

What Jesus Would Say to Our Culture's Modernized Gospel

In this politically correct age, when evangelicals are starting to gain more and more cultural traction as they gain more political, economic and academic power it is becoming more tempting for evangelicals to do away with some biblical beliefs that embarrass our public personas and impede acceptance by worldly power brokers in this so called "tolerant," "multicultural" and "diverse" society.

The 1925 Scopes Monkey Trial Christian fundamentalists have been painted by the secular media as ignorant religious fanatics and dangerous obstructionists who attempt to hinder scientific and academic progress. Hence, many evangelicals try to distance themselves from fundamentalists.

We now live in a "global village." Nationalism is dead and pluralism is in, say the educated, elitist pundits. Believing in "truth" and "absolutes" is for ignorant, uneducated, simple-minded religious fanatics who see the world in black-and-white and have a dangerous confidence about them when it comes to both the meaning of life and life after death.

After all, say the liberal social scientists and those in academia, religious fundamentalists are the kind of people who flew two jetliners into the World Trade Center and they have caused many wars and violence on the earth.

I have had my fair share of working with high level politicians, academia, business leaders and celebrities. Yet, in spite of all this, when we read the Scriptures, we find that Jesus sounds much like a Christian fundamentalist preacher.

The one big difference between Jesus and the typical fundamentalist is this: Jesus was not a separatist. He

commanded His followers to engage and transform culture (Matt. 5:13-16)—not run from it and build little subcultures while waiting for the rapture.

In regards to simplicity, Colossians 2:3 teaches that all treasures of wisdom and knowledge dwell in Him. So it makes sense that, the more wisdom someone has, the simpler they would communicate since there would be less ambiguity. This means that Jesus should communicate simply and directly in absolutes, and also see the world and reality in black and white because all things are clear to Him which would make Him sound like a fundamentalist.

The following are some of the things Jesus taught and believed.

Jesus believed that unsaved people went to hell

In Mark 8:42-49, Jesus said it would be better to cut off the members of our bodies if they cause us to sin and enter heaven maimed than to enter hell with our bodies completely intact, where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.

In John 3:17, He said those alive who did not believe were already under the judgment of condemnation.

In Matthew 25:41, He said He would cast wicked people into eternal fire that has been prepared for the devil and his angels. There are many other similar passages we could quote.

Evangelical preachers appear more and more uncomfortable speaking about this the more popular they become. When I see famous preachers being interviewed on national television, I cringe, because, many times, when asked if people can go to hell, they compromise the truth rather than publicly identify themselves with this fundamental biblical belief. I guess there is a point in which ministers of the gospel become embarrassed to fully identify with the Christ of the gospel!

Jesus said there is only one way to God

In John 14:6, Jesus said unequivocally that He was the only way to God the Father. The cultural and religious elites cringe when this is brought up, since they desire to classify all religions as equally important and true while preaching a global/ecumenical gospel. When Jesus or Christianity is brought up, they usually teach or speak from the so-called Beatitudes of Matthew 5-7, saying Jesus mainly taught “do unto others as you would have them do unto you” (Matt. 7:12). But they conveniently avoid passages that show the exclusivity of the biblical claims about Christ and the gospel as found in the very next verses (7:13-14), which speak about entering through the narrow gate: “Enter at the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who are going through it, because small is the gate and narrow is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.”

Jesus Believed in the Creation Story

When asked a question regarding marriage and divorce, Jesus referred back to the book of Genesis citing when God created Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. He didn't believe in evolution but in creation, something most in liberal academia would ascribe only to uneducated religious fundamentals! (Although they probably wouldn't have as hard a time with old-earth creationists as with young-earth, seven 24-hour day creationists.)

Jesus Said That Salvation Was Only of the Jews

When speaking to the woman from Samaria, Jesus directly told her the God her people were worshipping they “knew not” because salvation was (only) of the Jews (John 4:22)! Can you imagine the outrage if a minister of the gospel said on Larry King Live that all other religions worship their god ignorantly since only Christians know the truth about God!

