

"I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—not that there is another gospel, but there are some who are confusing you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ."

Paul was addressing a very important concern for the churches of Galatia. Instead of following the faith/trust centered relationship in Christ, the people were starting to listen to another gospel. This particular gospel that was causing concern for Paul was teaching that an individual could be saved through the Mosaic Law or also known as legalism. This teaching was saying that you are saved by observing the Law of Moses instead of through Christ.

Obviously this was a huge concern for Paul. People were actually thinking that you no longer needed the true gospel in Christ for their salvation.

This particular passage struck me this week because I think this concern is as true for us today as it was back in Paul's day. We get caught up in all kinds of gospels that distracts us from or pulls us away from the true gospel of Christ.

The one that causes me the most concern is prosperity gospel. This basically states that if you donate enough money to a particular ministry, then God will reward you by blessing you in return. Gospel refers to the teaching of salvation through Christ Jesus and when you look at what prosperity gospel is all about, there is absolutely nothing in it about Jesus. And yet many people listen to it. Most of us have heard of Joel Osteen who is probably the most well known prosperity preacher out there. There was another preacher who told his congregation during the last year or two that they needed to give more so that he could get a private jet to do his ministry. That is another example of prosperity gospel and people still listen to it.

What are some other gospels that we listen to? When I was on internship, I had a council member approach me and tell me that his son would no longer be attending confirmation classes because his son's soccer coach decided to have practice on Sunday mornings. I understand that our youth enjoys playing sports and I have no problem with that. I also have no problem with them playing in Sunday tournaments because you have to play when the tournament is set up. However, I do have a problem when practice is scheduled on Sunday mornings and people decide to do the practice instead of spending time with God. I am not sure what kind of gospel this is but it is a gospel that is proclaimed and listened to.

Throughout life, there are many different gospels that we listen to. I think we are looking for happiness and peace in our lives and so we are willing to try whatever. I know some

who tried burying their troubles with drugs or alcohol. There are others who fill their life with material things. As you look at all the different gospels and the things that they promise, can they really promise what the true gospel of Christ does?

Are they really able to give you peace and happiness? Are they able to give you a contentment with life where you are no longer searching for something. Or do you put your trust in the gospel of Christ?

Paul was trying to get people to realize that every gospel outside of the gospel of Christ contains empty promises. The false gospels distract us and keep us from embracing God's love that is found only in Christ.

The gospel of Christ promises unconditional love that offers forgiveness and eternal life to all who believe in what God accomplished through Christ. That is the good news and it is something that no other so called gospel can promise.