The Varnished Gospel

2 Timothy 4:3-4

4/3/22

There’s an account in Matt. 21:12-13 where Jesus becomes very angry when He comes to the Temple and people have made it a “Swap market”! The Bible says He overturned tables, benches, and drove everyone out. Now we know this isn’t the only time the scriptures mentioned Christ being angry, but this seemed to have one of those “I’ve had enough” moments written on it... I think Jesus gets angry BECAUSE of his love for His Father and the blatant disrespect for Him people had. In this passage, he demonstrates a “righteous anger”. He had a good reason to be angry because of corruption and injustice that was hurting people.

This morning I have this same type of “righteous anger” in my spirit. The things I mention today are not to hurt, disrespect, or slander anyone person, but rather to bring to light the importance needed in the church and in our hearts to be sensitive and alert in the Spirit when the Word of God is taught by the men & women who preach or teach it wrongly.

You see the Lord has been dealing with me for quite some time about “The Varnished Gospel”. If you’ve been in our Bible Studies within the past few months, we have had “in depth” discussions about “false teachers” and those who “water-down or twist the Word of God to fit their agenda and desire. And because of this, like Jesus, I have good reason to be angry because of the corruption and injustice that is hurting & deceiving Gods people. Proverbs 2:12 says “*Wisdom will save you from evil people, from those whose words are twisted.”* So this morning the Lord wants to impart Wisdom upon His church so they do not become even more deceived than they have...

If you have your Bibles turn to 2 Timothy 4:3-4:

* ***3 For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear. 4 They will reject the truth and chase after myths.***

Paul is telling Timothy in this letter that there is a time coming that people aren’t going to listen to the Word of God, but to what fits into their lives and hearts. In the book of Judges, it says that in that time “people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes”. Sounds like today. People will be attracted to and pulled to these teachers that say it’s ok to “be you” and “do you” and live as you want because “GOD LOVES YOU JUST THE WAY YOU ARE!”

* Now though that is true in the most real of ways, they’re not preaching the whole thing; That the Holy God that loves you...also can’t allow the sin in your life to continue!
* Their stopping at God loves you...And not teaching about how you MUST BE SAVED BY FAITH AND WASHED IN THE BLOOD OF JESUS!

One of the meanings of the word “Varnish” means “to disguise or gloss over a fact.”; or to cover or conceal something unpleasant with something that gives an attractive appearance.

Something has happened in the past 70 to 80 years behind the pulpit. Man has taken over and has “varnished” the Gospel. For many in today’s society they find the Gospel, old, “unpleasant” due to its convictions and “uncool”. So, man in his utter foolishness has falsely glossed it over to give it an “attractive appearance” by watering it down, or making it fit a “type” of social acceptance, & not teaching it fully or correctly.

Now here’s the part where some of you might get mad at me, but that’s ok. We are living in the times that Paul is writing about today, as there are well known men & women today, that you may even listen to that are deceiving people today with false teachings. Want to know the sad thing? Many people have no clue they are being deceived.

* 2 Peter 2:1 - *But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.*

I believe that some of these that started preaching the Gospel were teaching the Word as they should have been, but something happened...They begin “denying the Master who bought them with His Blood & called them to proclaim the Word but begin serving other masters and then ministry became about them, their ideals, or their power. I mentioned earlier, my intent is not to bring names out, but to ensure that we as Christs Church are aware & sensitive to the Holy Spirit when we hear someone preaching or teaching the Word of God! That we’d be so aware, that we’d know when something isn’t right about what their teachings, foundational practices, and directions are. Church, we need to be careful to what we are listening to and what we are receiving in our hearts today.

* *1 John 4:1 says “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.*

Church, truth is some of the “big names” in the “Church” aren’t what you think they are and we as the last days church need to be aware so that we don’t become deceived.

Now let me start by saying this isn’t me telling you what you can’t and can listen too, because then I’d be no different than some of them, BUT this message is a warning from the Lord in saying many are being deceived today and lulled to sleep with these false teachings being disguised today. They’re being taught a “watered down, uncompleted, and varnished Gospel”. This is a tragic & urgent problem, as there are going to be many people surprised when they think they are making it to Heaven, only to turned away by Christs words “I’m sorry, I never knew you” (Matt. 7:21-23)

So how are we to recognize the True Gospel from the “Varnished”?

* ***Romans 16:17-18***

***17And now I make one more appeal, my dear brothers and sisters. Watch out for people who cause divisions and upset people’s faith by teaching things contrary to what you have been taught. Stay away from them. 18Such people are not serving Christ our Lord; they are serving their own personal interests. By smooth talk and glowing words, they deceive innocent people.***

* 2 Cor. 11:13-15

*For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So, it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.*

We are living in very dangerous times because there are those today who are new to Christianity, so what they are taught is how they will respond and live their Christian lives.

