

Clear

Versus

Cliché

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CLARIFYING

THE GOSPEL

"MAKE THE GOSPEL CLEAR"

In reference to the gospel, the apostle Paul asked the Colossian saints to pray for him ". . .that **I may make it** [the gospel] **clear** in the way I ought to speak." (4:4) God's word also declares in Galatians 1:6-8 that anyone preaching a "different, distorted" gospel is "accursed!"

ACCURSED! Why such strong language? It is because only a clear gospel can produce a true Christian. Jesus warns in Matt. 7:22-23 that there will be many who believe that they are Christians. They have called upon the name of the LORD and have done many wonderful things in HIS name, yet they are not really Christians after all. Jesus says to them, "I never knew you!" They hadn't lost their salvation; they had "never" truly been saved! (Their "lawless deeds" or "iniquities" were that they believed or preached an accursed gospel.) These were horrible words to hear after they died thinking they were Christians. Being "close" does not count in Christianity. A "little leaven leavens the whole lump!" A clear gospel has no leaven.

INCORRECT, UNCLEAR CLICHÉS:

1. Make a commitment to Jesus. The Billy Graham Crusades made this phrase popular. Although being committed to our Savior and His ways should be our desire, commitment does not produce salvation, but is that which should follow salvation. The Bible teaches that we receive salvation and the Holy Spirit **ONLY** one way:

EPH 1:13 *In Him, you also, after **listening** to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation--having also **believed**, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,*

2. Turn from your sin and stop sinning. The Bible doesn't teach anywhere that a person is required to stop

sinning to get saved, stay saved, or prove that they are saved. In fact, it says believers will continue to struggle with sin. John makes the following statement about himself and all Christians in I Jn. 1:8:

"If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

What we need to do to be saved is recognize our guilt for our sinfulness and do what God commands:

ACT 17:30 "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent, . . ."

("Repent" means to change our mind as we admit to God that we are guilty and to believe His Word for salvation because we recognize our need.)

3. Say the sinner's prayer, ask Jesus into your heart, or open the door of your heart. No one in the Bible is ever told to ask Jesus into his heart for salvation or to pray a certain prayer in order to be saved. Jesus is in heaven, not in anyone's heart. Neither Jesus, the apostles nor any evangelists mentioned in the Bible ever led anyone in a prayer for salvation. Although praying is important, salvation comes through hearing the Word and faith--believing in Christ's suffering, not through saying a prayer.

(Jesus is "knocking on the door" of your heart, Rev 3:20. This was metaphorically written to carnal saints inside the door of the Laodicean church, not for salvation, but to reestablish fellowship.)

Romans 10:9 . . .*that if you **confess** [agree, not pray] with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and **believe** [not ask] in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;*

Galatians 3:2 *This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by works of the Law, or by **hearing with faith**?*

4. Be good enough by doing good works. A desire for godliness is admirable, but no amount of charity, deeds, contributions, or good works that we do can pay for our sins, save us, keep us saved, or prove that we are saved.

ISA 64:6 *For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.*

Here God is telling us how worthless our good works are in His eyes. He also tells us:

EPH 2:8-9 *For by grace you have been saved through **faith**; and that not of yourselves, it [salvation] is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.*

5. Obey God's laws (keep all of His commandments). Trying to obey the Law is good but cannot save us; the Law shows us that we are sinners.

Rom 3:20 *because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.*

We cannot keep even the first commandment:

EXO 20:3 *"You shall have no other gods before Me."*

In our lives we constantly put other things before God, such as our family, jobs, entertainment, money, etc. These things may not be sinful by themselves, but when they become priorities over God, they become "idols."

JAM 2:10 *For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.*

Our obedience will affect our rewards and blessings, but obedience has nothing to do with salvation.

6. Be water baptized or take the Lord's Table.

These "deeds of righteousness" (Tit. 3:5) cannot pay for sins. They are works, acts of obedience for those who are saved.

