

## Another Gospel

This morning I'd like to talk to you about the Everlasting Gospel. In **Matthew 24:14** Jesus said, "And this gospel (**that's the everlasting gospel John refers to in Revelation 14:6**) "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." And by the way, this is being largely accomplished through the Internet today. So this promise Jesus gave could be fulfilled very quickly. We should never court the idea that the coming of Jesus is a long way off, because if that's our attitude we will begin to stray from the straight and narrow path that leads to life eternal and soon be walking the broad road to perdition. Why? Because most people are natural procrastinators, and if we think we have a lot of time to prepare our characters for heaven when we don't, we will put off what we should be doing now and the end result will be an eternal loss, not only for us, but for those we could have led in the right direction by our witness.

From the time Adam and Eve partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, people have been confused about the true way of salvation, sad but true, and we know that this confusion doesn't exist because of anything God has done, because **1 Corinthians 14:33** tells us that God is not the author, or the originator of confusion. It's the father of lies who is responsible for that. Therefore, in order to become unconfused, Jesus must become the author and finisher of our faith, otherwise another gospel will be accepted, which will leave us hopelessly and eternally lost.

Turn with me please to **Daniel 9:7, 8** and notice what it says there. "O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee. O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee."

There are at least three important points we can glean from these verses. #1, anciently all of God's professed people were confused from the top down. #2, confusion is the result of sin, and #3, righteousness belongs to God and we don't have any apart from Him. As we consider what's happening in the world and within the great Advent movement today, I would say that this is a fair description of things as they exist today, wouldn't you? Confusion of faces. As we look at Christianity as a whole I believe much confusion exists because most of the professed followers of Christ don't know what sin is. If you went out and did a door to door survey you would find that very few people would be able to give you the Bible definition of sin; that it's the transgression of God's 10-commandment law; that's what it says in **1 John 3:4**. Oh, they might get some of the commandments right if you were to ask, but you can be sure that most would miss number four, or they would ascribe to Sunday what should be ascribed to the seventh day. On the other hand, when you look at Adventism as a whole, we know what sin is, but far too many have come to the conclusion that they don't have to stop sinning to be in a saving relationship with Jesus! They don't realize that every single sin

separates them from God, and at that point they are lost until there is repentance and confession and a realization that there's power to break the vicious cycle of sinning and repenting. This is why the apostle Paul speaks of the gospel and another gospel.

In *The Desire of Ages, page 210* we are told as soon as there was sin there was a Saviour, or the gospel, but did you know that there was another gospel that was preached in the Garden of Eden before the true gospel? Doesn't the third chapter of Genesis talk about how the serpent tricked Eve into disbelieving what God said before she actually disobeyed? You see, the devil had his deception all figured out before our first parents knew about the real gospel, and his deception back then isn't any different than it is today; it's just phrased a little differently, but it is the same old deception. The serpent told Eve she could disobey God and she would not surely die, and that is essentially the same thing as believing you can transgress God's law and still be saved. There is no difference between the two, they are just worded differently to fool unsuspecting people into believing they can be saved in sin.

In *The Great Controversy, page 582*, "From the very beginning of the great controversy in heaven it has been Satan's purpose to overthrow the law of God. It was to accomplish this that he entered upon his rebellion against the Creator, and though he was cast out of heaven he has continued the same warfare upon the earth. To deceive men, and thus lead them to transgress God's law, is the object which he has steadfastly pursued."

So, there's no reason for us to be confused about what Satan's purpose is for each one of us this morning. However he can get us to break God's law he will do it, and he knows what our weaknesses are and he'll continue to attack us on those points. Because he's been successful in the past, he will continue the same old tactics until we gain the victory, and we can gain the victory if we pray and watch unto prayer.

The apostle Paul wrote letters to the various churches that were raised up through his efforts, because confusion of one kind or another existed in those churches. In fact, if everything had gone smoothly in the early church we probably wouldn't have much of a New Testament at all. So in that respect I'm glad for the instruction that otherwise we wouldn't have.

For the most part I would say that the early church needed instruction because they became confused about how to be saved. And things aren't much different today, are they? Except that maybe things are even more confusing now than they were back then, and why would that be true? Because the devil knows that his time is short and he's had over 6,000 years to perfect his deceptions, and it's his purpose to devour his prey lest they escape from his snare. So don't let it be you!

Turn with me please to **Ecclesiastes 1:9-11** and listen to what the wise man says, "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us. There is no remembrance of

former things; neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after.”

