

Whats Wrong With the Gospel - Part 1

by Keith Green

The speaker argues that there's nothing wrong with the gospel of the Bible, but there's a problem with the way it's being preached today, and we need to unlearn what's wrong before learning what's right.

Duration: 44:14

Scripture: Psalm 37:4, Proverbs 3:5-6, Proverbs 16:3, Proverbs 16:9, Jeremiah 29:11, Matthew 7:7-8, Romans 12:2

Topics: "Personal Growth", "Faith Journey"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding and embracing the journey of faith. They encourage listeners to seek solutions and growth in their spiritual lives, rather than simply relying on external factors. The speaker also addresses the need for a welcoming and inclusive environment for those who may not have a strong religious background. They emphasize the importance of personal growth and choosing a path that aligns with one's dreams and aspirations. The sermon concludes with a reminder to continually learn and grow in one's faith.

Transcript

Lord Jesus, we look to you for our only source. We look to you as the creator and the keeper of our souls. We know, God, that the task that lies before us, Lord, is so sober and so serious, and that there's nothing that can stand in our way if we submit ourselves to you.

We know, God, that we need your Spirit to empower us and your truth to enlighten us and to give us something to say that's going to really make eternity change for people's lives. And, God, we don't want, as Christians, as counselors, as witnesses for you, we don't want to stumble anybody. We don't want to mislead anybody.

We just want to sit at your feet like Mary and learn from you tonight, not be so busy in serving you that we lose the grasp on who you are, Lord. You're the truth. You're the way.

You're the light. You're the very source of our being. And we know, God, that we can't do anything on our own, so we ask that you pour truth into our minds like light into a dark room to burn out anything that's not from light, anything that's not from God, that the Holy Spirit would fill every nook and cranny of our being.

God, we realize more than anything else tonight that we can't follow our own precepts and our own wisdom as witnesses for you. We don't want to stumble anybody. We don't want to mislead anybody.

We just want to sit at your feet like Mary and learn from you tonight, not be so busy in serving you that we lose the grasp on who you are, Lord. You're the truth. You're the way.

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God, we realize more than anything else tonight that we can't follow our own precepts and our own wisdom, but we need to be enlightened by your Word, and that's why we need to study tonight your heart, your motives, your mindset, your reason for putting us on the earth and keeping us here, and above all, your truth and your love and your mercy, your greatness. Thank you, Lord. We ask for your blessing on this time together in Jesus' name.

Amen. Okay. I guess you're wondering why we've got such a formal setting tonight.

We bought this old pew, I almost said, this old pulpit at an antique shop in Lindale, and we thought that when we got our Sunday evening services in the cafeteria, we could use it just because you could put your Bible over here and the concordance over here and all your notes over here, and everybody would think you're real spiritual when you preach. We're going to study tonight part one of what's wrong with the gospel, and it's called section one, the missing parts. You know, we really had trouble titling it.

We added parts. It just sounded too many parts in the title. What this sermon or teaching or, for those of you watching on video, counseling instructions is, is four years of my life preaching the same message night after night, adding a little bit more, refining a little bit more in concert.

It burned on my heart, and the thing that burned on my heart is when I got saved, I saw the world lost, and I saw the church excited to win the world that was lost for the most part, especially new Christians are always excited to win others, and, and I saw this big Grand Canyon between the two. I saw the church over here with brand new baby Christians going, wow, yippee, we want to get people saved, and I saw the world over here going, you know, Christians, P.U., you know, and never the twain shall meet, you know, and I'd lead my friends to the Lord, and when I led my friends to the Lord, I led them to the Lord the way it was taught me that I should lead them to the Lord, by either example or Bible study. When I got saved, I went to seven Bible studies a week, well, six plus church.

I wanted to get as much of the gospel. It didn't matter good, wrong, bad, fundamentalist, charismaniac, it didn't matter. I just wanted to feed on the Word of God.

I was saved. I mean, didn't happen overnight. Took me two years, in fact, to really get saved, and I don't, you know, I prayed to Jesus in '73, but I put all kinds of conditions on it, and in '75, I unconditionally surrendered to Jesus.

