

Perverting The Gospel Of Christ by Telling Someone to “Invite Jesus Into Your Heart”

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.

“INVITE JESUS INTO YOUR HEART” —

This particular expression, though very popular and also employed in songs that urge people to come to Christ, still does not spell out clear and plain the fact that faith in Christ as one’s Redeemer is the issue. In fact, it doesn’t describe what faith in Christ is at all. Faith in Christ as Savior is not inviting Him to do anything. It isn’t asking Him to do anything. Rather, it is the issue of trusting in Him for what He has already done to provide for salvation.

This expression, however, is all too often linked together with the issue of turning from sin, cleaning up one’s life, and making Jesus the Lord of one’s life. The unsaved is given the idea that salvation is contingent upon a change of lifestyle and who controls his heart. Up until now he has been living away from the Lord and has had a self-centered self-indulgent heart. He is told that he needs to change this in order to be saved. He needs Jesus to sit on the throne of his heart. Yet, he is told, Jesus won’t come into his heart and save him until he determines to change his life and to let Jesus be the Lord of his life. He is then told that he is supposed to signify his determination to the Lord by inviting Jesus into his heart to be the Lord of his life.

Once again, though, this is not the issue in salvation. This is another confusion of the issue of the Christian walk with how one becomes a Christian.

Besides all of this, it is God who is making the invitation to salvation. He's not waiting for an invitation from men at all. Rather, He is the one who is calling by the gospel. The inviting is on God's part, not the other way around. This expression even distorts that concept.

Support for this idea of inviting Jesus into one's heart is often made by appealing to Revelation 3:20 where the Lord says, "*Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*" Along with this, pictures portray the Lord standing at the door of a person's heart and knocking, waiting for the invitation to come in by the person opening the door of his heart to the Lord.

But a brief thoughtful consideration of the context of that verse will show that it is not talking about how to be saved at all. The context shows that the door is not the door of a person's heart.

Also the context shows that the verse is not even talking about an action of the Lord in this present dispensation of His grace. The book of the Revelation is dealing with the resumption of God's program and dealings with Israel. It is about the things that will be transpiring in the "day of the Lord." It isn't talking about what God is doing today in this 'mystery dispensation.'

Moreover, the letters to the seven churches are letters to the assemblies of the remnant of Israel in that day. Consequently, the issues that the Lord deals with (especially in the letter to the church of the Laodiceans) are issues of doctrinal correction and reproof to those that are already His own. The

Lord isn't talking to ones who are not justified in those letters.

In addition, the portrayal of the Lord as standing at the door and knocking is a declaration of the time that has arrived in Israel's "last days." It isn't a representation of the door of a sinner's heart at all.

Hence, the use of this verse to support the idea that God's requirement for salvation is the issue of inviting Jesus into one's heart is a clear misuse of Scripture. But that is just how most of the misstatements of God's requirement come into existence

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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