

Sent from a Member who Left the San Diego Church – “No Gospel of the Cross”

I'm not talking about the Gospel of Matthew, Mark, Luke or John. I'm talking about **THIS** gospel."

Those words were the "straw that broke the camel's back" in the long journey my wife and I had with CTMI. They were spoken by Miki Hardy in San Diego in 2006. When confronted with such a message, I immediately voiced aloud: "Well, I AM talking about the Gospel of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John."

What is "THIS gospel" to which Miki refers? It is another gospel which he has labeled "the gospel of the cross." I say "another" because, for one, it does not exist in the scriptures. Search for yourself! I've provided the link for a query into how many times the phrase "gospel of the cross" occurs in the Bible. <http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/translationResults.cfm?Criteria=%22gospel+of+the+cross%22&t=NIV&sf=5>

You can hold your breath because the result is an immediate zero. However, quite in contrast, search for "Gospel of" and you will find many biblical references to the true Gospel: That of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John:

<http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/translationResults.cfm?Criteria=%22gospel+of+%22&t=NIV&sf=5>

The Gospel of: the kingdom, God's grace, God, Christ, the glory of Christ, of your salvation, peace, our Lord Jesus Christ, the blessed God.

Some would say that it's merely a matter of semantics. But, do words matter? Indeed, a gospel of Buddha would have a totally different implication than the Gospel of Christ.

The Gospel to which Miki Hardy refers is not a gospel within the Bible. In fact it is "a different gospel." Gal 1: 6-7, "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ."

In order to understand Miki's "gospel", which he affectionately refers to as "my gospel," we need to understand Miki's canon of scripture. In the 5 or so years I was part of a CTMI church, I downloaded and listened to hundreds of Miki's sermons. In so doing, I noticed something about him: he preaches from the Pauline letters almost to the point of exclusivity. If he ventures into other books of the Bible, it is only to support his treatise from the Pauline letters. Don't get me wrong; there are sermons of his out there that are relative to other portions of scripture, but I think it would be fair to say that 90% of Miki Hardy's sermons are based on his misreading of Pauline scripture.

Second, Miki, in fact, views himself to be carrying the Pauline torch. Perhaps it might be too far to say he views himself as Paul, but esteeming himself as a modern day Paul is definitely accurate. Miki is commonly referred to as an "apostle" and uses Pauline phrases such as "my gospel" which is a rarity within the thousands of years of Christian History. Perhaps the most dangerous aspect of this Pauline identity is not a question of ego and lack of humility; it is that in esteeming himself to be Paul, he now has in his quiver all of the scriptures that Paul used to defend against persecution. Whenever a question regarding his teaching arises, he simply brands the person as having a "corrupt heart" and

ascribes to that person the status of "persecuting the church." When we left CTMI, it was without a peep, and yet we were labelled as persecuting the church when others independently, in hearing God's voice, left as well.

It should be noted that Paul actually faced persecution (2 cor 11:23-28 [http://www.blueletterbible.org/Bible.cf ... &t=NKJV#23](http://www.blueletterbible.org/Bible.cf...&t=NKJV#23)). As far as I know, the extent of Miki's persecution involves not getting a back rub and not receiving custom dinners each night. Paul on the other hand, was truly persecuted: whipped, beaten, stoned, arrested, etc.

Within this obsession with the Pauline identity, Miki Hardy has concocted a "different gospel." In order to deliver his "wolf in sheep's clothing," Miki has erroneously mixed several Biblical concepts into one new extra-biblical theology. It's called the "gospel of the cross."

We've already established that the "gospel of the cross" doesn't exist within the Scriptures. Now let's look at why the concept itself is erroneous, non-biblical, and therefore heretical: i.e. a "different gospel."

The "gospel of the cross" is a well-crafted phrase that rings of biblical concepts. To the untrained ear, it sounds like it fits right into scripture. Even some of the concepts are biblical. The gospel is definitely a major aspect of Christianity. The Cross is a center-point in Christian theology. Picking up one's cross is a common biblical image of discipleship. So what is the concern over the "gospel of the cross?"

