

“The Gospel does not come with a ‘Yeah, but . . .’”
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Greetings in the Name of our Crucified and Risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Why is it that so many Christians think that the Gospel of Jesus Christ comes with a “Yeah, but . . .”? I hear this all the time, even from lifelong Christians who should know better. You tell them that Jesus Christ lived the perfect, sinless life in their place and died on the cross for every single one of their sins, and that, through faith in Him, they have forgiveness, life, and salvation, and they respond with a “Yeah, but . . .” – “Yeah, but it’s up to me to accept Jesus as my personal Lord and Savior” or “Yeah, but I have to live a good life to get into heaven” or “Yeah, but I can’t drink, smoke, dance, gamble, etc. if I want to be saved” or “Yeah, but (you fill in the blank).”

Dear friends, the Gospel does not come with a “Yeah, but . . .” When Jesus died on the cross, He did not say, “I have done My part, now it is up to you to do your part.” No, He said, “It is finished!” What He meant by that beautiful Gospel proclamation was that He had accomplished everything necessary for the salvation of the world. He lived the perfect, sinless life we sinful human beings cannot live. He paid the full price for all of our sins by shedding His holy and innocent Blood on the cross. There is nothing, not one thing, not one iota, left for us to do to gain salvation, for He has done it all for us.

To add a “Yeah, but . . .” to the Gospel is to diminish the work of Jesus for our salvation. To make our salvation conditional upon something we must do is to deny that Jesus did everything necessary for us.

But, still, the “Yeah, buts” come. That’s because the Gospel doesn’t make sense to our sinful human reason. The Gospel is radically different than what we are used to living in this sinful world. Here, in the world, you reap what you sow. The harder you work, the better your chance for success. Nothing in life is free. You have to work hard to get ahead and get what you want in this life.

But, God’s ways are not our ways; His thoughts are not our thoughts. In His infinite, divine wisdom, which is beyond our full comprehension, He devised a plan of salvation that runs contrary to our way of thinking. He came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man. He became one of us, not to show us how we must live to earn salvation, but to earn salvation for us. He came to be our substitute and sacrifice, to live and die in our place, so that all who believe in Him have the free gift of forgiveness, life, and salvation.

Sounds too good to be true, doesn’t it? Yes, it does, but it is true nonetheless. Jesus has done it all for us. Salvation is free and requires no work on our part. All that is required is faith in Jesus and what He has accomplished for us, but even that faith requires no work on our part. Contrary to popular belief, faith is not a personal decision we make, but a gift given to us by God through His Holy Word and Sacraments. Not only has God done everything necessary for our salvation, but He is responsible for bringing us into, and keeping us in, the one, true faith which procures that salvation through the means of grace He Himself supplies free of charge.

The Gospel does not come with a “Yeah, but . . .” Thank God for that! For if it did, we would all be doomed, because no matter what one inserts after the “but,” there is not a single one of us sinful

human beings who could fulfill its requirements. Thanks be to God, indeed, that Jesus has fulfilled all the “Yeah, buts” in our place. That’s the Gospel! That’s the awesome, Good News! It is free. It comes with no strings attached, with absolutely no additional “Yeah, buts” whatsoever. All glory and honor be to God and to the Lamb who was slain in our place, even Jesus Christ, our Lord. In His Holy and Precious Name. Amen.

In Christ,

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