

The "Theology of Glory" versus the "Theology of the Cross"?

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Host: David Wheaton 00:08

The "Theology of Glory" versus the "Theology of the Cross"? That is the topic we'll discuss today right here on The Christian Worldview Radio Program, where the mission is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. I'm David Wheaton, the host. The Christian Worldview is a listener supported radio ministry. You can connect with us by visiting our website, TheChristianWorldview.org, calling us toll free at 1-888-646-2233 or by writing to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

Before we get to the preview for today's topic, I want to thank our golfers and all of you who participated in The Christian Worldview golf event on Monday, September 18th. We had a wonderful day and it was a beautiful weather day, which always makes it much nicer. We look back on it and try to measure success for this kind of event. What we think about when we measure success at this particular event is:

1. Did we prepare well and do our best? That all the staff and volunteers who helped that day, who we couldn't do the event without by the way, did we do our best for God's glory?
2. Did we pursue our mission at the event to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ? Did we do our best to impact attendees with that mission? If we do those two things well, we trust God with the financial support that that event raises. So again, thank you to our staff and volunteers and all who were a part of that event.

All right, now to the preview for today's program, The "Theology of Glory" versus the "Theology of the Cross"? If millions of people are reading a Christian book or watching a Christian television series like The Chosen, God must be at work, right? Or if 10s of 1000s of people are attending a megachurch with 15 multisite locations, God must be being honored, correct? If bigger is evidence of God's favor, Jesus must not have been very favored by God. By the end of Jesus' ministry, He had few followers, He was falsely convicted, and died a bloody death on the cross.

By today's Evangelical definition of success, Jesus was a failure. Jesus' leading disciple, Peter, actually rebuked Christ for saying He was going to suffer and die: "Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, *"God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You."* Matthew 16:22. Peter had a flawed human perspective of success for Christ, not a perspective that included death on a cross. Then Christ addressed Peters perspective of success when He responded, *"Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's."* Matthew 16:23.

The prevailing Evangelical definition of success can be summarized by the "theology of glory" - bigger audiences, more professions of faith, more acceptable to the culture, more smiley. The contrast to this is how Jesus defined God's interest which we'll call, the "theology of the cross," when He said in Matthew 16:24, "*If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.*" Now, that doesn't sound very desirable. Youth group leaders wouldn't think of attracting young people by saying that. After all, it's the pizza and games that bring them in, right? And bringing them in is the ultimate metric-bigger numbers means success.

This "theology of glory" dominates Evangelical Christianity in the West. Today on The Christian Worldview, we're going to hear excerpts from a recent message by Travis Allen, pastor of Grace Church in Greeley, Colorado, where he contrasts the "theology of glory" with a "theology of the cross," and how each believer must examine his or her own heart to orient ourselves toward God's purposes rather than our own.

Most of you will have heard of Rick Warren. He is the most well known and most influential Evangelical in the world over the last 25 years. He has impacted church leaders and Christians more than anyone. More so than David Jeremiah, Charles Swindoll, Charles Stanley, John MacArthur, RC Sproul. Rick Warren is more well known and more influential in the last 25 years I think than all of them. So what's his view of ministry success? Because in the world's eyes, and in the Evangelical world's eyes, he's certainly had a lot of "success." I remember listening to him at last years 2022 Southern Baptist Convention, when he made a speech on the floor, as he tried to advocate for having women as pastors within the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention. And as I listened to him talk about the ministry he's had over the years and how he defined success in terms of numbers. Listen to this short address, because it perfectly encapsulates what the theology of glory sounds like.

Audio Sound Bite: Rick Warren 05:58

First everybody, welcome to Orange County. Southern Baptists of 149 Southern Baptist churches here, 90 of them started by Saddleback Church.

Host: David Wheaton 06:11

Sorry to jump in so early on this sound bite, but it just struck me right off the bat that he starts out with saying how many churches in the area, his own church, Saddleback, had started. This is the theme of this whole message. Numbers. Whether it's new churches, pastors trained, or whatever else he's going to say, notice the specific numbers as how he defines success.

