lordship Salvation Gospel.

This teaches that salvation requires surrender, turning from sin, and submission to Christ. Now, they're all good things, mind you. They're all good things that we should do.

[10:57] But the salvation doesn't hinge upon any of that. The salvation is not about surrendering your life and submitting fully to Christ as Lord before you can be saved. Lordship Salvation says that saving faith includes a commitment to obey Christ and forsake sin as a prerequisite for salvation.

Now, of course, it's good to take those steps, but the faith is what saves. The Lordship Salvation, the problem with it is it's confusing faith with obedience.

It's getting it mixed up. The condition of salvation is faith. The result of salvation is obedience. It's the faith that saves. That must be our trust.

Our trust must be in that trust, Christ. Christ alone. Faith in Christ alone, not in our obedience, because that's all very subjective. And there's human measures of that.

The Bible shows us that saving faith is not measured by something that we do. That's the point. But by everything that the Lord has done for us. Amen? And so Titus 3, it talks about how the kindness, the love of God, our Saviour has appeared.

[12:07] And it's not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy that He saved us. By the washing of regeneration, renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Christ our Saviour.

That being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. So notice the stress, kindness and love of God, the righteousness of God.

He shed on us abundantly, but justified by His grace, we can know that eternal life. So salvation, friends, is by God's mercy and grace.

That's the point I'm trying to make here. It's not by our righteous deeds, even our surrender. Because requiring surrender adds effort to the gospel.

Now, naturally we should surrender, but the salvation is not by our surrender, any measure of our surrender, but our simply receiving of the gift. That's the point.

[13:04] It's about our faith. That's what saves. And the Father's will is faith. As it reads in John 6, 40, it tells us that the Father's will is that we believe on the Son of God.

And John 6 tells us, what shall we do then that we might work the works of God? And Jesus answered and said unto them, this is John 6, 29, this is the work of God, that you believe on Him whom He hath sent.

You look at the example of Acts 16, Paul and Silas, they were asked the direct question, sirs, what must I do to be saved? And the answer was just these words here, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved in thy house.

It was trust in Christ. Now, advocates of Lordship Salvation would then talk about verses such as, not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father.

That's Matthew 7, 21. But what is the Father's will? The Father's will is, in John 6, 40, it's believing in Christ. It's obedience. Obedience follows salvation, but it's not a condition for it.

[14:17] So the Bible never says we must make Jesus Lord to be saved. I know it's a common phrase and I've used it myself in times past, but it's not about you making Jesus Lord of your life.

He already is Lord. He is Lord. We simply trust His salvation. So it's a false gospel in the sense that it's adding human effort to the gospel.

It's not about that. The emphasis is wrong. It's not about human effort. It's not making salvation contingent, dependent on our commitment, but rather on Christ's finished work.

How much of a commitment is enough anyway? Even if you think that, well, I've got to make a commitment to be saved. How much commitment do you need to make? Full surrender? Has any of us got that yet?

Are we committed enough? How do you measure that? What is enough? Of course, we know it's not about that our works are enough. It's that His work is enough. Amen? It's His work that is enough.

[15:15] His completed work. The truth is, it's not about what we do. Salvation does not hinge on what we do. Do. It's about what He has done. Done. It is finished. And the gospel is that.

It's a free gift. So why is it a false gospel? Because salvation is a free gift. It's by faith alone in Jesus Christ. Next one.

There's another gospel yet further. Number four false gospel here. Is that salvation, they say, is by experience. Oh, you've got to get the goosebumps. You've got to get the tears at the altar.

Salvation, it depends on feelings. Emotions. Special revelations even. Signs and wonders. Some believe that salvation comes through this tingly feeling, some dramatic experience, a light from heaven, some vision or speaking in tongues, so they think.

Now, of course, God can work through emotions. We are emotional people and we are experiential people. But these are not the foundation of salvation. Sure enough, you might have had some great emotional reaction when you trusted Christ as your Savior.

[16:23] But it's not about the feelings. That's aside from the truth of the trust. And you might get no feelings and be saved. So it's about faith.

That's what the point is. Faith alone. And it's not by virtue of what we do. It's about what he has done. The finished work. It tells us that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. So salvation comes through believing in the heart, not a feeling a certain way.

As it tells in John 5, 24. And look at the chart there, the graphic there. You're on the side of death. The wages of sin is death.

The cross bridges that gap where you trust Christ and his finished work, and you go to eternal life. And John 5, 24 tells us, and Christ underlines it as very significant when he says, Verily, verily, truly, truly, he's reinforcing it.

[17:29] I say unto you, he says, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.

Passed over. And so, as saved people, you're not in the death side anymore. You're on the life side, okay? And Christ emphasises the hearing and believing, not experience.

