

Back in 1981, an article was written, entitled, *What's Wrong with the Gospel ?* by Keith Green. This document is the copy of the Keith Green article from the Last Days Ministries website, completed with more content of this sermon from the videos when Keith was preaching this message.

Keith Green's sermon on "What's Wrong with the Gospel?"

This is a study of what has been taken away, what has been added and the final results of adding these things and what we need to do to correct the problem. **It's to point out the horrible weakness in today's modern methods and to lift up the power of Jesus's ancient methods that work newly today.**

Some people might not even be saved in a Biblical sense. That's for you to know, but if you're not really saved, if you are not really a Christian, you gonna be a little uneasy working for God. There are a lot of people who work for God on the outside, who inside are not really yielded up to Him and that's a shame and it's a heartbreak and unless they find out by the end of their life, they're gonna be one of those people of which Jesus said: Some will come and say "Lord Lord!" but I'll say "**Depart from Me, I never knew you**". *"But Lord...we cast out demons and we healed the sick and we did this and that, we spoke in tongues, we went to Church, we taught Sunday school..."*

John 3:20-21 *For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. ²¹ But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.*

Those who love the Light come to the Light, they're not afraid it's gonna expose something in their lives, they look for the Light, they grow toward the Light. But those who hate God, who are enemies of God, they don't want to come to the Light because there are things hidden in their lives they don't want to come to the surface.

PRAYER

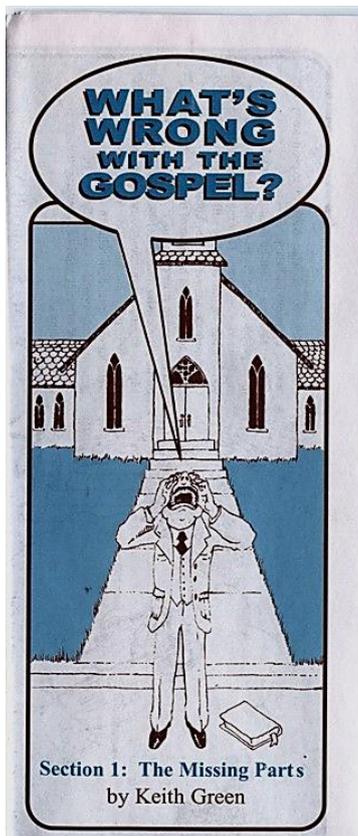
"God, we're not looking to ourselves, we're looking to Your Throne. We're not looking to become bigger Christians or even better Christians, we're looking to better please You. We're not looking to get a name or to work with some big crusade or to build up our own ministry or our own names God, we're looking to build up Your Kingdom and to build up the number of people and the quality of people, that are serving You, that are gonna come into Your Kingdom through these efforts. We know God that nothing, nothing can be wrong if we do it for You with a sincere heart according to the truth and nothing will work together for bad if we really love You. You said that all things, everything, works together for good, even our ignorance, even our mistakes God, even our past sins. Once we repented of them, can be turned around for a testimony and when we talk about it, it can lead people to Christ. How You can redeem even the dirt clods (kluiten) and make them into diamonds God. You buy us up when we're worthless and You make us into jewel encrusted gems (juwelen ingelegde edelstenen) for Your Kingdom and Your Treasury (schatkist). God we're so grateful that that's the kind of God You are, that You don't buy us up and rip us off, but You buy us up when we're worthless and make us priceless objects for Your possession. Holy Spirit, come and possess our souls. We do want to be possessed of God's Holy Spirit and we want to know Your truth and we want to be enlightened to follow You. Take away from us everything that is not of You, slice the devil down in our lives, nail us to the cross God, so that we can have a resurrection Easter morning with You. Any part of us that is still of sensual earthly selfish desire God, destroy it, crucify it. God, nail us, put us to death, please God so that we might live. Every misconception (misvatting) let it be destroyed, in Jesus' Name, we love You Lord, amen."

What's Wrong With the Gospel?

Section 1: "The Missing Parts"

by Keith Green

Introduction



I know that the title of this article will possibly raise some worried eyebrows. At first glance, some might say to themselves, "Oh no, Keith has gone too far 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!" That is, of course, if you're talking about the Gospel of the Bible - the very message that Jesus preached - what the apostles Peter, Paul, John, and the others devoted their very lives (and deaths) to.

