



Boston Catholic Journal



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Which Gospel Will You Proclaim?

“But though we, or an angel from Heaven, preach a Gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema.” (Galatians 1.8)

“Imparting the word of truth without deviation” (2 Tim 2.15)

What is the evangel that *you* proclaim in the name of Jesus Christ?

If it has brought you plaudits, welcoming smiles, and warm embraces, then two — and only two — possibilities exist in those to whom you bring this evangel:

- They are deceiving you
- You are deceiving them.

Either they recognize you as an imposter and politely tolerate you, in which case they are deceiving you; or you are bringing them another gospel and passing it off for Christ's, in which case you are deceiving them.

But how are we to tell, to distinguish, between the real evangel and the spurious? It is stunningly simple:

The Logical Biconditional (\equiv “*if and only if*”) and the True Gospel

- *If and only if*, you are hated for His Name's sake
- *If and only if*, you are reviled and marginalized, especially by those who have a "vested" interest in Him (that is to say, "Professional Catholics")
- *If and only if*, they see you coming and go the other way

then (\supset), you can be certain that you are on the right track and proclaiming the authentic evangel. Why?

Because you refuse to make a liar of Christ; because you refuse to make the Word of God “correct”, polite, warm and fuzzy, acceptable and pleasing to men and palatable to the world; and because you refuse to make it the courtesan of current trends, to make salvation something social or political ... even an entitlement — *in short, because you will*

not compromise the Word of God, or use it to any end but the salvation of souls — and not the rehabilitation of corrupt ideologies and reprehensible social agenda that fly in the face of God — because of all this, you are hated, reviled, shunned, and excoriated by the world, by the sons and daughters of men, the children of this world who believe in nothing but this world.

Why do you wonder? What did you expect?

So was Saint Paul ...

Saint Paul took Christ *seriously*; this Jesus Christ — Whom the world hated first ¹... the same Christ (yesterday, today, and forever ²) Who *assured us* that the world which hated Him ... will hate us, too ¹.

Really ... the question begs itself: *what did you expect, and why would you expect otherwise?*

If you are the darling of your parish, celebrated in every way, welcomed, embraced by all (and, if you are honest with yourself, *relish* it) ... in short, **if you are loved by the world, you can be absolutely certain that your evangel and Christ's Evangel are not the same.** It is not how the world received, treated, Christ. It is not how the world, received, treated, Saint Paul, or Saint Peter, or all the Holy Martyrs and Saints. It is not how the world will treat you.

And you, daughter, son of God ... did you expect otherwise?

Hard Words

These are hard words. You do not like them. But so is the reality in the letter of Saint Paul to the Galatians in which he pointedly warns us (as did Christ Himself ³) that:

“If we deny Him, He will deny us.”⁴

“*What is this?!*” you ask incredulously. That soft, delicate and effeminated Christ of so much religious art, so carefully coiffed, with uncalloused hands and manicured nails, the mass-produced velvet-art Christ ... *this* Christ will deny us?!

Unthinkable! It doesn't fit the color palette we have chosen, the one that we blatantly corrupt and distort with impunity, even with approbation. And you are right, *this* Christ will not deny you.

But the *real* Christ will. He has said so. “He that shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in Heaven.”³

Saint Paul was telling us nothing new, nothing that Jesus Christ did not tell us Himself.

And what, in turn, will *we* tell others? Something new? Something different? Something other? Will we *dare* to bring Christ, not on a color palette but on a Cross, and preach Christ, not coifed but crucified? And what shall we expect as a consequence? Adulation?

The world spat in the face of Christ. It buffeted Saint Paul and clapped him in irons. It bound Christ to the Cross and Saint Paul in Chains, but for all its efforts it could not bind the Word, which, despite the most egregious temporizing, *remains* — just as Christ promised.⁵

But for others — those who preach an “acceptable” evangel, a “gospel” and a Christ of their own making — the world holds out its embrace; they are crowned with laurels, not thorns, accorded plaudits and accolades, not scorn and derision. They offer the world what it *wants to hear* ... not what it *needs* to hear. Desperately.

Which evangel, then, and which Christ, will *you* proclaim?

Editor
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¹ St. John 15.18

² Hebrews 13.8

³ 2 Timothy 2.9+12

⁴ St. Mat. 10.33

⁵ St. Matthew 24.35



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