* Isaiah 5:20 says: *Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!*

We have men & women behind the “cool & modern” pulpits of churches, behind cameras

and online teaching ungodly things and masking them in the Word of God to make them easy to swallow! Things like:

**Feel Good Gospel** - “**It’s ok to be yourself...Come as you are” ...but,**

* Though we do come to Christ as we are, “Come as you are” has become misunderstood and misapplied in today’s church. Some churches take the grace of God and turn it recklessness by teaching that it makes no difference how you live, as long as you believe.
	+ If you come to Christ in an illicit relationship, some say Christ will accept you just as you are and sanctify that relationship.
	+ If you come to Christ as someone who enjoys the night life, you can continue in that path, and use it to “reach others for Christ.”

This may be a popular message, but it directly contradicts Scripture which clearly says that these things from our past lives should be left behind and that our former friends will think us strange for doing so (1 Peter 4:3–4).

* Romans 13:13 *commands us to walk honestly, or decently, no longer participating in the wicked lifestyle of the world.*
* Galatians 5:13 says *that we are called to liberty, but that we cannot use liberty “for an occasion to the flesh,” excusing our continued sins.*
* Eph. 4:22-24 says - *22 So get rid of your old self, which made you live as you used to - the old self that was being destroyed by its deceitful desires. 23 Your hearts and minds must be made completely new, 24 and you must put on the new self, which is created in God's likeness and reveals itself in the true life that is upright and holy.*

**Prosperity Gospel - “Give $100 dollars & the Lord will bless you abundantly with healings, or Money!”**

* These people have exploited Gods perfect Tithing & Offerings plan!

**Malachi 3:10 says -** *Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.*

He says, “TRY ME NOW IN THIS…and see If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.” God is asking us to have faith in his Word. He says to “try me” and see what I can do with your gift. It is God’s desire to not only bless us but to bless us past the point of having room enough to receive it! Notice He does not say He would bless you with finances, health, a nice life...He says you will be blessed so much you won’t be able to contain it! You can’t buy God off for healing or anything! As soon as someone says give a certain amount to me or my ministry and then and only then will God move in your life...Stop and turn them off!

**Motivational/godly Gospel - God is...God does...but never mentions the name of Jesus, stop listening.**

* God this, God that.... Now we know that God is Jesus, but the Bible refers to our life being in Jesus Christ and if the person you’re listening to keeps talking about “positive vibes” and not mentioning the name of Jesus, the name by which we are to be saved, don’t you think that’s a bit odd?

Truth is some most of these “false teachers” are great at manipulating people and condemning them

* **Condemning brings despair and bondage**
* **Conviction brings hope & salvation**
	+ That’s why in the Gospel of John it says Jesus did not come to condemn, but to save!

Closing:

Well Shawn it sounds to me like your just against “big church” or your jealous? Jealous of what?

* I’m angry that people are being deceived and not given the whole Truth about God’s mercy, grace, and salvation!
* I’m upset because we serve a God who has freed us from bondage, and because of the lies, manipulation, and “rules” man has added to God’s Word people believe their saved

You see the Gospel doesn’t need a twist of lime, or a spray of lemon to make it easy to swallow. The Word of God is, as Hebrew 4:12: *“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”*

* It doesn’t need a makeover! The Word of God is given to change us and make us like Christ! Sometimes it’s going to step on our toes, with love. Sometimes it’s going to cut, with compassion, but it always does so to make us more like Christ; not to make me feel good, or hope for more money, or just go with the flow! We’re not of this world, we’re just passing through...We are called to be different and that what the Word of God is...DIFFERENT THAN THE WORLDS WAYS AND THOUGHTS!

I see in Acts where Peter preached his first sermon and 3000 were added to the church!!! Why? Because of the WORD OF GOD!!! Not because of a hip, cool, modern, or even good-speaking person...but because THE WORD OF GOD WAS PREACHED! Not Peters opinion, motives, ways or the way he thought! THE GOSPEL IN ALL IT’S PERFECT WAYS WAS PREACHED AND IF WERE PREACHED CORRECT TODAY, WE’D SEE THE SAME THINGS PETER SAW THAT DAY!

Now whoa to the teachers and ministers of these false and watered-down Gospels.

James 3:1 says, “Dear brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers in the church, for we who teach will be judged more strictly.”

* Teachers of God will be held to a different standard. This doesn’t mean their better than everyone else, but that have been ENTRUSTED to teach the very WORD OF GOD and with that comes a very serious responsibility! If they’re not teaching, it correctly or trying to make it “fit in” then them and the ones who are receiving their garbage are doomed!
* Men & women who are teaching the Word incorrectly & deceivingly, using it to exploit people’s weaknesses, or make even to make a dollar off souls will have to answer for their false teaching and evil ways...

Matt. 7:15

15 “Beware of false prophets who come disguised as harmless sheep but are really vicious wolves

* ***As The Church…We need to be careful to what we are listening to and what we are receiving in our hearts anytime the Gospel is being spoken as to ensure the Word of God is being REPRESENTED in the Correct Way!***