

# How Some Preachers Are Missing the Authentic Christian Gospel

I'm going to make you a genuine pizza, the most authentic pizza you've ever tasted. What makes my pizza so authentic? Well, it's all about the right ingredients.

I'm sure you're familiar with the so-called "pizza" they sell in Italian restaurants, with a crust, tomato sauce, mozzarella cheese, and toppings. But that's not real pizza.

I make my authentic pizza with white bread, a thin layer of mayonnaise, a slice of bologna, and I top it off with another slice of bread. Voilà! An authentic Michael Youssef pizza.

What do you mean, it's not a real pizza? What did you call it? A baloney sandwich! My friend, you don't know authentic pizza when you see it.

All right, enough kidding. That little demonstration may seem bizarre, but it perfectly parallels a message we hear again and again in Christian circles today.

There are teachers, preachers, and authors who claim to be Christians, who claim to be preaching the purest and most authentic Christian gospel. Yet they have removed everything that makes the gospel authentically Christian: the reality of sin, the depravity of man, the virgin birth, the atoning death of Christ, the resurrection, justification by grace through faith. For more than two thousand years, these doctrines have defined what Christianity is.

But this new crop of teachers, preachers, and authors would have us believe that what we've been taught is not "authentic Christianity." They have replaced orthodox Christian teachings

with “narrative” and “postmodern theology” and “social justice” and political activism. They trade the “pizza” of authentic Christianity for a lot of baloney.

What’s more, they are telling us the church has been wrong throughout all two thousand years of Christian history. Orthodox Christianity is wrong, the Bible is wrong, and Jesus is wrong. This pseudo-Christian baloney they’ve devised in their imagination is the only “real” Christianity. You may think I’m exaggerating. I’m not.

Read the words of one of the early popularizers of progressive or postmodern Christianity, retired Episcopal bishop John Shelby Spong. He wrote a series of books that promoted a new version of “Christianity”—a version without sin or guilt or any need for Jesus to die on the cross to save us.

He told an interviewer:

*The thing that bothers me most about the Christian church today is that we spend our time confirming people in their own sense of wretchedness. You can’t go to church without praying ten or fifteen times for God to have mercy on you. You can’t sing “Amazing Grace” without reminding yourself that the reason God’s grace is amazing is it saves a wretch like you. This self-denigration stuff—Jesus died for my sins—is nothing but a guilt message. That’s the thing we’ve got to get out from under. That’s not Christianity.*

Do you see? Bishop Spong is telling us that biblical Christianity isn’t real Christianity, that pizza isn’t pizza, and that his baloney is the real deal.

But Spong is wrong. A Christianity that sings “Amazing Grace” is real Christianity. We are wretched, we are lost in sin, and Jesus died on the cross to save us from our sins. Some narrow-minded preachers or theologians did not invent these doctrines. They come straight from the lips of Jesus the Master. He is the One who originated Christianity, and He

tells us we are wretched and that we desperately needed Him to die for our sins.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, “If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!” (Matt. 7:11, NIV, emphasis added).

To whom was Jesus talking? Not the scribes and Pharisees. He was talking to His followers, to people who had sought Him out to hear Him preach on the mountainside. In the original Greek, He called these followers Πονηροὶ, “evil,” the same word the New Testament routinely uses to describe Satan. Yes, we are wretched, we are sinful, we are evil—and that is why the lyrics of “Amazing Grace” are so true.

As Jesus reminds us, we are capable of doing good things and giving good gifts—but that doesn’t change the fact that we are evil and wretched and lost in our sins. That’s why we need a Savior—and that’s a foundational truth of Christianity.

Any teaching that says differently is baloney. {eoa}

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