Jesus Believed in the Existence of the Devil and Cast Out Demons

Jesus not only cast out demons like a faith healer (Mark 1:21-27), but He also believed in and exposed the works of the devil. In John 8:44, He told certain religious leaders that they didn't believe in Him because their father was the devil. He said in Luke 10:17-19 that He saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven because of the work of His disciples in preaching the gospel.

Nowadays, when a minister says those who don't believe in Christ are being deceived by the devil, they come off sounding like a medieval priest during the so-called Dark Ages rather than an enlightened citizen of the twenty-first century!

Jesus Believed in Miracles and the Supernatural

Jesus went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil (Acts 10:38). He raised the dead, healed the blind and the lame, walked on water, multiplied fish and bread to feed multitudes, and prayed to His Heavenly Father. He lived and believed in the power of the spiritual world in a way that would make today's contemporary atheistic advocates for an anti-supernatural, naturalistic view of reality like Christopher Hitchens and Richard Dawkins mock His superstitious worldview.

Jesus Believed in the Divine Inspiration and Authority of the Bible

When Jesus was being tested in the wilderness, He constantly quoted the Scriptures in his battle against temptation. It was obvious from the account in Matthew 4 that Jesus memorized and lived by the Bible as His source of strength.

How would Jesus be treated in a typical freshman university classroom in which one of the first things a professor does is mock anyone stupid enough to believe in the Bible?

Jesus Called All People to Repentance

When a tower fell and killed 18 people, Jesus told His audience that unless they repented they would also perish (Luke 13:1-5). He didn't mince words and didn't try to be politically correct.

Nowadays, many popular evangelical preachers never use the word "repentance" for fear they will offend their congregations.

Jesus Told People They Must Be Born Again to Experience His Kingdom

Jesus told religious leader and cultural elite Nicodemus that he had to be "born again" if he wanted to see His kingdom. Jesus was saying that it wasn't enough for Nicodemus to be religious; He had to be supernaturally reborn.

Many so-called educated, cultured people in cosmopolitan centers love to have just enough religion and ritual to make them feel righteous. Evidently, that didn't fly with Jesus the fundamentalist.

Jesus Commissioned His Church to Evangelize the Lost

In Mark 16:15, Jesus commanded His followers to evangelize the lost. It wasn't enough for them to attend a church and have community love. They had to be bold, audacious and filled with the power of God, going to the highways and byways, spreading the word and compelling unbelievers to come in. This doesn't sound too dignified; it sounds more like a fundamentalist.

There are many ways to preach the gospel. Preaching doesn't always have to include standing on a street corner preaching to crowds and handing out tracts. It can be done through drama, music, literature and above all through friendship evangelism.

Jesus Upheld the Moral Law of God

In Matthew 5:17-20, Jesus said He didn't come to abolish the law but to fulfill it. He upheld the Ten Commandments (Mark 10:19-20) which meant He agreed with the standard of holiness that made it a sin to be involved in any sort of sexual activity outside of marriage between a man and a woman.

Today, some say certain practices such as the giving of tithes and certain sexual sins that were not mentioned by Jesus are not relevant to the New Testament moral standard. But Jesus didn't have to mention them: He was speaking to a Jewish audience that assumed Old Testament law as their standard. By saying that He didn't come to abolish the law but to fulfill it He was in essence agreeing to and upholding not only the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20) but the 613 laws that were extrapolated out of the Ten Commandments. Those laws include Leviticus 18:19-23 which speaks against all forms of sexual sin (which is still applicable in today's culture), and the sacrificing of children to Molech (like modern-day abortion).

So which side of the social/political aisle would Jesus side with today? Certainly not with the stuffy, naturalistic, anti-supernatural cultural elites of today who sneer at biblical fundamentalism. {eoa}

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