

American Gospel: Christ Crucified, Week One Additional Notes and Scriptures

WHY LEARNING COMMUNITIES?

To develop spiritual character and strength to face **anything** by ...

1. Learning anchored in Biblical truth but addressing cultural issues
2. Relationships that connect and blossom even outside the meetings

Ephesians 4:11–16 (ESV)

WHY AMERICAN GOSPEL: CHRIST CRUCIFIED?

To understand true, Biblical Christianity in a compromising culture.

To identify wrong beliefs we have adopted unwittingly and correct them.

Knowing and living God's truth leads to experiencing Jesus' Abundant Life that sets us free. Satan is constantly fighting against Jesus and His Truth.

There are many good sounding compromises and lies in American Christianity.

The eternal lives of people hang in the balance.

TONIGHT: CHAPTER 1 – PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIANITY

Experiences versus truth

Understanding Progressive Christianity

Understanding the TRUE Gospel

SECTION/clip 1: 3:00-7:34 – Experiences versus truth

1 Corinthians 2:14–16 (ESV) ¹⁴The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. ¹⁵The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. ¹⁶“For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.

Matthew 13:18–23 (ESV) ¹⁸“Hear then the parable of the sower: ¹⁹When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. ²⁰As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, ²¹yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. ²²As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. ²³As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”

John 12:47–49 (ESV) ⁴⁷If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. ⁴⁸The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. ⁴⁹For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak.

Matthew 24:24 (ESV) ²⁴For false Christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.

Mark 13:22 (ESV) ²²For false Christs and false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect.

SECTION 2: 7:34- 17:24 – Understanding Progressive Christianity

Blogger Alisa Childers summarized progressive churches as having

- a lowered view of the Bible,
- feelings are emphasized over facts,
- essential Christian doctrines are open for interpretation,
- historical terms are redefined,
- and the heart of the gospel message shifts from sin and redemption to social justice.

<https://www.beliefnet.com/faiths/christianity/the-dangers-of-progressive-christianity.aspx>

p. 13 Chalkboard Illustrations:

John 2:22 (ESV) ²²When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

John 5:24 (ESV) ²⁴Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

Acts 15:7 (ESV) ⁷And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, “Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe.

1 Corinthians 15:1–2 (ESV) ¹Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, ²and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

1 John 2:15 (ESV) ¹⁵Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

1 Corinthians 6:9–10 (ESV) ⁹Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, ¹⁰nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

John 3:3 (ESV) ³Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

Philippians 3:17–20 (ESV) ¹⁷Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. ¹⁸For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. ²⁰But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

SECTION/ clip 3, 17:24-23:00– Understanding the TRUE Gospel

2 Timothy 3:12 (ESV) ¹²Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,

TAKEAWAYS: what will I do in response?

Additional information for Chapter 1

What is progressive Christianity? Dr. Michael Kruger shares some of the characteristics of progressive Christianity and how it distorts the gospel.

It's a version of Christianity that sells itself as a valid option for Christians that on the surface looks a lot like the Christian worldview and may seem in the eyes of many people to be more acceptable, more likable, a really more palatable version of the faith. But again, like in Machen's day, when you really bore down into it, you realize there are some really serious problems there. So one of the common questions is: how do I spot that progressive Christianity when it looks so much like true Christianity? Well, just a few tidbits for you.

1. Progressive Christianity Has a Low View of Christ

One of the hallmarks of progressive Christianity is the way they view Jesus. The orthodox view of Jesus, of course, is that he's the divine Son of God and worthy of our worship and worthy of our adoration and to be praised as God. But, of course, that's not what progressive Christians believe. They believe that Jesus isn't so much the divine Son of God, but rather just a moral example for us to follow. Jesus is more of a big brother that sets a pattern that we walk in his footsteps. That's partly true, of course, we do follow Jesus's example, but progressive Christians make that the main thing. Jesus is just a picture of what we can be and what we can do and his main point is just to set an example for us. The lowering of Jesus is the first mark of progressive Christianity.

2. Progressive Christianity Is Focused on Moralism, Not Salvation

The highest goal of the Christian life for progressive Christianity is that you just have to be a good person. Tightly tied to that, as I've already suggested, is a second mark, which is this big focus on moralism. If you don't have any sort of sense of Jesus as someone to be worshiped, then he's just someone to be emulated, so the highest goal of the Christian life for progressive Christianity is that you just have to be a good person. You should just follow certain rules. You should be kind to your neighbor. You're not really left with the gospel of salvation; you're left with a moral code, and it really reduces it to sort of this moralistic religion.

3. Progressive Christianity Downplays Our Fallenness

The third mark is tightly close to that, too, which is if you think you can be a good person, you must have a very low view of sin, which is another thing that progressive Christianity has. It's this idea that people aren't really that fallen and they're not really that bad, there's not really anything marring us, that we're all good people at the core and therefore really do have an opportunity to be even better. You'll find that in progressive Christian circles, there's a downplaying of the word sin; there's certainly no interest in talking about the wrath of God on sin. God is not portrayed as at all disturbed by or upset with sin. These are sort of the classic hallmarks of progressive Christianity.

That's what's really sad about progressive Christianity. At the end of the day, it's really not good news at all. Now, when you wrap all that up, you're left with something that's not really Christianity at all at the end. If you don't have a divine Jesus and if you reduce it all to moralism and there's no real fall or sin then the cross isn't really anything that saves you. When you look at the cross, it's just a good example of a good person. It's not really good news. That's what's really sad about progressive Christianity. At the end of the day, it's really not good news at all. It's really that it's all up to you. If it's all up to us, that's bad news. But of course, the real gospel is good news that it's all done and completed in the great and finished work of Christ.

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