Philippians. 1:20-21

***20** According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that **in nothing I shall be ashamed**, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.*

***21** For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

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?** And 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 on the day of Pentecost, "Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?"²

When a victim is a victim long enough, they start identifying with the person victimizing them. They start disseminating (verspreiden) 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. **Whoever you hang out with you start acting and talking like them.**

Before you can learn what is right you need to unlearn what is wrong.

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.

***Mark 8:38* Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.**

***Romans 1:16* For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.**

***II Timothy. 1:8* Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God.**

How dare we try to change the Gospel. We remove most of its vital parts, and replace them with artificial limbs of our own.

Galatians 1:6-7 *I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ **unto another gospel**: ⁷ Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would **pervert the gospel of Christ**.*

There is a huge difference between the Gospel of the Bible and the modern preaching gospel. Isn't Jesus the master evangelist? **Shouldn't we judge our evangelism by His example?**³ Was His message anything like what we're hearing today? It is my intention to try to briefly cover in Section 1 each of the major parts of the Gospel that have been "**surgically removed**" in most of today's preaching. And in Section 2, we will go over each of the "**new additions**" that have become a very part of our modern gospel.

The Removed Parts Of The Gospel

THE BLOOD OF JESUS

Hebrews 9: 22 *And almost all things are by the law **purged with blood**; and **without shedding of blood is no remission**.*

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.**⁴ Can you imagine what the preaching and writings of Paul would have been like, if he had been as squeamish (preuts, kieskeurig) in proclaiming the magnificent power and beauty of **the blood of Jesus** as our generation of preachers are?

Without the shedding of **Blood** there is **no** remission of sins.

There must be a **Blood Sacrifice** – There must be a **Blood Atonement**, it is the Law and Wisdom of God. But we need to continue to lift **that shed Blood** up for the remission of sins.

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 Testament⁵ has been lost - "It takes too much time and thought to explain," you will hear some say. "*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!

THE CROSS OF JESUS

1 Corinthians 2:2 *For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*

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-centred Gospel,⁶ and **our modern, cross-less, me-centred gospel**.

Today, if anyone preaches **self-denial as a condition of discipleship**, you can hear the comments afterwards: "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 "**to take up your cross and follow Me**", He was talking about **denying your self-seekiness, denying looking for yourself**, to it's needs, to it's wants, to it's lusts, to it's desires, to it's ambitions, plans, to it's futures, to it's past, present...

Matthew 16:24 *Then said Jesus unto his disciples, **If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.***

Here's what A.W. Tozer says about the cross... *"The cross is the most revolutionary (baanbrekend) thing ever to appear among men. The cross of Roman times knew no compromise, it never made concessions (een vergunning die een overheid uitreikt aan een entiteit om op eigen risico bepaalde activiteiten te ondernemen of diensten te beheren). It won all its arguments by killing its opponent and silencing him for good. It spared not Christ, but slew Him the same as the rest. 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 or die upon it!**"*

The cross is a symbol of death. And you don't have a Resurrection before you have a death on **the cross**.

THE THREAT AND TERRORS OF HELL, AND THE GUILT OF SINNERS

We often hear people say, "I'm tired of hell-fire and brimstone preaching!" "Well," I often reply, "when was the last time you heard any?" It is true, very few people preach on hell anymore - it is no longer in vogue (mode). "We shouldn't scare the poor sinners, no, that wouldn't do. They're just unfortunate, misguided souls, right"? **Wrong!** The Bible clearly shows that they are rebels who have robbed and dishonored the living God, infinitely offending Him. They have no right to look at themselves in any other light.

But we, smart as we are, have decided to help God along. He doesn't understand our generation as well as we do. **The things Jesus emphasized in His preaching were all right for the Jews, but our generation needs a more gentle, loving tone.** "Tell 'em about heaven!" We talk about heaven, about the "rewards of being born-again," but **we completely neglect the other side of the "two-edged sword."**

Hebrews 4:12 *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

WE DON'T HAVE ANY RIGHT TO REMOVE WHAT JESUS DIDN'T REMOVE.

Jesus talked about **hell** almost as much as He talked about everything else.

There is verse after verse in the Bible about the punishment of God of being disobedience to God.

Our fear that we are gonna hurt somebody (by preaching about hell) isn't going to help them at all.