Audio Sound Bite: Rick Warren 06:34

You know, it's customary for a guy who's about to be hung to let him say his dying words. I have no intention of defending myself. I have taught my kids and grandkids for years I am most like Christ when I refuse to fend for myself. The Bible says, Jesus spoke not a word unto them when Pilate accused him of all kinds of things. So I have no intention. I have most of you on my mailing list anyway, and I can write you and tell you what I believe about the gift of pastoring as opposite from the office of pastoring. But I'm not here to talk about that.

Host: David Wheaton 07:11

To say that he's not there to defend himself? That is exactly what he's doing. He's going to use the "success with specific numbers" in his ministry to provide credibility for what he's trying to do. Then to drop the little line about, I have everyone's email address, reminds them of his position and his reach and his influence.

Audio Sound Bite: Rick Warren 07:36

At lunchtime I wrote you a love letter, and I'd like for my possibly, and likely last convention, to read it to you. Kay and I could have not built Saddleback Church to its size and influence in any other denomination.

Host: David Wheaton 07:54

Sorry to keep jumping in here, but don't miss what he's saying. He literally said, "Kay and I could not have built Saddleback Church to its size and influence." Who builds the church? Rick and Kay Warren? Or does Christ build His church?

Audio Sound Bite: Rick Warren 08:12

I love Southern Baptists. I am a fourth generation Southern Baptist pastor. My great grandfather was led to Christ by Charles Spurgeon and sent to America as a church planter. Saddleback was sponsored by the North American Mission Board. I served on the staff of the California State Convention and the Texas State Convention as a teenager. Billy Graham picked me up when I was 18 and for the next 52 years mentored me, because I started at 16 years old, hired by the California Convention to preach youth revivals, I had preached over 120 harvest crusades before I was 20. Billy took this long haired, skinny Californian and mentored me for the next 52 years.

Host: David Wheaton 09:00

Is this becoming of a pastor or anyone, to be talking about his lineage of Charles Spurgeon, that he was handpicked and mentored by Billy Graham, and the specific number of harvest crusades he preached before the time he was 19 or 20? This is textbook theology of glory, man's glory, not the theology of the cross, and it's being communicated by the most influential evangelical of the last 25 years, Rick Warren.

Audio Sound Bite: Rick Warren 09:32

Here's my love letter to you, because I really am grateful if this is my last convention. Because of Southern Baptist polity, I was allowed to serve one church for life. That's not possible in those denominations, and grew it to become the largest church in this convention.

Host: David Wheaton 09:54

Again, I just have to pause. Who built Saddleback Church? According to Rick Warren, he grew that Church to be the largest in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Audio Sound Bite: Rick Warren 10:04

Because Southern Baptists gave me a passion for evangelism and mission, we baptized 56,631 new believers. And as a Southern Baptist Church, sent 26,869 members overseas to 197 nations. Because Southern Baptists taught me the value of a membership covenant, 78,157 members of our church signed our membership covenant after taking a four hour membership class. Because Southern Baptists taught me to emphasize the priority of Bible study, we now have 9,173 home Bible studies in homes in 162 Southern California cities. Because Southern Baptists taught me the value of church planting that I already mentioned, we planted 90 in Orange County alone and literally 1000s around the world. Because Southern Baptists taught me to honor and love the local church, I've had the privilege for 43 years of training 1.1 million pastors. That, sorry friends, that's more than all the seminaries put together.

Host: David Wheaton 11:22

That anyone doesn't see through this kind of obvious arrogance and pride. This isn't even a humble brag. This is Rick Warren taking credit to this precise person and the precise numbers of all that he thinks he has done, and trying to pass it off as, I'm thankful to the Southern Baptist Convention. Just contrast this to what John the Baptist said. *"He [Christ] must increase and I must decrease."*

Audio Sound Bite: Rick Warren 11:57

I owe you all so much. So I sincerely say thank you, Southern Baptist, for shaping my life. You're never going to find another Baptist who agrees with you completely on everything. There are Baptist brothers here today who don't believe Jesus died for the whole world. But we manage somehow get along with them.

Host: David Wheaton 12:24

You know who that not so subtle dig was directed at? It was directed at those who understand the Bible to teach, and I believe accurately understand the Bible to teach, that Christ's death on the cross only covers the sins of those who would ultimately believe in Him as Savior and Lord. It didn't cover those who would reject Him. Otherwise, they would be saved because their sins were paid for.

