

Perverting The Gospel Of Christ by Telling Someone to “Give Your Heart And Life To The Lord”

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.

“GIVE YOUR HEART AND LIFE TO THE LORD” — This is a very popular expression used by Christians and evangelists today when they appeal to people to respond to the gospel. After telling them that they are sinners who need to be saved, and that Christ died for them, they tell the unsaved that what they need to do in order to be saved is to “give their heart and life to the Lord.” If they do this, they are told, God will save them. But this is not God’s requirement for salvation. God doesn’t use this terminology in His gospel of justification unto eternal life.

Giving one’s heart and life to the Lord isn’t what faith in Christ is all about. Salvation is not the issue of giving God anything. Rather, it is the issue of receiving a gift from God. The gift of salvation is not received by giving God anything in exchange. It is received solely on the basis of one’s complete trust being placed in the merits of Christ’s redemptive work on the cross.

In truth, giving one's heart and life to the Lord is an activity of service to the Lord. It is something that describes dedication. Such activity of service and dedication is something the Lord wants, but only from those who have become His own. Serving the Lord by giving Him one's heart and life in dedication is something that the Lord appeals to Christians to do. Notice this, for example, in Romans 12:1-2 and Ephesians 2:10.

¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

² And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (Romans 12:1-2)

¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:10)

Giving one's heart and life to the Lord, therefore, is the work of service to the Lord that God can accept and be well pleased with only *after* He has first justified and sanctified a person. But it is not the means by which one gets justified and so becomes a Christian.

What this expression of God's requirement actually does, along with so many other similar expressions, is to confuse the issue of salvation with that of Christian service. It takes terminology appropriate to statements God makes regarding the service of His people, and applies it to the issue of being saved and becoming one of God's people. But salvation and service are

two completely different things. A person cannot serve the Lord until he is saved. This is because it isn't until a person is saved that he possesses anything from God by which he can serve the Lord. A person must be justified and sanctified first before any service is even possible. Hence, it is absurd to make serving the Lord a requirement for salvation.

However, it isn't only absurd, it is downright false. Serving the Lord and dedication to Him is not God's requirement for justification. Giving one's heart and life to the Lord is not the issue of faith in Christ. Therefore, instead of accurately stating the response God wants, this expression misstates it. And, as such, it perverts "the gospel 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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Telling Someone To

"GIVE YOUR HEART AND LIFE TO THE LORD"

*A Perversion of
The Gospel of Christ*

KEITH R. BLADES

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