You need to get through the washing machine of God to get clean, He'll hang you on **a cross that hurts** until you are squirming (kronkelen) and screaming, but when He is done putting you through the washing machine, you gonna be clean. And part of that washing machine is saying "You need to get into that horrible machine" called **REPENTANCE** for your sin and self-denial and be made into the likeness and image of Jesus. And part of that is telling you that **you are a wicked rotten criminal**, I love you but you are a wicked rotten criminal.

Why is the Bible full of stories about **hell**? Because God cares enough to tell people the truth.

What right do we have to remove things from the Gospel that Jesus Himself gave great place to in His own preaching?⁸

Jesus preached about **hell** and about **the penalty** of not serving God:

Matthew 25:32-34, 41, 46 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall **separate them** one from another, as a shepherd divideth his **sheep from the goats**: ³³ And he shall set the sheep on his **right hand**, but the goats on **the left**. ³⁴ Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: ⁴¹ Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, **Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels**: ⁴⁶ And these shall go away **into everlasting punishment**: but the righteous into life eternal.

Matthew 24:48-51 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; ⁴⁹ And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; ⁵⁰ The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, ⁵¹ **And shall cut him asunder**, and appoint him his portion with **the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth**.

↓
cut him asunder means: to cut in pieces, heavy flogging (zwaar geselen)

Matthew 25:10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: **and the door was shut**.

↓
the foolish virgins will be kept out in total darkness

We need to let people see themselves **as criminals** and **not as** poor misguided souls.

Romans 11:22 Behold therefore the **goodness** and **severity** of God: on them which fell, **severity**; but toward thee, **goodness**, if thou continue in his **goodness**: otherwise thou also shalt be **cut off**.

THE LAW OF GOD PREACHED TO CONVICT ONE OF SIN

Pages could be written on this subject, but there is room for only one brief example. When the rich young ruler came to Jesus, he asked a very direct question: "Good Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Can you imagine what our preachers would answer him today? "**Just admit you're a sinner, accept Jesus as your Personal Savior, go to Church, pay your tithes, try to be good, and you're in!**" But what was Jesus' answer? "**You know the commandments... if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.**"

Matthew 19:16-21 And, behold, one came and said unto him, **Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?** ¹⁷ And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but **if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments**. ¹⁸ He saith unto him, **Which?** Jesus said, Thou shalt **do no murder**, Thou shalt **not commit adultery**, Thou shalt **not steal**, Thou shalt **not bear false witness**, ¹⁹ **Honour thy father and thy mother**: and, **Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself**. ²⁰ The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? ²¹ Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.

The Commandments?? "Isn't this the "age of grace"?"

Well, the truth is Jesus wasn't preaching **the Commandments** to him as the way of salvation, Jesus used **the Law** to dig down into the cancer that was in this man's heart. He was using **the Commandments** to specifically convict him of his particular sin - greed. That rich boy loved the bucks, and Jesus knew just how to flush him out of the bushes - **preach the Law!** And that's exactly what **the Law** is for:

***Romans 3:20** Therefore by the deeds of the **law** there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the **law** is the **knowledge** of sin.*

The Law must be preached - not as the way of salvation, but **as a searchlight** put on the sinner's heart, **so he can see how utterly rotten he is**, compared to the way God requires him to be.

But today again, we are wiser than God. Our preaching isn't filled with "dos and don'ts." No, we don't want to scare the "liberated generation" away. Why, if we said that fornication was wrong, or drugs, or abortion, or any other specific sin, people would feel all condemned and then how could they get saved? But that's just it, Jesus preached **the Law** to the rich young ruler so that, after feeling condemned about his greed, he could turn and obey Jesus and find true treasure in heaven.

Mark 10:21** Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: **and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

Unless people are truly convicted of sin, if they do not fully see that they are totally condemned by the requirements of **God's Law**, then it is virtually impossible to show them the need for a Savior. Why, what would they need to be saved from? **Fun?**

That is why our modern gospel must dwell on "*all the good things God will do for you if you'd just accept Him!*" We can't convince a sinner that he needs a Savior by just getting him to admit that, "*Well, generally, yes, I am a sinner.*" He must see how **the Law of God** totally condemns him as a sinner, **and** then the beauty of **the Gospel**, the glory of **the cross**, the marvelous power of **Christ's blood** will be able to penetrate his anxious, waiting mind and heart. **Only by the preaching of the Law can a man fully desire to be saved from his sin.**

***Romans 7:7** What shall we say then? Is **the law** sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by **the law**: for I had not known lust, except **the law** had said, Thou shalt not covet.*

THE FEAR OF GOD AND THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

We can't rush people into salvation, sometimes it takes time. If people were not ready, Jesus left them alone.

