

Reading Material Reflecting Early Church and Early Anabaptist Truth

Deceived by a False Gospel

Have you ever been lied to or deceived?

All of us have been, the problem is we don't know it at the time because most lies contain a certain amount of truth. This is why it is so difficult to know when we are deceived. What if you were deceived right now? How would you know? I suppose you wouldn't. That is the irony of deception ... you don't know it. Let's apply this to Christianity.

Suppose someone told you that in order to be saved you need to "accept Jesus as your personal Savior", "believe in His work on the cross", and "receive His promises". Would you believe this? How would you know this wasn't a lie? Right, we would compare it with scripture. If you wanted to find out if this was the truth or a lie you would simply need to consult the scriptures to get to the bottom of it. If you grew up like me, in the evangelical church, you were probably taught something very similar to what was stated above in regard to salvation. This is because it is the accepted model, or teaching. What if we told you that the modern teaching of salvation was a lie, what would you do? Would you quickly close the browser and shrug us off as heretics? Well, it is a lie, and most professing Christians believe it.

The Lie

The New Testament talks about something called "the lie". We read about it in Romans 1.25 and II Thessalonians 2.11. What is the lie? The first lie in the Bible was when Satan told Eve, "You will not surely die". Or in common English he told her, "You can go ahead and eat that fruit, there will be no judgment to follow". Perhaps Eve thought something like: "Yeah that's right, God is loving and kind. He wouldn't do anything like that to me". There it is... "the lie". The lie is... "You can live any way you want"... "You can make your own decisions"... "You can sin, you won't die"... "No judgment will follow".

What we want to do in this article is compare "the lie" with the modern "gospel" or salvation message. The modern gospel is claiming to save men in their sins. However Jesus taught that man has to repent and make some serious changes before he can be right with God. The book of Jude tells us that there will be certain men who creep in unaware that will turn the grace of God into lasciviousness. A synonym of lasciviousness is loose living, lawlessness or disobedience. If we compare "the Lie" that Satan told Eve with the modern "gospel", we get a lot of striking similarities.

Lying to yourself

Is it possible that you could lie to yourself? You may think this is absurd, but have you ever seen an obese person dressed in an extremely tight pair of pants, or a young white male dressed up like a gang member, or perhaps a young lady dressed up like a movie star? These people want so badly to be attractive, tough or famous that they have learned to play pretend with themselves.

In the same way let us suppose that someone has "received Jesus", they go to church, they have been

baptized, they are involved in church activities and give tithes. As Christians we would never think to question this person's faith, rather we would think this person is very faithful. But are all those things really what faith is? Does someone have faith because they have been baptized and go to church? The truth is, anyone can do those things and not have any faith at all.

Most people's "faith" is nothing more than make-believe. They are playing pretend with themselves like an obese person in a tight pair of pants. How do you know you have faith? Because you believe you do? Because you believe God's promises are true? Do I have faith just because I believe I do? The Bible tells us, "By faith Abraham obeyed God". Did Abraham have faith simply because he acknowledged God's promise? Imagine that Abraham didn't leave his home but said he believed in God's promise... he believed it so much that he went all around his hometown telling everyone about the wonderful promise God was going to give him. If this were the substance of Abraham's faith, would he have received God's promise? No... because, "Real faith is my obedient response to God's demands on my life".

Even the demons believe

We are all familiar with John 3.16. It is one of the most popular verses the modern church uses to teach about salvation. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have ever lasting life" When I was 7, I was told to believe that Jesus died on the cross, and rose again making Him God, and that if I believed this I would receive the promise of salvation. Is that really believing?

Let us suppose that my name is Earl and I drive a taxi. I pull up next to you in my taxi on a dark night and ask if you want a ride. Although you may believe that my name is Earl and that I drive a taxi, if you question my integrity and don't get into my car do you really believe in me? No. If you believed in me you would have gotten into my taxi. Do you see the difference in the types of belief? Just because you believe my name is Earl and I drive a taxi doesn't mean that you trust me to get you home.

We can think of belief in Christ in the same way. Just because we acknowledge that Jesus died on the cross, rose, and resurrected, doesn't mean we believe in Him. The word "believe" means: to adhere to, to put one's trust in, to cling to, and to obey. Truly believing in Jesus is trusting in Him, clinging to Him, adhering to His words, and obeying them. Just because I believe He died on the cross and rose again doesn't mean I trust in, cling to, and obey Him.

The Bible says, "You believe there is one God. You do well. Even the devils believe and tremble". In other words, even the demons believe in Jesus and tremble at the thought of Him. Even the demons believe Jesus is the Son of God and that He was crucified on a cross, died and rose again making Him the Son of God. Even the demons believe in Christ. Do you see the lie in the way we are taught to believe?

Twisted Grace

Most of us are familiar with Ephesians 2.8. This is another popular scripture the modern church uses to "save" people. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works lest anyone should boast". The modern gospel has put a twist on this scripture. Like any good lie, there needs to be some truth attached to it. It is true we are saved by grace, but what is grace?