This is why mankind continues to make the same choices, to make the same mistakes, and continues to be confused about the same issues. People are just as perplexed about salvation today as Cain was when he brought his offering of fruit and vegetables to the gate of the Garden of Eden. You would think that we would have learned better by now, but not so. Confusion exists today, as it always has, because there’s more than one choice that can be made, and in a religious sense confusion exists today for the same reason, there’s more than one gospel being preached, even within Adventism, and as a result a choice must be made, and it’s eternally important that we make the right one.

Because there’s only one truth there can be only one true gospel. Does that make sense? And not only that, but that’s all there has ever been! That’s why **Revelation 14:6** calls it the “Everlasting Gospel.” The way of salvation has been the same for all people ever since Adam and Eve partook of the forbidden fruit. However, there are Christians today that believe the Jews were saved by obedience to the law, but during New Testament times we are now saved by grace through faith; no! The gospel has always been the same for all people and from all time. The only difference is, during Old Testament times people looked forward to the coming of the Messiah and during New Testament times we look back and see that He has already come, but salvation has always been a gift that comes through faith.

And so what we want to do this morning is make sure, since there’s more than one gospel out there, that we have the right one, and that we are proclaiming the right one, because it means, not only eternal life or death to us, but eternal life or death to those who hear us.

As I have studied all through the Bible, I have found that Paul’s letter to the Galatians is very good at showing the contrast between the true and false gospels, and that’s where I’d like to begin as we allow God’s holy word to expose another gospel.

**Galatians 1:6-9**, “I marvel (in other words, I’m surprised) that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: (right away we see that the true gospel has to do with the grace of Christ. By contrast then, another gospel must have to do with what we can do to save ourselves. If grace is the free gift of God to fallen humanity, then all other gospels must have something to do with what we can do to earn salvation; whether all or in part.) Verse 7, Which is not another; but (actually Paul says, there is no other gospel, but I say this because) there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. (Is the gospel of Christ being perverted today? I’ll say. It’s being perverted big time! The word “pervert” here means “to transmute”, which means to change to a higher form, or to take something base and make it more valuable.” This is what certain Jewish converts to Christianity claimed to be doing with the gospel Paul preached; that their gospel was superior because it taught faith in Christ plus what man can add to it to make it more acceptable to God, but what does Paul say in verse 8?) But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have

preached unto you, let him be accursed. **(That is, let him be excommunicated, or disfellowshipped. Pretty strong language, but necessary in order to keep the church pure)** Verse 9, As we said before, so say I now again, **(Paul's trying to make a point here so we better listen carefully)** if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." In other words, divorce yourself from this kind of thinking, or this error, because it will infect the whole body.

In *Patriarchs and Prophets, page 73* it says, "Nearly every false religion has been based on the same principle—that man can depend upon his own efforts for salvation." Notice, it says "nearly every false religion." If there are a few false religions that do not depend upon human effort for salvation, what do they depend on? They depend upon half a gospel that justifies but does not sanctify; a religion that pardons, but does not make holy; a religion that declares one righteous, but does not make him righteous, and that's a gospel that is very popular today, but it's another gospel just as surely as depending upon your own efforts.

It's obvious from what Paul writes, that the Galatians had at one time experienced the true gospel, but later on were fooled into thinking that they could now do something to save themselves. That's why Paul wrote what he did in the verses we just read, and also in **Galatians 3:1-3**, so let's take a look at that. "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, **(who has cast a spell on you. You started out all right, but you ended up all wrong; what happened?)** that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? **(In other words, if you think you can do something to save yourselves somehow, why did Jesus have to die?)** This only would I learn of you, received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? **(Did you receive God's Spirit by doing what the Law requires or by hearing the gospel and believing it?)** Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" That was a penetrating question Paul asked the Galatians, and it's a good question to ask ourselves as we consider this subject.

I wish I could say that the Galatians were the only ones who were fooled by another gospel, but I can't, because the Corinthians were fooled too. Notice what Paul says in **2 Corinthians 11:1-4**, "Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me. For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." Oh friend, this is somewhat off subject, but what a miracle of God is here described. That God could take someone who is not a virgin and make them as though they were. The spiritual significance here is an absolute miracle that only the Holy Spirit can perform. He can take someone who has been a terrible sinner and consider them as though they had never sinned. Every time a person accepts Christ as Lord and Master, that's exactly what happens, it's called justification by faith and that's what the third angel's message is all about, as we learned last month, and I hope that each one listening right now has had this experience, because it's what true Christianity is all about, making saints out of sinners. When we come to Christ we are given to Him in marriage as a chaste virgin, and we are to remain faithful to Him ever afterward, but just in case we fall back into

our old ways of spiritual fornication and cheat on Him, He has even made provision for that (you can read it in 1 John 2:1), and we can be brought back to the same pure relationship with Him we had before, because He cannot be married to anyone who has a divided interest. It's got to be all or nothing. God's love for you knows no bounds, except as we choose to play the harlot like Israel of old.

