

## The Difference in Old Gospel and New Gospel Preaching

By *Rolfe Barnard* (1904-1969)

Now my friends, I come to say that the Old Gospel of God's Grace is opposed to this "new gospel" of part grace and part man. The Old Gospel, which is the true Gospel of God, safeguarded some values which this new gospel loses. Will you hear me carefully now? The new gospel that we have today by an uncertain universal redemption and universal divine saving purpose compels itself to cheapen grace and to cheapen the cross of Christ—by denying that the Father and the Son are sovereign in salvation. This new gospel assures us that after God in Christ has done all that They can or will do, it depends finally on each man's own choice whether God's purpose to save him is realized or not.

Now my friends, this popular position has two unhappy results — this preaching that God has done His part and now He helplessly stands by while you decide whether or not his purpose shall be realized:

In the first place, this position compels us to misunderstand the significance of the gracious invitations of Christ in the Gospel. When we hear the invitations of these preachers who pervert the Gospel—they are not the expressions of the tender patience of a mighty Sovereign; they are the pathetic pleas of human desire. And so the enthroned Lord of glory under present-day preaching is suddenly changed into a weak, futile figure, knocking at the human heart which He is powerless to open. My friends, this is a shameful dishonor to the Sovereign Christ of the New Testament.

In the second place, this "new gospel" as it is preached forces us to deny our dependence upon God; when it comes to vital decisions, it takes us out of God's hands. It tells us that after all, we are the master of our fate and the captain of our souls. And it so undermines the very foundation of our relationship with our Maker. No wonder the converts of today are so often both irreverent and irreligious!

The Old Gospel speaks very differently in expounding man's need of Christ; the Old Gospel stresses something almost ignored today. That something is that sinners cannot obey the Gospel any more than they can obey the Law, apart from renewal of heart. On the other hand, declaring Christ's power to save, the Old Gospel proclaims Him as the Author and chief agent of conversion. It preaches Him as coming by His Spirit as the Gospel goes forth to renew men's hearts and draw them to Himself. Thus, the Old Gospel, while stressing that faith is man's duty, stresses also that faith is not in man's power. God must give what He commands. Ephesians 2:8 says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."

Hebrews 12:2a says: "*Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith.*"

Thus the Old Gospel announces not merely that men must come to Christ for salvation, but the Old Gospel also announces that men cannot come unless God draws them. John 6:44 says, "*No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him.*"

John 14:6 says, “*Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me.*”

John 3:27 says, “*John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from Heaven.*”

Thus, my friends, the Old Gospel does what desperately needs to be done; it labors to overthrow self-confidence, it labors to convince sinners that salvation is altogether out of their hands, and to shut sinners up to a self-despairing dependence on the glorious grace of a Sovereign Saviour, not only for their righteousness, but for their faith, too. Thus the Old Gospel doesn't talk about deciding for Christ, as we hear today. For this business of deciding for Christ suggests voting a person into office. It suggests an act in which the candidate plays no part, beyond offering himself for election. Everything is settled by the voter's independent choice. I wish people would believe me when I tell you that we do not vote God's Son into office as our Saviour! Nor does our Saviour remain passive while preachers campaign on His behalf.

My friends, coming to Christ, resting on Christ and turning from sin in full surrender to Christ is far different from deciding for Christ as your Saviour. Those who pervert the Gospel beg people to accept Jesus as their Saviour, and they will be saved. That is a lie out of Hell, because it is not in the Bible. If a person does not surrender to Jesus Christ as Lord to rule and reign over the life—he is not saved! We also hear these words spoken by preachers who pervert the Gospel: “Now sinner, God has done His part—the Devil wants you, and Christ wants you, and you have the deciding vote.” But, my friends, that is not so! Christ didn't just offer Himself for office. He is working now—He is on a throne ruling and reigning as Prophet, Priest, and King. He does not stand by while we try to get people to decide for Him as the Gospel is proclaimed. He comes in the Spirit actively to draw men to Himself, and thus we preachers say that He is a Saviour for sinners. The Father and the Spirit draw sinners to Christ.

Salvation is of the Lord. Thank God it is all in Christ. And to the question, “What must I do to be saved?” And this is the question of questions. The Old Gospel replies, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.” And then somebody says, “What does that mean?” The Old Gospel replies, “It means knowing one's self to be a sinner and knowing the Christ who died for sinners. It means to abandon all self-righteousness and self-confidence, and to cast yourself wholly upon Christ for pardon and peace. It means exchanging one's natural enmity and rebellion against God for a spirit of grateful submission to the will of Christ, through the renewing of one's heart by the Holy Ghost. It means God taking a sinner and making him a new creature in Christ.”

The next question, how am I to go about believing on Christ and repenting? “Brother Barnard, you say I have no natural ability to do these things?” I didn't say that—God says that! “If I have no ability to do these things, how am I to go about believing on Christ and repenting? If you say I must—and I can't—how can it come to pass?” To that perplexing question, and yet true one, the Old Gospel answers, “Listen, sinner friend, look to Christ. Quit looking to yourself; quit listening to your old bent and feeble will; look to Christ, seek the Lord, beg for mercy.” 1 Samuel 2:8 says, “*He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunhill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory.*”

Isaiah 45:22 says, *“Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.”*

Isaiah 55:6 says. *“Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near.”*

Jeremiah 29:13 says, *“And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart.”*

Cry to Christ, just as you are, cast yourself on His mercy, ask Him to give you a new heart, working in you true repentance and faith. Ask Christ to take away your evil heart of unbelief and to write His law in your heart. Draw near to Him, watching, praying, reading, and hearing His Word. And continue to seek the Lord until He speaks peace to you.

God Almighty has to perform a miracle in you and reveal Christ in you, for you to have eternal life.

John 17:3 says, *“And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent.”*

Luke 10:22 says, *“All things are delivered to Me of My Father: and no man knoweth Who the Son is, but the Father; and Who the Father is, but the Son, and He to whom the Son shall reveal Him.”*

The Holy Ghost has to baptize you into the body of Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:13a says, *“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.”*

Our Lord Jesus Christ is not passively waiting, but is actively working to bring His chosen people to faith. The preaching of the “new gospel” is called bringing men to Christ, as if only men moved while Christ stands still. ***The true Gospel is the coming of Christ to men.*** As the Gospel is preached, and Christ is set before men’s eyes, the mighty Saviour, Whom the Gospel proclaims is busy (Praise God!) doing His work through the Word. Not standing by, but visiting sinners with salvation, awakening them to faith and drawing them in mercy to Himself. Thank God, we don’t have to use all these methods of the flesh to get somebody to decide to accept Christ! We just have to proclaim Christ in the power of the Holy Ghost! We don’t have to look at those poor sinners and know that it all depends on them. But we know that as we preach Christ, He is standing by, He is working, He is dealing with men. He is opening blind eyes and, bless God, He is drawing sinners to Himself. Oh, how glorious it is to proclaim the Christ Who came into the world to save sinners! Praise His Holy Name!

Luke 5:32 says, *“I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”*

Galatians 1:6-9 says, *“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel, which is not another, but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from Heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”* Amen.