

Perverting The Gospel Of Christ by Telling Someone to “Make Jesus The Lord Of Your Life”

First of all, note God’s clear declaration of the fact that faith, and faith alone, is His requirement for justification in His sight.

21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. (Romans 3:21-27)

4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. (Romans 4:4-5)

8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

As these verses (along with upwards of 150 others) clearly state, God’s requirement for justification unto eternal life; for salvation from the debt and penalty of one’s sins; is the sole issue of placing one’s faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior.

Faith by nature is non-meritorious and excludes the issue of one’s works. Faith in someone is the issue of placing your trust, confidence, or reliance in that person and not in yourself. Believing in someone is the issue of being fully persuaded regarding the sufficiency of that person’s merits and strength, and depending upon him and his merits instead of yourself and your own merits.

Therefore in believing in someone, you trust that person and depend upon him and his doings for what you need, and you don’t offer any efforts of your own. Hence, having faith in someone by its very nature excludes one’s own works in any manner or form. Faith places full confidence and dependence upon the works of another for you.

Wherefore, when God declares in the gospel of Christ that He is “the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus,” this is what He is talking about. “Believing in Jesus” is the issue of placing your complete trust, confidence, or dependence upon Jesus Christ and His redemptive work on the cross for your salvation, and not trusting in any works you can do. It is the issue of having “faith in his blood.” That is, having complete confidence and dependence upon the merits of Christ’s shed blood to provide for and effect your salvation. It is the issue of being fully persuaded that when He died for you as your substitute Redeemer He did all the work necessary to accomplish your salvation. This is what “believing in Jesus” means. This is what faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as one’s Savior means.

Unfortunately, though, this issue of faith in Jesus Christ as God’s sole requirement for salvation all too often is not made plain and clear. Rather, it is muddled up by terminology and phraseology that not only does not accurately convey what faith in Christ is, but that actually perverts the issue and turns faith into works.

The following example falls into this category. By using such an expression God’s requirement for salvation is misstated, and “another gospel” is preached instead of the gospel of justification by grace through faith without works.

“MAKE JESUS THE LORD OF YOUR LIFE” — This misstatement of God’s requirement for salvation is often used as the gospel appeal by ones who preach what is called Lordship salvation. Lordship salvation is the designation given to the preaching that says that Jesus Christ must be made the Lord of one’s life, in every area of one’s life, if a person is going to be saved. The teaching is that there is no salvation if Jesus Christ isn’t the Lord of one’s life, and has one’s obedience and surrender of will in every area of life.

However this misstatement is guilty of the same mistake as many other misstatements, which is to confuse an issue of Christian service to God with the issue of how a person gets saved and becomes a Christian in the first place.

It should be painfully obvious that making Jesus Christ Lord of one’s life is an issue that God exhorts and urges Christians to do. That’s what passages such as Romans 6-8; 12:1-2ff; Ephesians 4:17ff and many others exhort us to do as ones whom God has already justified and sanctified by His grace in response to faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. After trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and being justified by faith, God teaches us and exhorts us to make Jesus the Lord of our lives. He exhorts us to “present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto Him, which is our reasonable service.” But a person can only present his body a “living sacrifice” if he has first been put to death in Christ, just as Romans 6 teaches. Therefore, making Jesus the Lord of one’s life is an issue only for saved people. God never tells the unsaved to do it or try it. It is impossible for them to do it at all. This is because it can’t be done if God Himself has not first justified, reconciled, and sanctified a person by His grace.

Again, making Jesus the Lord of one's life is a Christian service issue and not a salvation issue at all. Surrendering one's will to Jesus as Lord and allowing Him to control the details of one's life is what the life of good works that God created us unto in Christ Jesus is all about. A person has to be God's "workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works" before he can make Jesus the Lord of his life. A person can only "serve the Lord Christ" when first he has been made a servant of Christ by the creative activity of God. This creative activity of God takes place when the Holy Spirit regenerates us and places us into Christ. Then, and only then, can a person make Jesus the Lord of his life. Making Him Lord, though, is not how God saves us at all. It isn't the issue of faith in Christ as Savior at all.

Confusing the issues of discipleship and service with the separate and preliminary issue of salvation is one of the most common ways in which the gospel of Christ is perverted and "another gospel" ends up being produced. Also it is so subtly deceiving because God's own word is used to produce the perversion. Verses and passages that are dealing with discipleship and service are taken out of their contexts, and they are used as if they were talking about how to be justified unto eternal life. Hence, God's word is made to sound as if it stipulated salvation on the basis of making Jesus the Lord of one's life, and the like. But in reality God is being misquoted and misrepresented, and He is being made to say something He never said. Through unscrupulous and deceitful Bible handling the gospel of God's grace is libeled, and the unsaved are deceived and blinded to the truth of the gospel. And it is all to the advancement of the policy of evil against the gospel.

Sometimes it is said in response to this that "If Jesus isn't Lord of all, then He isn't Lord at all." The implication in connection with this is that one cannot receive the *Lord* Jesus Christ as Savior without making Him the Lord of one's life. But this is a subterfuge of semantics and simply is not true. Jesus Christ is Lord, and Lord of all, whether anyone ever makes

Him Lord of their lives or not. Jesus Christ is Lord by virtue of being God. His Lordship is part of His Godness. In fact, as Philippians 2:9-11 declares, Jesus is going to be acknowledged and confessed to be Lord "to the glory of God the Father" even by ones who never get saved and end up being cast into the lake of fire for ever. They are going to be cast there because Jesus Christ is Lord, and as Lord He judges them worthy of everlasting punishment. However, why they end up there isn't because they didn't make Him the Lord of their lives. It is because they never responded to Him as their Savior in view of Him having died on the cross as their substitute Redeemer. They rejected His work on the cross for them and were enemies of the cross of Christ.

Once again, God's sole requirement for justification unto eternal life is faith alone in Christ alone as your all-sufficient Savior. Your works cannot be, and will not be, counted for righteousness. As Romans 3:26 says, in view of "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" God is "the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

Have you honestly believed in Jesus as your all-sufficient Savior? If not, why not do so right now. God will see your faith, and He will do exactly what "the gospel of Christ" says; He will justify you unto eternal life, counting your faith for righteousness.

— K. R. Blades

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*A Perversion of
The Gospel of Christ*

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Make It Clear! Make It Plain!*