Of course, we know Paul says, I know whom I have believed. That's what matters. He's able to keep. He's able to keep. And Paul's confidence is Christ. And so, why is this idea of salvation by experience of false gospel?

It's because we base salvation on feelings or signs. It makes it subjective and unreliable. Emotions change. Hey, sometimes I have a bad headache. But those emotions don't take away my salvation. God's word endures. It's sure my salvation is sure. Salvation rests on the objective truth, the fact of Christ's finished work, received by faith.

[18:35] And so, friends, salvation, it's important to understand the true gospel. In the light of all of those things, there's a lot of murkiness, a lot of confusion. People get very angry.

They think, oh, well, I've got to do this. Uh-uh. It's not in the word. It ain't in the word. We've got to go with the word. What does the word say? It says, salvation is by faith alone in the finished work. Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. What is the gospel? Paul defines it there. 1 Corinthians, I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received. How that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures.

And that he was buried. And that he rose again the third day, according to the scriptures. And salvation is that. It's the gospel, the good news. Christ died for sinners.

When we add works, even surrender or experiences to the gospel, we distort it and confuse it. And then it makes it all very cloudy.

[19:35] Well, am I saved? Am I doing enough? Am I living up to the measure? Have I done enough? No, it's not about what you do. It's trust Christ.

Trust Christ as your saviour. Trust him alone. These false gospels are making their gospel murky, even a counterfeit, because they're not clear about the gospel.

And Paul warns us about such a thing that we ought not to add to the gospel. He says, even if an angel come from heaven and tells you some other gospel, if they preach any other gospel unto you, then that which we preached unto you, let him be accursed.

Very strong words. So, friends, the stakes are eternal. The stakes are eternal. This is important that we get it right, that we understand it so we can articulate it to others.

Trust Christ alone. You might be hearing this and you think, well, I'm not sure that I'm saved yet because I've been trusting in my works. I've been trusting in my experiences. I've been trusting in my efforts to deserve it, to earn it, to merit it.

[20:39] But it's a gift. Get that. It's a gift. Receive it as you would receive a gift. As many as received him, Christ, he gave the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name.

And it's like to a rescue operation. It's God's rescue operation. The simple gospel, really, isn't it? And at this time, we think, examine yourself.

Let a man examine himself. It's important that you know that you're saved, that your trust is Christ. Trust. And it's like as you would trust a lifeguard. As a drowning person, you don't try to keep swimming to the shore.

Stop trying. Start trusting. Trusting in the lifeguard. Trusting in the one who comes to rescue you. You know, they say when someone's drowning, they're screaming out and yelling and flailing all around.

Actually, it's better that you stop doing that. And just let the lifeguard grab a hold of your neck and he'll take you to safety. Let the lifeguard do it.

[21:46] All right. Don't try to save yourself. You can't. You simply can't. Trust Christ. If you've never trusted Christ, trust him today. Believe on him today.

Make that sure. Make that salvation sure as receiving a gift, as letting the lifeguard rescue you. Oh, just lie back and let him get a hold of you and swim you to safety.

Stop flailing around trying to save yourself. You can't. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. So as believers, let's understand that.

Let's understand that personally. And then let's share that with others. The love of God, as we correct those false teachings, we'll have clarity. We'll be able to, with love and clarity, declare the gospel to others, pointing to the free gift.

Receive the free gift. Stop trying and start trusting. Stop doing and trust that it's done. It's finished the work of Christ. And to answer those that were saying, well, you've got to do something.

[22:49] You've got to understand the difference between salvation, that moment in faith, and discipleship. We're not denying.

Yes, surrender. Yes, commit. Yes, obey. But that's the discipleship part. Don't confuse the two. That's the point. Many confuse the two.

And they make salvation about all of the discipleship. No, that's wrong. We can't do anything to merit it. Salvation is a gift. And you don't work for a gift. And hey, he doesn't give you a gift and then say, oh, but you've got to do this as well.

Otherwise, I'm going to take the gift away from you. And all that. It just adds more and more confusion, doesn't it? And so the person who's drowning, they can't save themselves. They trust the rescuer.

And it's the grace of God, isn't it? Brothers, sisters here this morning, trust Christ alone. Trust Christ alone. Christ is done by faith alone for the glory of God alone.

[23:49] Let's be encouraged. I pray that you've perhaps seen some more clarity on these things. I know there's so much confusion on many of these subjects. And I've been somewhat confused in times past too.

And I acknowledge that too. But when we get the concept of a gift, we get that concept of God's gift. It makes it clear. It makes it very, very clear.

And a wonderful truth is that salvation, it's by the grace of God. We cannot merit it. We cannot deserve it. We can't ever be worthy of it.

It's by grace through faith. Salvation. Salvation.