

Pope Benedict's false gospel

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On Christmas Eve 2005, Pope Benedict XVI, hailed by many as one of the world's greatest theologians, delivered his first Christmas message and conclusively proved that he does not know the Gospel of Jesus Christ. His words left no doubt that he believes, as the Roman Catholic Church teaches, that Christ died to save everyone and that the only reason that Christ is supposedly "unable" to save everyone is because some have closed their own hearts against him. Their so-called "free-wills" are stronger than Christ's ability to save them. As the Pope put it at midnight Mass:

"God loves everyone because everyone is his creature. But some persons have closed their hearts. There is no door by which his love can enter. They think they do not need God, nor do they want him. Other persons, who from a moral standpoint are perhaps no less wretched and sinful, at least experience a certain remorse. They are waiting for God. **They realize that they need his goodness even though they don't have a clear idea of what this means.** Into their expectant hearts God's light can enter and with it his peace. God seeks persons who can be vessels and heralds of his peace. Let us pray we will not find our hearts closed. Let us strive to be active heralds of that peace in the world of today."

God loves everyone because everyone is his creature?

While these words from the pope may initially seem compassionate to our human ears (2 Timothy 4:3), they smack of a theology that is totally disconnected from biblical truth. For instance, it seems quite reassuring for the pope to tell us that because God created each one of us, he very much loves each one of us. While we would agree that we should certainly love others because they are God's creation, God himself is the Creator, and as the Bible tells us *"he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased"* (Psalms 115:3). But let's see how the pope's insistence that God loves everyone because he created everyone stacks up with God's word, the Bible. Let's start with the Old Testament.

Certainly none of us who claim to be Christian would doubt that indeed God does create all things; people, creatures, plants—everything! We read about that in the very first chapters of the Bible in the book of Genesis.

We would also agree that God had certainly created all the people who were alive in Noah's time and yet God sent a great flood to wipe all of them from the face of the earth except for Noah and his extended family. Is this an expression of God's love for everyone because "everyone is his creature?" Certainly not, for God would have never sent the flood to kill all the other human beings in Noah's time had he loved them.

Next, we turn to the Pharaoh of Egypt and find that God himself has hardened the Egyptian king's heart, so that Pharaoh refuses to let God's people go from his country. Ultimately, we learn that Pharaoh, this man God created, along with all the other God-created men in his army, were drowned as God closed the waters of the Red Sea upon them.

Next, God orders Joshua and his army to kill every man, woman, and child in the land of Canaan which God has chosen to give his people. Certainly God had created every one of them, yet God ordered Joshua to destroy them. To believe what the pope teaches, in each of these instances, we would have to believe that God destroys the people he loves, since all these people who were killed were indeed God's creation. How ridiculous! We haven't even moved past the first books of the Old Testament and already we see that the pope's theology, which seeks to connect God's love for us to the fact that God created us, has been dashed to pieces. His theology is simply not true.

Instead, God protects those he has chosen

Yet, each of the cases we have pointed to in the Bible does prove something much deeper about this God we worship. **Namely, that he protects and effectually saves all those he has chosen.** In each case, the destruction that fell upon some was designed to protect God's chosen people. He wiped the wicked people from the face of the earth to give Noah and his family an opportunity to start over, an opportunity to restore righteousness on the earth. He destroyed Pharaoh and his great army to show his chosen people his power to protect them and lead them from their terrible bondage. He ordered Joshua and his army to totally destroy every man, woman and child in the Promised Land in order to give the Israelites protection against the idol worship, immoral lifestyles, and sexually transmitted diseases of the Canaanites. In each case, God was indeed showing love; however, that love was not directed at everyone he had created, but specifically toward those he had chosen.