It'll be seven years this spring, being 1982 right now, and I went to Bible study after Bible study, and I started adopting, of course, I mean, I was like a sponge. You ever seen a dry sponge refuse liquid? You know, you know, whatever was poured in them, yeah, you know, and I just received, you know, I went to Bible studies by pastors and Bible studies by Christians that were just three or four years. Bible studies by rebels.

Bible studies by boring people. It didn't matter as long as it, if I could go to one every night, it didn't matter who was putting it on. I wasn't particular.

I just wanted to hear the Word of God preached. I was naive. I was ignorant, a little stupid.

Foolish would be a better word, and I sucked in as much as I could, like a plant. Well, needless to say, I learned a lot of garbage, and when I learned this garbage, of course, being influenceable, influenceable, we'll pass that word around, being easily influenced, I started preaching and disseminating the knowledge that I gathered, just like anybody else. Whatever goes in the ear comes out the mouth, as long as it gets in the heart somewhere, and God blessed my foolishness, just like He does every new Christian.

People got saved left and right, but the problem was I didn't know how to keep them saved nor really authentically get them saved, so many, many, many of them fell away. It was like planting, it was like somebody giving you a big bag of styrofoam potting soil. Looks like it, you know, and it was real dark and rich.

Put it in, wow, this is great for light, you put the water in, it just sucks it right up. Put your plant in, it looks great for a couple days. All of a sudden, it starts drooping, you know, what's the matter? You put plant food in, and the plant kind of sticks up for a while, but there's nothing to hold the plant food.

It goes right out the hole in the bottom of that planter. I had the wrong ingredients, and then, of course, like every new Christian, I got bitter. I started going, why isn't this working? Why isn't this working? Then I started studying the Bible.

Dangerous thing to do. Don't ever study the Bible unless you want to have your thoughts and mind changed about the truth. Dangerous to do.

If you just want to go along with the status quo and what everybody else is saying about the gospel in Jesus, just listen to what everybody else says. Listen to teaching tapes, you know, today we've got a new scripture. When you and a teaching tape is gathered, I'll be there in the midst of you.

Our fellowship now is with a cassette player and the television set. But just, you know, listen to everything, let it go in, and you will be what I call a spiritual schizophrenic. You will lead people to the Lord, and you really will with little seeds of truth, because remember, anything that anybody says about Jesus in the Bible, if you even use those words, there's a little bit of truth in this and a little bit of truth in that.

People swallow it. Some effect happens. They go through the right motions, but it doesn't take.

It doesn't take. It doesn't take root. It doesn't grow.

So I got bitter, and I started reading the Bible, and I thought, wait a minute, they didn't talk about this part. In fact, they skipped from there to there. Why did they leave out? Wow, that's heavy, you know? And so then I started blaming the church.

Well, don't ever blame the church. I did that for a few years and got in a lot of trouble with God. Can't blame the church.

The church is a victim, and just like any victim, just like Patty Hearst when she was kidnapped, when a victim is a victim long enough, they start identifying with the person victimizing them. They start disseminating the same garbage that they start taking in. So the church becomes a victim of a lack of truthful knowledge being presented as a whole, and then it starts propagating it.

Remember what I said the other night, that whoever you hang out with, you start talking and acting like them. Well, let's make a long story short so we can get to the meat of what I have to say. For three or four years, I did concerts, and I preached, and I shared what was wrong with the church and what was right about the truth and how my heart was struggling with the lack of truth that I was seeing in evangelism and in the church, and little by little, God softened my heart.

Little by little, He took the bitterness out, and He started putting discernment and gentleness in. Not that I've become the gentle giant that I want to be as a Christian, but I'm not bitter anymore. I really am not.

I am really compassionate about the state of the church, and I really see that we need to gently speak the truth in love, but still speak the truth, not ignore it, not put it off because it's going to hurt somebody, but try like a doctor who has to hurt you to operate on you, put as much anesthetic called love as he can before he has to do the deep cutting, and recovery will hurt, too, and the doctor prescribes pain pills for that, too, if he's a good doctor. Not too much, not too long, so you don't get addicted to those things, but enough to keep the pain from really affecting the way you live, and so that's what we need to do tonight. Now, before you can learn what's right, you have to unlearn what's wrong.

