

# A Confused Hesitancy

Long Beach Alliance Church  
August 3, 2014 • Pastor Chris Lankford

So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood.

~Hebrews 13:12 (ESV)

## 1) **True Wealth Is Only Found In Christ**

- A) The Parable of Two Sons (Luke 15:11-32) concludes that true wealth (value) in the family is relationship with the father. Relationship with the father results in celebration and gladness (15:31-32). Prodigal means “lavish.” It’s not the sons who are prodigals. God is the Prodigal One.
- B) God the Father offers relationship to all people through submission of one’s whole life to Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:4-6). The relationship comes with benefits, specifically the forgiveness of sins (Acts 10:43) and the ongoing presence of God’s Spirit in His people (Acts 2:38-41).
- C) All of God’s people are saved by grace, not by self-effort or works (Ephesians 2:8-9). Jesus Christ does the “work” of salvation through His sacrificial death on the cross, paying the debt for sin (Romans 3:23) with His own blood (1 Peter 2:18-19). It’s Good News! It’s the Gospel!

## 2) **Confusing Messages Of Identity In The World**

- A) Like all ‘Lost Sons’ who are invited into relationship with the Father, we are raw when saved. We “come into the house,” and while our position is changed *definitively*, our lives still need change *progressively*.
- B) But then, things get nutty... We want to respond from the inside to the outside, but we settle for a ‘therapeutic moralism,’ good works and good feelings, which have more to do with appearance than transformation. We quietly define our actions and ourselves through the eyes of others, rather than define ourselves through Christ’s eyes.
- C) Distressingly, we live in a world communicating what matters most is what can be seen. Identity is formed through myriad perceptions, our own and from others. From the time we are very young, we are bombarded with “fake it ‘till you make it,” and other lies of our enemy.

### **3) Confusing Messages Of Identity In The Church**

- A) Worst of all, the church can contribute to our confusion. Transformation gets defined more as avoiding certain things (sex, drugs, & rock-n-roll) than living from a progressively “sanctified” (set apart, holy) heart.
- B) Sanctification sets apart a person or object for purposes of purity or perfection; it is being worthy of God. Sanctification is our response to the Gospel. Simply stated, sanctification is “being conformed” to Christ (Romans 8:29), it’s *progressively* becoming who you are *definitively!*
- C) Pastors and teachers in the church can over-simplify progressive change with phrases like, “Just let go, and let God;” “Trust and obey;” or “you just have to get used to your new identity” and finally (as though you’re on a holy Easter Egg hunt) “seek a second work of grace.” These phrases can reduce Christianity to confusing mathematical equations.
- D) This is NOT good news. This is bad news. Pastor and author Kevin Deyoung rightly states, “any gospel which focuses only on what you must do, but never announces what Christ has done, is no gospel at all.”

### **4) Paralyzed By A Confused Hesitancy**

- A) Christians are often paralyzed with a confused hesitancy in their relationship with God. Unsure of how to change from the inside out, they settle for therapeutic moralism, hoping that someday, somehow, authentic transformation from the inside-out will finally occur.
- B) At the same time, some in the church quietly live with rebellious hearts, inoculated from life in Christ by moral living, doing xtianity without knowing Jesus. As A.W. Tozer stated, “plain horse sense should tell us that if it makes no difference in your life, then God doesn’t know you.”

### **5) Begin With Baptism & Communion As Gospel Responses**

- A) Believers baptism is a one-time public confession of faith in Jesus Christ associated with death & resurrection (Romans 6:4-5). Communion is an ongoing celebration of faith in Jesus associated with Christ’s victorious death and all it provides for believers (1 Corinthians 11:23-34).
- B) Baptism and Communion are good examples of actions which are based on identity. Without identity in Christ (Galatians 2:20), actions have no meaning. Actions without identity in Christ are moralism. Actions which come from identity in Christ are “sanctified” (holy, set-apart) works.