**Verse 3**, "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him." In other words, you'll probably believe those who come to you with these false teachings. Carrying on with Paul's analogy, he's saying, you would probably go with another lover. And so, Paul didn't have much confidence that the Corinthians would stick to the truth, did he?

But I want you to notice, Paul not only speaks of another gospel, but also about another spirit and another Jesus, which are both central to an understanding of the true gospel. And here's the thing, the Corinthians weren't the only ones who had this problem, because it continues to be a problem even today. There is another Jesus and another spirit being promoted today within some Adventist circles, and I would like to address this just briefly this morning. As you probably know, there are those who teach that the Holy Spirit is not a personal being, but simply an influence that proceeds from the Father and the Son, and without going into great detail, this teaching is teaching another spirit and would qualify as this false doctrine Paul warns about here. So we need to be aware of this when people come with these false ideas, that they are preaching another spirit.

Then there are those who preach another Jesus that the Bible does not teach, teaching that Jesus had a beginning somewhere way back in the eons of time and that He is not equal with the Father. But let me ask you a question: if Jesus did not always exist, could His sacrifice be adequate to atone for sin? Think about it! **1 John 3:4** says that sin is the transgression of the law, the 10-commandment law if you read the context, and since the law is a transcript, or an exact copy of the character of our Heavenly Father, and it is because in **John 15:10** Jesus said they are His Father's commandments, could it be that one who came along sometime afterward be equal with the Father? and thus equal with His character? and able therefore to reconcile fallen human beings who have transgressed that law? Simple logic tells us that there is something wrong with that picture. By the way, the 10-commandment law is also Jesus' law! Because **Revelation 22:14**, speaking of Jesus, says, "Blessed are they that do His commandments." And in **John 14:15** Jesus said: if you love me, keep my commandments. And so, here we see the oneness and the equality that exists between the Father and Son and thus their likeness in character, and anyone who teaches contrary to this is preaching another Jesus.

Now back to another gospel. Have you heard of the Cain Principle? Let me read it to you from ***Signs of the Times, 12-23-1886***, "The Cain class of worshipers includes by far the largest

number; for every false religion that has been invented has been based on the Cain principle, that man can depend upon his own merits and righteousness for salvation.”

As you read about the religion of the Pharisees, it becomes obvious that their religion was the religion of Cain. In fact it's the religion of Catholics, Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and other religious persuasions, but it all started with Cain, and since that time the devil has had 6000 years to fine-tune it. So let's break down the Cain Principle a little bit this morning. And please keep in mind that what I'm about to say must be with the understanding that the surrender of our will to God is required in the salvation process. Obedience is required, but that's not how we receive salvation.

Now listen carefully. Anyone who teaches that the sacrifice of Christ and His righteousness alone is not enough to save us is teaching the Cain principle. Anyone who teaches that we are saved by grace through faith in Christ plus something else, is teaching the Cain principle. Anyone who teaches that salvation requires what Christ has done and what we can add to it, is teaching the Cain principle. Now, does that mean that what we do is unimportant? NO! Faith without works is dead! We know that. And Paul says, “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid, yea we establish the law.” As I have stated many times in the past, and in many different ways, our good works are the result of salvation and not the cause. The fruit of the Spirit is made manifest in the life when the Holy Spirit takes possession of the heart and not before. We cannot manufacture any good thing apart from Christ, but many people think they can.

***Selected Messages, book 1, page 377*** says, “While good works will not save even one soul, yet it is impossible for even one soul to be saved without good works.” Truer words have never been spoken, but here's the tricky part, we can perform good works without the heart being changed, can't we? People do it all the time. Even an atheist can perform good works, and many of them do. But as professed Christians, can we be just good actors? Yes we can, it's called playing church; it's called hypocrisy; it's a concealment of one's real character and motives, and some people are really good at it. Have you ever heard of “will worship”? There are many people today who have a very strong will and they can do just about anything they set their minds to, and in a spiritual sense that can be very dangerous if they don't understand their true weakness as fallen human beings. Because they can do what they set out to do by sheer grit and determination, they can become deceived to their true spiritual condition before God and it may be difficult for these kind of people to realize their own helplessness and inability to render acceptable obedience to God because they are so used to doing whatever they determine they're going to do.

