

# The Heart, Not The Whole

Long Beach Alliance Church • June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013 • Pastor Chris Lankford

*And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.*

**~1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 1:30-2:2 (ESV)**

## **1) Life Through Death**

- A) The focus of Jesus Christ's Gospel preaching is captured in His command to "Follow Me" (Matthew 10:38).
- B) Jesus always explained following Him in active terms. Following Jesus meant following Him through repenting and making a definitive break from an old life (kingdom of earth) for a new way of life (kingdom of heaven, cf. 4:17).
- C) The Gospel comes with tremendous cost. It is a call to new life, new priorities, and new loyalties. The Gospel is a call to come and die, and in so doing, find new life (10:34-42).

## **2) The Therapeutic Invitation To Choose Jesus**

- A) Oftentimes though, a call to follow Christ looks nothing like Jesus' preaching. Rather, the Gospel is couched in very therapeutic terms, promising a life of greater fulfillment, deep self-actualization, or a satisfying spiritual experience. For instance, have you ever heard a version like:
  - i) Jesus wants to help you with your problems, and if you choose Him, He will make you feel better or prosper more.
  - ii) Jesus died to pay for your sins. If you will just choose Him,

- you can make the transaction with God, sin for salvation.
- iii) Jesus wants to drain out the poison with which this evil world has infected you. Get well. Get Jesus. Accept Him!
  - iv) You don't want to go to Hell like sinners, do you? Jesus loves you and died so you can go to Heaven. It's nice there.
  - v) Just ask Jesus into your heart. Simply invite Him into your life. Repeat this prayer after me, and you will be saved.
  - B) These types of Gospel presentations are well intentioned, but often mislead people into thinking they are saved, when they are not. They drink tasty-but-deadly Kool-Aid, instead of the pungent-but-life-giving blood of Jesus Christ.

### **3) The Gospel Is Not Just The Cross**

- A) It is popular to present the Gospel as simply about Christ dying for our sins (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:3). The Apostle Paul, who wrote the young church in Corinth, even earlier noted that He only wanted to speak of the cross of Christ (2:2).
- B) And, if you want to provide assurance for people, as Paul did for the Corinthians, you might even go on to mention the bodily and physical resurrection of Jesus (15:3ff)
- C) While the cross of Christ, His death, His resurrection, His blood sacrifice, and His sufficient payment for sins are at the heart of the Gospel, they represent only a portion (probably less than half) of the whole Gospel.

### **4) The Gospel Is Exceedingly Greater Than We Think**

- A) The context into which Paul spoke to the church in Corinth is critical (15:1-2, also 1:27-2:1)! All of Scripture is preparing, presenting, or revealing our participation in the Gospel! The true soul of the Bible is the story of God's Gospel!
- B) The Gospel reaches past our first response, extending back through history, and grips us with an ongoing call to die. Die to your life, die to your family, die to your friends, die to the culture, and die to your dreams. Die like Christ.
- C) But by dying, you will find true life in Jesus. To live is Christ. To live in a family of every tribe, tongue, and nation. To live in joy that doesn't make sense. To live with promise, with hope, with the Spirit, in Christ, and as a child of God.
- D) This is the Gospel. There is nothing that has been, is, or ever will be, more important. All Jesus asks is, Follow Me...