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Popular Terms That Abuse the Gospel

by Greg Stier

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Would it surprise you that the following five terms are never used in the Bible when it comes to describing how a person receives salvation?

1. Let Jesus into your heart.
2. Invite Christ into your life.
3. Just say this prayer and you'll be saved...
4. Make Jesus the Lord of your life (we don't *make* him Lord. He IS Lord!)
5. Turn from all your sin (and, no, that's not what "[repent](#)" means!)

What term does the Bible use again and again as the sole requirement for salvation? What word is used 98 times in the book of John to describe the only means of getting "saved"? See if you can pick it out from the most quoted verse of all time. Jesus said, "*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*"

*Whoever believes...*that's it. It's not whoever turns, tries, seeks, surrenders, stops, starts, or anything else! Instead, it is faith alone in Christ alone that saves us from sin. This brand of simple faith has abandoned every shred of self-effort and is clinging solely to Christ based on what he has done on the cross.

Any additions to simple faith is a vampire, sucking the grace out of the gospel. Anything more than faith is a parasite, attaching itself to faith and turning it into "*another gospel.*"

What did the Apostle Paul have to say about these parasitic, pharisaic additions to the message of grace? Check out his harsh, yet inspired, words in Galatians 1:6-9, "*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 or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!*"

Let's keep it simple. Let's preach it clearly. Let's avoid terms that abuse the good news.

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