

## What Christians Can Do When The Gospel Causes Offence

"I am eager to preach the Gospel to you ... I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus for it is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes ... The Gospel reveals God's righteousness from faith to faith. As it is written, 'The righteous will live by faith'. The wrath of God is revealed from heaven (through the Bible) against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what is known of God is revealed in righteous men for God revealed it to them. The invisible things of God since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that were created, even His everlasting power and divinity so they may be without excuse, because knowing God, they did not glorify Him as God, neither gave thanks but became vain in their reasoning and their senseless heart was darkened, professing themselves to be wise, they became fools" (Romans 1:15 to 22).

Many unsaved people behave like fools, considering trivial things to be serious, believing the lie of evolution but suppressing the truth of the Bible, so when a righteous person speaks the truth, they are vilified, abused or persecuted. What can Christians do when the sharing of the Gospel or aspects of it causes offence? Continue to teach the whole truth from the Scriptures without watering down the message. We can tone down the warnings of God's righteous judgement on rebellious non-believers but the Gospel must remain intact. Scripturally, we should deliver the Bible message of salvation without any compromise, knowing this approach is the only way to ensure a genuine choice between truth and falsehood. 'Jesus, in Whom you hoped, having heard the Word of the truth, the Gospel of your salvation' (Ephesians 1:13). We can pray for God to draw them near to Jesus. "No one can come to Me unless the Father Who sent Me draws them" (John 6:44). We should teach them God loves all of humanity so He sent Jesus to take our eternal judgement, to suffer and die on the cross to save our souls and give us eternal life (John 3:16). It is the preaching about Jesus that causes the greatest offence, just like it did in the early church (Acts 4:18). Showing God's love and praying for people is sometimes the only way to lead them to salvation but the decision is ultimately their choice. We can tell them, lead them and love them but they alone must decide whether to accept or reject the salvation message.

Some Christians water down the Gospel message to make it more palatable to their audience, even at the cost of distorting and misrepresenting doctrines central to the true Gospel such as the divine nature of Jesus, His virgin birth, His resurrection, His place in the Holy Trinity and how He became incarnate of both the Son of God and Son of Man. Watering down the Gospel causes confusion for the unsaved who are seeking the truth. The truth is, Jesus is God the Everlasting Father, the Son of God and a Man. 'To us a Child is born (as a human). To us a Son is given (as our Saviour) and the Government (heavenly rulership) will be on His shoulders. His name will be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace' (Isaiah 9:6). God is Spirit, divine and omniscient. He can be all things to all people, all at once. With Mary's permission, God overshadowed Mary as an innocent young woman (Luke 1:26 to 38) so Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit. Jesus is the beloved Son (Matthew 3:17) Who originated from God (John 8:42), but He was always in heaven (John 6:38) and was there when the world and universe were created (Colossians 1:16 & 17). Jesus was there and spoke with Moses as the 'Angel of the Lord' within the cloud (Exodus 33:9 & 11). Jesus was King and Priest, Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18; Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 5:6 & 10; 6:20; 7:1 to 3, 10 & 11, 15 to 17, 21). Jesus met and spoke with Abraham many years before Mary gave birth to Him (Genesis 14:18 & 19; Hebrews 7:1). Jesus was the Rock Who gave water to the Children of Israel in the wilderness (1 Corinthians 10:4). He was active with humanity long before He was born to Mary to become our Saviour and Redeemer. We must never weaken the whole truth of the Gospel but relate the Gospel message in its entirety.

Some unsaved people find the reference to Jesus as the Son of God quite offensive because some false religions portray Jesus as a mere human prophet not a member of the holy triune Godhead. The true portrayal of Jesus as the one and only begotten Son of God (John 1:18) and also the Son of Man (Luke 22:69) made possible by the divine virgin birth is seen as being blasphemous by some false religions. This sometimes causes Bible teachers to water down the truth and compromise the Gospel, weakening the true Gospel. However this approach brings with it divine punishment. 'There is not another Gospel. There are some who want to pervert the Gospel of Jesus. If we or an angel from heaven should preach to you any Gospel other than what we preached to you, let him be cursed. As we have said before so I now say again, if any man preaches to you any Gospel other than what you received, let him be cursed' (Galatians 1:7 to 9). Teachers of the Gospel beware – you must teach the full Gospel of the Kingdom or God will curse you. Jesus only ever preached the full Gospel of the Kingdom of God.

