

The Gospel of Self

Matt. 16:13-23

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- Matt. 16:13-20 - “When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, ‘Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?’ 14 So they said, ‘Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’ 15 He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ 16 Simon Peter answered and said, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ 17 Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18 ‘And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. 19 ‘And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.’ 20 Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ.”

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- Matt. 16:21-23 - “From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. 22 Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, ‘Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!’ 23 But He turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.’”

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- Peter's great confession is made by Peter the great stumbling block
- Peter's character is revealed on these two occasions
 - The part of him that acknowledged the Gospel
 - The part of him that thought his opinion was part of the Gospel

The Gospel of Self

- Our current society is obsessed with the self
 - The unofficial philosophy of our day (postmodernism and its inherent relativism) establishes the self as the ultimate standard for truth for the individual
 - Our economic system (capitalism) depends on the enrichment of the self regardless of the cost to others
 - Our government establishes the individual as the basic unit of election

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- “Two centuries ago, a somewhat obscure Scotsman named Alexander Fraser Tytler (1747-1813) made this profound observation: ‘A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It can only exist until the majority discovers it can vote itself largess out of the public treasury. After that, the majority always votes for the candidate promising the most benefits with the result the democracy collapses because of the loose fiscal policy ensuing, always to be followed by a dictatorship, then a monarchy.’ (“The Daily Oklahoman”; December 9, 1951, Elmer T. Peterson)

What Is The Gospel Of The Self?

- The Gospel of self is when we make ourselves the standard of judgment
- The Gospel of self is when we decide on our own what is right or wrong
- The Gospel of self is when we interpret the Scriptures to fit our own preconceptions, and not allow the Scriptures to change our thinking
- The Gospel of self is when we allow our upbringing, society, culture, and education to establish what we believe about the Word of God
- The Gospel of self is when we think this sermon and all others apply to someone else

The Scriptures And The Self

- Prov. 3:5-8 - “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil. 8 It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones.”

The Scriptures And The Self

- James 4:10, 13-16 - “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up... 13 Come now, you who say, Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit; 14 whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. 15 Instead you ought to say, If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that. 16 But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.”

The Scriptures And The Self

- The dangers of the Gospel of self: The darkened mind
 - Rom. 1:18-23 - “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, 21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man-- and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.”

The Scriptures And The Self

- The dangers of the Gospel of self: Choosing to live in sin
 - Rom. 6:15-21 - “What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! 16 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? 17 But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. 18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. 19 I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. 20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. 21 What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.”

The Scriptures And The Self

- The dangers of the Gospel of self: Sin begins with the self
 - James 1:13-16 - “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. 16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.”

The Scriptures And The Self

- Examples - Israel in the period of the Judges
 - Judges 2:10-12, 20-22 - “When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel. 11 Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals; 12 and they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD to anger... 20 Then the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and He said, ‘Because this nation has transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers, and has not heeded My voice, 21 I also will no longer drive out before them any of the nations which Joshua left when he died, 22 so that through them I may test Israel, whether they will keep the ways of the LORD, to walk in them as their fathers kept them, or not.’”
 - Judges 21:25 - “In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”

The Scriptures And The Self

- Examples - Jeroboam, son of Nebat
 - 1Kings 12:26-30 - “And Jeroboam said in his heart, ‘Now the kingdom may return to the house of David: 27 If these people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn back to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and go back to Rehoboam king of Judah.’ 28 Therefore the king asked advice, made two calves of gold, and said to the people, ‘It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!’ 29 And he set up one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. 30 Now this thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one as far as Dan... 33 **which he had devised in his own heart**”
 - 2Kings 17:21-23 - “...Jeroboam drove Israel from following the LORD, and made them commit a great sin. 22 For **the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did**; they did not depart from them, 23 until the LORD removed Israel out of His sight, as He had said by all His servants the prophets. So Israel was carried away from their own land to Assyria, as it is to this day.”

The Scriptures And The Self

- Examples - Ananias and Sapphira
 - Acts 5:1-4, 9 - “A certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. 2 And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? 4 ‘While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? **Why have you conceived this thing in your heart?** You have not lied to men but to God.’ ... 9 Then Peter said to her, ‘**How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord?**’”

The Scriptures And The Self

- Examples - Simon the sorcerer
 - Acts 8:13, 18-23 - “Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done... 18 And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, 19 saying, ‘Give me this power’ also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit.’ 20 But Peter said to him, ‘Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! 21 You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. 22 Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. 23 For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity.’”

Application

- When people begin to think in terms of themselves and not in terms of God, they start to follow self and not Him
- Jesus Christ, the Son of God and God the Son, did nothing of His own accord on Earth, but only the will of His Father in Heaven
 - John 5:19, 30 - “Then Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner... 30 I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.’”

Application

- Even in the Garden of Gethsemane
 - Mark 14:35-36 - “He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. 36 And He said, Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will.”

Application

- We are to imitate Christ
 - 1Cor. 11:1 - “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.”
 - As He never permitted Himself to be distracted from the will of His Father, so we must not allow ourselves to cause us to stumble from His path