

An Evangelical Deception

Grace, but not 'cheap' grace!



By
Frederick L. Pattison,
A Christian!

An Evangelical Deception

Before proceeding further into this booklet I need to let it be known that:

- I am a born again believer;
- I am an evangelical Christian, and
- I believe and accept the Bible as the fully and uniquely inspired written Word of God.

As an evangelical Christian I believe that it is my responsibility to seek to correct wrong whenever and wherever I see it in the Body of Christ. What I am sharing in this booklet is an area of concern that troubles me as a follower of Jesus Christ and as an evangelical Christian. I do not purport to have all of the answers on such matters that are being addressed in this material. However, I am convinced that many evangelicals are being led astray by persuasive charismatic personalities into some areas of belief and practice that are either deceptive or on the road to deception. In this booklet I am addressing but one of these areas. The apostle Paul issued the following warning,

"I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel – which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we are an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let that person be under God's curse! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let that person be under God's curse!" (Galatians 1:6-9) TNIV.¹

What is a deception? According to a dictionary that I have "to deceive" is "to give a misleading impression."

¹ TNIV is "Today's New International Version" of the Bible. Unless otherwise noted all scriptural passages quoted in this booklet are taken from this version.

What you will find in this material ***is not*** considered as either heresy or deception by the majority of theologically Conservative Christians. In fact, I am convinced that what I am addressing is honestly believed to be truth by the vast majority of evangelicals, fundamentalists and charismatic Christians. Yet, I view it as a form of deception although it is sincerely believed and taught. I believe that it is leading many people astray by clinging to a false hope. This teaching hinges on the very root of the biblical doctrine of salvation, hence it is a very serious matter. To those believers holding what I term "the evangelical party line" my view will seem heretical. ***But is it?*** I am of the conviction that my position is in accord with New Testament teaching.

My basic problem with what is presently being widely taught and stressed by the majority of fundamentalists and evangelicals is what I view as a message of "easy believism" or "cheap grace!"

Hear My Premise: Where in the New Testament is the sinner exhorted to: "Accept Jesus as your personal Savior?"

The missing ingredient in this exhortation is that it is seldom emphasized to the individual that he or she needs to believe in and receive **the LORD Jesus Christ**. The deception of "easy believism" separates Jesus as Savior and Lord. In Scripture he is always referred to as **the LORD Jesus Christ!**

I am aware that evangelists, pastors and other Christians in their witness usually refer to Jesus as "Lord and Savior." *But what do they usually mean?* They invariably proceed to simply present him as personal Savior. **That he is!** However, he is not Savior alone. He is Lord! "**The**" Lord. The concept of commitment is missing in presenting an "easy believism" message to "accept Jesus into your heart as your personal Savior" Note how Paul and Silas put it when asked:

" . . . Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." (Acts 16:30b, 31) KJV.

The above exhortation does not implore one to “believe about” Jesus but to believe “on” or “in” him. It must be noted that the word “believe” is more than simply voicing intellectual assent. This is really the crux of my premise. Involved in believing is “to trust in, to reply upon, to commit to.” An “easy believism” is simply head knowledge. I am convinced that this deception is leading many people to “claim” to be born again simply because they have followed the prescribed formula set forth in many modern pulpits. These folk have gone forward in a church meeting, “said” a prayer and “zappo” they are “told” that they have been born again, that they are saved. ***But are they?***

Undoubtedly there are many who do come into a personal relationship with God in this manner. *But what about countless others who are not instructed as to what being born again is all about?*

Salvation is entirely of God’s doing. It is the Holy Spirit who draws people to Christ. God sent his Son Jesus to die for the penalty of sin. Sin is the human problem. Jesus, in his death on the cross, took upon himself the penalty of sin which is death; spiritual and physical. He alone is Savior! He, who is Lord (deity), has atoned for our sin. Without and until the shedding of Christ’s blood God’s grace had not come into full fruition. God’s grace is not “cheap grace!”²

The gift of God is eternal life. This gift of God is received through faith,

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.” (Ephesians 2:8 & 9)

The very next verse of this passage in Ephesians is often ignored by many Christians,

² This ministry has a booklet available titled “Grace!”

“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” (Ephesians 2:10)

In other words once we are “in” Christ we are new creations. We are now disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. As disciples we are under his discipline. He is both Lord as well as Savior. I’m not fully convinced that you can have one without the other. He certainly cannot be Lord of one’s life if he is not their Savior. It also seems logical that when he is one’s Savior he must be their Lord.