Now, could have Christ's death on the cross covered every sin ever committed by every single person? Of course. Christ didn't pay the penalty for the sins of those who would reject Him. Those sinners will have to pay the penalty themselves in hell, but Rick Warren can't resist the dig on the "Calvinists."

Audio Sound Bite: Rick Warren 13:11

Since this is the year 2022, that means we are 2,022 years from the birth of Christ. Now, we know Christ started His ministry at 30 years of age. Luke tells us that. He had a three and a half year ministry. Christ died in AD 33. He was resurrected in AD 33. He gave the Great Commission in AD 33. He sent the Holy Spirit and started the church in AD 33. That means 2033, just 11 years from today, is the 2,000th anniversary of the Great Commission. I hope one of you, because I won't be here next year, will make a resolution that Baptists take the next 10 years to finish the task of the Great Commission, in our generation, before the 2,000th anniversary of the church. Are we going to

keep bickering over secondary issues? Are we're gonna keep the main thing the main thing? We need to finish the task, and that will make God smile. Thank you everybody. I love you.

Host: David Wheaton 14:28

You have just heard a perfect encapsulation of the theology of glory, where man gets the glory. Rick Warren and others are going to finish the task of the Great Commission, and they're going to symmetrically do it exactly 2000 years after Christ died. Don't focus on secondary issues like very clear ones the Bible talks about as male only leaders in the church, pastors in the church. Don't be small minded like those people. Focus on the big issue of evangelism. One more thing. Did you hear the amount of applause that was taking place by these pastors and elders and leaders within the Southern Baptist Convention? Pastor Tom Ascol, whose church is within the Southern Baptist Convention, came on the program at this time and said, "Rick Warren is giving the Southern Baptist Convention messengers exactly what they want to hear."

In other words, they have been so influenced by the theology of glory, that bigger equals better. They see that Rick Warren's done that better than anyone, and therefore they don't either notice or don't care that the most prominent pastor of the most prominent church in the convention would boast his way through this message. They have imbibed the theology of glory.

Coming up next, we'll hear from Pastor Travis Allen as he explains this dichotomy, what rules evangelicalism? The "theology of glory," versus the "theology of the cross." You are listening to The Christian Worldview Radio Program. I'm David Wheaton.

Featured Resource: Essential Church Movie 16:13

God's truth is enduringly true throughout all the generations. It transcends culture. The church is always going to be an embattled people. If it's swimming with the tide, it's not being the Church of Jesus Christ. Look to the past, learn from the past, because the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

That was from the just released documentary, *The Essential Church*, which chronicles how three churches followed God's command to gather during the pandemic rather than comply with arbitrary government mandates. Normal retail is \$12.99 plus shipping for this two hour film. For a limited time, you can order the DVD for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview. Order at TheChristianWorldview.org or call toll free 1-888-646-2233 or write to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

Featured Children's Resources 17:14

Scripture commands that children ought to be brought up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Offering Biblically sound resources for children is one of our top ministry priorities. At our store at the ChristianWorldview.org, you will find carefully selected children's Bibles and books along with video and audio resources. Check out the Bible infographics for kids books, Little Pilgrims Progress, and the popular Adam raccoon set. Theo is a 15 episode video series addressing key doctrines of the faith that is a must see for children and adults. Satan and the world are bent on capturing the

heart and mind of your child. Instead, get sound resources that will train them up in the way they should go. Browse and order at TheChristianWorldview.org or give us a call for recommendations at 1-888-646-2233. That's 1-888-646-2233 or TheChristianWorldview.org.

Host: David Wheaton 18:19

Welcome back to the Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton. Be sure to visit our website, TheChristianWorldview.org where you can subscribe to our free weekly email and annual print letter, order resources for adults and children and support the ministry.

Our topic today is, The "Theology of Glory" versus the "Theology of the Cross." That is based on a message that Travis Allen recently gave at the Pillar of Truth Conference at Grace Church in Greeley, Colorado, where he is the pastor. Two pastors were preaching at the conference. Travis Allen, and also Don Green, who is the pastor of Truth Community Church in Cincinnati. Don is going to be an upcoming guest on the program. He gave an excellent message at the conference on Psalm chapter 42 on that well known passage (*Why are you in despair, O my soul, and why have you become disturbed within me?*) about what to do as a Christian when you are depressed.