ACT 10:47 *"Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who **have received the Holy Spirit** just as we did, can he?"*

ACT 11:17 *Therefore if God gave to them the same gift as He gave to us **also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ**, who was I that I could stand in God's way?"*

1CO 1:17 *For Christ **did not send me to baptize**, but to preach the **gospel**, not in cleverness of speech, so that the cross of Christ would not be made void.*

LUK 22:19 *And when He had taken some bread saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in **remembrance** of Me."*

7. Trust in Jesus and serve Him. We can do nothing to add to the finished work of Christ. If we think we can, we are not trusting in Christ alone as our Savior, but only as our "Helper." We cannot obtain God's free gift of eternal life that way. We must completely forget about our good works and commitments as a means of getting saved, staying saved, or proving we are saved. We must put our faith in the finished work of Christ ALONE.

ROM 4:5 *But to the one who does not work, but **believes** in Him who justifies the ungodly, **his faith** is reckoned as righteousness,*

8. Call upon the name of the Lord. Although Romans 10:13 does state, "*WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED,*" this is not instructing us to fabricate a "sinner's prayer" for salvation. If that were true, we would find many "sinner's prayers" throughout the Bible. Actually we find none! The verse must be understood in its context, that those who "call on Him" are already believers, as we see in verse 14:

Romans 10:12-14 *For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all **who call on Him**;*

13 *for "**WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.**"*

14 *How then will **they call on Him** in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?*

W. E. Vine gives us the following information in his Expository Dictionary Of Old And New Testament Words.

CALL, CALLED, CALLING

Verb.

3. *epikaleo* (1941), *epi*, "upon," and No. 1., denotes (a) "to surname"; (b) "to be called by a person's name"; hence it is used of being declared to be dedicated to a person, as to the Lord, Acts 15:17 (from Amos 9:12); Jas. 2:7; (c) "to call a person by a name by charging him with an offense," as the Pharisees charged Christ with doing His works by the help of Beelzebub, Matt. 10:25 (the most authentic reading has *epikaleo* for *kaleo*); (d) "to call upon, invoke"; in the middle voice, "to call upon for oneself" (i.e., on one's behalf), Acts 7:59, or "to call upon a person as a witness," 2 Cor. 1:23, or to appeal to an authority, Acts 25:11, etc.; (e) "to call upon by way of adoration, making use of the Name of the Lord," Acts 2:21; **Rom. 10:12-14**; 2 Tim. 2:22. See APPEAL, SURNAME.

As we will see in the following verses, people do not “call upon the name of the Lord” to *GET* saved. They “call upon the name of the Lord” because they *ARE* saved. Those who “call upon the name of the Lord” are already believers, both Old Testament and New Testament saints.

ABRAHAM

Genesis 13:4 *to the place of the altar which he had made there formerly; and there Abram called on the name of the LORD.*

Genesis 21:33 *Abraham planted a tamarisk tree at Beersheba, and there he called on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God.*

ISAAC

Genesis 26:25 *So he built an altar there and called upon the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there; and there Isaac's servants dug a well.*

MOSES

Exodus 34:5 *The LORD descended in the cloud and stood there with him as he called upon the name of the LORD.*

ELIJAH

1 Kings 18:24 *Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD, and the God who answers by fire, He is God.” And all the people said, “That is a good idea.”*

NAAMAN/ELISHA

2 Kings 5:11 *But Naaman was furious and went away and said, “Behold, I thought, ‘He will surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper.’*

PSALMIST

Psalm 116:17 *To You I shall offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and call upon the name of the LORD.*

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 9:13-14,21 *But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Your saints at Jerusalem; and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all **who call on Your name.**”*

21 *All those hearing him continued to be amazed, and were saying, “Is this not he who in Jerusalem destroyed **those who called on** this name, and who had come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?”*

