

Ticketmaster and the Church

The Book of Galatians

Have you ever bought a ticket to a concert/game/play, just to discover that a \$25 ticket actually costs you \$40 after all the fees?

There are few things more frustrating than false advertising!

Some say it's not false advertising, it's just part of buying tickets online! But why can't they just specify the price up front? Why the bait & switch?

I wonder if people ever feel that way about Christianity! That the church draws people in with "good news" just to later place heavy burdens upon them!

It's free admission, but do we add hidden fees? Like you have to look/talk/act a certain way, do certain things, before you are allowed in, or welcomed back!

Is the gospel truly good news, & is salvation truly free? Paul would say YES! But many of the churches he started were functioning more like Ticketmaster!

Galatians 3:1-9 The gospel is good news because it is offered to us freely! We don't deserve it, we couldn't earn it, it's a gift received by faith alone!

But sometimes that gospel gets distorted, & the stream of living water that is Christ Jesus, gets muddied by a false, works-centered religion!

Galatians 1:6-9 Don't let anyone, regardless of who they are try to sell you another gospel! There is no other, even if it comes from the mouth of Paul!

What was this false gospel that the churches in Galatia were trying to promote, and what were the hidden fees attached to their message?

They proclaimed that Gentiles could come into the church, but they had to be circumcised first! Well, who is going to do that? And why should they? Those coming into the Church wanted to follow Christ, not become Jews!

But the Jewish Christians in Galatia were trying to make them convert to Judaism (circumcision) before they could be included in the Church!

What was Paul's response to those who were distorting the gospel in such a way? "I wish those who unsettle you would emasculate themselves!" 5:12

Why would Paul be so angry and speak such harsh words? Because a distorted gospel is no gospel at all, and no better than paganism!

The false teaching in the Galatian churches was not only wrong, it was causing many good intentioned believers to be led astray as well!

Even the Apostle Peter and Barnabas were led astray! Galatians 2:11-14

Paul knew that if a person's identity in Christ was based on anything other than faith in what Jesus accomplished on their behalf, then the gospel would be stripped of it's power and would no longer be "good news!"

If our acceptance is based upon our works, then it will never be enough! Galatians 3:10-14 It's all or nothing, faith or works! But "no one will be justified before God by the law."

How does all this impact us? We know today that circumcision and the ceremonial law of the Jews does not apply to us, "so what?"

Maybe circumcision isn't the hidden fees of the Ticketmaster church of today, but wherever a false gospel is proclaimed there are always additional fees/demands – You have to... like us! You have to give this much! Etc.

Whenever there are "You have to..." expectations in the church to receive what the Church has been entrusted with offering to all people (the gospel), then that church has become a false representation of Christ's Church!

Our belonging to Christ, and our entrance into His Church, is not based on us, but based upon Him, and what He has done to make us acceptable!

Let us read again that which we have already declared in H.C. #61 & #65!

We have a Savior who is mighty to save, and who can move mountains to do so, but let us make sure those mountains are not ones of our own making!

There are lost and hurting people in this world that need to know that they can "Run to the Father, fall into grace, be done with the hiding, with no reason to wait..." Are we helping, or hindering, people coming to Jesus?

So what place does "works" have in our faith journey? They do matter right? Absolutely! Works are the fruit of a changed, gospel-centered, Spirit-filled life!

Galatians 5:22-23 – We are free from sin, and the demands of the Law in Christ, but our freedom ought to fuel our response to Him for all He is, and all He has done for us! A free-will offering vs. A Ticketmaster Church

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