Before you can fill a glass full of sparkling, clean water, you need to wash the glass out, and if there's a little residue of Kool-Aid, you've got to wash the glass, pour it out. You can't pour clean water into a little bit. You ever seen that? You drink, you know, hot chocolate, and you get up in the morning, and there's a scum on the bottom, you've got to wash it.

There's scum in our hearts. There's residue of old, wrong teachings that have stayed in there, never got washed completely clean, some of us, and you've got to be emptied before you can be filled, and now what I want to say before we start is that some of these things are going to be sensationally impressive to you. In other words, they're going to shock you.

Some of these things are going to be, what? No one ever told me that before. You're going to have two reactions. You're either going to think, this is terrible, and I don't want to listen to this anymore, or you're going to go, this is the greatest teaching I ever heard.

Wow, you know, Keith Green's really a great Bible teacher. Don't do either of the two, please. Just say the Word of God is true.

Let it change your mind. Let it change your heart. Let it change your life, and then you will change lives in return for what God will do in you.

Now, what we're going to do, it's kind of an experiment in teaching for me. I've got this whole teaching written out in track form. We printed it in April of 81 in our newsletter, and we hope to, anybody seeing the tape, we're going to send a packet of these so you can read along with me.

I'm going to read a paragraph or two or even a whole section. Just read it verbatim, and I'm going to stop and expand a little bit and tell of my experiences that led to me writing such things. I might even say, well, if I was to write this again today, I wouldn't be as harsh, or I wouldn't be as black and white, because I've learned more since, you know, almost the years gone by since I wrote this, and if you don't learn more in a year about something you wrote a year ago, then you're not learning or growing in the Lord at all.

Even Charles Finney, one of my favorite Bible teachers, who's dead but still alive through his writings, through the Lord, even he said in his book of theology, which is this thick, he says, if anybody can show

me where I'm wrong, or if anybody can show me some new light, I'll change like that, because I'm not married to my doctrines. I'm not married to my theology. I'm married to the truth, Jesus Christ.

If you can clear off my window and show me that I have a misconception about something I believe, I'm not going to hold on to that. I want to hold on to God. That goes for me, too.

That's why the negative and corrective mail we receive here is very important to me. I mean, sure, it hurts. Sure, ooh, ow, ooh, you know, people go, you're, but I read it, and I take it to heart, and I pray about it, and sometimes it changes my mind very profoundly.

That's what the body of Christ is all about. When this elbow itches, this hand must scratch it. This hand can't scratch this elbow, you know? Can't do it.

It needs this hand. That's why God says, were two or more gathered, I'll be there. One Christian alone cannot grow straight and narrow.

He cannot grow perfectly straight in the Lord, and the more that are following God with their whole hearts, the better, because they all check and balance each other. No one man has a corner on the market of truth. Not Billy Graham, not Oral Roberts, not last days, not anybody has a corner.

God enlightens a certain group of people or a certain denomination or a certain preacher about one particular truth, and then from that, one man will hammer away at that truth, so the whole church gets it, and then he'll lead them to something else, and he'll lead this guy in the church to teach on love and this guy to teach on judgment, and you'll find that sometimes you'll find that some of the teachers will sound like somebody playing a one-string fiddle, but that's the string God wants him to pluck. In his own life, he's not out of balance, necessarily, but in his preaching, he might just be playing one chapter of the Bible over and over again. This is the missing link.

This is the missing part. So tonight, we're going to go over my one string that I played for four years, that I'm not playing now, but okay, this is introduction. You have to open it up.

Look for the big white eye. That means beginning eye. I know that the title of this article probably raised some worried eyebrows.

What's wrong with the gospel? Okay, at first glance, some might say to themselves, oh no, Keith has gone too far at this time, but let me quickly put those possible reactions to rest to the question, what's wrong with the gospel? I can easily answer, absolutely nothing. Okay, now the reason I wrote that was because by the time I wrote this article, I'd already gotten a reputation for being somewhat of a troublemaker. We had just finished printing the first three installments of the Catholic Chronicles and had gotten a lot of negative mail, about 20%, one out of five letters was negative back then, and the Lord had been speaking to me through the last concert tour in October of 80 to put down my message on paper so that I didn't have to preach it anymore, so that I could go on to other things, so that I could go on to my main calling in life and that's leading sinners to the throne of God.

