

The Missing Ingredient

in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.
(Colossians 1:14 – ESV)

Are you saved? If so, what are you saved from, a lack of self-esteem, a bad marriage, a bad childhood, a lack of money? No, looking at Romans from 1:18-3:23 we see that salvation is from the wrath of God, which has been being revealed against all who suppress the truth with their unrighteousness. Jesus Christ is the answer to sin, and His death propitiates (appeases) the wrath of God.

None of those other needs requires God to become incarnate, live a sinless life, die on a cross and rise again. Is it necessary for Christ to have been crucified; that is a good criterion, do you need a bloody savior to preach this? The problem is that people aren't looking for salvation as being reconciled to God. The old (real) gospel starts with an offended God. The new (false) gospel starts with a wounded "us". The truth is not that we are wounded but that we are dead!

The gospel is not a commodity, and unlike what we hear preached as the gospel these days, Jesus isn't very passionate about some of your greatest felt needs. There is nothing distinctly Christian about the new gospel messages at all, that is why they are so popular. They appeal to the masses that are looking for some way out of their misery, when they don't know what it really is. The false preachers just add Christ into the mix but their messages are just like they would be without Him, motivational talks, moral exhortations, feel good seminars. If you took out the biblical references or even added them it wouldn't make any difference to the content of the teaching.

What kind of savior do we really need? The bible defines that need. We are saved from God by God. The law had to be fulfilled by humanity. Only God could save us; only a human being should save us. Until that broken law was fulfilled by humanity we were still dead in our sins. We needed a new federal head, a second Adam. To redeem a people He had to be fully God, so as to give the atonement an infinite value, and He had to be fully man to perfectly satisfy the requirements of God's law, thus becoming an acceptable substitute for sinners. It is not how many bad things you have done, not how many sins you have committed, but actually how bad sin itself really is. The new gospel appeals to those who say, "just let me do what I want but help me deal with the pain", or "I just want to feel better about myself". That isn't the gospel.

It is in Christ that we have what we need. The true gospel is a gospel of the cross. The new gospel is a gospel of wisdom. The true gospel cares about salvation from sin. The new gospel cares about salvation from ignorance. The true gospel looks to stimulate faith. The new gospel looks to stimulate knowledge and insight.

The new gospel tells us to forgive ourselves. You don't forgive yourself it is God who forgives you, and if you are looking for that, the power to forgive yourself, well then you are looking to be God and you realize you don't have the power and you feel bad and no wonder. Do they need a healthy self-image? No what they need is to be conformed to Christ's image!

The missing ingredient in many gospels or gospel presentations is the fact that we are bound by sin, dead in sin, and slaves to sin. Salvation is from sin and to the Savior. The great problem of humanity is sin, not a lack of knowledge, not a lack of power, but a lack of purity. No amount of power and no amount of knowledge can erase that. Only the blood of Christ can wash away my sin, nothing but the blood of Jesus can make me whole again. The only way we can have peace with God is if our sins are forgiven, and in Christ they are (Romans 5:1).