

God's People Have More to Do than Preach the Gospel of Christ!

Introduction

There seems to be a misconception amongst the professing body of Christ in America that God's messengers should focus their messages solely on the gospel of salvation in Christ and the nature and character of God.

A general survey of the New Testament, however, will show that the Holy Spirit inspired the biblical writers John, Paul and James to focus on various aspects of life in Christ, the depravity of man and corrupt nature of the world system.

Undoubtedly, the gospel of Jesus Christ is the foundation of the body of Christ. (1 Corinthians 3:10-11) It's upon that one true foundation that Christ's body is built as his members serve one another with the spiritual gifts God has distributed amongst them. (1 Corinthians 3:12-15; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4:10-16; Romans 12:3-8)

It's certainly true that Jesus called everyone to repentant, saving faith in himself as the one and only Son of God during his earthly ministry. He preached the gospel of the kingdom to those outside it. (Matthew 4:17; Matthew 21:28-32; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 13:1-5; John 3)

In addition to this teaching, however, Christ expressed loving concern for the rights and needs of others. His teaching didn't skirt real world issues. He wasn't detached from reality and unconcerned about how people treated his creations. No, the moral light of his truth exposed the dark values and devilish practices of Satan's socio-political-religious world system and manifested the true values and godly behavior associated with God's heavenly kingdom.

The purpose of this message is to teach that the church; otherwise known in the New Testament as the saints, the body of Christ, the *ekklesia* or the Israel of God, has more work to do than to preach the gospel of grace so that others can be saved.

You may be hearing differently, however, it's absolutely true that neither the study and teaching of biblical prophecy; nor the study and preaching of the gospel of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone, are the only topics that the body of Christ should be concerned with.

You might feel that this is a mute point; however, it's critically important to the healthy growth of the body of Christ that we understand and apply this truth in our relationship with other professing saints.

All believers should have a growing knowledge of eschatology; biblical prophecy concerning the final seven years and the return of the Lord. All believers should also have a growing desire and ability to communicate the gospel.

I would contend that it's the biblical norm that some believers spend more time working on one of these things than they do working on the other. I believe this to be true because God has specifically gifted some believers with the spiritual gift of evangelism while gifting others with prophecy or some other spiritual gift. God has designed his body so that we need each other. We simply aren't all created the same in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 4:11-16; Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12)

Cultural diversion: focus solely on the gospel

Why is it that professing Christian leaders are intent on insisting that we should all focus exclusively on evangelism and spreading the gospel? I would like to offer the following reasons for our consideration:

First, there's a group in the professing church with a sinful, prideful psychological need to be preeminent among and or in control of others in the church. They think more of themselves than they should. (Romans 12:3-4, 3 John)

Some of these individuals, such as the infamous Diotrephes, will fabricate a "straw man" or false argument that they will then use to try to destroy the work of others. They will hatefully destroy the "straw man" using scripture and then convince themselves that the other believer is a heretic who must be separated from others unless they realign their belief.

Secondly, there's another group whose religious careers and associated financial welfare within contemporary Christian Churchianity depend upon maintaining their doctrinal niche. They serve filthy lucre or financial gain rather than Christ and his body. Their inordinate first love demands that they put down all perceived threats to their little religious empire. (Titus 1:11; 1 Peter 5:2; Jude) They may also recognize that no work yields a greater financial ROI than evangelism does.

Third, 501-c3 church leaders may feel that the gospel is the only politically correct or IRS-proof thing that they and their congregation can talk about in this Orwellian day in which we live. They are overcome by the fear of man rather than overcoming through faith in God.

Fourth, some professing believers insist that the gospel should be our only focus because they fail to understand the difference between the message of the gospel and the faith of the gospel.

Philippians 1:27 speaks of the faith of the gospel. The faith of the gospel is concerned with the unity of believers under the authority of correctly interpreted biblical truth. The message of the gospel of salvation in Christ is the one and only key that can open the door to God's kingdom. Once someone enters the kingdom of God through receiving the gospel of the grace of God, they can begin learning the various doctrinal truths making up the deep, comprehensive faith of the gospel.

