



The Center of the Gospel

Christianity WITHOUT the religion defines Christ-less religion as any systematic method used to either earn or gain favor with God initially, or to improve and maintain one's ongoing standing with God on the basis of deeds, involvement, attendance, performances, rituals and ceremonies.

One of my favorite authors, Richard Rohr, speaks of the “*performance principle*” as the absolute foundation of all religion.

The “*performance principle*” is the myth that leads humans to live lives defined by achievement—it is a myth that is rooted in and driven by fear. Fear is the foundational building block of Christ-less religion.

The “*performance principle*” is a myth that deceives people who are fearful of being punished by God for their sins into thinking that their religious accomplishments will effectively persuade God not to send them to eternal torture in hell. The fabrication of hell is itself another monstrous lie concocted by big business religion designed to control its followers and keep them in line.

The vast majority of people on this planet live lives of slavery to Christ-less religion—as long as they follow the dictates and dogmas of their religion, they assume that *performing* at a high enough level saves them from the presumed wrath of God.

Religious followers assume that they are good because they obey the Ten Commandments, because they perform prescribed rituals, because they do what they

“should” and because they “belong” to a particular religion, denomination or congregation.

Thus people are trapped by law—they believe that by doing good things and by regularly going to a brick-and-mortar church that they will somehow be able to attain worth and earn acceptance from God.

The cross of Jesus centers us so that we fall in love with God—and we switch our center from our own performance to the perfect, never-ending love of God who loves us in spite of, not because of, our performance.

Imagine that I'm holding a big sign—**No Religion Allowed Beyond This Point!** Now imagine that the sign is nailed to a cross.

The cross is the end of religion. The cross of Jesus liberates us—it proclaims that the law game is over. The cross insists that it is futile for humans to prove themselves to God.

The cross of Jesus insists that Jesus is our center. Our relationship with God is all about what Jesus, God in the flesh, has done for us—NOT what we are capable of and must do for ourselves.

The cross of Jesus centers us so that we fall in love with God—and we switch our center from our own *performance* to the perfect, never-ending love of God, who loves us in spite of, not because of, our *performance*.

The cross of Jesus centers us so that we surrender to Jesus and to God's grace. *The cross of Jesus changes our focus from a futile and endless quest of trying to convince God to love us to just letting God love us.*

Before we are centered in Jesus we try to prove ourselves to God—when we are centered in Jesus we rest in him, we live in his freedom, we embrace his grace—and we know that perfect love casts out fear.

When we are Christ-centered we rest in the love and grace of God—we are centered in his forgiveness and his mercy.

The problem with Christ-less religion at large is that it takes the spotlight off the works of God and places it on the works of humans as seen and known within the systematic procedures and practices of a religious enterprise or institution.

When the spotlight is on the works and the production of a religion, then the focus becomes narrow and exclusive—so that one cannot help but regard anyone apart from one's religion as an outsider, perhaps even a heretic or an enemy.

Ardent and fanatical religious followers thus stress their dogmas, their practices, their holy books, their holy rituals and ceremonies, and they minimize or even forget the love, grace, mercy and forgiveness of God. □

—Greg Albrecht

Join us for the complete message of “The Center of the Gospel” at the audio teaching ministry of Christianity Without the Religion, the week of July 8, 2018.