

Repentance Required

Acts 17:30

Truly, then, God
overlooking the times of ignorance,
now strictly commands
all men everywhere to repent

When our gospel tells men, "**All you have to do is ...**", we have put misleading words in God's mouth.

The passivity of saving faith is to us an indicator of easy entrance into the kingdom of Heaven. Salvation is not by our obedience to the Law, but by faith in Christ's doing; our personal effort is put far to the rear. This seems to justify an "**all you have to do**" approach.

However, the apostles never used anything like an "**all you have to do**" formula in their preaching. Read through the fifteen or so sermons in the book of Acts. Their Gospel was, you might say, severe. The passive nature of faith- that salvation occurs apart from my doing - never translated into ease of salvation for them. There is a reason for that. **Salvation**

BUYS us. We become God's possession when He saves us. This places a total demand on us. There are no optional salvation plans where we can offer God less. God either redeems us- buys us lock, stock, and barrel- or He doesn't. He can't partially redeem us. So if we're offering Him less, it's in terms of another gospel. If we hold this out as salvation to men, again- it is some system of deliverance foreign to Scriptures.

There's another reason we see 'Easy Believisism' in the Gospel. It's because we *don't* perceive why passive faith is God's chosen instrument to impart salvation. The reason He uses passive faith is that a passive agent takes all credit away from man. Faith looks *away* from self. Faith looks *to* what someone else has done. God is the only one who can be credited when faith is the means of salvation. Faith glorifies God.

All we see- wrongly, nonetheless- is that faith makes it easy. That's because our whole theology has moved away from God's glorifying of Himself as His *modus operandi* for **everything** He does.

We can't see that the simplicity of faith is due to its making a complete exchange. It looks outside of self to another. It looks away from self and trusts in another. We see simplicity meaning **little** requirement. In reality, faith means **total** requirement.

So, whereas the Gospel proposition is a simple mechanism, so to speak, its actual workings are very demanding, serious, and complex. It can never be rightly portrayed in an "**all you have to do**" manner.

The witnessing quote given at the head of this devotion says that God strictly commands men to repent. That's not a God who's lowering the bar to garner as many folks as possible. By putting that permissive kind of face on Him, we've made it possible for countless Christians to have an idol for their God- right in the lap of His kingdom, it would seem. They've come in by the Easy gate without taking notice that that gate, of man's invention, does not even open onto the King's property.

