

Simply Christ

Gospel Newsletter

Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ

August 19, 2018

A “Yes and No” Gospel

Years ago we were at a local television station filming our weekly broadcast. A bible teacher at the station who had strongly withstood the gospel message that Jesus Christ came and died to make us free from sin, caught us and said, ““I finally realized that you and I are saying the same thing, only in a different way.” “How is that?” Brother Leroy Surface asked. “Well, we are both just preaching WHO WE ARE IN CHRIST.” “No!” Brother Surface said, **“You teach that who you are in Christ is different than who you are in this world. I’m preaching that who you are in Christ is who you are on Main Street!”**

The apostle Paul told us that the gospel he preached was not a “YES and NO” message. He said, *“But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea. For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us”* II Corinthians 1:18-20.

It seems that today the gospel is widely accepted to be a “YES and NO” message. Each precept of the gospel is declared to be true, but not exactly true. Every gospel declaration is filtered through the lens of “that’s only the way God sees us” or “that is only how we are in Christ.” The apostles never used such “filters”

when proclaiming the gospel. They spoke simple and clear gospel truth that was meant to be accepted for what it said. The opposite is the case in Christian theology today. We have a justification that says we are righteous, Romans 5:19 just not righteous in character or act; a sanctification that makes us holy, Hebrews 13:12 but not holy in actual experience; a crucifixion that makes us dead to sin, but not *“dead indeed to sin,”* Romans 6:11 and a blood that cleanses from sin, I John 1:17 except it does not actually cleanse from all sin. We declare, *“The Son shall make you free,”* but then we make sure they know that no one can be truly free from sin. In other words, we say “Yes it does,” then we say “No it doesn’t.” This is exactly what Paul was speaking of as being *“yea and nay.”* Some call this the difference between “our position in Christ” and “our condition in this world.” The apostles never presented the gospel that way.

Paul would have been dumbfounded to find out that the gospel he preached contained a difference between “position” and “condition” for the believer. The only thing close to a “positional” theology in Paul’s message is discovered in the words, *“...because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:”* II Corinthians 5:14. Paul let it be known that since Christ died for everyone, then everyone also died with Christ. This includes every believer, every unbeliever, every sinner, every atheist, etc. You could call this the “position” of all humanity. Yet this “position” does nothing for anyone before God. It is only those who believe the gospel of Christ that experience the saving power of his death and resurrection. **Christ did not die to change our “position.” He died to change our**

“condition.” Positional theology is a great doctrinal loophole people use to disannul the truth of the gospel. The only reason a person has a “position” without a corresponding “condition” is because their heart is blind to the truth of Christ. The scripture says they are *“alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart”*

Ephesians 4:18.

Years ago I stumbled at one of the simplest gospel passages in the scripture. Paul wrote, *“...we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all”* Hebrews 10:10. I stumbled at this passage because it seemed to deny all my wisdom concerning my sanctification. I understood the process of sanctification by the continuous “work of the Spirit,” by “growing in grace,” by “test and trials,” by “dying daily,” etc., but this passage did not fit any of those things. It confused me because it looked as though Paul was describing my sanctification as something that was completed at Calvary when Christ died on the cross. My wisdom told me that this was just too simplistic, and even foolish. I knew Christ had changed everything when I came to him, but still it could not be that simple. It was not until I was willing to believe the simplicity and the “foolishness” of this passage that I discovered that I could rest in the sanctification Christ completed for me on the cross. Today I know that I am *“sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all!”*

Paul’s statement, *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God...”* II Corinthians 5:17-18 is not a

complicated statement. It means what it says! If any person, man or woman, is in Christ, they are new creatures! The old has passed away, and they are become new. They are not new creatures only in Christ. They are *"in Christ"* therefore they are new creatures at home, on the job, on vacation, and when everything is going wrong. If they are not new creatures, they are not in Christ. Paul did not say "most people in Christ are new creatures, or "some people in Christ are new creatures." He said "if ANY man be in Christ, he is a new creature." This is not *"yes and no."* This is *"yea and Amen!"*