

The Western Church Has Adulterated the Gospel

In 2 Corinthians 11:3-4 (NIV), Paul laments: “But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the Spirit you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough.”

When Paul says he fears the Corinthians will be seduced away from a “sincere and pure devotion to Christ,” the word “sincere” is not the best translation. The Greek word here is *haplotēs*, which literally means singleness and simplicity—a word that would describe a glass of clear water without any impurities or additives. It’s interesting that both the Old Testament prophets and the apostle Paul use the image of adultery to describe religion to which falsehood has been added. Similarly, we say that when a harmful substance is added to pure water, the water has been adulterated. To adulterate is to taint and contaminate.

The Western church has adulterated the Gospel. The Good News of Jesus Christ is simple and transparently clear—yet we have clouded and adulterated it with false philosophies, ideologies and doctrines. We have added business principles, psychological principles, worldly philosophies, “new revelations,” political ideologies and human greed to the purity of the Gospel message. Then we call this poisonous stew “Christianity.”

We forget that the people of Israel did not deny God. They still proclaimed their love for God, and they still offered sacrifices to Him. They just added a few “harmless” idols and

practices borrowed from the Canaanites and the Philistines—just to make God more “relevant.”

In His high priestly prayer before going to the cross, Jesus prayed, “I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth (John 17:15-17).” We must not exchange the truth for a lie, but be set apart, clinging to the scandalous love of God that confounds the world but brings hope to the lost.

Prayer: Lord, bring Your church to repentance and start with me! May I never add to Your perfect Gospel of grace through faith in Jesus Christ. He alone is my rock and my righteousness. Let me not be a stumbling block to Your Truth by adding or taking away from the pure and simple Gospel. I pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

“I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ to a different gospel, which is not a gospel. But there are some who trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ (Gal. 1:6-7).”