

WHICH GOSPEL DO YOU FOLLOW? THE TRUE GOSPEL OF CHRIST OR A FALSE GOSPEL?

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There are two gospels in this world today. The TRUE gospel of the cross of Christ, which calls for self-denial, through which is salvation and eternal life, and a false worldly gospel, which calls for ease, pleasure and comfort, through which is only judgment and death. So which gospel do you follow? The true gospel of Christ, or the gospel of the world?

The doctrine of the cross, of the true gospel of Christ, is a doctrine of self-denial and suffering. Jesus set the example during His life on earth, and all that will come to Him **must follow it by faith**.

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.'

*1 Peter 2:21 ...'For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also **suffered for us**, leaving us an example, that ye should follow in his steps.'*

Christ denied Himself when He voluntarily laid aside the glory which He had with the Father before the world was (John 17:5), and became a mortal man. *"Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."* (2 Corinthians 8:9) - ('rich' with eternal life, not with worldly riches). Jesus denied Himself as He went about doing good, proclaiming good tidings, toiling on foot over the hills of Judea, meeting the opposition and frowns of those He would have gladly blessed.

*Luke 9:58 ...'And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; **but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head**.'*

Jesus denied Himself even when in extreme anguish in the garden of Gethsemene, at the thought of being separated, through death, from His Father in heaven. His mental anguish was so great that *"his sweat fell as drops of blood"* (Luke 22:44). And still Christ denied Himself, saying *"not my will, but Thy will be done"* (Luke 22:42). He denied Himself when He endured cruel mockings and scourgings, and finally, the cruel and shameful death of the cross.

Since so much has been done for us, it is not a hard thing that we are required to "*deny self, take up our cross and follow Jesus.*" (Matthew 16:24). Rather, it should be esteemed a **privilege** to follow the example of our suffering Lord and Saviour.

Philippians 1:29 ...'For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.'

1 Peter 4:12-13 ...'Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.'

*Revelation 7:14 ...'And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, **these are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.**'*

2 Timothy 3:12 ...'Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.'

Anyone who studies God's word with an open heart to learn will see clearly that being a true follower of Christ will bring suffering and persecution to our lives. Why? Because we should be WILLING, through faith in Christ, to turn away from ALL worldly pleasures. We should be WILLING to share the truth the world hates. We should be WILLING to labour hard for the kingdom in reaching and saving souls. We should be WILLING to use ALL our money and resources to further the kingdom and helping the poor and needy. We should be WILLING to lay down our very lives for Christ.

Philippians 2:5-8 ...'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.'

If Jesus is truly abiding in us (John 15:5), then what kind of life do you think we will be living? You only need to look at the life Jesus lived on earth to find the answer. He gave His **ALL** for the service and saving of others and the uplifting of the truth. Do our lives match that? Do we really have Christ in us? Or are we continuing to live for SELF?

We are told in Hebrews 2:10 that Jesus was made perfect in the flesh through suffering. And in these final hours of earth's history, we desperately need our characters perfecting ready for heaven. And one of the main ways the Lord uses to perfect us, is through suffering. It is a way of testing our faith, to see of what sort it is. Do we merely have a profession of faith in Christ, or are we truly **living the faith OF Jesus?** (Rev.14:12).

*1 Peter 1:7 ...'That the **trial of your faith**, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be **tried with fire**, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.'*

The TRUE gospel is a gospel of **self-denial and suffering**. True faith is a faith that works. But sadly, there is 'another gospel' that has infiltrated the churches today. It is a gospel that teaches you don't need to turn away from sin. A gospel that teaches you can continue living

for yourself and the pleasures of the world. A gospel that teaches no self-denial and no sacrifice. And the apostle Paul warned that this would happen in the last days:

*2 Timothy 3:1-5 ...'This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be **lovers of their own selves**, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, **lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God**; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.'*

Paul above is talking about professed believers, as he says they '*have a form of godliness.*' But they are those who believe in a false gospel, believing that the sacrifice of Christ allows them to continue living for self and sin! But there is no salvation in this false gospel. There is only salvation through faith in the true gospel of Christ. And anyone who has a true faith in what Christ has done for us, **will be MOVED BY LOVE to sacrifice ALL for God and the kingdom.**

So which gospel do you follow? The true gospel of self-denial and sacrifice, or the false gospel of no self-denial and no sacrifice? **All who name the name of Jesus must be prepared to live in harmony with the TRUE gospel** - the doctrine of the CROSS.

Our faith is going to be tried and tested in these last days - "*Many shall be purified, and made white, and **tried**; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.*" (Daniel 12:10).

When we learn of the LOVE OF GOD and sacrifice made for our salvation, we should be broken and willing to give our all, dying to self and sin and giving our all for the kingdom and salvation of our fellow man. And knowing what Christ suffered for us, we should be willing to joyfully suffer for Him. So let us go forth BY FAITH in the true gospel of Christ, not the false gospel of the various churches, not fearing what man can do to us, but in the 'fear of the Lord', labouring, sacrificing, denying self, and seeking to serve the Lord in holiness.

*Hebrews 13:13 ...'Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, **bearing his reproach.**'*