

1 *Introduction*

Jesus Teaches Exclusive Reliance On His Words Is Key for Salvation

It is not hard to discern Jesus' Gospel. It is emphatically stated in both declarative form as well as in parables in a repetitive fashion. If one ignores learning Jesus' principles of salvation from Jesus' words only, then one cannot actually enjoy the promise of salvation. Jesus says His words are the *exclusive key* to salvation.

- Those who have “kept guard” of Jesus' words *should* have eternal life. (John 8:51.)
- Those who “go beyond” (contradict) the “teachings by/of [Jesus] Christ” do not have “the Father or son” but whoever “remains” in the teachings of Jesus has “both the Father and son.” (1 John 2:19.)
- If you “keep on following” Jesus and “believing in the one who sent” Jesus (*i.e.*, the Father), “no one can snatch you from my hand.” (John 10:27-29.) (The present continuous tense in Greek was used for *follow* and *believe*.)¹
- Jesus says you shall not call anyone your teacher other than Himself. (Matthew 23:8-11.)
- The one who hears Jesus' words and “does not put them in practice” is like a builder who builds on sand. His house will end in a “great fall.” (Matthew 7:25-27.)

1. For a discussion of the Greek present active tense, and its continuous/progressive aspect, see Appendix A to D. Del Tond, *Jesus' Words Only* (2006).

*Purpose of This Book Is To Check The
Error of De-Emphasis on Jesus' Doctrines*

This book attempts to systematically present Jesus' words on salvation. This is to enable Christians to choose to follow Jesus with a clear view of what Jesus taught. This book hopes to discourage the modern practice that disregards Jesus' words on salvation.

At first blush, we might suppose such a book is unnecessary. However, as the famous Lutheran pastor martyred by the Nazis, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, demonstrated in 1937, marginalizing Jesus' words has become the basis to the modern gospel. Bonhoeffer calls this the gospel of cheap grace. He was the first to coin that term.

Bonhoeffer is popular among evangelicals and many other Protestants. Bonhoeffer wrote this critique of cheap grace in his ground-breaking work entitled *The Cost of Discipleship* (1937). Bonhoeffer said the evangelical gospel of today represented "Christianity without Christ." (*Id.* at 59.) This modern gospel emphasized the lack of the necessity of following Christ, obeying Christ, and sacrificing one's life for Christ. Bonhoeffer explained how Jesus, to the contrary, repeatedly emphasized the costliness of grace.

This is precisely the crisis in modern Christianity. We have dismissed any words of Jesus's incompatible with our notions of cheap grace. Thus, we insist Jesus' words of a costly grace were intended for a different and defunct dispensation God had with Jews. We live under a grace that is free. We thus supposedly enjoy an entirely new set of principles than what Jesus' taught. In our view, grace is totally free, without cost or obligation.

As a result of the Modern Gospel of Cheap Grace, we have so abandoned the words of Jesus as our guide on salvation that His words sound foreign. They even sound heretical. As John MacArthur, the prominent evangelical pastor of Grace Community Church, says in *The Gospel According to Jesus*:

This lamentable hermeneutic [*i.e.*, Jesus' words were for a different dispensation] is widely applied in varying degrees to much of our Lord's earthly teaching, emasculating the message of the Gospels.²

MacArthur then remarks it is no wonder that our gospel is different from what Jesus taught. It is a point well-taken.

Thus, this book is intended to take Bonhoeffer's *The Cost of Discipleship* one step further. We will make a systematic analysis of Jesus' doctrine. We will show the literal meaning of Jesus is best. We will show that many read Jesus through the lense of doctrine, but that ultimately Jesus' teaching is directly contrary to the Modern Gospel of Cheap Grace. We will hopefully find, by this process, the truths Jesus intended we learn that lead to salvation — the most precious and important proposition for any human to learn and follow.

2. John MacArthur, *The Gospel According to Jesus* (Zondervan 1994) at 33-34.

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