Instead of the awesome majesty of Jehovah, today the Lord is presented as a sort of "ice cream man-Santa Claus." And the Church is the "candy store" where you can get "every goodie your heart desires." Jesus Himself is portrayed as "a sweetie pie," so good, so loving, so forgiving, and so gentle, that you can almost hear the preacher whisper, "*Aw, He wouldn't hurt a fly...*" But what happened to:

***Hebrews 10:31** It is a fearful thing **to fall** into the hands of the **living** God.*

***Proverbs 9:10** The **fear of the LORD** is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.*

The wise, new editors of **modern preaching** rhetoric have conveniently **wiped out every reference to the Almighty's severity** while emphasizing only His kindness. This they do, ignoring the balanced, biblical view of Paul:

Romans 11:20** Behold therefore the goodness and **severity of God**: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, **if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

Psalm 111:10 *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.*

Matthew 24:13 *But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.*

Today you never hear preach on the scriptures that talk about **the fear of the Lord**. Churches love to preach about scriptures that are nice and that are easily swallowed. Almost everyone has heard a sermon on "God loves a cheerful giver" (**2 Corinthians 9:7**). **Because the Church loves fearful givers more than they love faithful endurers.** They're looking more for the financial security than for the true eternal security. They're looking more for financial stability rather than spiritual stability.

The two-edged sword:

The Gospel definitely has a balm of love, it has a sweet honey-like loving substance that God pours in before He applies **His razor blade to cut out the cancer** and afterwards too and in the midst of.

IT'S BETTER FOR SOMEBODY TO BE AFRAID THAT THEY ARE NOT SAVED AND TRULY BE, THAN FOR SOMEBODY TO THINK THAT THEY ARE SAVED AND TRULY AREN'T.
It's better to have a salvation that you are doubting than to have no salvation that you are sure of.

REPENTANCE AS NECESSARY FOR FORGIVENESS

It has always amazed me how the Church could have evolved to such a state as it is in now, **with such clear, direct teaching from the Lord Jesus as to what is necessary to be right with God.** Please read *the first five verses of the 13th chapter of Luke*. Here, Jesus is told the news about some Galileans who were executed by the Romans. He then says, "**Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.**" Using another example, He then repeats the same exact sentence:

Luke 13:1-5 *There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. ² And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were **sinners above** all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? ³ I tell you, Nay: but, **except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.** ⁴ Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were **sinners above** all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? ⁵ I tell you, **Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.***

↓ = to destroy fully,
die in your sins
like they did

Luke 12: 20 *But God said unto him, Thou fool, **this night thy soul shall be required of thee:** then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?*

I cannot conceive of conversion without repentance. The teachings of Jesus and the apostles are full of commands to "**repent and be saved!**"¹⁴ Repentance is not just "being sorry" - that is only conviction. Repentance is not merely **a change of heart and a change of mind, it is a change of action!** Jesus gave us **His Blood**, He gave us **the Cross**, He gave us **forgiveness** available to us upon **repentance and faith.**

God requires that if we are sincerely convinced that sin is wrong, then we will turn from it to God, and commit ourselves to not take part in sinful deeds any longer. God blesses such decisions and commitments with abundant grace. And it is **by that grace** that we can fulfill **the desires of the Spirit** within us.

Mark 1:15 *And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: **repent ye, and believe the gospel.***

What produces conviction? **The Law**
What makes people want to repent? **Conviction**

But because there is **so little real conviction of sin brought about by the preaching of our modern gospel**, we cannot truly require repentance anymore. If we did, no one would "come forward" at all. **IF WE DON'T PREACH THE LAW PEOPLE AREN'T CONVICTED, THEY'VE GOT NOTHING TO REPENT FOR.** They can't be converted. For repentance is easy to him who sees how ugly and horrible sin is, **but repentance is impossible where the Law does not convince the sinner of his wicked heart**, compelling him to turn from his sin into the arms of a waiting, compassionate God. You see, all these removed parts of the Gospel are connected. In God's wisdom, every aspect of the appointed way of salvation is irreplaceable.

