

## How Complete is the Gospel You Preach?

I recently wrote and published a new tract that I plan to use in my door to door evangelism (to the Muslims of East Dearborn). I sent a copy of it via email to many Christians and asked for feedback. (I often ask Christians for their input on things I am writing.) The response I received about this new tract has caused me to reflect a bit on my perception of the message being preached these days.

I am not able to get into the minds of everyone who read the new tract so my perceptions may be flawed. First, I noticed that very few people actually responded to my invitation to provide feedback. Now I realize that people are busy and may not have even read it. I am certainly not complaining! But from the limited responses, I got the impression that Christians might not like my new tract because of the things it teaches. Let me put it another way. If Christians were deciding what tracts to use in their evangelism outreach, I suspect they would choose other tracts over my new tract. I suspect that they would think that its message is slightly off topic...dealing with matters not central to the gospel.

Besides the responses (or lack of them) I received, I have another reason for my suspicions. During the past 18 years, I have had the privilege of evangelizing with Christians from all over the world who came here to Dearborn. I have heard a fairly wide sampling of what Christians preach. Reflecting back, I can testify that for the most part, I do not hear Christians preaching about the message of my new tract. Their focus is on the good news that Jesus came to deliver us from the penalty of sin. I rarely hear anyone saying that Jesus came also to deliver us from slavery to sin and to give us new life that produces actual righteousness. I am left to conclude that most Christians do not view this as a main part of the gospel message. They must view it as a secondary item. Worse yet, some may not view it as a part of the gospel at all.

So, I ask you now my brethren, how do you see this? Do you talk about the things Paul taught in Romans 1 – 3 but neglect to convey the truth of Romans 5 – 8? If so, I assure you that your gospel is incomplete. They came preaching a gospel of repentance. My tract is basically talking about the need for people to repent and bring forth fruits of repentance. This is a very important part of the gospel! It conveys truth similar to Jesus' warning that unless a man is willing to die for Him, he cannot be His disciple. Repentance is not changing one's set of beliefs. It is nothing less than the changing of one's entire life. All people, including the most righteous appearing Muslims, are born slaves to sin and they rule over their own lives as if they are God. Repentance brings about true surrender unto Christ as LORD. God is the One who grants repentance and when it occurs, the person surrenders the ownership of his entire life unto Christ. He loses his life to Jesus!

Here is what one Christian wrote concerning my new tract: The new tract "*appears (to be saying) that the real submission of born again Christians focuses on better ethical compliance – which is not absolutely true (some upright Muslims have superior moral compliance to some born again Christians).*" This statement (feedback about my tract) reminds me of a conversation with a Muslim while going door to door. At one point in the conversation, the Christian who was with me said to the Muslim, "*I am sure the you probably are leading a more righteous life than us.*" Immediately, I turned to the Christian and rebuked him in the presence of the Muslim. I said, "*Speak for yourself!*" I should have added, "*If your statement were true, then we are both currently headed for hell!*" Muslims are much like the Pharisees. They maintain an outward appearance of righteousness but according to Jesus, the inner man is wicked to the core. Jesus also said, "*Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Pharisees, you will NOT enter into heaven.*" (Jesus was talking about actual righteous living.)

Let us examine the statement, "*Some upright Muslims have superior moral compliance to some born again Christians*" (part of the new tract feedback). According to Romans 8:7, this is impossible. It says that the mind set on the flesh (all unregenerate minds) is hostile toward God because it does not subject itself to the law of God, it is not able to do so. They are not able to please God. (He is only pleased with true righteousness.) On the other hand, all who are "in Christ" have His Spirit dwelling in them. They are no longer

slaves to sin. Through the Spirit, they put to death the misdeeds of the body. Any so called “Christian” who does not strive to live this way is deceived. He is either not born again or he is temporarily caught in sin and in need of deliverance. In this condition, he should have absolutely no assurance of salvation.

Make no mistake, Jesus came not only to deliver us from the penalty of sin. He came also to deliver us from slaves to sin. He desires that true righteousness be produced (by His Spirit) in the thoughts, attitudes and actions of His people (the Holy people). Just as a reminder, I have listed a few of the things that are “His will” for us:

- That we forgive others from the heart (Matthew 18:21-35). If not-no heaven.
- That we be people who love our enemies (Matthew 4:43-48).
- That we should STRIVE to enter the narrow gate (Matthew 7:13-14). All who don't will perish.)
- That we should do what Jesus has commanded us to do. (John 14:15). If not, we don't love Him.

He told us to pray, “Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” He wants His desire to be done on earth, IN THIS AGE. In heaven, there is no unrighteousness. He is not pleased with anything except righteousness. This is what He wants to produce in our lives. If this is not occurring in an increasing measure in one's life, he should tremble for hell is near.

For reference, I have pasted my new tract below. Have a nice day.

### **Muslims can't be “muslim”**

Many Muslims have told me that the word “Muslim” means “submitted to God.” Muslims think that if they abide by the teachings of Islam that they are submitted to God but this is not the case. There are millions of religious people in the world. Some call themselves Christian. Some call themselves Muslim. Some call themselves Jews. According to the Bible, none of these people are able to submit to God in their own power in the way God wants them to submit to Him.