My main calling is for evangelism. I don't feel that, I know that. I still have more of a burden for the church than for the world.

I still to this day want to shake the church up and go, don't you see what you're doing? Because I see the way to win the world is to make the church holy. Because as Leonard Ravenhill says, you never have to

advertise a fire. You know, when there's a big fire, everybody's driving to see it.

You don't have to say, you know, in the paper, we'll come and see our fire tomorrow night. Our church will burn down for Christ, you know. You don't need to do that.

So my burden is still to the church on fire, but God's calling me to preach for the lost. And I guess the main message for me from God is that he wants me to, by example, do what's right, instead of trying to wring the neck of the church. And you won't find a lot of this preaching in my concert crusades, although I will address somewhat the state of some Christians who are not really Christians.

My main thrust in the crusades is dealing with how to give your life to Christ and how to follow him and how to turn from sin to a life of holiness and serving Jesus. So I wrote this as an apology before I start for those that might think that I'm just getting off on a tangent. Okay, I can easily answer absolutely nothing that's wrong with the gospel.

That is, of course, if you're talking about the gospel of the Bible, the very message that Jesus preached and what the apostles Peter, Paul, John, and the others devoted their very lives and deaths to. Now, by the way, there's a lot of scripture, scriptural references in these. We're not going to go into, we'd be here for hours if we looked up every reference, but if you have the time to study this and look up at least the references given in the main text, and maybe some of the ones down on the bottom in the footnotes, it would be helpful for you to see the biblical backing of this message, the biblical thrust of this message.

I didn't just sit down and try to think up something that would be good to raise the dust of the church. This is years of study and prayer and being led to preach, so I would, as you go back over your notes or go back over your studies, I'd like you to look up these scriptures, at least the ones in the main text. Okay, second paragraph.

No, there's nothing at all wrong with this message from heaven, but what about the stuff that's being preached today? Is it truly gospel preaching? Are the evangelists that preach in churches and arenas on radio and television, are they preaching what Jesus called the gospel? What about the mountains of modern gospel literature? You know, the tracts, pamphlets, comic books, newspapers, etc. Do they really contain the same message, the whole message about the salvation that Jesus offered? How are we answering the awesome question that people are still asking the church as they asked in the day of Pentecost? Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved? People are still asking that. They really are.

They might not be asking it outwardly of Christians because Christians embarrass them. The truth embarrasses people. Have you ever noticed how hard it is for you and your dad or you and your mom to hug? You know, to really give them a big hug.

You know how there's kind of like a wall between you? That's not true in some cases, but in a lot of cases it's embarrassing. It's usually with one parent, you know. Your mom usually who's kissed you and hugged you a lot while you were growing up might not have, you might not have had as much trouble with, but your dad, you know, who might have been cold and reserved and everything.

You know, when you're a grown-up, when you're 20 or 25, it's kind of hard to hug him, you know, because it's just not usual. Well, that's the way that Christians, I mean, that the world looks at Christians. We're embarrassing.

We're all gushy. We're all vibrant. We're all alive.

We're supposed to be anyway. And they look at us and we say, Hey, do you know where you're going when you die? You know, or, you know, uh, do you know Jesus loves you? Or do you know all these kind of corny ways of witnessing that people use? And they just, you know, it's like kind of scratching your fingers on the blackboard, you know, just kind of rubs people definitely the wrong way. They're not used to people dealing with things like eternity and death and hell.

Golly, you know, so, um, um, people are asking that question. What do I do to be saved from this mess of life? What do I do to get out of this death trap called life on earth? That's what I asked myself. And that's what every one of you who are sitting here tonight, ask yourself, or you wouldn't be a Christian.

Now, if you're a Christian because somebody else talked you into it, you're probably not a Christian. Now, it doesn't mean that somebody else couldn't have instilled the question into you or made you think about it. But if you're a Christian, cause mommy and daddy allegedly go down the aisle when you're five years old, and that's your experience with Christianity, then you haven't had your own Waterloo face to face with God yet.

And you need to have it. And I'm not going to give an altar call. We'll get to that next meeting, you know, but, um, what I'm dealing with here is the difference between the gospel of the Bible and the gospel that is being preached today.