He still chooses, Christ says so

And the New Testament tells us that God still very much chooses those he saves to this very day. In fact, Christ himself tells us that repeatedly:

John 6:44 *"No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him..."*

John 15:16 *"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you..."*

John 6:65 *"...no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father."*

Luke 10:22 *"...no man knoweth... who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him."*

John 6:37 *"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."*

John 14:6 *"...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."*

John 17:2 *"...Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give **eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.**"*

All this biblical evidence is from Christ himself, yet the pope still refuses to believe that it is Christ who chooses us for salvation. Instead, he believes that we choose Christ. And as you

know, many Catholics and Protestants believe the same. By this they prove that they still have not heard nor believed the true Gospel, because **Christ clearly tells us that he does the choosing. That is important because it is further proof that the salvation of believers is strictly from Christ and we play no role whatsoever in it.** We do not, will not, and cannot “choose” Christ unless he has first chosen us. Without his gift of faith, we cannot believe in him nor can we make choices that please him in anyway: “... *without faith it is impossible to please him [God]: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*” (Hebrews 11:5)

Clearly, it is Christ alone who saves us, and the **“instrument” he uses to allow us to know that he has saved us is the gift of faith that he gives us to believe in him as Lord and Savior, as God in the flesh.** It is this gift that allows us to acknowledge that he alone has accomplished all that was necessary to absolutely secure our salvation. In short, we must believe in the person of Christ and his fully accomplished saving work on our behalf. We believe in the person and work of Christ for our salvation.

In the Bible we find clear evidence that the choice for our salvation was made before the world began, long before any of us drew our first breath:

“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestined us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.” (Ephesians 1:4-5)

So, should anyone ever tell you that Christ did not know for sure who he was dying for on the cross, or that he died for everyone, even though not everyone is saved—but only those who of their own free will choose Christ—politely tell them, No! Then tell them the true Gospel, that **Christ died for his chosen people—all those he gives the gift of faith to believe in him as Lord and Savior—all those who believe he died to absolutely secure their salvation!**

Saying what itching ears want to hear

In his homily (or sermon) on Christmas Eve, the pope asked the following series of rhetorical questions: “It would be better to ask: ‘who are those who God loves and why does he love them?’ ‘Does God have favorites? Does he love only certain people while abandoning the others to themselves?’” (Our answer to the last question is a resounding "YES," see Romans 9:22-24)

Of course, the pope’s ultimate answer is that while God obviously loves certain people (in his homily he listed Mary, Joseph, Elizabeth, Zachariah, Simeon, and Anna) He also loves everyone because God created everyone. As we have already seen, there is absolutely no biblical basis for this papal teaching that God loves everyone simply because He created everyone. In fact, it is contrary to what the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, tell us. As we read in the verses above, it is contrary to what Christ himself told us.

During the same Christmas sermon, the pope mentions “other persons” in today’s world who have not closed their hearts to God:

“Other persons, who from a moral standpoint are perhaps no less wretched and sinful, at least experience a certain remorse. They are waiting for God. **They realize that they need his goodness even though they don’t have a clear idea of what this means**. Into their expectant hearts God’s light can enter and with it his peace. God seeks persons who can be vessels and heralds of his peace.”

Who are these “other persons” the pope speaks of who don’t have a clear idea of what it means to need God’s goodness? They are people who do not know God. They, along with the people he mentioned who have “closed their hearts” desperately need to hear the Gospel. Yet, this pope is utterly unequipped to tell them the Good News. In his sermon, he acknowledges that these “other persons” exist and they are waiting for God, yet the pope does not tell them the Gospel even though he has an audience of millions on hand. Why? Because, he cannot. He cannot share what he does not have.

No Gospel from this mouth

This “great” theologian doesn’t know the Gospel. Sure, he knows part of it. For instance, he knows that Christ died on the cross, but he does not know for whom Christ died or what his death means to them. His church teaches that Christ’s death was for everyone, and it simply gives everyone the “possibility” of everlasting life and that their good works are the determining factor after their faith. He believes Christ died to simply make everyone “savable.” He does not understand that Christ’s death absolutely secured the salvation of all who come to believe in Christ.

If the pope did understand this, he would preach this Gospel freely to all. And those who have been chosen to receive the gift of faith would believe and truly turn and acknowledge Christ as fulfilling all that was necessary for their salvation. Instead, this great theologian of a pope, by this one sermon alone, shows us that he rejects the true Gospel. He sees salvation as something that is ultimately based on the choice of man and not of God. Therefore he cannot preach the Gospel that God uses to draw his chosen to salvation. As St. Paul tells us:

“For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth...” (Romans 1:16).