The Bible teaches that all human beings come into the world as sinners. This teaching is demonstrated by every human being as they grow up. Every single one of them is selfish by nature and definitely not submitted to God. One who is truly submitted to God obeys Him! God considers each and every act of disobedience idolatry, the most serious of sins. Idolatry is devotion to any god who is not the true God. All human beings naturally act as if they have the right to disobey God. People rationalize this behavior by comparing themselves to the many people in the world who seem to behave worse. Muslims call their acts of disobedience “mistakes.” Thus, they downplay their acts of disobedience. It never occurs to them that whenever they disobey God, they commit idolatry. Each act of disobedience is blatant rebellion. By the sin, the human acts as if he is God over his life. He does not have the right to decide to disobey God. Each time he does so, he is not submitted to God and God considers it a flagrant act of idolatry and it is highly insulting to Him!

Whether they call themselves, Christian, Muslim or Jew, there are millions of religious people on earth who think they are submitted to God even though they disobey Him often. These people have a basic understanding of what God considers right and what God considers wrong. Outwardly, many of these people seem to do right things and avoid doing wrong things. Their friends and neighbors may have high respect for them because it seems like they live righteously. By this, I mean that they seem to live in a way that God considers acceptable and honorable.

In Jesus' day, there were certain religious people called Pharisees. Most of them had a reputation for being very serious in their religion that is known now as Judaism. Some of these men memorized the entire Torah. (The Torah contains all of the writings of Moses.) These people lived in such a way that the Bible calls “blameless.” This means that if they were taken into court, nobody could convict them of breaking the Law given through Moses. Sounds pretty righteous, doesn't it? Yet, Jesus taught that unless a man's righteousness exceeds that of the Pharisees, he will NOT make it to heaven! God requires a much greater level of

righteousness! The Bible teaches that God requires a level of righteousness that human beings cannot achieve in their own power. This is why the Bible says, *“There is none good, no not one!” (Psalm 14:3)*.

The Bible explains why human beings do not have the power to produce the righteousness God requires. *“The mind set on the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the Law of God, it is not able to do so.” Those who are in the flesh (not born again) cannot please God” (Romans 8:7-8)*. According to the Bible, all human beings, no matter how religious, naturally have their minds set on the flesh. (They care more about their own life. They seek out their own comfort, etc.) Because of this tendency, they fail often to submit to God’s Law. Their own desires get in the way because true submission to God’s Law goes against the desires of the flesh for comfort, recognition, respect, etc. Because of these things, the Bible teaches that by trying to keep God’s Law, no person will be justified in God’s sight. (See Romans 3:19-20.) In other words, God will not consider them righteous, no matter how many good works they do.

God has made a way for people to live in a way that He considers righteous. On their own, people cannot and will not live sufficiently righteous lives. But God has made a way for them to live righteous lives through the power of His Spirit living inside them.

Most people who call themselves Christian are merely religious people. But some of those who are called “Christian” have been “born again.” This is a supernatural act of God that makes spiritually dead people suddenly alive to Him. But none of this could be accomplished without the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ. This was necessary because in reality, each and every sin must be punished by God in order to fulfill His absolute justice. Though He is merciful in nature, He cannot excuse a single sin. So, He sent His Son to take the punishment. All those who believe that Jesus took their punishment this way receive remission of sins. (Remission means that God has taken our sins completely away from us.) BUT they also receive new, everlasting life from God. It is not merely an extension of natural life. It is Jesus’ life inside them that produces true righteousness in the way they live. Only these people can live truly submitted lives. They obey for a different reason than mere religious people. The true Christian does not obey as a means to gain heaven. They obey because God has put in them a new heart. They obey Him because they truly love Him and enjoy doing the things that please God. This is their food! Below is a short passage from the Bible that explains this:

*“There is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God Himself did by sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin; He condemned sin in the flesh that the righteousness of the law would be fulfilled in us who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit” (Romans 8:1-4)*.

This passage contains several concepts so let us break it down a bit. First, there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. Those who are in Christ Jesus (the people who have been “born again”) do not walk according to the flesh. They walk according to the Spirit. The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set us free from the bondage of sin. This could not happen by trying to keep the Law in our own power because our flesh wants nothing to do with obeying God. (*“For the mind set on the flesh is enmity against God because it is not subject to the Law of God, nor can it be” - Romans 8:7*). Our flesh ruled over us and because of this, we could not fulfill the righteousness demanded by God’s Law. But God made it possible for righteousness to be fulfilled in us. He sent His Son from heaven in the likeness of sinful flesh in order to condemn sin in the flesh. He did this not just to deliver us from the penalty of sin which is hell. His purpose was that actual righteousness would be produced in His people. With sin being condemned, His born again people are free to walk according to the Spirit. They are no longer hopelessly bound to follow the dictates of their flesh with its sinful desires. (*“Walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh” – Galatians 5:15*). Christians put to death the misdeeds of the body through the Spirit. (See Romans 8:13.) Only those who do this will enjoy eternal life. These are those who are born again. They are “In Christ Jesus.”

Only those who truly believe the gospel of Jesus Christ receive remission of sins and this new, everlasting Jesus’ life. They are the only ones who can achieve the righteousness that God requires. Any person who claims to be a Christian but does not live a righteous life is a liar. He has not been born again. Any person who insists on following Islam or Judaism will not receive the promise of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Their sins will not be remitted and they will not have the power to live the submitted life that God requires.