

Preaching a Watered Down Gospel - Part 1

by Jeff Noblit

Jeff Noblit warns against the dangers of a watered-down gospel that promotes spiritual shallowness within the church.

Duration: 9:17

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 3:2

Topics: "False Teachings", "Spiritual Maturity"

Description

This sermon delves into the concept of the 'Milky Way' as an idol of shallow principles in Christianity, emphasizing the danger of glorifying shallowness doctrinally and condemning deeper exploration of Christ's teachings. It warns against the seductive infiltration of this enemy into the church, leading to a preference for 'milk' over solid spiritual food, weakening believers and creating fertile ground for false teachings.

Transcript

...through the book of Hebrews, and we've come to the latter part of Hebrews chapter 5. While you're turning there, let me give you these introductory thoughts. I would ask you to listen carefully to what I'm going to say. You'll get the gist of where we're going.

I was watching a documentary while I was trying to overcome some malady that came upon me this week. And it was about World War II and the two atomic bombs that were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. About 150,000 people perished.

And World War II came to an abrupt and sudden end. I thought about that, and I was thinking about that. I switched into preacher mode, and I thought, you know, the enemies of the church and the enemies of the Christian don't attack that way.

They don't just come in suddenly and abruptly, let their presence be known, like dropping an atomic bomb. No, they're more seductive. They're slower.

They take a more gradual approach. More like a cancer in the body that works there and far too often isn't noticed until it's too late. Or like weeds in your yard that just creep along, and after several seasons, you notice you have more weeds than you do grass.

Good grass is being choked out. Or like a serpent in the rocks that slithers gently and slowly until it ambushes its prey, and it's too late. It's like Jude said in Jude, verse 4, that there are persons who have crept in unawares.

Seductively, sneakily, craftily, the enemy works on Christians and on the church. And there is an enemy that has been creeping into the church for several generations now. Now, I'm not implying that he hasn't always been working on the church, but I think in an unusually large way and more effective way, this enemy's been creeping into the church for several generations.

Now, if it had stormed in all at once, the church would have seen it and rejected it and cut off its head like a serpent. But it slowly and carefully and seductively has crept in until today it has an almost vice-like grip on evangelical Christianity. At first, it was just tolerated, and then it grew to be accepted.

And now, in most quarters, this enemy is embraced and even defended against the truth when the truth is preached and it is exposed for the error that it really is. And thus, the enemy, the evil, becomes a friend that we fend off the truth for. What is this enemy of Christ and of the church? Well, I'm going to expose it to you.

And many of you, and perhaps, well, not in this church, not most of you, but perhaps many of you, when you hear what I'm going to say, you're going to yawn and you're going to say, what is the big deal? That's no real problem. Well, that's just a straw man. That's a paper tiger.

But that very response indicates how thoroughly well the enemy has infiltrated the body and well-loved into false security you have become. It's kind of like when Jonathan Edwards, probably the greatest intellectual of American history and certainly the greatest pastor and the leader of the Great Awakening that shook America and Europe, when Jonathan Edwards preached his famed sermon, Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God, at his own church, he said his men left the service, went out on the steps of the church and yawned and talked about the hay crop that year. It didn't have any effect.

He preached at other places and great revival broke out. Well, what is this enemy I'm talking about today? Well, I'm going to call it the Milky Way. The Milky Way.

I'm not attempting to be clever or cute. I'm using Bible terminology. You'll see that when we read the text.

When I say the Milky Way, I mean the idol of elementary or first or shallow principles of Christianity. It's when there is a glorying in shallowness, doctrinally speaking, and a general spirit of demeaning or condemning any attempt to go deeper in the doctrines of Christ. Accompanying this idolatry is a demeaning or condemning spirit.

And I use catch phrases. And to be politically correct, you must reject all teaching and all teachers that can be labeled or associated with these phrases. One phrase that's been used through the years is the deeper life.

If you hear somebody's into the deeper things, run from them. That's dangerous. That's bad stuff.

Or I used to hear about the seminary. If you go to the seminary, why, it's really the cemetery. Well, that's true.

Our cemeteries have been bad. But that's because they were liberal, not because they were deep. There's a difference there.

A couple of late-coming catch phrases, and don't get hung up here. We're going to move on. Calvinist or Reformed, if you see that, run and cover your ears.

Get away from it. The very persons using it have no idea what they're even talking about. They condemn these things.

If you understand what they're saying, they're talking about extreme or hyper-Calvinism, not a true understanding of historic Reformed theology or Calvinism. And it all comes from this idol of glory in shallowness, which I'm calling the Milky Way. Now, you can search far and wide across the Baptist or evangelical universe, and you will see the dominance of the Milky Way.

You have milky churches that demand that milky preachers preach milky sermons to milky Christians who desire to have their bottles refilled with formula each week that they might nurse themselves back to sleep and satisfy their lactose dependency. But in the natural realm, an adult man still sucking on a bottle or nursing at his mother's breast is pathetic. It's a perversity.

It's even a crime punishable by law. But for Christians to love milk and stay on milk and embrace milk and in turn reject and even ridicule solid food or meat is to God a perversity, even a sin. And it's a ploy of the enemy.

It makes the church weak and pathetic. It dishonors God. It dishonors the church.

It dishonors the minister of God. And it is fertile ground for false teachers and their false doctrine, this Milky Way. But today's Christians, they love their plabum.

They demand more of the same. Now, not to say they do not like variety. While the most popular preachers are those who can most craftily and cleverly use milk to delight their shallow appetite.

So they search out teachers who can flavor the milk and package the milk and color the milk in different ways, shapes, varieties, and forms but just make sure it's still milk. By all means, make the milk more interesting, make the milk more appealing, more attractive, more humorous, and more entertaining, but it must be only milk. We don't need any Paul-type preachers who are determined to preach, quote, the whole counsel or purpose of God, end of quote, Acts 20.

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