Jesus is absolutely the true Son of God Who came to earth in the living image of God Himself. 'Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation' (Colossians 1:15). Genuine Bible teachers never water down the true Gospel of the Kingdom. The mere thought of watering down the integrity and the uniqueness of the Scriptures is abhorrent to us. We cannot appease the unsaved by tampering with God's

Word. We need to give the original meanings of the Scriptures to make the distinction between eternal life and eternal damnation. 'We know the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, so we know Him (Jesus) Who is true and we are in Him (God the Father) Who is true, in His Son Jesus. This is the true God and our eternal life' (1 John 5:20). There is no other belief or religion that gives us a Saviour Messiah, Who has died to give us eternal life with the promise of living in a holy Kingdom.

Genuine Christians have the responsibility and the authority as stewards of God's Word to speak with His authority when teaching the Gospel. Even if a member of a false religion becomes offended, we must adhere strictly to the nuances spoken by Jesus and written by the apostles and teach the unsaved what God is telling us. All of the names and titles of God and Jesus are written in the Bible, the one and only true Word of God. There is no other holy book. The Bible is the only holy Book of Truth, the Holy Scriptures, Sacred Scriptures written by the breath and inspiration of God via His holy prophets and apostles. 'Every Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, reproof, correction and for instruction in righteousness so the man (and woman) of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work' (2 Timothy 3:16 & 17). The Quran is a book written by a false prophet who plagiarised some of the Bible to suit his own agenda but he denies the cross and blood of Jesus and His miraculous resurrection. False names for God like Allah, Buddha, Isa, Krishna and others need to be removed from the vocabulary of dedicated Christians because they are names of false gods and must not be confused with the holy names of our Creator Lord. Humanity is not permitted to worship false gods. If they do, God will one day judge them in His wrath. There is no need for Christians to concede to the terminology of false religions. Christians must stop being ashamed of preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom in its fullness. They must stop being embarrassed about talking about our Saviour Jesus, or in Hebrew, His name is Yeshua. When unsaved people genuinely come to know Jesus, they accept what the Bible says so there is no need to give them a wishy-washy version of the Gospel. They need to hear the whole truth just as Jesus spoke the truth.

When unsaved people hear a watered down Gospel their commitment to the Lord may also be watered down. 'You outwardly appear righteous to men but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity' (Matthew 23:28). The Gospel has been given to us to help people with their personal walk with the Lord. If that is compromised by a weak Gospel, their walk with God may be so carnal, on Judgement Day Jesus might say to them, "I never knew you. Depart from Me you who work iniquity" (Matthew 7:23). If all they have is a watered down Gospel, they may not be fit to enter the Kingdom of God and that would be tragic, so teaching the full Gospel is paramount to helping people receive eternal life and grow in God so they become holy and acceptable to God (Romans 12:21). When Jesus preached, He offended many people but He never compromised the truth of the Gospel. Some people wanted to stone Him (John 8:59) or throw Him off a cliff after throwing Him out of Nazareth (Luke 4:29). Jesus' own brothers mocked Him (John 7:3 to 5). Religious men complained about Him and accused Him of leading people astray (John 7:12). No matter what we have to endure for the sake of the Gospel, nobody will have to endure what Jesus endured. He warned us we would be hated without cause or reason (John 15:25) and we would be persecuted like He was persecuted (John 15:20). 'If the world hates you, you know it has hated Me before it hated you ... Because you are not of the world, since I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you ... If they persecuted Me they will persecute you' (John 15:18 to 20). The unsaved people hated Jesus because He testified and revealed their sinful ways (John 7:7). When we walk closely with God, just being with unsaved people can make them feel convicted of their sin, which sometimes causes them to feel anger towards us. It is this anger that brings division within families and breaks friendships apart because God's Light and spiritual darkness cannot live together. Sometimes we need to separate ourselves from those who live in darkness. 'Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers (in business or marriage) for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? What fellowship has Light with darkness? What agreement has Jesus with Belial? What portion has a believer with an unbeliever? What agreement has a Temple of God with idols? You are a Temple of the living God. As God said, "I will dwell in them and walk in them. I will be their God and they will be My people. Therefore, come out from among them and be separate. Touch no unclean thing and I will receive you. I will be to you a Father. You will be to Me sons and daughters," says the Lord Almighty' (2 Corinthians 6:14 to 18).

Even if loved ones reject us, we must never compromise the full Gospel of the Kingdom. The Gospel message was given to us for a reason and that is to lead unsaved people to salvation and to help us grow in the Lord after salvation. We need to try to 'snatch' them out of the lake of fire no matter what the cost. Our salvation cost Jesus His life. 'You beloved, keep building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus to eternal life. Have compassion, save some by snatching them out of the (lake of) fire with fear, hating even the clothing stained by the flesh. Now to Jesus Who is able to keep them (new converts) from stumbling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory in exceedingly great joy to God our Saviour, Who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power both now and forever. Amen' (Jude 1:20 to 25).

Amen and God bless you.

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