What do you think of when you hear the word grace? Unmerited favor, mercy, pardon, immunity? All of these things are what the modern gospel teaches about grace. We are taught that grace is God overlooking man's sin. We are taught it is something like a handicap in golfing. Sometimes when people of unequal ability golf together the person who is a better player will "handicap" himself or lower his score to allow the other person a winning chance. This is how we are taught about God's grace; it is Him lowering His righteousness because we aren't able to achieve His standard.

To take the twist out of this, simply look at Titus 2.11-13: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;" Does this scripture say that God's grace is unmerited favor, mercy, pardon or immunity? No. Rather, it says that His grace is teaching us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. Do you see the difference? God's grace is doing the complete opposite of what the modern gospel is teaching. God's grace isn't Him overlooking our sin; it is Him teaching us not to sin! It isn't Him looking over His shoulder when we sin. Grace is God teaching us to attain to His standard ... to live godly, soberly and righteously in this world.

Romans 10.13 "For whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." This is another popular scripture the modern gospel uses. Often they take this one scripture and use it by itself. I am not calling this scripture untrue; I am simply trying to weigh this single scripture against the rest of the New Testament. "Not everyone who says to me Lord, Lord shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven". Mathew 7.21. Will simply calling on the Lord's name save us? Jesus said not all who call Him Lord will be saved. Is Romans 10.13 wrong? No, but if you weigh it against Matthew 7 suddenly it doesn't mean what the modern gospel teaches it does. If this is all we do to be saved we will be greatly disappointed when we stand before Jesus and He tells us "Depart from me, you never did the will of the Father".

Many people call Jesus their Lord, but if we do not obey Him and His teachings our profession means nothing because He isn't truly our Lord. If Jesus is our Lord, He has to be the Lord of our lives. To give an example of this read Mathew 5.39. Jesus said if someone slaps you on one cheek you are to turn the other. If someone slaps you on one cheek what do you do...? If you hit the other person back, is Jesus really your Lord? Are you doing what He has commanded you to do? If Jesus tells us to turn the other cheek and we don't, He isn't truly our Lord.

The Upside-Down Gospel

The problem is the "modern church" has the Gospel upside-down. For example, when I was 7 years old I was "saved" and told I needed to "accept Jesus as my personal Savior". I was told that Jesus died for me on the cross and gave His blood for my sins. I was told that if I accepted this and believed in it, then his blood would cover my sins. I did accept these facts and I did believe Jesus shed his blood for me. I had already been attending church at this time and would continue to go to church until I was 15 or 16. However when I was 14, I questioned whether I was saved. I knew I was walking in darkness. I knew I sinned a lot. I asked my mother if God would save me even if I didn't live like a Christian. She told me, "Yes, salvation is a gift, it can't be taken away". I still questioned.

1 John 1:7 says, "But If We Walk In The Light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

1. If We Walk In The Light
2. We have fellowship one with another

3. The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin

We all want to be saved. We all want to claim Christ's Blood. However, Christ's blood is conditional.

In order for Christ's blood to cleanse us we have to walk in the light first. "If We Walk In The Light, then..."

The modern Gospel turns this upside-down. It would teach...

1. The blood of Jesus Christ covers us from all sin if we just accept it (get saved)
2. We have fellowship with one another (come to our church)
3. Clean up the bad things you do and straighten up (stop going to the ____)

Do you see how it's upside down? We can't claim Christ's Blood until we walk in the Light. Walking in the Light isn't just stopping the really bad things we do. It is Repenting.

Another example of the "modern gospel" being upside-down is in Acts 26.17-18 "...to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to Light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me."

1. To open their eyes
2. To turn from darkness to light
3. From the power of Satan to God
4. That they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance...

Do you see how it's upside-down from today's thinking? We can't receive the inheritance until we are forgiven. We can't be forgiven until we turn from Satan to God. We can't turn to God's light until we turn from darkness. We can't turn from darkness until we have our eyes opened.

The "modern gospel" would teach...

- 1) You already have the inheritance (you're already saved)
- 2) You're already forgiven (you just have to accept it)
- 3) Forget turning from Satan to God and from darkness to Light (this is never taught)

Jesus is telling us right here that we have to do something in order to be saved; He cannot accept us "just as we are". We have to turn from darkness to light. We have to turn from Satan to God, so that we can receive forgiveness and the inheritance. If you want to be saved you have to turn from Satan! You can't be forgiven until you turn from darkness and repent! You have to have your eyes opened in order for any of this to happen! We cannot be accepted by Jesus as long as we choose to serve Satan. This was the Gospel Jesus gave to Paul. This is the Gospel in the simplest form. If what we preach does not align with this message, it isn't the Gospel.

The conclusion

The "modern church" is lying to people by telling them "you can live any way you want". This was the lie Satan told Eve: "Go ahead and sin. No judgment will follow. You won't die". The "modern church" is telling people the same message. The prophecy Jude gave to the Church has already been fulfilled and we are living in the fall-out of it. In other words, those certain men who will creep in unaware and turn God's grace into lawlessness ... these men have already crept in and taken over.