

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Colossians 1:26-2:5**.
- B. There are over 1,200 religious groups in the U.S. alone, all claiming to have the truth, but disagreeing with one another. In the midst of this confusion, what do we have to offer?
- C. The early Xians were a band of believers focused on X. Xianity then:
 - 1. Spread to Greece where it became a **philosophy**.
 - 2. Spread to Rome where it became an **institution**.
 - 3. Spread to Europe where it became a **culture**.
 - 4. And then came to America where it has become an **enterprise**.
- D. In view of all of this, **what do we have to offer?**

I. SOME BAD ALTERNATIVES.

- A. First, we could offer **emotionalism**.
 - 1. This is whatever we do and believe will be based on the emotion it brings. If it feels good do it!
 - 2. The attitude would be; "Come to worship to experience an emotional high."
 - 3. But that would not really give us anything to use in life. God needs to be in control of the emotions, but **emotionalism** can put our emotions in control of God.
- B. Second, we could offer **promotionalism**.
 - 1. That is, get a high-powered preacher good in gimmicks, gadgets, and methods. Turn down the house lights when he preaches and let him perform.
 - 2. This ministry would be full of pep, power, and promotion. Traditional worship services would be replaced by contemporary ones.
 - 3. But would be too little on proclamation of the gospel. There would be more entertainment going on than edification.
- C. Third, we could offer **liberalism**.
 - 1. That is, accept almost anything and be sure not to "ruffle anyone's feathers."
 - 2. Smooth off the rough edges of the gospel and ignore all the "hard" teachings.
 - 3. Let the people know that everything is all right. Many will no doubt respond to this kind of preaching/church.
 - 4. But we must ask ourselves: is really the gospel that X wants preached? (Gal. 1:8; Rev. 10:9-11).
(Gal. 1:8) But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed.
(Rev. 10:9-11) And I went to the angel, telling him to give me the little book. And he said[^] to me, "Take it, and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey." And I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and it was in my mouth sweet as honey; and when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter. And they said to me, "You must prophesy again concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings."
- D. Fourth, we could offer **legalism**.
 - 1. Instead of letting things go on as usual--tighten the screws a little until everything works better.
 - 2. "Fine tune" the message and the doctrine so closely that you have every question answered.
 - 3. Be sure to have everyone in your congregation believing that they are right and everyone else is wrong.
 - 4. But legalism is not NT based. Grace saves, not law. We can only bind Scripture, not our interpretations of scripture (Mt. 16:19; 2Pet. 1:20-21; Gal. 5:1).
(Mt. 16:19) "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
(2Pet. 1:20-21) But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit

spoke from God.

(Gal. 5:1) It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

- E. Fifth, we could offer **radicalism**.
 - 1. Endorse those preachers who believe in change. Change everything--start over.
 - 2. The past and its traditional thinking is wrong simply because it is the status quo.
 - 3. Radicals are to be in charge. Change for the sake of change!
 - 4. But therein lies the problem. Change needs to be scriptural and necessary.
- F. Sixth, we could offer Xianity as a **franchise**.
 - 1. This is what could be called "cookie-cutter Xianity." This approach says that you need to find the particular "franchise" of the church you like best and attend that one wherever you go.
 - 2. McDonalds, Hardees, Wendys, the Burger King have made millions on the fact that wherever you go their food will taste the same. Wearing of the name is so important--more so maybe than what you have to offer.
 - 3. But this approach assumes that one franchise is better than the others, or just the opposite, that it matters not which one you choose, just so long as you choose one.
 - 4. The church is to believe and teach the same things, no matter where you go; but there should always be room for differences of opinion and culture.

II. WHERE IS THE FOCUS?

- A. Some have focused their message on only a portion of the Bible:
 - 1. Some prove everything out of the book of Acts.
 - 2. Some prove everything out of the book of Revelation.
 - 3. Some spend all their time in the letters of the NT.
 - 4. Others say the Bible is inspired but require reading in several inspired books to teach evangelism, discipline, and counseling.
- B. The apostle Paul had but one focus. Peter and John did not have gold, but they did have one thing of offer.
- C. We can offer that which the apostles offered...**Jesus Christ**. And if we offer you anything else then we have nothing to offer! (1Cor. 2:2).

For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.
- D. The power to do anything comes from a personal relationship with God through X (Rom. 8:37).

But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

III. TO OFFER JESUS WE MUST...

- A. First, **preach Christ**.
 - 1. We must get back to giving the witness (testimony) that works!
 - 2. You will rarely, if ever, convert someone by winning a "Bible war." Life is found in the Son (1Jn. 5:11).

And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.
 - 3. If Jesus has helped you to overcome any sin in your life--tell someone about Him! You have something to offer the world! (Col. 1:27-29).

...to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ. And for this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.
- B. Second, **become a person of the gospels**.
 - 1. Saturate your life with THE life.
 - 2. Sadly, I quote more scripture from memory from the letters than from the gospels.
 - 3. "The power to do what is in the epistles is found in the gospels."
 - 4. Take the personal challenge to know something in each chapter of the gospels. In doing so you

will get to know X.

- C. Third, **allow people to grow in their faith.**
 - 1. Jesus did not assume faith in everyone he met. He taught faith to all He encountered.
 - 2. The rich young ruler (Mk. 10) was challenged to have faith in X, and not in riches.
 - 3. The woman at the well (Jn. 4) was challenged to have faith in spiritual nourishment over the physical water she was drawing.
 - 4. The woman caught in adultery (Jn. 8) was challenged (not condemned) to go and sin no more.
- D. Fourth, **walk by faith and not by sight.**
 - 1. It is more comfortable to walk by sight (have everything planned out).
 - 2. But spiritually we are to trust God and not ourselves.
 - 3. Walking by faith means being ready and willing to change if need be.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. As Xians we have something to offer the world, when we offer Jesus Christ.
- B. We must fall head-over-heels in love w/X.
- C. Motivation that lasts does not come from outside sources, but is X working in us.
- D. Forget **emotionalism, promotionalism, liberalism, and legalism.** Focus your life on the Savior, and you have everything to offer.
- E. Come to Jesus.
- F. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.