He will talk about that topic coming up. But you'll remember Travis as a regular guest on The Christian Worldview. He has spoken at one of our conferences. He has a very high view of the local church, the polity or organization leadership of it. That it is to be led by qualified elders according to Scripture, expository preaching, they have a very reverent methodology of worship and fellowship, church discipline, they practice that, or church restoration, communion, baptism, and church membership.

They have to go through an extensive class in order to become members of the church. They only want believers to be members of the church. Unbelievers are welcome to visit, of course, but they want the church body to be of one mind. So why was I there? Well, Travis invited me to host the final session of the conference, which was a q&a with Travis and Don Green, and then also be interviewed before their Sunday morning service.

Just for today, we're going to highlight the first message of the conference, when Travis preached on the "theology of glory" versus the "theology of the cross." Again, what does that mean? It apparently originated from Martin Luther back in the time of the Reformation, with a theology of glory being human reasoning, applied to the Christian faith. In other words, bigger equals better, or the ends justify the means of gaining a claim, versus the theology of the cross is what Christ said in Matthew chapter 16:24. *"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."* I read a little bit of that portion of Matthew 16 at the beginning of the program, but I'm going to read the full passage now. Matthew 16, starting in verse 13. *Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is? And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Verse 16. Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*

So he gives this powerful, accurate answer to who this Christ is. Verse 17. And Jesus said to him, *"Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not reveal this to you, but my Father who is in heaven."* In other words, we don't figure this out on our own. God needs to open our eyes spiritually to be able to identify Christ as the Son of the living God. Then he goes on in verse 18 to say, *And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."*

But then, kind of like a whiplash takes place. Skipping down just a couple of verses, to verse 21, just moments after Peter confesses Christ for who he is, it says, *From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.* What was Peter's response to this? Verse 22. And Peter took him aside, and begin to rebuke him saying, *"Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you."*

What was Christ's response? *But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hinderance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."* There it is. The theology of glory that Peter had in his own mind that, Oh no, the Christ can never be killed, this shall not happen to you, versus the theology of the cross, which Christ knew he must come to fulfill.

Peter is thinking, the Messiah doesn't suffer and die. You need to get bigger, you need to be more prominent, you have ministry to do. That's the theology of glory. But the theology of the cross is defined right away by Christ in the next verse in verse 24. Then Jesus told his disciples, *"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."* Now, just to be sure, there is nothing wrong with a church or ministry growing larger or working to reach more people or doing ministry in more efficient ways, but God must get the glory.

As it says in Acts chapter 2, when the church grew, it wasn't Rick Warren who grew his church, it was the Lord added to their number. God cares about the means that we strive to do ministry and whether those means are manipulative and unsound doctrinally. I think every church and every Christian, and every ministry has to face this proposition, the theology of glory versus the theology of the cross.

Here at The Christian Worldview, we have to ask ourselves, Are we doing this program to simply gain more listeners? To get more downloads? To be on more stations? To have a bigger mailing list? To bring in more donations? To be more prominent and influential?

Or are we trying to honor God? To be faithful to Him and His word? To preach Christ, and then let God determine whether it grows or decreases? I heard one pastor say one time, focus on the depth. Let God take care of the breath. So true. So I'm going to start out by playing a soundbite from that message by Travis, where he talks about how Rick Warren became so popular and influential through his two books, *The Purpose Driven Church*, and then *The Purpose Driven Life*. One thing I really like

about Travis's preaching is that he balances instruction and exhortation with reproof, or warning, or polemics is the word.

Polemics is, according to the dictionary, expressing a strongly critical attack on someone or something. If there is no polemical aspect to our Christian walk in life, I don't think we're being faithful to Scripture. If we just see no evil, hear no evil, and speak no evil, if we just ignore or don't discern false teaching and false teachers, if we think we can just, "keep it positive," we're missing the mark. On the other hand, if our pattern is a majority polemical, pointing out all the wrong all the time, everything we focus on is about pointing out error, we have missed the mark as well.