It is true that without God loving us first, we could not be saved. He made the first move, He always does. But He will not do what He requires of the sinner himself to do - and that is **to repent!**

GOD'S SORROW AND BROKEN HEART OVER SIN

The picture of God as presented today by evangelists is that of an optimist - a positive-thinking good old boy who lives in Heaven, high above the trouble on earth, where everything is rosy, "and the skies are not cloudy all day." Why, how could anything bother the living God? He isn't really troubled by all the mess down here, He has **everything under control!**

But again, the Bible paints a different picture of **our King**. Just look at Jesus weeping over Jerusalem:

*Luke 19:41 And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and **wept** over it,*

or the pleadings of God with the nation of Israel through the prophets Isaiah or Ezekiel.¹² This God, the one in the Bible, is **continually striving with men through His Spirit**. It says in Proverbs:

*Proverbs 15:3 The eyes of the LORD are in every place, **beholding the evil and the good.***

That means that God saw every rape committed today, He saw every murder...every person that starved to death...every pornographic film and book...every abused and battered (mishandled) child...every prostitute...every wife that was beaten...every person that was tormented... **How can anyone believe that He sees this and does not grieve?** Of course God can grieve. Doesn't the Bible implore us not to "grieve the Holy Spirit of God"?

*Ephesians 4:30 And **grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.***

You see, **God is the most hurt and dishonored being in the universe**. He could stop all this mess, all the perversion and crime and corruption any time He wishes, but He doesn't! Why? Because **He waits** for the souls of men and women:

*2 Peter 3:15 And account that **the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;***

But the Church, which doesn't have one millionth of the compassion that God has, has turned around and **created a god in its own image and likeness. A carefree, cheerful, above-it-all God**. And then the Church has conveniently removed from the "gospel" it presents all reference to the pain and sorrow in God's heart. **The Church doesn't want a God who's grieved with sin, because then this God would be grieved with them...** (and He is!)¹³

He can intervene but according to the rules. If you are a believer and you ask, God then has the ability to intervene:

*Matthew 7:8-11 For every one that **asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.** ⁹ Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask **bread**, will he give him a **stone?** ¹⁰ Or if he ask a **fish**, will*

he give him a **serpent**?¹¹ If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

Pray as God leads you to intercede, **the Lord's prayer is all about God's intervention.**

What was the key teaching of Jesus? Love your enemy, bless those who curse you, pray for them who spitefully use you... Don't you think the early Church was praying for Saul who was the greatest threat and murderer against the Church?

Philippians 4:6 *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*

A stubborn and rebellious heart of a person will go from ministry to ministry, from preacher to preacher, from counsellor to counsellor, **till they find the person that will tell them what they want to hear**, till they find the pattern and the package of beliefs and doctrines and sliced up scripture pasted together that fits what they need from God.

THE NECESSITY OF HOLINESS TO PLEASE GOD

Hebrews 12:14 *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:*

↓ = properly purification,
sanctification =
to be set apart for God's
service, to be cleansed

It is true that Jesus commands us **to be perfect.**

Matthew 5:48 *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*

It is also true that you most likely have never met **a perfect person**, nor do you probably ever expect **to be perfect yourself**. Nevertheless, we still have those uncomfortable words of the Lord, "*Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect*"!

Now, because of our dilemma in finding ourselves to be such numskulls, and seeing the demands of Jesus, we have invented some pretty **interesting and craazzeey doctrines**. Some Christians have said, "*Well, when God looks at us, He doesn't really see us anymore, He sees Jesus instead. And when there's ever sin in our hearts, if God should happen to look at the wrong moment, He'll see a smiling face of Jesus there, instead of seeing our sin. So God sees me as holy - even though I'm not! But...I really am...euh, well, you know what I mean!*" (I don't happen to believe that God is that easily fooled, not even by Christians.)

Another stranger-than-truth doctrine is that blessed refuge of backsliders called "**the carnal Christian.**" In this example of pretzel-logic, we are led to believe that any "believer" who isn't really "walking with the Lord" at the present time, and is indulging in the things of the world and the lusts of the flesh, can still be considered a "Christian," but **not a Christian of the 1st class, no, a Christian of the 2nd class... a "carnal Christian."** Here we have a case of the "believer" who doesn't believe. Oh, he still "believes" that God is God, and that there is a heaven and hell, and so on (but don't forget, the devil believes all these things too!- **James 2:19** *Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.*). He knows all the right things to say to convince granny, the pastor, and his Christian friends that he's still hanging in there. He even sort of believes it himself. Seems he's got everybody fooled - everybody that is, except God! The Bible is clear that: *If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 1 John 1:6.*¹⁴

IT'S WHAT WE PRACTICE THAT PROVES WHO WE SERVE.