There is a difference. If you don't think there's a difference, a big difference, a Grand Canyon, as I called it before, between the gospel of the Bible and the modern gospel being preached today, then why aren't we having the results that the early gospel had? As, uh, I was just meeting with my brother Leonard tonight, Leonard Ravenhill. He says, the only proof of apostolic succession is apostolic success.

You know, a lot of churches claim that they're direct descendants of the apostles. He says, well, if they have apostolic succession, then they're going to have to have apostolic success, or all it is is physical succession. It isn't a spiritual.

That's a little deep. Okay, is our gospel the gospel? I believe with all my heart that Jesus would be ashamed of most of the gospel messages and sermons that are being preached today, mainly because they lack almost every major point he himself preached on. How dare we try to change the gospel? We remove most of its vital parts and replace them with artificial limbs of our own.

Vital parts, um, in medical terms is organs. Your vital parts is your heart, your lungs, your kidneys, your liver. Isn't Jesus the master evangelist? Shouldn't we judge our evangelism by his example? Was his message anything like what we're hearing today? It is my intention to try and briefly cover in this section each of the major parts of the gospel that have been surgically removed in most of today's preaching, and in section two, we will go over each of the new additions that have become a very part of our modern gospel.

Okay, about Jesus being the master evangelist. Many people read the Bible with different glasses on, okay? They call it, you know, you've heard that he looks at the world through rose-colored glasses and everything's you know, or, you know, he's a pessimist. He looks at the world through dark glasses.

Well, what's called our mindset or our grid is the glasses we look through, and it colors everything we see. If we have a theological bent this way, then every scripture we'll look at through those glasses. If we have a theological bent this way, we'll look at through that.

If you are into grace, you know, you're into, well, it's okay, we can do anything we want to, and Jesus loves us anyway, then you'll see through your glasses and all the scriptures that don't say that will kind of just disappear, and all the ones that say what you like to hear will be there, and if you're the other, if you're a law freak, you know, well, you've got to work for Christ, you know, you've got to do everything right, or God's going to come after you with a club, you know, and all the scriptures that are heavy are going to just jump out of the page at you. Wow, you know, and the other one's about grace. Yeah, that's cool too.

So what we've got to do is take off our glasses tonight. We've got to take off our grid. Me too.

And look at the gospel. Look at the Bible as a whole. What is God's mindset? What is his attitude? Now, isn't Jesus the master evangelist? What I'm saying is, Billy Graham isn't the master evangelist.

Oral Roberts isn't the master evangelist. Keith Green isn't the master evangelist. Jesus Christ is the master everything.

He's the master healer. If we want to find out how to heal, we better look and find out what his attitude was toward healing, toward sick, toward restoring people's health, toward demons, or whatever. If we want to find out how to deal with sin, then we've got to look at his attitude toward sin, not our pastor's attitude, not last day's attitude, but Jesus Christ's attitude toward sin.

What was his attitude? That should definitely be our attitude. We should try to have an attitude like him. And so instead of judging Jesus's word by what the pastor says, we need to judge the pastor says by what the Bible says.

We need to look at last day's literature. We need to look at our bulletin from church. We need to look at streams in the desert or our squirts in the wilderness through what the Bible says.

Couldn't help it. Okay, to remove parts of the gospel, the blood of Jesus, it's a fact that the very word blood scares people. Now I remember when I was a new Christian, I was brought up in a religion that was what's called metaphysical religion.

I was brought up in a religion called Christian science. It didn't believe that Jesus's physical death had anything to do with salvation. It didn't believe that the devil was real, or that sin was real, or that sickness was real, or that death was real.

In fact, every time you'd go to church, you just kind of disappeared. You weren't there. And you know, I was a vegetarian for three years.

And it wasn't for health reasons. I thought it was morally wrong to kill and eat animals. And when I became a Christian, well, really the year before I got saved, when I was looking into Jesus, I found out he ate lamb on the Passover.

I said, hallelujah. I went out and had a barbecue pork sandwich. I said, hey, if my master, and at that time, Jesus wasn't my Lord and Savior yet a year before I got saved, but I called him my master.

