

Will You Be Seduced From the Cross

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Turn in your Bibles to the book of Galatians and the sixth chapter. Galatians six and verse 14. Paul writing to the Galatians says, “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”¹

I have entitled this message, “Will you be Seduced from the Cross?”

The great whore that we read about in Revelation chapter 17 is used by the Spirit of God as a symbol or picture of all false godless religion in the world. As a matter of fact, she is symbolically that same strange woman that we read about in Proverbs seven.

Turn back over to Proverbs seven. Because in Proverbs seven we have one who is described as a simple one that Solomon observes as a individual without understanding. But he writes and he says:

My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee. Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye. Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart. Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister; and call understanding thy kinswoman.²

He is talking here as the spiritual message of this text says, about the word and gospel of God.

He says:

That they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger which flattereth with her words.

For at the window of my house I looked through my casement, And beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding.³

¹ Galatians 6:14.

² Proverbs 7:1-4.

³ Proverbs 7:5-7.

This is, without a doubt, a moral lesson on the surface. But more importantly it is a spiritual lesson.

He says, "I observe this young man..."

...Passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house, In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night: And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart. (She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house: Now is she without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner.) So she caught him, and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him, I have peace offerings with me; this day have I payed my vows. Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee.⁴

You remember what our Lord said about the Pharisees. He said, "You cross land and sea to make one proselyte. You are so enthusiastic and zealous and evangelical in a sense and you do so. And when you do you make that one proselyte two fold more the child of hell than yourself."

Here she is.

I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt. I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning: let us solace ourselves with loves. For the goodman is not at home, he is gone a long journey: He hath taken a bag of money with him, and will come home at the day appointed. With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him. He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; Till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life.⁵

In other words, he is so allured, drawn and all the time he does not realize as it says here, "It is for his life." His life is at stake. And with every sinner our soul is at stake.

Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth. Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths. For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.⁶

⁴ Proverbs 7:8-15.

⁵ Proverbs 7:16-23.

⁶ Proverbs 7:24-27.

Now, as I said, these two women, they are symbolically the same and representing this harlot religion that would lure every soul away from the Lord Jesus Christ.

And I have had it on my mind this week perhaps that of all the days of the year, maybe of all the so-called holy days above every other, more than any other on this day, Easter, as men call it, she struts her stuff.

Now what so many people do not realize is that as far as the Bible is concerned, as far as the word of truth speaks, there is no command, no example and not even the slightest encouragement to recognize one day apart from others and regard the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

And what has happened over the course of the centuries is this, that all the so-called pagan holidays or holy days they have been embraced by Catholicism and every other ism and now molded into what is called in our day Christianity when, in truth, Easter is simply nothing more than the worship of the queen of heaven who is called Astar or Ishtar.

If you want to find out more about that, you can take Mr. Hyslop's old book called *The Two Babylons* wherein he traces all these connections back to find that it is nothing more than idolatry carried on in the name of God.

But here she is, especially on this day strutting all her stuff, going about to present herself with every thing that appeals to our natural fallen flesh. And like this strange woman in Proverbs seven she parades herself and all that is about here and seeks to allure and draw away and lead astray. She is the great seductress. She has something that is appealing to all. She has something for your children. She has something to appeal to your emotion. She has something to appeal to your traditions and your superstitions. She is so much this false religion pictured in this woman, she is so much like the sirens in Greek mythology, you remember the sirens. They were supposedly women in mythological forms that were on this island whose songs and whose words and whose signings would lure the sailors toward their island only to be crashed upon the rocks and destroyed.

Her message, her words, flattering words as they are described in Proverbs seven, words that appeal to us, words that seduce us rather than being the words of truth, always alluring to the flesh, to the degree that every one will be deceived by them, believe this word, who receive not the love of the truth and deluded every one except, if you notice in Revelation 17, every one except those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

And it is the responsibility of a gospel preacher to warn men and women about everything that is not taught in holy Scripture and especially those things that are contrary to holy Scripture, all these superstitions, all these traditions and such in religion. And the one way then we can know that they are not of God is that they absolutely distract from the true worship of God. They distract from the Word and message of the gospel.