Notice what it says in ***The Sanctified Life, page 7***, “There is in the religious world” **(so we're talking about those who think of themselves as Christians here)** “There is in the religious world a theory of sanctification which is false in itself and dangerous in its influence. In many cases those who profess sanctification do not possess the genuine article. Their sanctification consists in talk and will worship.”

If we perform good works without the heart being changed, it's like having a form of godliness without the power; it's doing what we know is right without really wanting to; it's claiming to be a child of God when we are really a child of the devil; it's pretending to keep the commandments of God while violating them through the thought processes; it's thinking you are rich and increased with goods and in need of nothing, when in reality you are spiritually poor, miserable, blind, and naked. It's real easy to get caught up in a dream world, thinking we're all right when we're all wrong. I don't know about you, but I've been there, done that! It doesn't work. What we need is a way to examine ourselves to see if we truly be in the faith.

In *Steps to Christ, page 58* it says, "It is true that there may be an outward correctness of deportment without the renewing power of Christ. The love of influence and the desire for the esteem of others may produce a well-ordered life. Self-respect may lead us to avoid the appearance of evil. A selfish heart may perform generous actions. By what means, then, shall we determine whose side we are on? **(and then the answer)** Who has the heart? With whom are our thoughts? Of whom do we love to converse? Who has our warmest affections and our best energies? If we are Christ's, our thoughts are with Him, and our sweetest thoughts are of Him. All we have and are is consecrated to Him. We long to bear His image, breathe His spirit, do His will, and please Him in all things."

Friends, I've said it so many times before, God wants heart service! That's the only kind of obedience He can accept. The service of love is the only service that can produce a Christlike character, and isn't that what you want? Isn't that what Christianity is all about? When we truly understand that we are saved by grace, not by law, by faith, not by works, by the Spirit, not by the flesh, by Christ, not by self, and this is the gospel of the kingdom that is preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, then shall the end come.

Now, let me say one more thing before we close. There may be someone listening today who realizes that their obedience has not been from the heart. If this is your experience, what should you do, just give up on Christ since only heart obedience is accepted of Him? Absolutely not! To do wrong when you know to do right, even if it's not from the heart, is never the right answer. To turn your back on the truth will only cause you to go deeper into sin, which in turn will make it more difficult to disentangle yourself from it, and that's what the devil wants. If you don't find more delight than duty in God's service, then there's something you can do to change things.

Notice what it says in **Hebrews 11:6**, "Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God **(first of all)** must believe that he is, and **(secondly)** that he is a rewarder of them that **(do what?)** diligently seek him."

Do you have enough faith to believe there's a God in heaven, and that He will reward you if you seek Him diligently? Diligence is careful and persistent effort put forth to gain something. If your relationship with God is shallow and unsatisfying, it will never become deep and abiding unless you spend quality time getting to know Him. Five minutes in the morning with your hand on the doorknob won't do it. Spending time on Facebook or other computer

activities in the morning instead of opening the word of God will not help you. Turning on the news or reading the newspaper instead of prayer and studying the truth from the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy will not suffice, and I know you know these things, but we can still miss the obvious when it comes to having a vibrant and satisfying Christian life simply because of our laziness, or simply because we think we'll get to that a little later in the day, and later never comes. I nearly lost my way many years ago because of this kind of thinking and I never want to do that again. So you're talking to someone that knows by experience that the end result will be eternal loss unless we do an about face, and do it very quickly.

In **Philippians 3:1** Paul said, "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe." Friends, I believe it's important to constantly remind you of the same things because for you it is safe. Study to show yourself approved unto God and He will reward you with heart obedience, and it will not be a difficult thing to spend that quality time with God if you put forth persistent effort to get to know Him. Wrong habits are hard to break and good ones take time to establish, but if we are diligent to do what we know we must, it will become a pleasure to do what before you found hard to do.

**Luke 11:9-13** says, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that **(do what?)** ask him?"

And let me tell you friends, if the Holy Spirit gets hold of you, you will not find it a difficult thing to obey God and keep His commandments, because it will come from the heart, and if it doesn't come from the heart, it's just another gospel that will leave you empty.