Acts 15:17 *SO THAT THE REST OF MANKIND MAY SEEK THE LORD, AND ALL THE GENTILES WHO ARE **CALLED BY MY NAME,***

Romans 10:12-14 *For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all **who call on Him;***

13 for “**WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.**”

14 *How then will **they call on Him** in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?*

The above verse, Rom. 10:14, gives us the process of salvation. It is similar to Eph. 1:13:

“In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,”

The gospel “message” comes from the “preacher.” If we “listen” to or “hear” a clear gospel, and choose to “believe” it (exercise faith), we are saved. Now we may “call upon the Lord.” There is not one account in the New

Testament of any one being told to “call on the Lord” to get saved. They were always told to “believe!” We “test the spirit” (I Jn. 4:1) to find out whether or not a person is truly saved by asking them what they “believe.” Notice the following verses that also use the Greek word epikaleo to refer to Christians.

1 Corinthians 1:2 *To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with **all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours:***

2 Timothy 2:22 *Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with **those who call on the Lord** from a pure heart.*

Hebrews 11:16 *But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed **to be called their God;** for He has prepared a city for them.*

James 2:7 *Do they not blaspheme **the fair name by which you have been called?***

1 Peter 1:17 *If you **address as [call] Father** the One who impartially judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth;*

Further examples

of Biblical clichés, falsehoods, and truths taken out of context:

- * Give your life or heart to Christ (no where in the Bible)
- * Confess your sins (good, but doesn’t produce salvation)
- * Saving faith--given only to the chosen (Calvinist error)
- * Speaking in tongues (proof of salvation--error)
- * Ask God to forgive you (asking is not believing)

The GOSPEL--What does the Bible say?

All men are sinners.

Ecclesiastes 7:20 *Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins.*

ROM 3:23 *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*

The penalty for our sin is eternal fire (Hell, death).

Luke 16:22-24 *Now the poor man **died** and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also **died** and was buried. In **Hades** he lifted up his eyes, being in **torment**, and *saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for **I am in agony in this flame.**'*

Revelation 21:8 *But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that **burns** with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."*

God provided an escape plan for us so we do not have to suffer eternally, and that escape is through Jesus Christ, who suffered on our behalf before the cross, on the cross, and in Hades--paying our penalty fully. He rose from the dead and lives today!

1 PE 3:18 *For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;*

ACT 2:24, 31 *God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power. . . . he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that HE WAS NEITHER ABANDONED TO **HADES**, NOR DID His flesh SUFFER DECAY.*

Our responsibility and choice is to repent (admit our guilt to God), and believe—trust, have faith in the fact that Jesus (God in the flesh) did this for us.

JOH 8:24 *"I said therefore to you, that you shall die in your sins; for unless **you believe** that I am He, you shall die in your sins."*

EPH 1:13 *In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation--having also **believed**, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,*

Romans 4:5 *But to the one who does not work, but **believes** in Him who justifies the ungodly, **his faith** is credited as righteousness.*

If we truly believe this, we will have absolute assurance that our salvation is forever. It doesn't come and go based on how we feel or what we are doing. It is based on God's Word since God's promises are absolutely true.

John 1:12 *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who **believe** in His name,*

JOH 3:14-15 *As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that **whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.***

JOH 6:35 *Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who **believes** in Me shall never thirst."*

ACT 2:44 *And all **those who had believed** were together, and had all things in common;*

ACT 10:43 *"Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name **everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.**"*

ACT 16:30-31 *and after he brought them out, he said, "Sirs, **what must I do** to be saved?" They said, "**Believe** in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."*

ACT 18:8 *And **Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord** with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were **believing** and being baptized.*

JOH 6:39-40 *This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me **I lose nothing**, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and **believes in Him** will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."*

We will continue to struggle with sin, but it will never separate us from our Savior, Jesus Christ, who suffered and was resurrected for ALL our sins--past, present, and future.

**"Sanctify them in the truth,
Thy word is truth." John 17:17**

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