And so I find myself just like the apostle Paul who said to the Corinthians, he said, “But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety...”⁷

In other words, here was this woman in Proverbs seven who is very subtle of heart, very deceiving and by that she allures this young man, leads him down his path that in the end is the pathway to hell.

Did you see that? He doesn't know that this has to do with his life. He doesn't realize. He is void of understanding. He is described as the simple one, just like every one of us by natural birth, he doesn't understand that this is a life or death matter. Oh, it is just this or it is just that or it is something else.

No, it is life or death. And the way that God is worshipped, I don't know how we will ever get by this. He said, “[Those] that worship God must worship him in spirit and in truth.”⁸

Not by getting up before day when it is cold and walking out before three wooden crosses on a hill or something like that, not by all of these things that stir the emotions of men and women who are naturally religious, but religious without God, not by doing all these other things, but he says, “By the Spirit of God, leading us, enabling us to worship God through the truth.”

Those who worship God, I don't care what they claim. I don't care what they feel. I don't care what people think about them, they only people who worship God in this world, they worship him spiritually, not by things external, but spiritually by the enablement of the Holy Spirit through the Word of truth. Truth.

Now look back in Galatians six at what Paul says. He says, “But God forbid...”⁹ And he is putting against this everything imaginable from circumcision and every other thing that is man made and man presented to God. He said, “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”¹⁰

Now what does it mean here to glory in something? Well, it simply means to make your boast in or to have your joy in or to be able to rejoice in. It has to do with having confidence in or relying in or depending in or trusting in. He said, “God forbid that I should glory,”¹¹ or trust in, or in any way be fascinated with anything but the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But maybe more importantly, we ought to ask ourselves and evidently few in this world ever have, what does he mean by the cross?

⁷ 2 Corinthians 11:3.

⁸ John 4:24.

⁹ Galatians 6:14.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

If you notice here it is singular. It is definite. And it is set apart from every other thing in this world. He says, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."¹²

Now I don't know about you, but over the last few days I have seen a lot of crosses. As a matter of fact, I passed three standing in a field coming out to the service this morning. There are lots and lots of crosses.

But he was not talking about that instrument of wood. And not only that, he was not talking about the symbol of the cross.

How is it that men take and hold up as the symbol of Christianity the symbol of the cross when God had already said unto the law, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image"?¹³

That is just another form of idolatry, whether it is a symbol of a cross, whether it is symbol of a fish or whatever it is. He said it is all a graven image and we don't worship him through man made graven images. We worship him in truth spiritually.

And he was not talking about some gesture with the hand. He not even talking about the believer's cross of self denial who when he speaks to his people he says, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."¹⁴

He is not talking about any of those things.

But what is meant here and everywhere else in the Scripture in concern with this, what is he talking about? The cross. What does the Spirit of God mean by giving us such a statement?

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."¹⁵

Well, what he is talking about here and elsewhere, he is talking about he doctrine of a crucified Christ.

Now there have been a few people in this world comparatively that actually saw the Lord Jesus Christ. As a matter of fact, that is the requirement of an apostle. He had seen the Lord Jesus Christ. And that is why on the road to Damascus, not only did God save this man Saul of Tarsus, but Christ revealed himself to his man Saul of Tarsus because he was to be an apostle.

But what about everybody else? I haven't seen Jesus.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Exodus 20:4; Deuteronomy 5:8.

¹⁴ Luke 9:23.

¹⁵ Galatians 6:14.

I heard a man tell me one time that he had seen Jesus. And when he described him I knew right away that he hadn't.

Well, what about us? How will we ever... how will God save these people whose names in his everlasting covenant of grace that he has written in that Lamb's book of life, how will they ever know Christ? How will they ever come to believe on him? It is through this doctrine or this message and gospel of a crucified Christ. That is what he is talking about when he speaks of the cross.