We need to strive to be as polemical as scripture is, and no more and no less. I quickly compiled a few examples of this in scripture from Jesus, Paul, John, Peter, and Jude. Jesus in John 8:39 is talking to some religious Jews who say that *"Abraham is our father."* Jesus said to them, *"If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham, but as it is, you are seeking to kill me, a man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. This Abraham did not do. You are doing the deeds of your father."* In other words, your father, the devil, he tells them, *"You are not of God."* Do we ever see or say that the unregenerate are children of Satan as Jesus did? That's very polemical in nature, strongly critical.

Or Paul, in Galatians chapter 1. *"I'm amazed that you are so quickly deserting him who called you by the grace of Christ for a different gospel; which is really not another: only there are some who are disturbing you, and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed."* Do we ever assert there is only one gospel, and that all others and those who preach a false gospel are to be accursed?

That's polemical. Or John, who writes, *I wrote something to the church; but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not accept what we say. For this reason, if I come, I will call attention to his deeds which he does, unjustly accusing us with wicked words; and not satisfied with this, he himself does not receive the brethren. Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good.*

Do we ever name names of those who are doing wrong things within the Christian faith? Or Peter warns, *But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves."* He says, *"Their judgment from long ago was not idle and their destruction is not asleep."* Do we ever use this kind of polemic in our own Christian walk, pointing out strongly false teaching and false teachers?

The final example is Jude who says, *"I'm writing to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith, which was once for all handed down to the saints. For certain persons have crept in unnoticed who are long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons, who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ. Do we ever speak like this about those who have crept in unnoticed, who are marked out for this condemnation?"*

It's absolutely true that the Bible says *that whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good report, if there is any excellence in anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things*. But the Bible also says, and exemplifies, that we must speak about sin and righteousness and judgment and warn about false teaching and teachers. This is a loving thing to do. Sinners can't be saved without knowing about their sin and God's judgment. Believers need to be warned about getting off track with false teaching and false teachers.

So as you read your Bible, notice what is being said. I don't know what the ratio is of positive to polemic, but don't just gloss over the critical harder sayings of Christ and the apostles. Emulate the way they preach what is good and comforting, and yet warn what is evil and what is God dishonouring. With that in mind, listen to how Pastor Travis Allen gives us a polemic on how Rick Warren has been the model of this theology of glory that has so influenced the evangelical philosophy of ministry

Audio Sound Bite: Pastor Travis Allen 31:26

It was back in 2002 that Rick Warren and Zondervan publishers published *The Purpose Driven Life*. The phenomenon that produced *The Purpose Driven Life*, and before it, *The Purpose Driven Church*, what brought that to a reality and made it such an astounding success is with us to this very day, stronger than ever. *The Purpose Driven Life*, published in 2002, was a follow up to Rick Warren's earlier hit in 1995, *The Purpose driven Church*. Whereas, *The Purpose Driven Church* targeted pastors with church growth, philosophy, *The Purpose Driven Life* went after the churches, went after the people in the pews. Rick Warren, Bill Hybels and other church growth pastors wanted big successful churches, so they latched on to this new philosophy, the church growth philosophy. They learned from McGavran and C. Peter Wagner over at Fuller Seminary in Pasadena, California.

Rick Warren learned to market church growth from his mentor, Crystal Cathedral pastor and televangelists Robert Schuller. Robert Schuller was not a Christian, though he claimed to be. He was actually a peddler of positive thinking and self esteem psychology. The shtick of every motivational guru from Norman Vincent Peale, to Tony Robbins, and this stuff worked. It worked in a pragmatic sense. It did what it was peddled to do. Rick Warren, Bill Hybels, and others, they discovered that by targeting the wealthy in Orange County, California or in South Barrington, Illinois, it turns out that wealthy Americans are a lot like Brahmins in India. They also prefer to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic and class barriers. They too, like churches full of people who are mirror images of themselves.

The success of *The Purpose Driven Church* in 1995, was due to Rick Warren's ability to make this church growth strategy, to market it and its tactics to pastors. Pastors, who were desperate to make their churches grow. Pastors, who had tried year after year after year after weary year to try to teach the Bible, yet to no avail, to many people getting up and leaving. It's not something must be wrong, it must be my methodology. So they were the kindling that caught fire with church growth philosophy. Yet, for a number of reasons, these same pastors were unable to discern the unbiblical premise of this church growth philosophy. Some of the fallout of the success of his book with more

than 50 million copies sold that his shrewd marketing, and really the worldliness that had driven it, became exposed to the public.