Today, possibly the greatest insult to the Gospel has been the almost total neglect of the preaching of holiness for the Christian. Jesus doesn't want to make believe that we're holy,

He wants **to impart His holiness to us by the Holy Spirit**. But because people are not being driven to **the cross**, convicted by **His Law to repentance and real rebirth**, then we have to spend hours in our seminaries trying to find suitable, complicated ways to explain away the obvious meanings (voor de hand liggend middel) of Scripture. Do the Scriptural twist around and around...

1 John 2:1 *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an **advocate** with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:*

We belong to Christ and He is our Sanctifier (heiligmaker), He wants to cleanse us. It doesn't mean it is **imputed** (toegerekende) righteousness, **it is imparted** (verleende) **righteousness**.

↓ means you are not really righteousness, but God considers you righteous	↓ means you are not really righteous, but God wants to make you righteous
---	---

There is a difference between **making** us righteous and **making believe** that we are righteous.

To all this you might be saying, "But what about all those people getting saved by the efforts of good men and ministries out there? They're not preaching the way you say they should, and **they** still have converts!" Well, the immediate answer to that question is, "The people are not getting saved **because** of their messages, they're getting saved **in spite** of them." But unfortunately, many of the people who make "decisions for Christ" through large evangelistic crusades, do not even attend Church regularly in the years that follow. (And as you probably well know, "attending Church regularly" does not guarantee that one is a true believer.)

But let's take a closer look at what kind of "converts" today's gospel usually produces.

What's Specifically Wrong With Our Modern Gospel?

IT'S ME-CENTERED INSTEAD OF CHRIST-CENTERED

First and foremost, it is the gospel that appeals to the selfish. Instead of honoring God, it places **the sinner at the centre** of God's love and plan. But the Bible places **Jesus at the centre** of God's plan, **not** the sinner.

One of the most well-known phrases of modern evangelism is "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life!" But the sober, biblical truth that needs to be presented to the sinner's mind is "**You have made yourself an enemy of God, and in your present state of rebellion there is absolutely no hope for you.**" That is the truth that they need to come up with when you're done preaching. They need to realise that they have offended the living God. You don't need to be haughty or condemnatory, you suppose to be real and truthful, you're suppose to let them know their position, they are in trouble, they are in danger. **Why?** Because they offended God and He is willing to **forgive** them, but they must **repent**. They must see that sin is ugly, no matter how good it feels, it is ugly.

In fact, God's "plan" for the sinner at this point in his life is to separate him from His presence forever, in hell. However unpopular or unlovely that may sound, it is the only truth and reality about anyone who is an enemy of God through sin.

The whole line of reasoning in our modern gospel continues on and on in this mistaken way:

"Sin has separated you from God, **'and His wonderful plan for your life.'**

Jesus came and died on the cross, so that you may experience **'His wonderful plan for your life.'**

You must accept Jesus now, so that you will not miss out on **'His wonderful plan for your life!'**"

You, you, you, you!!! It's all for YOU! I'm not sorry to say this, but **JESUS DID IT ALL IN OBEDIENCE, FOR HIS FATHER'S GLORY. NOT FOR YOU,** He did it for his father and HIS FATHER DID IT BECAUSE THE WORLD WAS CREATED **FOR HIS PLEASURE:**

Philippians 2:8-12 *And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore God also*

*hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: ¹⁰ That at the name of Jesus every knee should **bow**, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; ¹¹ And that every tongue should **confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father**. ¹² Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.***

Revelation 4:11** Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and **for thy pleasure they are and were created.

Of course, it infinitely benefits those who love, serve, and honor Him, but that was a **secondary** consideration, **not the primary one**. And **if** we **serve** Him, then we have **pleasure**, we share His pleasure. We share His **love**. We share His **light**. The only way you're gonna get anything from God is to give Him yourself and that is no why you should Him yourself.

YOU SHOULD GIVE HIM YOURSELF BECAUSE YOU BELONG TO HIM. AND WHEN SOMEBODY IS WHERE THEY BELONG, THEY FEEL PEACEFUL AND JOYFUL.