In other words, Paul is saying that as an apostle and preacher of Christ he did not preach man's works or man's rituals or even circumcision or any of these thing. He preached the crucified Christ. And he didn't do like some people do, try to separate the person of Christ from the work of Christ. You see, that is exactly what is involved here. You can't separate the two. We are talking about the cross of Christ. We are talking about Christ crucified.

Turn over 1 Corinthians chapter one. You see, the reason men and women put wooden crosses by their buildings and why they have all the pageantry of Easter and everything else associated about it, is because of their unwillingness to preach the cross.

Now listen to what Paul says here. 1 Corinthians chapter one and verse 17.

He says, "For Christ sent me not to baptize."¹⁶

That is not my first order of business.

He says, "... but to preach the gospel: [and] not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect."¹⁷

In other words, there is a way to preach about the cross and cloak it in the wisdom of men and the history and things like that and never get down to actually preaching the message of the cross.

He says, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness."¹⁸

Oh, we would rather have a lot of other things. Let's light candles. Let's go out for a sunrise service. Let's do all these things because really this preaching of the cross is really foolishness.

But it is foolishness to them that are perishing. He says:

¹⁶ 1 Corinthians 1:17.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ 1 Corinthians 1:18.

But unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.¹⁹

Nobody will be saved by going out, standing in the cold and shivering like I used to do at a sunrise service or any of these other things. Nobody will be saved by somebody standing up and we will all kind of have a pity party over Jesus having been slain. Nobody will be saved by simply confessing the fact that a man rose from the dead.

No, he said:

It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified. But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.²⁰

He said, “We preach Christ crucified.”²¹

We don't ever get beyond that. We don't ever find that to diminish. We don't ever find that that no longer satisfies us or gives us hope. We preach Christ crucified. We preach the cross. And what is plainly declared and manifest in this cross or the preaching of the cross through this gospel of a crucified Christ, what is declared in that?

Well, the cross reveals, shows, demonstrates, however way you want to put it, truly what we are.

Now the cross says a lot about God, but it says also something about what we are.

What did that woman use for that fellow? Flattering words.

“Oh, I do think, fellow, you are about the best looking guy I have ever seen. I have never seen such muscle. I have never seen such charm. I have never seen such a hunk.”

And that is exactly what preachers do. People go to be told how good they are and how valuable they are, how strong their will is. They are so powerful that God can't do

¹⁹ 1 Corinthians 1:18-21.

²⁰ 1 Corinthians 1:21-25.

²¹ 1 Corinthians 1:23.

anything without them, that God can't do anything in spite of them. They are so strong and everything. They are so wealthy. God doesn't have anything unless they get it.

But the cross reveals the desperate state of every fallen son of Adam and the absolute bankruptcy of man all of which made God becoming a man and enduring the shame and suffering the cross necessary if they are ever to be saved.

I don't spend a lot of time telling you how bad you are. I try not to spend a lot of time beating you up, because I know this. If God ever reveals to your heart how awful you are—and that is the only way you will ever know it—when he brings you to believe what he says about you. You know, you and I are not what we are based on what we think we are or what momma said we are or what preacher so and so says we are. We are what God says we are. And we will never know that until he reveals that to us and he reveals that to us in the light of the cross. We are such sinners, so lost, so desperately hopeless that the only way we can ever be saved is for God himself to take on a human body and come into this world and die in our place.

That is the cross.

It shows that all the imagined works of men and the worth of men and the will of men and the ways of men, they are all useless, godless vanity. The cross stains the pride of man, shuts of the boasting of man, leaves him hopeless without Christ, says that it is not of works lest any man should boast. Every boasting is excluded. And not only that, all the feelings and the emotions and the religiosity of men and women, there are men and women that will walk out of buildings this morning that are lost and just maybe today or tomorrow go out into a godless eternity, but they will leave this morning when in that atmosphere they will feel like that they have got really near to God, but they don't know the truth.

You can't believe on him of whom you have not heard. And you can admit that Christ rose from the dead all you want to, so what? What does that mean? What are the ramifications of it? Yes, he died on the cross. Why? Who put him there? Who is he dying for? What does his death accomplish?