For his part, Rick Warren explained the success of *The Purpose Driven Life* as the evidence of the work of God. Here's what he said. "My concern is that no one, neither Zondervan publishing nor myself, claim credit for the astounding success of *The Purpose Driven Life* Book. The worldwide spread of the purpose driven message was the result of God's supernatural and sovereign plan which no one anticipated." It was in 2005 that Tim Challies reported on what happened when Rick Warren tried to suppress the connection between *Purpose Driven Life* and then what would come to light in a book by Greg Stielstra. A book called *PyroMarketing: The Four-Step Strategy to Ignite Customer Evangelists and Keep Them for Life*.

With Rick Warren, everyone thought the wizard had powers, that the Rick Warren success was indeed supernatural. Turns out it was just Greg Stielstra behind the curtain, pulling all the levers and cranking the marketing sheet machine up. That's what explained it. There is no wizard. There is no wizardry. It's just clever marketing. And Stielstra, for his part, he's just doing his job. At least he's honest about it. Rick Warren was playing people. He was playing this off as all God's work when he knew very well, this is the work of men.

Host: David Wheaton 36:01

Can you see how this kind of preaching is helpful for Christians? Oh yes, Travis will get to the passage and exposit Matthew Chapter 16 on the theology of the cross, but he uses an example of Rick Warren in the pyro-marketing, which we're going to get into next after this break, about the theology of glory that has so overtaken the philosophy of ministry in the evangelical church. Stay tuned, much more coming up. You're listening to The Christian Worldview Radio Program. I'm David Wheaton.

Featured Resource: Speaker Series with Alex Newman (USB Drive) 36:35

There is a war ongoing. There are two sides in this war. There are those who are with Christ and there are those who are against Christ and sometimes it's not always easy to see the difference. But as we go through this information about The Great Reset, I think you'll find out very quickly what side these great resetters are on. Their own words condemn them. Know that this has implications for everything. For education, for health care, for your job, for business, for government, for law, for property rights. The social contract as Klaus Schwab will explain. The social contract as Klaus Schwab will explain,

That was journalist, Alex Newman, speaking at our recent Christian Worldview Speaker Series Event on being informed and prepared for The Great Reset. Alex's presentation is full of sound bites from those who are seeking to transform the world into a godless dystopia. You can download the audio of the event or order a USB thumb drive by going to our website, TheChristianWorldview.org or calling toll free 1-888-646-2233.

Featured Resource: Essential Church Movie 37:37

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Host: David Wheaton 38:43

Welcome back to The Christian Worldview, I'm David Wheaton. Be sure to visit our website, TheChristianWorldview.org, where you can subscribe to our free weekly email and annual print letter, order resources for adults and children and support the ministry. Our topic today is, The "Theology of Glory" versus the "Theology of the Cross."

At the end of the last segment, Pastor Travis Allen, in a message he recently gave at a conference, was giving an example of how Rick Warren, the most popular evangelical of the last 25 years, how his two books, The Purpose Driven Church and The Purpose Driven Life, become so popular? It was through something called pyro marketing. Now he's going to take you behind the scenes as to how that actually took place. A little glimpse here into the Christian publishing and marketing industry. How when a book comes out from a well known author, how it gets in one church and then another and then it's everywhere.

Audio Sound Bite: Pastor Travis Allen 39:47

Stielstra's four step approach to pyro-marketing, which Rick Warren used, Tim Challies outlines the whole thing, but I'm just gonna summarize it just so you know how it works. Rick Warren and Zondervan convinced pastors of mid sized churches to begin what was called the 40 days of purpose campaign. You remember that? It was going on everywhere. You couldn't get away from it. These campaigns were held in churches and they promised these pastors and these churches that this campaign is going to build bigger, more successful, thriving churches. So, 1,200 pastors signed on the dotted line. 1,200 pastors, their congregations total totaling about 400,000 people.