I was into Eastern religions and I was into gurus. And I said, well, if all the Eastern religions, everybody in every Eastern religion says that Jesus is one of the gurus, they do. The Hindus, you know, say he was an incarnation of Krishna.

The Buddhists say he was a Buddha. All the cults, every one of the cults uses parts of the Bible and teachings of Jesus that he's one of the ascended masters. Well, I kind of put like a, you know what acetate is, a kind of clear plastic where you've got building plans and they've got overlays, they call them, you know, you got the walls and then they put the ceiling on, they put the coloring, or it's like a, you know, a four color separation.

Well, I put all the world's, I put all the world's religions down in my mind as an overlay, right? Hinduism, they said, you know, that Krishna was cool and Buddha was kind of cool. And even the Mohammedans said Jesus was a prophet. Even the Jews said he was a nice rabbi.

They didn't call him a demented liar. So I put all the world religions down and it all pointed to Jesus. Every single one overlapped at him.

You know, the Buddhists didn't say that Mohammed was cool. The Christians didn't say that Buddha was cool, but they all said Jesus was one of the ways to God. And then I figured, well, what did Jesus say? He says, I'm the only way.

You know, they all said he's one of the ways. He says, that's right, but I'm the only way. They're none of the ways.

So when I put all these things down, yeah, when I put all these overlays down, it all pointed to Jesus. So I said, well, you know, Todd, my, one of my best friends at the time, he was following Krishna. I said, well, and he was following Krishna through a guy named Yogananda, who was a modern day guru to lead him to Krishna, you know, or Allah or whatever.

And I said, well, you know, I don't feel comfortable with that because Jesus said that he was the only way and Yogananda said he was one of the ways. So why don't I just go with the best bet? You know, go with the winner, right? So I made Jesus my guru. I did.

I said, I said that Jesus Christ was my guru. When I put the cross on, I said, Jesus, you know, all the ascended masters in Eastern, you know, grasshopper, you know, they're all pointing to you and you point to only you, you know, they're all pointing to you and you're going me, you know? So I said, all right, I'll, I'll buy it. You're my guru.

So at that time, I was coming out of a Christless, bloodless, crossless religion called Christian science into Eastern religions, which, you know, was kind of out there in outer space. And I was a vegetarian and I wore a rope, a woven cloth belt and, and, and, you know, rubber thongs and, and man-made, you know, leather, the man-made leather, the vinyl stuff and I had vinyl coats. And you know, I, I just, man, if people made me vegetable soup, I asked them if they used beef broth or vegetable broth, you know, if, if you want, you couldn't have Mexican food that was cooked in lard, it had to be cooked in Crisco or vegetable short.

I mean, I was pure, you know, pimples and all. And so when I got saved right out of vegetarian Eastern Christian scientism, somebody started preaching about the blood of Christ in my hair, you know, kind of stood up, you know, blood. I got to fix this again.

Blood. Are you kidding? Blood. Every time they said it, they gave me the willing thought of Dracula, you know, blood.

And so I understand we live in a bloodless society. You know, you go for Colonel Sanders. You don't see the chicken running around without his head when they cut his head off.

You know, we had, we had a cow out here on the thing and he died on us and we took a machete and had to cut him up and serve him for dinner, you know, and some of the girls didn't want to eat it. And I understood why we pulled his skin off and everything. This is, you know, you have to, you know, leave the room.

It's okay. But it was the same kind of meat that we got in the market, but it wasn't with a nice little package with all the blood drained off all the eyeballs taken out. You know, it was just pre-packaged.

Like, you know, they asked these kids in Oregon, where milk came from? They said, the store. Everything in our life is so pre-packaged, including the gospel. And today we've got a bloodless Jesus, a nice pre-packaged colorful carton, you know, by now Christianity.

And so when, when you talk about the blood, which the Bible does over and over and over and over again, people get the willies, even Christians, because they're not used to hearing about the blood. The pastors usually nicely pass over the scriptures on the blood because it's not as civilized anymore. And they say it's outdated because the only reason Paul talks much about the blood was because the Jews were into the blood sacrifice.

And so they had to keep relating Jesus to the Passover lamb. But I don't agree without the shedding of blood, there's no remission of sin. There must be a blood sacrifice.