The true Gospel does not begin with the pope’s lie that God loves everyone because he created them. Instead, it tells them the frightening truth: Everyone who is born on the face of this earth is a sinner who was born headed for hell because “...*all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*” (Romans 3:23). “...*the wages of sin is death...*” (Romans 6:23).

Next, the true Gospel speaks to them of the Savior who was born of the virgin to rescue, or save them, from their sins and eternal hell. It tells them this Savior, Jesus the Christ, died to absolutely secure heaven, salvation, and everlasting life for all those who come to believe in him as their Lord and Savior. All who come to believe in him, his chosen, can know and trust that he keeps all of his promises—for he is the sovereign Son of God, God in the flesh. And what is among the most important of his promises? ***“He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.”*** (John 6:47).

In short, Christ died to absolutely secure the salvation of all those who come to believe in him as Lord, Savior and God in the flesh. Do you believe this?

Do you believe?

Those who believe in Christ and the work he fully accomplished for them will rejoice over this simple yet beautiful Gospel of the God who has chosen them for everlasting life. It is not for anything they did or anything they will ever do but simply because he loves them. They will seek to serve him, not in some hapless attempt to help themselves attain heaven, as the pope teaches, but to bring glory to the Christ who has saved them. Why does God love them? Why does he show mercy upon them and not others? Why do they believe while others do not? As the scriptures tell us, the best answer we can find is that: God does what he pleases.

Therefore, rejoice that God, the Creator of the universe, was pleased to give you the gift of faith, to believe in Jesus his only Son and the work that Jesus did by dying on the cross to absolutely secure your place with him in eternal life.

Surely, you may have doubts about your salvation; Satan loves to try to get you to waste your time with such doubts. But each time those doubts arise, remind yourself that the gift of faith Christ has given you is not a gift to help you trust in yourself or your own actions. No! You do not trust in yourself; you know you're a sinner. Instead, through the gift of faith Christ has given you, the Holy Spirit turns your thoughts to Christ. The faith Christ has given you allows you to trust in him alone for your salvation! He's the one who died for you. He's the one who rose bodily from the grave for you. He forgives your sins. He covers you in his righteousness and it is by his righteousness alone that you will join him in heaven when you die.

He may also give you the opportunity someday to share this wonderful Gospel with others! Seek to show your gratitude by obeying his commandments to love God and to love others, even as Christ has first loved you. We are not "under" the commandments, not under the law, but under the grace of Christ, who alone has saved us. Nevertheless, we seek to keep the commandments that we may bring glory to the Christ who saved us, that men may see our good works and give glory to God! (Matthew 5:16)

The trials ahead

Certainly, you will face trials along the way and at times you will sin and fail Christ miserably. But he will never let you lose the gift of salvation he has won for you. (Read John 10:27-30.) Take your sins to him. You will know the forgiveness and mercy that only he can give. Rejoice daily that he alone has won your salvation—it was paid for by his blood alone. He is the unblemished, sinless Lamb of God. He allowed himself to be sacrificed in substitution for all those he has chosen for everlasting life—all those who come to believe in him as Lord and Savior, as God in the flesh. All those who believe that he alone has done all that is necessary to secure their salvation.

Seek him daily. Read the Bible, pray and grow in the fullness of his truth. Christ taught us this prayer to pray. You may wish to pray it to start each new day: *"Our Father, who art in heaven,*

hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.”

A warning of condemnation, eternity in hell

As for the pope and all those who would preach the so-called gospel that insists that salvation has anything to do with the will of man, or is in any way by man’s choosing, they must be warned that they are preaching a false gospel because they are essentially denying that “*salvation is of the Lord.*” (John 1:13, Romans 9:16)

Speaking while inspired by the Holy Spirit, Paul warns that there are eternal consequences for those who preach “another gospel:”

“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 [condemned to hell].” (Galatians 1:9).

We pray that, if it pleases him, God will choose to turn the hearts of the pope, and all who preach a false gospel, to him before it is too late. God’s will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

In the Lord’s loving kindness and grace,
Bro. Jim

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