

Why the American Church's Incomplete Preaching Is Incredibly Dangerous

If you're looking for controversy, this post will hit you just right. Some of the edgiest topics in our culture are religion and politics. Both are extremely controversial.

This post will stir the religious. It might stir up pharisaical and other fundamentalists.

We live in times where unbiblical and extra-biblical messages pour through our pulpits and airwaves.

Some have taken the gospel and fashioned it to their own comfort. Some have made "being saved" the end of receiving eternity. It is actually the beginning.

As Christians, we realize we are sinners and need forgiveness. None of us is worthy. All need salvation.

How Do We Receive Christ?

"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

Confess That Jesus Christ Is Lord

"That if you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved, for with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto

salvation" (Rom. 10:9-10).

Is this it? Yes and no.

This is where we will be stretched.

Is this all there is? No. That's not all.

But this is what we are taught. Being saved includes having a circumcised heart, becoming new, bearing fruit and living by faith.

"But he is a Jew who is one inwardly. And circumcision is of the heart, by the Spirit, and not by the letter. His praise is not from men, but from God" (Rom. 2:29).

"Therefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things have passed away. Look, all things have become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).

"A good tree does not bear corrupt fruit, nor does a corrupt tree bear good fruit" (Luke 6:43).

"But a man may say, 'You have faith and I have works.' Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works" (James 2:18).

Is there more? Yes. I am not questioning anyone's salvation. But there is more to consider. John's baptism was obviously not sufficient.

Check This Out

"While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper regions and came to Ephesus. He found some disciples and said to them, 'Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?' They said to him, 'No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.' He said to them, 'Into what then were you baptized?' They said, 'Into John's baptism.' Paul said, 'John indeed baptized with the baptism of repentance,

telling the people that they should believe in the One coming after him, that is, in Christ Jesus.’ When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in other tongues and prophesied. There were about twelve men in all” (Acts 19:1-7).

If John’s baptism was complete for salvation, why did the apostles travel and teach them more?

Why did they introduce the Holy Spirit in Acts 2, 3, 8, 10 and 19?

Today’s Preaching

Is this what we are doing in the pulpit today? We preach repent, repent; and if you repent, you’re OK. You are saved.

“When He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’” (John 20:22).

Does that sound right? OK, take a breath and think. After Christ’s resurrection, He breathes on the apostles.

This is symbolic of receiving the Spirit of God (being saved). Did you get that? Now, what happened?

The disciples wait for the Holy Spirit in Acts 2. Then the apostles go throughout all Galilee, Judea and beyond and tell the people about the Spirit of God.

They go. Why would they go? This was obviously important.

What drives them to travel, take risks and face hardships? Because the message was vital. It carried eternal weight.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, “You must be born again.” The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it

comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit (John 3:6-8).

Read it again. So, is everyone born of the Spirit? When you were saved did anyone mention the Spirit to you? Probably not.

But I am sure they told you that you were saved, right? I am not saying you're not. That's not my call.

But please make sure you are.

When you signed your salvation pledge card did anyone mention that you are a new person, or that you were born by the Spirit just like you were born as a child?

No. Not. Almost never.

Why Did the Apostles Share the Holy Spirit?

What happened to the church after Acts 2 and after the Holy Spirit came?

Signs, wonders, miracles, prophesying and healing. All works of the Spirit.

Has religion stolen our identity?

We must examine our lives through the lives of the apostles and our Lord.

It is imperative that we know that we are saved and have the fruits of being a new creation in Christ Jesus.

Watchman Nee once wrote: "We have the Holy Spirit within as life and without as power and gift. If we are truly filled with the Holy Spirit within, we have the riches of the life of the Lord. If we do not have the riches of the spiritual life, this proves that although we have the Holy Spirit dwelling within us, we are not filled with Him. In the same way, if we have the Holy Spirit upon us, we have power and a certain kind

of gift. We cannot say that we have the Holy Spirit upon us if we are not powerful and are unable to do anything. We must have power and gift.”

Let’s take our own temperature. Is the American church preaching an incomplete message? Is repentance enough (John’s baptism)?

I think it’s incomplete. Controversial for sure.

Let’s see what Jesus says:

“I indeed baptize you with water to repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire” (Matt. 3:11).

There is more. Let’s make sure we get this right. It’s too important. {eoa}

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