

Beware: This Line of Thinking Will Move You Quickly Into Universalism

Have you taken a close look at your theology lately?

Have you caught yourself thinking maybe everyone will be saved in the end? Maybe you've started to accept some of the hallmarks of our culture that the Bible defines as sin—some without even noticing, such as greed and materialism, and some out of fear since Christians are vilified for opposing them, such as homosexuality and abortion. Or you may be thinking, "If God is loving, surely He wouldn't send people to hell for their lifestyle choices. Right?"

Perhaps you see people who do not follow God, yet they work tirelessly to serve the marginalized, and you question whether the Bible really tells us the only way to heaven is through Jesus Christ. Why would God punish people who are doing such good?

With this line of thinking, we very quickly descend into universalism and humanism. Universalism is the belief that all people will be saved eventually through Jesus, whether or not they repent and believe in Him in this lifetime. Humanism is the belief in the inherent goodness of people and man's ability to improve himself through reason and good works. In both ideologies, man is swayed by sentimental love and a fear of rejection from the world.

The Bible is clear that eternal life comes by grace through faith in Jesus Christ the Savior, not through our good works or intentions. Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).

The Bible promises salvation to those who believe in the name of Jesus, but condemnation for those who refuse and rather choose darkness instead of the light of Christ (see John 3:16-21). The true gospel offends those who do not want to be told there is a higher authority over them. They say, "Where's that compassion you're preaching? What is this narrow-mindedness and bigotry? I want nothing to do with a God who hates sin." That's the prevailing attitude of the average American.

Has our culture's spiritual attitude worn on you? Has it made you doubt the Word of God or tempted you to compromise scriptural truth? As you assess the beliefs occupying your heart and mind, ask yourself:

- Does this belief line up with Scripture?
- Does this belief acknowledge the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ?
- Is Christ or man the center of this theology?

We are all prone to wander. God knows this, and His Word provides a sure antidote to this spiritual waywardness: "your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against you" (Ps. 119:11). Immerse yourself in God's Word. Hide it in your heart. The Bible is not just another religious book. In fact, it is proven in its credibility, with thousands of prophecies fulfilled with exact precision and detailed accounts aligning with historical records.

Trusting God's Word doesn't take blind faith. What it takes is humility. In order to walk in the truth, we must be willing to surrender our own false beliefs about God. We must be willing to abandon theologies that seek to make His gospel more palatable to a culture worshiping the god of self. And we must be willing to give up the idol of comfort for the sake of following Christ.

Take heart! We serve a God who understands. Our God became a

man, experiencing the temptations of this world to worship self and reject the Lord, and yet He did not sin. It is precisely His understanding, love, and compassion that led Jesus to die a bloody, lonely, accursed death on the cross—the death we should have died—to save us and free us from our sin. So run to His strong, faithful love. Confess, repent, and remember the righteousness that Christ has imparted to you. He will receive you if you have strayed. Then go out and love boldly, remembering that love “rejoices in the truth” (1 Cor. 13:6).

There is only one way to have inexpressible joy and the great gift of eternal life: Jesus Christ. May we never forget the glory and gravity of this good news. {eoa}