There must be a blood atonement. It's the law and wisdom of God. And unless we present Jesus as that Passover lamb of the Old Testament, unless we realize the Old Testament is necessary for the New Testament to come, the type of Christ in the law of Moses is so important.

We don't need to preach the law of Moses that much. We don't need to preach and teach in a gospel meeting all about Leviticus and start memorizing Leviticus. But we need to at least present the fact that there needs to be required by the law of God a shedding of blood.

Jesus did it so you don't have to shed blood. You don't have to shed animal blood anymore. Isn't that beautiful? You don't have to take your cocker spaniel or your pet pony or something down to the priest and have him slit his throat.

Jesus shed the blood. But we need to continue to lift that shed blood up as a remission for sin. Let's read on.

It's a fact that the very word blood scares people. It's also a fact that the blood of Christ scares the devil because it is the only cleansing agent for a sin sick soul. You know what a cleansing agent is? Bon Ami, you know? It'll scrub your soul.

You better believe it. Can you imagine what the preaching and writings of Paul would have been like if he had been as squeamish in proclaiming the magnificent power and beauty of the blood of Jesus as our generation of preachers are? What we have now is a bloodless gospel. Today people are afraid to think and preachers are afraid to make them.

The whole concept of Jesus being the Passover Lamb of the Old Testament has been lost. Quote, it takes too much time and thought to explain, you will hear some say. Quote, we need to simplify the gospel so that we can reach the masses.

Oh, what logic. Remove the blood from the preaching of the gospel and you remove the power to conquer the devil for the souls of men. You better believe that.

I'm not saying you got to stand up and say the blood this and the blood that. You just have to explain the concept that without the shedding of blood according to the law of Moses, which Jesus came to fulfill, and you better believe it. He didn't come to abolish the law and he didn't come to say, you don't need that.

He says, that's God's wisdom and I'm going to fulfill it. I'm the Lamb. What did John the Baptist say when Jesus showed up at the Jordan River to be baptized? Behold, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.

He lifted Jesus up as what? As the Messiah? As the Savior? No, the Lamb. Quiet, docile, sad, to be butchered and slaughtered and bled for you and me. And it wasn't the physical death so much, but the offering of his soul to God.

Sure, he physically died. Sure, he was mutilated and beaten, but that wasn't the greatest pain. He offered his soul, it says in Isaiah 53, as a propitiation, which means taking away the curse as an offering to God so that God's anger could be turned from each and every one of us.

And you and I both know that God has every right to be angry with you and me for hurting him and for turning away from ripping our lives off. We have stolen our lives from God. They belong to him from the day we're born.

And we grew up and we learned the ways of the world. Amen. Do your own thing if it feels good, do it.

You know, watch out for number one and all that other secular garbage. And we ripped our lives away from the Savior. And before, you know, he died before we were born.

He already had it all taken care of before you and I walked on the earth. You know, a thousand, almost two thousand years ago, he'd taken care of it. You just needed to find out about it, believe it, have faith in it, and walk in it, and you're saved.

Okay, the cross of Jesus also is a missing part of the gospel. Paul said, I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. Halleluiah.

I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. Why not just Jesus Christ? Why not? Because Jesus Christ death. Why did Jesus come to the earth? To die.

He didn't come to live, he came to die. Anybody can live, but not everybody can die for the sins of the whole world and then raise in conquering death. That was his whole purpose for coming.

The Reverend Moon has the blasphemy to say that he missed his calling by dying, that he should have gotten married and set up a celestial kingdom like he's doing on his limb yet. What blasphemy. Jesus came specifically to die, and he told his disciples over and over again, I'm going to die and be raised on the third day.

I'm going to die and be raised on the third day. I'm going to die and be raised on the third day. And what was the saddest day of Jesus' life? The day that we all say hallelujah for he has risen? The resurrection morning.

He told all these dunces he was going to raise on the third day, and nobody was there to meet him when he came out of the tomb. Not one. And he told them, blank, point blank, literally, word for word, I'm going to raise on the third day.

Now what is the cross of Christ? What does it mean Jesus Christ and him crucified? Let's go on. Nowadays it isn't Jesus Christ and him crucified, it's Jesus Christ and what he can do for you. You cannot have more exact opposites than the Bible's Christ-centered gospel and our modern crossless me-centered gospel.