Finally, some take Paul's statement "this one thing I do" out of its proper context. They use their misinterpretation to support their contention that we should keep our focus on preaching the gospel because Paul did this "one thing". What is this "one thing" that Paul did? Was it preaching the gospel of salvation in Christ?

Paul wrote to the saints in Philippi that the one thing that he did was to press toward the goal of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus. His goal was to drop everything in his life that could interfere with attaining his goal and suffer anything that would help him to reach it. (Philippians 3:7-21) The biblical writings of Paul are proof that he thought and taught about far more than just the gospel

of Christ. Paul also communicated the volume; the length, width and height of the faith of the gospel.

Biblical counterpoint: the bi-focused ministry of James

A great example of the fact that the *ekklesia* is to be concerned with more than preaching or teaching the gospel of God is found in the writings of James.

James was a brother of Jesus. (Matthew 13:55; Galatians 1:19) Before Jesus was crucified, James didn't even believe that his brother was Lord and Christ.

Witnessing the resurrection of Christ changed his mind about the truth so much so that James went on to become one of the original leaders of the earliest body of Christ. (Acts 12:17; Acts 15:13-19; Acts 21:18-26; Galatians 1:16-19)

The nicknames of James show that his life was focused upon expressing love for God by obeying God's commandments and love for people by meeting their needs. His nickname, "James the Just", emphasizes his reputation as a holy man who obeyed God's moral law while demonstrating fair and impartial love towards others. His other nickname, "The Man with Camel's Knees", describes the physical deformation of his knees resulting from the time James spent upon them in humbly asking God to meet the needs of others.

James' life of faith mimicked the simple, bi-focused ministry of Jesus. What is meant by the bi-focused ministry of Jesus? It refers to the fact that the teaching of Jesus wasn't confined to spiritual things. It wasn't focused on just one message such as the gospel and how to be saved.

The bi-focused ministry of James is illustrated throughout his letter as the following paragraphs will illustrate.

In Christ-like manner, James decried favoritism towards the rich as abusive sin and prejudice against the poor as loveless rejection. (James 2:1-13) Professing American Christians may fawn in the delusion that their alleged freedom and prosperity is due to the wealthy elite running their world. "James the Just" poignantly reminds us, however, that the wealthy blaspheme God and unjustly oppress and murder the just. (James 2:6-9; James 5:1-6)

James details for us how a wise and intelligent man produces virtuous works in humility. (James 3:13) He shows that the human heart can be controlled by a demonic, ill-tempered bitterness that can dispose a person to hatch malicious plans that hurt others simply for personal gratification. (James 3:14-15)

While many professing American Christians trust in the wars of the wealthy to protect their financial capitalist interests; James exposes the selfish, covetous, murderous motivation of human hearts lurking behind deceitful elite war propaganda. (James 3-4:5) The epistle of James explains that the evil tongue can be a venomous weapon used to curse and falsely accuse others. It indicates that the wealth of others can be extorted through unjust, murderous war and killing. (James 3-5:6)

Unlike America's state enslaved 501-c3 churches, James didn't focus solely upon preaching the heavenly gospel while failing to shine the light of truth upon the ungodly values and evil acts of world powers. (James 2:6-7; James 4:1-4; James 4:13-5:6) He didn't sidestep the global problem of human sin falling prey to preaching a popular, earthy, green, social gospel that fails to expose the root of social ills because of its singular focus upon human rights and needs. (James 1:13-15; James 3:2-8; James 3:13-4: 10; James 5:1-6)

James avoided the error of offering the blessings of salvation without first exposing the moral darkness of the human heart and human world system. He rightfully refused to alienate the lost with self-righteous moral crusades against the sinful works of human nature without offering people the answer to their sin crisis. (James 3:13-4:10)

"James the Just" preached the holiness of God and the need for everyone to repent and be born into a new life of good works through faith in God's truth. (James 1:13-18; James 2:14-26; James 4:1-10) He preached salvation by grace through faith in Christ while emphasizing the truth that saving faith liberates people from the destructive power of their sinful nature, Satan and the evil world system. (James 1:18-27)

Conclusion

The professing bible believing 501-c3 Christian church continues to become increasingly weak and ineffective in her role as preservative of moral truth.