You see, this is only seen in the cross.

Look back over in Galatians chapter five. Look down at verse 11 at what Paul says to these people who were about to be some of them seduced by this religion which had as a part of it we will let you help do something. You can obey Moses' law. Maybe as a part, you know, as kind of a joint effort, you and God.

No. He says in verse 11 of Galatians five, "And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision,"²² if I preach something in man or done by man, he says, "Why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased."²³

²² Galatians 5:11.

²³ Ibid.

There will be a lot said about the cross this morning. But there will be no offence in it. The offensiveness of the cross lies in the fact that we are such helpless, godless sinners that Christ had to come into this world to die in order to save us, that there is nothing we can do, no other way, but that way that is Christ's.

You look back in Galatians six again in verse 12 he says, "As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ."²⁴

This is their seductive message. They tell you something to do. They tell you something to perform in your flesh, something you are to keep of the law. They do this so they themselves don't have to suffer persecution for preaching the cross.

Now I will tell you this. I have stood on both sides of this fence. I have stood as a so-called preacher preaching about the cross, preaching somebody called Jesus. And all the time wondering what such texts as Christ gave us in the New Testament, what that really meant when he talked about those who would live godly will suffer persecution or they will take you and bind you and put you in prison. They will speak evil things about you, persecute you in every way.

I thought, you know, he must be talking about those in the first century... until he revealed the cross to me and I began to preach Christ crucified. And then I found out just exactly what he is talking about because there is an offensiveness about the cross. Because you and I want to do something at our little part, steal our little bit of glory. We want to do something without realizing that everything we try to do simply minimizes what Christ has done.

And then the cross is that which reveals God's peculiar glory.

How does Christ? Christ is God manifest in the flesh. You know that, don't you? He is no less than... he is God. But when Christ came into this world and went to that cross, in his death, it says that he would suffer all the prophets said he would suffer and then enter into his glory.

Well, he already possessed glory as the eternal Son. He already possessed omnipotence and every other attribute of God. So what is he talking about this glory that he prays to the Father in John 17? He says... he speaks of the glory that he had with him before the world was. What is that glory? It is God's redemptive glory.

"Father, glorify now your son."

Make manifest. That is what it is to glorify something. It is to make them manifest for exactly who and what they are or what they have done. And so when Christ came and

²⁴ Galatians 6:12.

went to that cross though they mocked him there and they said, “You saved others, save yourself and if you be the Son of God come down.”

No, this is his glory. His glory and not only that, but nowhere are all the attributes of God and them in a perfect harmony with each other seen anywhere except in the cross, in Christ crucified. And everything else is a distorted view of God.

You see the harlot, she just seeks to lure him off under the banner of love. It is all going to be love all the way through.

No, love yes, God is. That doesn't even mean he loves you. It says, “God is love.”²⁵ Two times in the Scriptures it says, “God is love.”²⁶ But that doesn't mean he loves you or me. But it does say that the love of God is in Christ Jesus.

If you are not in Christ, you don't have any corner on the market of God's love. I don't care how many preachers stand up and tell you like they will tell people today, seduce them in this language of love.

“Oh, God loves you. He has got a wonderful plan for your life. He wants to save you. He wants to help you. He wants to do something for you if you will just let him.”

He is a God of holy hatred, too. He hates all workers of iniquity. He hated Esau. He is a gracious God, but he is a just God as well. He is a merciful God, but he is also righteous in all things.

Find a message, find a doctrine wherein God in all his sum total of attributes is in total harmony all or in total harmony with each other, you have got Christ and the gospel.

You see, today's gospel, today's preaching and opinions of men concerning God, they are all riddled with inconsistencies and contradictions. Only in the cross can we find out how God is how he says he is, a just God and a Savior.

Preachers say things like this sometimes. They say he is a just God, but he is a Savior. That is not what it says. He said, “I am a just God and at the same time a Savior.”