Today if anyone preaches self-denial as a condition of discipleship, you can hear the comments afterward, old-fashioned, harsh, legalistic. I dare say that our Lord would have as much trouble finding acceptance among our preachers as he had among the religious leaders of his own day. When Jesus preached the cross, when he said take up your cross and follow me, he was talking about denying your self-seekingness, denying looking to yourself, to its needs, to its wants, to its lusts, to its desires, to its ambitions, to its plans, to its future, to its past, to its present, and look to him.

Let's read what A.W. Tozer said about the cross. The cross is the most revolutionary thing ever to appear among men. The cross of Roman times knew no compromise.

It never made concessions. It won all its arguments by killing its opponent and silencing him for good. This is the Roman cross.

It spared not Christ, but slew him the same as the rest, that's including thieves and murderers. He was alive when they hung him on that cross and completely dead when they took him off of it. That was the cross the first time it appeared in Christian history.

With perfect knowledge of all this, Christ said, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. So the cross not only brought Christ's life to an end, it also ends the first life, the old life of every one of his true followers. This and nothing less is true Christianity.

We must do something about the cross, and there's only one of two things we can do. Flee it. That means run away from it or die upon it.

Now when we preach the cross of Christ, we're not supposed to just talk about the cross that Jesus died on. When we mention the cross, it's wonderful, it's beautiful. Yes, Jesus died on the cross, but we need to understand because Jesus mentions about us taking up our cross.

Now, if he hadn't said that, then we could just tell about the death and life and rebirth, the death and resurrection story without even mentioning how it applies to us. But Jesus took away our excuse for doing that by mentioning we must take up a cross. And when Jesus mentioned that, when Jesus said you must take up your cross, he was talking to people who had a visual knowledge of what the cross meant.

They had been to the Passover, they'd been to Jerusalem, they had seen the Romans time after time after time take religious zealots and murderers and rapists and arsonists and nail them to a cross. And he saw them, just like Jesus, carry their cross, being whipped and beaten out of the city, being nailed to it, hung

up until they rotted there. You know, Jesus only got taken down because it was the night of the Sabbath.

Usually they left them out there. They left them out there to have their bones picked by birds. They took them down because it was not right, according to Jewish law, to keep a man up on the Sabbath.

Now, when the disciples heard Jesus say you must take up your cross, that must have put a shutter down their spine because they knew that everyone who took up their cross in Jesus' day, for them it was a one-way trip. There was no coming back from that, taking up your cross. See, today we say take up your cross while you think of that nice little silver thing around your neck with a diamond in it or a ruby or a piece of turquoise, a piece of jewelry.

If Jesus would have died on the electric chair, would you be wearing an electric chair around your neck? I don't think the cross is an appropriate symbol of jewelry, personally. Everybody's hiding their jewelry. I don't know, you know.

I don't care what you wear as jewelry, personally, but I'm saying that the cross needs to be a symbol of death because that's all it is. It's not a symbol of resurrection. It's a symbol of death.

It's a symbol, sure, of Jesus crossing out our sins. Sure, it's canceling out the debt. Sure, it means that he crosses out the old life.

But what it really means is death, death to him and death to you. And if you haven't heard that message, if you haven't accepted it, embraced the cross, taken it to heart and see that you need to die and you need to deny yourself and you need to take that one-way trip carrying that big beam like Jesus did and have everybody shudder because they know you're not coming back unless you go through what Jesus did, a resurrection, a new life. And you don't have a resurrection before you have a death on the cross.

Jesus didn't have a resurrection until he fully died and was laid to rest. We want to quickly pass over the cross. Yes, yes, you have to die, but there's a resurrection.

We want to present the resurrection. Jesus didn't. He suffered for 33 years on earth knowing the day of his death.

You know that? How would you like to know the day of your death? How would you like to walk around for 33 years knowing you're going to be beaten and mutilated, not be able to get married, not be able to enjoy any of the things of this world that God created for man and women to enjoy? And you knew exactly that you were going to have to die on that Passover on your 33rd year. I think he knew that. Maybe not when he was two, but for sure when he started his ministry, he knew it.

He knew he had a limited time.

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