

Joyce Meyer: The One True Gospel for Eternal Life

Jesus came to give us a new way to live. In John 10:10b (AMP), He says, "I came that they may have *and* enjoy life, and have it in abundance [to the full, till it overflows]."

When we put our faith in Christ, trusting Him to be our Savior and forgive us of our sins, we can have the abundant life He died to give us.

The apostle Paul was passionate about teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ as much as he possibly could. When he first went to Galatia, the people there were idol worshippers, but by God's grace, Paul was able to bring many of them to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ through preaching.

Later on, he wrote the book of Galatians to defend the gospel because it had come under attack by people seeking to draw the early Christian believers back into legalism, which is based on following rules and regulations about how everything involving our relationship with God must be done.

In Galatians 1:6-8 (NIV), Paul says, "I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse!"

Paul uses strong words to convey to the Galatians the danger of accepting or even entertaining the idea that any gospel other than the one he has preached to them has any validity at all. He knows the danger of deception and does not want the Galatians to lose their newfound freedom. In the same way, we

must be firm in what we believe, and although we should not be narrow-minded and unwilling to learn new things, we also shouldn't be so open-minded that we are ready to believe anything we hear or read.

In verse 8, Paul says, "If we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse!" Now, he isn't actually cursing people, but by divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he is pronouncing that divine judgment must fall on anyone who leads others into error. The pure unadulterated message of the gospel of Jesus Christ is the only true gospel, and anything that teaches that we need Jesus *plus something else* will lead us in the wrong direction. Of course, we should obey God and pray, but those spiritual activities do not save us. We are saved by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ (see Eph. 2:8-9).

The Jews who held the belief that it was good to have Jesus as long as certain Jewish laws were also followed were called Judaizers, and Paul considered them dangerous to anyone who was not firmly and deeply rooted in the truth regarding the gospel. Paul's missionary trip to Galatia had been one of his most successful—sinners were saved, miracles were performed, and churches were planted. And now, he could hardly believe that after what the Galatians had witnessed and experienced, they could so quickly begin falling away.

I have heard it said that the church's greatest troublemakers (both now and then) are not those outside the church who criticize, oppose, ridicule and persecute it, but those inside who try to change or pervert the gospel—people who take sound theology and twist or distort it. They don't totally deny it, but they add to it or take away just enough to turn it into a false doctrine without the people even realizing what is going on.

Too many people who start off right concerning their belief

about salvation through Jesus end up deceived. When they first come into a personal relationship with Him, they trust that He has forgiven them of their sin because of His love for them—His grace and mercy toward them. They go along happily for a while and begin to grow in knowledge concerning Christ and the new way of living He offers. The devil hates this, so he puts someone in their midst who presents another message that includes their current beliefs but adds something to it that, if believed, will cause them to be deceived.

I want to encourage you to study God's Word diligently and pray that you won't be deceived by any message that does not line up with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Make a determined decision to steadfastly put your trust in what Jesus has done for you and not in good works you can do in your own strength that can never make you right with God.

That's the only way you can have the life of righteousness, peace and joy that Jesus died to give you. {eoa}

Joyce Meyer is a New York Times bestselling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries, Inc. She has authored more than 135 books, including *Battlefield of the Mind* and *The Power of Thank You (FaithWords)*. She hosts the *Enjoying Everyday Life* radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide. For more information, visit .

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