And you will never find out how he can be both at the same time except in this cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the cross there is a... and in Christ crucified is a display of all the perfections of God and the will of God and the works of God.

Paul said, “Therein is the righteousness of God revealed,” that is the justice of God. The power and the wisdom of God, we just read that in 1 Corinthians one. That is what Christ is. The love and mercy and grace of God, everything all together he says, “Mercy and truth.”

²⁵ 1 John 4:8, 16.

²⁶ Ibid.

All right, Lee, here I am your friend. But I am also the judge. You have committed a capital crime. And here I am wanting as a judge to deal with you justly. Here I am as your friend wanting to show you mercy. How can mercy and truth kiss each other?

That is what the psalmist said. Mercy and truth are met together and righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Where? In Christ crucified.

I could do one way. Die for you. There I am showing mercy as the friend. There I am showing justice as the judge. The problem would be in my case, in your case, I couldn't satisfy true justice. But a sinless, harmless, holy, undefiled one who is none less than God himself, who not only is a sinless sacrifice for sin, but of such worth and value, he is able as that God appointed sacrifice to be the sacrifice for all the sins of all his people of all time. And justice and truth and righteousness and peace will kiss each other. They meet, find themselves friendly to each other.

You see, it is the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is a work done by God's Son.

How do we ever imagine we could add to that? He made it a success. It is a victorious act of love. It is a total satisfaction of divine justice against his people. It is a full accomplishing of his will, a fulfilling of his word and prophecies, a glorifying of his holy being. The cross is the evidence of divine love.

You see, if he does not actually save his people, save them fully through the cross, then what good is his love? If his love doesn't satisfy his justice, if what he has done can be thwarted or changed by somebody, what good is it?

If you and I are eternal souls and we are, we are going to spend eternity somewhere. What is the most absolutely the most important thing that we can be talking about this morning?

Not about whether or not we are going to do this for Easter or that or whether or not we are going to have a big lunch for Easter, all this kind of stuff. The most important thing we could be dealing with is the gospel of the cross. And if you and I can be seduced from the cross, we will be.

If you can leave the gospel, you will. That is just the way it is. If God doesn't reveal to us the absolute life or death necessity of this, we are gone. We will perish. We will just live out our days in the arms of the harlot somewhere. I have just seen it too many times. I have seen people who come and who make a profession of faith in, profess to be identified with this gospel. And then all of the sudden the harlot.

Now she talks about all her ways, but she is only one way, the way of death.

What did the writer say? “There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”²⁷

I love what that old hymn writer wrote. He said:

My hope is built on nothing less,
Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness.
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly, completely lean on Jesus’ name.

God will save his people. He will keep his people. He will preserve them. They will fall. They will make lots of mistakes. They will have lapses of unbelief, but they will never perish.

He said, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”²⁸

The deception will be so strong that if it were possible they would deceive even the elect. But that is not possible.

He said, “My sheep hear my voice and a stranger they will not follow. They will follow me.”

They have flashes in their minds and hearts of adulterous thoughts. They look around them. They see all that goes on. It is appealing to the flesh. But he said, “I will never forsake them. I will keep them. They will be kept by the power of God unto that salvation that is ready to be revealed. They will be presented as a chaste bride.”

There is a wonderful moral lesson in Proverbs seven because there is a greater spiritual lesson in morning. May God keep us.

I will say like another hymn writer, “Bind my wandering heart to thee.”

God forbid that I should ever glory, have any hope, any fascination with anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Father, this day we pray for faith that we might look to Christ, that we might not yield to the siren’s call of this religious world, but that we might be espoused to the Lord Jesus, that we might worship you in spirit and in truth among those who worship you in the same way, the only way you can be worshipped through the crucified Christ. Give us eyes to see the difference, understanding. Keep us in that simplicity or singleness, as it is, that is in Christ. We thank you for this crucified Christ who is all our hope, all our salvation that we might be brought to trust in him because he is the same one you have entrusted all in. We thank you and pray in his name. Amen.

²⁷ Proverbs 16:25.

²⁸ Hebrews 13:5.