In my youth, as a zealous Christian and student in Bible College, I would seek to button hole anyone who would listen to me. In my witnessing I used such plans as “The Roman Road” and “the Four Spiritual Laws.” Upon becoming a pastor in Baptist and in non-denominational churches I would plead with people to come forward at “the Invitation” or “altar call” to receive Jesus as their personal Savior. Those who came forward, and there were many who did respond, were then instructed to “say/pray” “the” sinner’s prayer. They were then told, “You are saved!” “You now have eternal life.”

But did they?

I believe that many of them went beyond mere intellectual assent and did commit themselves to Jesus Christ as their Lord thus becoming a disciple. Jesus must be taken as Lord and Savior,

“If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.” (Romans 10:9-10)

Please hear me out on this. I fully understand that when the individual is led by the Spirit of God to commit his or her life to the Lord Jesus Christ all of the ramifications of being a disciple are not fully known at that time. **Being a disciple takes time, effort and maturity in growth.** What I am saying

however is that the new convert to Christ needs to be aware of what is involved in their commitment. Jesus is now LORD of the individual's entire life: body, soul and spirit. That which has taken place, if truly of God, is not a passing fancy. **It is a life. It is new life. It is life as a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ,**

*"Whoever wants to be my [Jesus] disciple **must** deny themselves and **take up their cross and follow me**. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for you to gain the whole world, yet forfeit your soul? Or what can you give in exchange for your soul? If any of you are ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of you when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels." (Mark 8:34b-38)*

*"Whoever wants to be my disciple **must** deny themselves, and **take up their cross daily and follow me**." (Luke 9:23b)*

On numerous occasions in the Gospels our Lord instructs his disciples to "**follow him**." In other words I wonder about those many professed Christians who have "**said**" the sinner's prayer and "**claim**" to have been born again but who have no idea or concept of what biblical commitment to follow him as a disciple is all about. **Are they truly born again?** Only God knows!

I am concerned that in the deception of "**easy believism**" little if anything is ever said or taught about what being born again, or what a disciple of Jesus Christ, entails. Authentic believers (disciples) are instructed to follow Jesus,

*"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and **they follow me**. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one." (John 10:27-30)*

Note this exhortation,

"Whoever serves me *must follow me* . . ." (John 12:26a)

We have not been called to "make a decision" rather we have been called to commit ourselves to Jesus Christ as the Lord of our lives. We are called to a life of following him; to being one of his disciples. **See** – Matthew 10:42; 27:57; Luke 14:26-27, 33; John 8:31; 13:35; 15:8; 19:38; Acts 9:1, 26, 36; 11:26; 16:1; 19:1; 20:7; 21:16.

It is my prayer that my evangelical peers who are mistakenly teaching a false premise of what salvation is will get back into Scripture. Too many church leaders and ordinary Christians appear to be so **enamored with numbers** rather than truly winning lost souls to Jesus Christ who **alone is Lord and Savior**.

It is my belief that **God has a people** scattered throughout Christendom, who **in spite** of some false teaching, do acknowledge and know Jesus Christ as their Lord. **The Holy Spirit** has brought them into the family of God through spiritual rebirth, i.e., *being born again according to John 3*. Salvation is **not an "easy believism" nor a grace that is "cheap"**. Note what the apostle Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus,

"For he [God] chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will – to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment – to bring unity to all things in heaven and earth under Christ. In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of

*truth, the gospel of your salvation. **When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession – to the praise of his glory.***" (Ephesians 1:4-14)

Note also what Paul wrote to the believers at Rome,

*And we know that **all things work together** for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did **foreknow**, he also did **predestinate** to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also **called**: and whom he called, them **he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.** What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:28-31) KJV*

My friend **have you** trusted in Jesus Christ as Lord of your life and only Savior.

Contact us for additional information on this and other subjects that may interest you. We are a non-denominational ministry seeking to let Christ be known to all. We are also seeking to equip believers. In addition to our literature we are available to come to your group or church to hold seminars and workshops on sundry topics. We are:

Strawberry Views

"Unique – Challenging – Controversial!"



"Berry Good News!"

HC 1, Box 1529

Strawberry, AZ 85544-9740

Visit our Web Site at: www.strawberryviews.com

Email address is: strawberryviews@mypayson.com