First off, it is a "different gospel." Gal 1: 6-7, "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to **a different gospel**, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ." Read this verse in light of Miki's quote: **"I'm not talking about the Gospel of Matthew, Mark, Luke or John. I'm talking about THIS gospel."**

Second, as far as I can tell, no one has bothered to ask the question **"Whose cross?"** This is where the true deceit comes in. Within the scriptures, the Gospel of God, the Gospel of the Kingdom, the Gospel of Christ, the Gospel of your salvation, all have as their center the Cross of Jesus. The scriptural gospel ascribes the focal point of history to the work of God on the Cross, sacrificing his son Jesus for the sins of the world. In fact, in Paul's theology the cross marks the transition point from this present age, to the age to come (in which believers can partake by grace through faith). Furthermore, the message of the cross was a central aspect of Paul's deliverance of the gospel: 1 Cor 1:18 "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." If one was ever in doubt as to the nature of the Gospel preached by Paul, he sums it up beautifully in 1 Cor 15:3: "For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born." (This is what Paul preached, he states it himself in the scriptures. Don't ever let anyone tell you Paul preached something else than what he delivers as "first importance" in the passage above).

So, one can clearly see the essential nature of the Cross of Jesus within Christian theology as evidenced in the scriptures. Now let's take a look at the "gospel of the cross" preached by Miki Hardy and ask the same question "**whose cross?**"

Within the preaching of Miki we constantly hear of death, dying, sacrificing oneself, etc. Not that these aren't valuable attributes of a disciple of Christ. **However, the error is that the emphasis of one's own death becomes the focal point CTMI theology as a whole, rather than the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.** In listening to sermons note how often the concept of dying to oneself is employed in testimonies, prayers, prophecies, and sermons.

During the several years that I served in a CTMI church, the charge to die to oneself was the underlying theme of every gathering. True, in response to God's salvation, we are to take Christ as an example and pick up our cross daily as disciples. **However, "our cross" became the center point of the service in place of "HIS cross."** When this happened, a constant theme of death hung over every service. It was reflected in people's expressions, the language they used, etc. Many devout followers took on a trait of apathetic listlessness. If ever joy and excitement were brought in, it was usually by means of someone new carrying over their joy from previous experiences. Eventually, they too would join in the obsession of dying and start expressing the same listlessness.

In my time within a CTMI church, I never heard anyone explicitly state that dying to ourselves was the means of salvation. However, by means of how often it was employed as the center-point of the worship service, it definitely took on the status of a doctrine of salvation. Furthermore, it ventured into the error that our own works had something to do with our salvation, rather than the work of Jesus on the cross.

Finally, one has to step back and consider the fruit of this ministry. In Matthew 12:33 Jesus says "A tree is known by its fruit." I don't have to share of the bad fruit that I experienced coming from CTMI over the years, because countless people have begun to share their stories already. Every church may face a few instances of false allegations, but the sheer volume (approaching hundreds) and consistency of the testimonies in this forum and elsewhere point to nothing short of bad fruit coming from a bad tree. In contrast, there is very little good fruit being produced from "this gospel" to counter such considerable accounts.

Therein lies the problem with the "gospel of the cross." In review, it's a "different gospel," it's extra-biblical (outside the bible); it mistakenly uses words from the bible but employed in such a way that they have a whole different meaning; it focuses upon our death and not the death of Christ; it produces a cult of listless followers who constantly eat, drink, and breath their own death as the center-point of their worship; the work of dying to oneself has taken on a notion of works-based salvation; and finally, the absence of good fruit, and the overwhelming testimony of bad fruit all point to the same thing: this is not of God.

For anyone who finds themselves in this situation, underneath the false doctrine of the "gospel of the cross", I have two exciting truths to point you to that will set you free:

It's HIS cross. Jesus died on the cross to save the world from sin. His cross is the center-point of the biblical doctrine of salvation. However it doesn't stop there:

Jesus is Risen from the dead. He is ALIVE, and those who follow him are given ETERNAL LIFE. The Gospel does not end on the cross, it only begins. The cross was the remedy for sin. God raising Jesus from the dead paved the way for eternal life.

If you find yourself bonded by the false "gospel of the cross," please pray to God that He will reveal to you the work He did through the cross of Jesus. And don't stop there! Put your faith in Christ and He will give you life eternal.

As a note in closing, my wife and I decided to leave CTMI several years back. I am not exaggerating... the moment we stepped into a Bible teaching church we heard a phrase from the scriptures that was never preached in CTMI: "the blood of the lamb." Instantly we were reminded of God's work on the cross through the Lamb of God, His Son, Jesus Christ. We have never felt so free as when we were refreshed in the Gospel of God and stepped out from under the curse of the false doctrine, mistakenly called "the gospel of the cross."