***Ezekiel 36:22-32** Therefore say unto the house of Israel, thus saith the Lord GOD; **I do not this for your sakes**, O house of Israel, **but for mine holy name's sake**, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. ²³ **And I will sanctify my great name**, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. ²⁴ For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. ²⁵ Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. ²⁶ **A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.** ²⁷ And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. ²⁸ And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. ²⁹ I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. ³⁰ And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen. ³¹ Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations. ³² **Not for your sakes do I this**, saith the Lord GOD, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel.*

But anything God does for Himself benefits those who are part of His family. He is not selfish but He cares for His own. If people come to Jesus mainly **to get a blessing, or only to get forgiveness**, they will ultimately be disappointed. **But if they come to give Him their lives in honor and worship, then they will truly have forgiveness and joy** - more than they could ever imagine!

***1 Corinthians 2: 9** But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

IT'S SHALLOW, CHEAP, AND OFFERED AS A "BARGAIN"

Our gospel reduces the good news to a "come and get it while you can" sale. We make every effort to take all the bones out - everything that **might offend someone, might make them hesitate** or put off their decision. **Jesus didn't do this**. He never lowered the requirements for anyone. **One had to be completely sincere, totally humbled, having counted the cost, willing to leave everything, family and property,**

Philippians 3:8 *Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,*

When that same rich young ruler "*went away sad, for he had many possessions*" (**Matt. 19:22**), Jesus didn't go running after him shouting, "*Hey, wait a minute! Let's talk this thing over, it isn't as bad as it might sound. Maybe I was a little too harsh!*"

Maybe we're so eager to "see the converts," to publish "how many got saved at our last concert" in the bulletins to our supporters, that we'll do anything to rush someone into a "decision" before he's had a chance to really make one. The problem is, if you have to rush him into it, he probably will change his mind later anyway. For as a friend of mine says, "**If somebody can talk them into it, somebody can talk them out of it!**" Sure we're to encourage, sure we're to **create an example**, sure we need to **preach the Gospel** and **tell somebody they're lost**. But never try to talk them into it to make the actual decision. **Encourage them into giving their hearts to God, turn from their sin.**

Mass producing for Christ, that is so wrong. It's sick, we can't mass produce Christians.

I Corinthians 1:17 *For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.*

SALVATION IS SHOWN AS A BARTER OR TRADE, INSTEAD OF THE RESULT OF OBEDIENCE BY FAITH

We offer forgiveness of sin like Monty Hall on "*Let's Make a Deal.*" I've even heard, "*You give Jesus your sin, and He'll give you salvation in return!*" No one in the Bible ever thought so low of the grace of God to talk about **the gift of eternal life like it was for trade**. You can't make deals with God. **It is a gift!** You can't earn it, or buy it, or give anything in return for it. How it must **offend the Holy Spirit** to hear people talk of His Jesus so.

Acts 8:18-23 *And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, ¹⁹ Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. ²⁰ But Peter said unto him, **Thy money perish with thee**, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. ²¹ Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. ²² **Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. ²³ For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.***

All you need to do is want to have Him and to get rid of anything in your way to have Him.

IT PRODUCES SELFISH, "BLESSED," AND FEELINGS-ORIENTED "CONVERTS"

Anyone who is made to believe he becomes a Christian under such preaching **will seldom bring forth the true fruits of a real convert**. He will **remain just as selfish as he always was**, only now his selfishness will take on a religious form. If he wants something for himself, he will say he "*has a burden*" for something, or he will say, "*It is the desire of my heart,*" or some other religious-sounding phrase like that. He will **pray selfishly**, desiring blessings for himself, and even if he does pray for others, it usually will be for selfish reasons. After all, when he "accepted the Lord," he was told how much Jesus wanted to bless him and how much God had stored up for his account, and how the Bible was like "**a checkbook full of promises, just waiting to be cashed!**"

Such a person always seeks to "feel" good about himself, his own Church, his own pastor, etc. His whole world is built on **feeling blessed**.

HE WAS NEVER SHOWN HOW HE WAS CREATED TO BLESS GOD... God was not created to bless him.