Why does America continue to decay morally when her churches, airwaves and bookstores continue to broadcast many sound messages focused upon the character of God and the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ?

The problem with these messages is not usually found in what they say. Their weakness lies in what they fail to communicate to the body. These messages fail to apply the whole truth to all critically influential events, policies, philosophies, institutions, corporations, media, groups and leaders that are used to mold thinking. They focus only on the gospel of God and by-pass much of the faith of the gospel.

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The truth of God’s word is preached in America in hypocritical selectiveness rather than fearless inclusiveness. The false idea that the only thing that we should focus our teaching efforts on is the gospel of God is encouraging this error. The fruit of this sin is that the professing church is accepting evil as good.

If you doubt the truth of what I’ve just said, please take some time to read the following inexhaustive list of hypocrisies that are being embraced by many professing American Christians because of what isn’t being taught in the body.

- Abortion is condemned while killing non-militant civilians in combat isn’t.
- Submission to domestic governing authorities is emphasized as support of American overthrow of foreign governing authorities is demanded.

- Covetousness is forbidden at the same time foreign war for the sake of American economic interests is supported.
- Evolution theory is exposed as fraudulent while the physical, scientific, rational truth exposing the official “911” theory as impossible is denied or shunned.
- Stewardship of finances is emphasized while concern for protecting God’s air, water and food supply for us against poisonous chemical aerosol chemtrail spraying/weather modification/weaponry and corporately engineered GMO “food” is mocked or shunned.
- Kindness, love and mercy are promoted as torture is defended.
- The gospel is the power of God for salvation for all who believe and it’s to be preached around the world, however, Middle Eastern Muslims need to be killed.
- Communism is hated while un-Constitutional Patriot Acts and Federal Agencies with the power to quench freedom are supported.
- Drunkenness is condemned while gluttony is encouraged.
- Homosexuality is condemned while witchcraft and rock-n-roll are bought and sold as acceptable entertainment.
- Risky gambling is forbidden but capitalizing on the risk of financial investment is good stewardship.
- Recreational mind controlling pharmaceutical drugs are forbidden yet antidepressants and ADHD/ADD behavioral mind controlling pharmaceutical drugs are helpful and necessary.

Sadly, “the end justifies the means” is the devilish philosophy of both the typical professing 501-c3 church and the new international order in which we now find ourselves.

The solution to this situation lies in a change of thinking about the importance of doing more than simply talking about the character and gospel of God in our gatherings. It involves expounding the mysterious and voluminous faith of the gospel. Solving this growth problem involves seeing the differences in the focus of

our messages at times as complimentary, not contradictory. Paul's interaction with Apollos can serve as a relational model for us to follow.

Paul contrasted his planting role with the watering role of Apollos in growing the body of Christ of their day. (1 Corinthians 3:4-6) Paul recognized that God ordained the diversity of their ministries in building his body. He refused to despise the work of Apollos. He didn't exalt his focus of planting foundational truth above Apollos's watering role in growing the body of Christ. (1 Corinthians 3:1-9) He didn't fall prey to the natural, prideful, carnal, sinful tendency to divisively sever himself from the work of Apollos because the focus of their messages was different at times. Paul never encouraged Apollos to abandon his watering focus in order to take up a foundational planting role.

In spite of this rich history of diversity shown to us in the scriptures, however, the 501-c3 professing church still attempts to squeeze its messengers into a single unbiblical mold.

Those with ears to hear this message need to kindly and patiently resist the pressure of 501-c3 church leaders and their followers to squeeze people into that "gospel only" ministry focus mold. At the same time we should affirm the good work of our detractors as we explain to them why we have more to do than just simply preach the gospel.

Each member of the body of Christ needs to remain free to be who God has remade them to be so that the body of Christ in America can grow out of infancy towards maturity as each member supplies what the body needs through the diverse gifts the Spirit has distributed among us.

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. (Ephesians 4:11-16)