Next, Zondervan produced, distributed commercial spots on Christian radio, building brand recognition, and not for the book per se, but for the 40 days of purpose campaign, all of them kicking off in a local church near you. So the radio got on board. The marketing got on board. Zondervan sent discounted copies of The Purpose Driven Life to all those participating churches, and 400,000 plus people bought them at discounted rates. That started the fire going. Zondervan fanned the flame by promoting that book as evangelistic, gathering testimonies of individual people

who said their lives were changed and testimonies of pastors who said their churches just exploded in size. All this stuff works.

Challies writes this. He says, "A company called, Outreach Marketing, produced posters, door hangers, and other items to assist churches as they spread the word. Zondervan provided retailers with marketing tools like postcards and emails, along with a list of participating churches so they could sell them any additional copies that they needed and the pastors and the laypeople who had already completed the program, largely unknowingly became consumer evangelists." Then came the next stage, the final stage. The counting. Counting up the numbers, totaling the numbers, reporting the sales figures, gathering data on participating individuals, participating churches, gathering and crunching all that data, getting email addresses, other personal data, everything that they could. And according to Greg Stielstra, he says a great deal of scientific evidence for Pyro marketing comes from psychology, physiology, and sociology. He says, and all that data gathered prepares the publisher for the next marketing campaign. Now, why have I told you that story?

Host: David Wheaton 42:32

That's a good question. Is he just trying to tear down Rick Warren and the Christian publishing industry? No. Travis has a specific purpose for that polemic. It is to sharpen the discernment of Christians so they're aware of what's going on, what's taking place at the church's expense.

Audio Sound Bite: Pastor Travis Allen 42:53

I can assure you it is not to be salacious. It's not to expose Rick Warren, other big name authors, Zondervan, Christian publishers, Christian retailers, the Christian media industrial complex, or whatever you want to call it. I'm not trying to just expose how they have been duping an unsuspecting public. My interest instead in telling you what happened 20 years ago, is to draw attention to that unsuspecting public. That's where I want to shift your focus is to those people. There were after all, 1,200 pastors and their churches who were all complicit in this scheme. They represent 400,000 professing Christians.

Host: David Wheaton 43:41

This is the reason he brings it up. For the very same reason that Jesus, Paul, Peter, Jude, and James and the others in the New Testament have an element of polemics in Scripture. They are concerned with people's souls. Christians need to be warned and develop discernment about that which is false, and teachers who are leading people away from that which is honoring to God. It's as simple as that. That's why scripture has this ratio, this balance of both positive instruction in what is polemical, critical of error.

Audio Sound Bite: Pastor Travis Allen 44:24

What Luther identified there at Heidelberg, identifies a watershed between true Christianity, true religion, the way of God, God centered thinking on the one hand, and man centered thinking and man centered religion on the other hand.

Peter had his mind on the things of men, and he was thus susceptible to thinking, that was frankly from the pit of hell itself. It was demonic, and this is the theology of glory. By human wisdom, he judged the invisible things of God as being wrong, as being in grave error, as meriting rebuke and rejection. Why? Because suffering and dying on a cross is not glorious. It is the ultimate assault against any person's dignity.

Truman writes this, The theologians of glory, therefore, are those who build their theology in light of what they expect God to be like, and surprise, surprise, they make God to look something like themselves.

I'd argue that much of today's evangelicalism is making the exact same mistake now, right now. In fact, many of us in this room have been weaned and reared and raised on this same thinking, the same theology of glory that persecuted the prophets, that crucified our Lord, that burned reformers at the stake. It is the fundamental flaw of many leaders in the Christian world today, and it is the dominant spirit of our age.

In 2002, there were 1,200 pastors and their churches who believed God wants them to build a mega church. That God's true work is evident in mega proportions. Big numbers, big sales, big movements, big things, big influence worldwide. So when someone comes along to sell them what they so desperately want, surprise, surprise, God looks a lot like exactly what they want.

Host: David Wheaton 46:28

I hope this explains the dynamic that takes place within the evangelical church in movement. Not just when Rick Warren came along, but this is an age old battle for Christians between the theology of human glory versus the theology of the cross. That's what we'll conclude with today. One more soundbite from Travis about the theology of the cross. I wrote down four points that he gave in his message.