Psalm 149: 4 For the LORD taketh **pleasure** in his people: he will beautify **the meek with salvation.**

Philippians 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of **his good pleasure.**

As you can see, the "converts" described above are not like those pictured in the book of Acts, when the Church was new and the fire was hot. Take a look at **Acts 2:41-47 and 4:31-35**, and you will see the tender spirit of **love**, and the mighty spirit of **power** that prevailed among the brethren in those early days. I believe that one of the great reasons that "everyone kept feeling a sense of awe" (**Acts 2:43**), was because "they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to prayer." (**vs. 42**) I believe that Peter and the others made every effort to convey the whole message of the Gospel when they preached and taught, and that is why the Spirit of God could anoint and bless the new converts so powerfully- **God always anoints the truth!**

The Bible requires certain things to have **anointing**.
What is anointing?

↓

Uction (salving) is another synonym for anointing
The anointing meant that you were chosen or that God was choosing to use you (like David).

Isaiah 55:11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

Acts 2:41-47 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. **42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine** and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. **43 And fear came upon every soul:** and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. **44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;** **45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.** **46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,** **47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved.**

Acts 4:31-35 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and **they spake the word of God with boldness.** **32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul:** neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. **33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.** **34 Neither was there any among them that lacked:** for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, **35 And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.**

When any half-truth is presented as a whole truth, it becomes an untruth. Jesus taught with authority and God only anoints with His authority and His anointing the truth.

THE TRUTH WILL ALWAYS OFFEND THOSE WHO DON'T LOVE THE TRUTH.

Footnotes:

- 1) Matthew 4:23; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 3:16-18
- 2) Luke 3:10,12,14; Acts 2:37, 16:30
- 3) Ephesians 5:1; I Peter 2:21; I John 2:6
- 4) Matthew 26:28; Acts 20:28; Romans 3:25, 5:9; Ephesians 1:7, 2:13; Colossians 1:20; Hebrews 9:14,22, 10:19, 13:12; I Peter 1:2; I John 1:7; Revelation 1:5, 5:9, 12:11, 19:13
- 5) Exodus 12:23-24; Isaiah 53:7; Luke 22:15; John 1:29,36; I Corinthians 5:7; I Peter 1:19; Revelation 5:6,12, 7:14, 22:1,3
- 6) Matthew 10:38; Luke 14:27; I Corinthians 1:17-18; Galatians 6:14; Ephesians 2:6; Colossians 1:20; I Peter 2:24
- 7) John 8:44; Acts 13:9-11; I Corinthians 6:9; Galatians 4:16; Ephesians 2:1-3; James 4:4; II Peter 2:12-19
- 8) Matthew 5:22, 8:12, 10:28, 13:41-42, 49-50, 22:11-14, 23:13,33, 24:48-51, 25:30,46; Luke 13:26-28
- 9) Romans 2:12,20, 3:20-21, 4:15, 5:13,20, 10:4; I Corinthians 15:56; Galatians 2:16,19, 3:10-11; James 29:11
- 10) See also Deuteronomy 5:29, 10:12; Joshua 24:14; II Kings 17:39; Psalm 2:11, 15:4, 19:9, 25:14, 31:19, 33:18, 34:7,9,11, 52:6, 60:4, 67:7, 72: 5, 85:9, 86:11, 103:11, 13,17; 111:5, 112:1, 147:11; Proverbs 8:13, 10:27, 13:13, 14:26-27, 15:16, 16:6, 19:23, 23:17, 28:14, 31:30; Isaiah 8:13; Jeremiah 32:39-40; Malachi 3:16, 4:2; Matthew 10:28; Luke 1:50; Acts 10:35, 13:26; II Corinthians 7:1; Ephesians 5:21; Philippians 2:12; Hebrews 12:29; I Peter 1:17; Revelation 14:7
- 11) Psalm 7:12; Isaiah 30:15; Ezekiel 18:32; Matthew 3:2; Mark 1:5, 6:7,12; Acts 2:38, 3:19, 8:22, 17:30, 26:19-20; Revelation 2:5,16, 3:3,19
- 12) Isaiah 1:18, 54:7; Ezekiel 18:23,32, 33:11; Hosea 11:8
- 13) Psalm 78:40-41; Mark 3:5
- 14) Here are only a few of the many Scriptures that say this over and over again, in the clearest possible terms: Psalm 5:4,6; Matthew 7:22; John 3:20-21; II Corinthians 6:14; I John 2:4,9-11, 3:10, 4:20.