1. Discipleship demands divine regeneration. It's like what Jesus said to Nicodemus, a religious person, but who was not regenerate. He said, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven. If you've never been born again, if you've never obeyed Christ's command to repent of your sin and believe in the gospel, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the perfect Lamb of God that was sent by God to take away the sins of the world. That His perfect life and His substitutionary sacrifice on the cross satisfy God's wrath and justice over your sin, so that believing in His work and not your own works, God forgives you and credits you with Christ's righteousness. that's how you can be born again. If you have more questions about that, go to our website, TheChristianWorldview.org and click on the page, "What Must I Do To Be Saved?" Or give us a call, and one of us will walk you through God's offer of salvation.
2. The theology of the cross is that discipleship demands a religious institution. He said, the ecclesia, which is the in person gathering of believers, is a localized assembly of Christians. This is not the para church. It's not the Christian culture or concerts or podcasts. It's being a part of a local body of a sound preaching church.

3. Discipleship demands penal substitution. That is the heart of the gospel. That instead of us paying the penalty for our sins, Jesus Christ was a substitute who paid God's required penalty for our sin. He said, the theology of the cross is power hidden in weakness. Who would have thought of the foolishness of the cross, where God becomes man and submits to death by men to pay for the sins of men?
4. Then finally, he says discipleship demands full submission. This is a permanent lifestyle for the believer of self denial, cross bearing and lifelong obedience. Here's what he had to say about that.

Audio Sound Bite: Pastor Travis Allen 49:07

A lifelong practice of self denial is the most basic, most fundamental, pre commitment of the Christian life. It is the defining mark of discipleship. Self denial means we crucify all self centeredness and mortify the flesh. We set aside every supposed claim to self promotion, every self received right. It's the starvation of the flesh. It is the end of you, in order that God might have His way with you. Do you want that? Because, if you do want that, it could be evidence of regeneration, it could be evidence you're truly born again, that you're truly a part of His church, that truly the penal substitutionary Christ has covered all your sins. This is good news for you.

If you don't want that, if there's something in your spirit that says, I think it's too far, you've gone from preaching directly in the metal, if that's rising up within your heart, you need to check yourself and realize that that is a demonic impulse. That's coming from the enemy himself, the one who wants to mangle your soul. Don't trust him. Don't listen to him. Don't believe that.

Second, Christian discipleship is the life of cross bearing. Cross bearing, this is about the extent of discipleship. Okay, so I'm to deny myself but to what extent? I mean, how far does this really go? It's to the point of death. Even if it means death by crucifixion on a cross. Cross bearing refers to picking something up here. The very implement, the results in your death, in this case, the patibulum, the crossbeam of the cross. It's not just to pick it up, but it's to lift it on your shoulders, and then to carry it from one place to another. To take it from where you are now today. Luke 9:23 adds this very important word, daily. So daily, keep carrying this patibulum to your place of execution. Hence, the saying refers not so much to literal martyrdom, as to the attitude of self denial, which regards its life in this world as already over, already finished. I am dead, buried in Christ, I'm done. It's the end of me. It's the end of self. It's the attitude of dying to self and sin, which Paul demands.

Host: David Wheaton 51:21

I'm sure you're seeing the contrast between the theology of the cross that Travis is describing here, and the theology of glory, which was described earlier in the program. Of course, this way of following Christ is against everything that's going on around us and what our flesh wants inside of us. But it actually results in our greatest joy.

Audio Sound Bite: Pastor Travis Allen 51:44

Was there ever a happier, more joyful, more contented, more fulfilled being than Jesus Christ? No. And if not, then perhaps we ought to take a page out of his playbook. Live as He lived, walk as He

walked, pursue daily obedience to His commands, which are commands based on the Father's will. Denying the self, taking up our cross daily, following Jesus Christ as Lord.

Those who follow a theology of glory, that does not sound like their best life now at all. But to those who are truly born again, to those who love, serve, and submit to sound, faithful, local churches, to those whose hearts are full of joy and gratitude, because they cannot get over the fact that Christ died for them. You can spot them every time. They live a life of self denial, cross bearing, following and obeying Christ, because that is living their best life now and forever. They've embraced the theology of the cross.

Host: David Wheaton 52:39

Let's remember what Jesus said. *If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.*

Thank you for joining us today on The Christian Worldview Radio Program. Until next time, Think biblically, live accordingly, and follow Christ! The mission of The Christian Worldview is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. We hope today's broadcast encouraged you toward that end.

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