

# American Gospel discussion, part 1

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Preacher: Mike Scrivani

[ 0 : 00 ] Good evening, good to have you all here.

We are going to watch the first 42 minutes of this video. It's about three hours long. And so with watching it and having discussion, it's going to probably take us four or five Sundays to get through it.

And I encourage you, if you can, I know life happens, to be here to watch every segment of the video because really at the end is when they tie it all together.

And you'll see that there's a lot of sort of back and forth, give and take of two different sides. And what we're talking about is the cross and why Jesus was crucified and those who say one thing and those who say another thing.

Now, it can be confusing, but I think that you'll see where we as a church land.

[ 1 : 12 ] And so I don't think that that will be real confusing. But if it is, we'll have time of discussion afterwards. And so I encourage your dialogue as well.

This is a really good video. This is the second one that this company has produced. If you remember, we watched the first one a year ago, American Gospel, Christ Alone.

And this is the second installment in American Gospel, Christ Crucified. Whereas the first one really focused on the health and wealth gospel, the prosperity message and how that is flawed, how that's not a message that you can truly tie to Scripture.

It's not what Scripture teaches. This one focuses on Christ crucified, the cross. Why was Jesus crucified? And so that is the question really that the different pastors, theologians, will be discussing through this video.

It's really well put together. Whoever edited the first one and edited this one deserves some kind of reward because it's really good. So I'm going to stop talking and we'll watch the first segment together, 42 minutes now.

[ 2 : 22 ] If you can't make it for some reason, I'm sure that in the future, I'm sure that we can figure out some way to arrange for you to be able to watch what you missed. But again, I encourage you to be able to be here for all of them and be a part of the conversation that proceeds afterwards.

All right, let's watch the first part. All right. All right. So see that they're starting to get really into the heart of the matter.

I know we didn't save a whole lot of time for questions and answers. We've got about 10 minutes. I did want to just kind of curious about some of your thoughts. At the beginning, we're first introduced to Bart Campolo and Russell Berger, who's the CrossFit guy whose wife, they were in the last video, who's been struggling with a long time for a lot of health issues.

One thing I noticed was they're both talking about their conversion experiences, right? And one, obviously, or it seems very clearly, is a genuine conversion, where he was reading Scripture, and it was through the reading of God's Word that he saw his sinfulness, he saw his need to be saved, and it was through reading God's Word that he came to faith in Christ, whereas the other, Bart Campolo, talks about being, and if you know, his father's very well known.

He talks about being in some sort of a youth event and having what he described as a transcendent experience, and that it was through that experience that he felt like he was saved, but then, well, as you notice from the answers that he gave, he no longer claims to be a Christian at all, but something else.

[ 4 : 20 ] I can't remember what his title was underneath, like a social activist, secular humanist. Okay, so my question is, one conversion, it seems real and authentic, was based upon the reading of God's Word, where the other one was based upon how a person felt at a time.

And so my question to you, or for us to think about it first, is why are, or why is it that we shouldn't trust our feelings more or over the Word of God?

Or if you disagree with me on that, then you can go ahead and say that as well. But I guess what I'm trying to say is, why is it so much more important that we base our understanding upon who God is by what his Word says more than on our feelings of what we think God is like or should be like?

Does anybody want to? Okay, okay, okay. Wes, you want to grab Brandon? Sure. I would just say because we're fickle human beings, like our feelings come and go, you know, and that's just basically what it is.

Yeah, fickle human beings. We can't trust our feelings, we just can't. I think we had Doylene here. Okay, so good answer. Yeah, because, Brandy, like you said, we are fallen human beings.

[ 5 : 45 ] And I think we could all say, and we would be willing to admit, have you ever thought you were right and found out that you were wrong? Have you ever experienced something that you thought this is, you know, this has to be right, and then you realize later on that you were dead wrong about it?

So, or you thought a certain way about a person. You know, I think a lot of times we do that where we see a person, and automatically we judge by what we see that, you know, this is a person I could never like or something like that.

And then you get to know the person, and you're like, well, I actually really like this person. All my opinions, all my judgments, all my thoughts about them were totally wrong. Doylene? Tomorrow night in the Ladies' Bible Study, our chapter that we're studying, I saw a lot of that in this tonight, and I was real excited, but the author in the book that we're studying on Monday night was basically said, you can't trust science because it changes.

Can't trust facts because you don't know who found those facts. He goes into this, that you can't trust your emotions because, like you say, they change continually and usually drive you down the wrong path.

He also said, you can't rely on Scripture alone to know the truth. And the point he was making is, like some other people are reading the Bible, and they're getting it all wrong.

[ 7 : 07 ] We just saw it tonight, and others are. And the only way to know the real God and how to understand Scripture is only after God opens your eyes.

It has to be a work of God. Oh, that's a good point. Nothing else. That's a good point. Well, I mean, we'll get in John. We'll talk about the Pharisees' new Scripture, but knowing Scripture and knowing God aren't always the same thing.

All right, I saw Danny's hand go up. Was there another? Amy, did you have your hand? Okay, good. Mike. Willard, go ahead. You know, 1 Corinthians 2, verse 14, tells it all. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for their foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they're spiritually discerned.

Amen. And that's the whole problem with all of this. You've got those that don't know God. They don't know what the Scripture says. Thus, God has not spoken to them through the Scriptures. So everything they say is just off the wall.

They're not of the Lord, and that's the whole problem. Yeah, good observation, good comment, Willard. Danny? Well, the thing that I think of is that God says that his thoughts are higher than our thoughts, and they are.

[ 8 : 25 ] And the thing I like about his word is that I think we can find whatever we need to know in his word, because nowhere is there a discrepancy in it.

And if we read something and don't really understand it, we can go to another place in the Bible, and there are other people saying the same thing.

So it all comes to the right conclusion, which can only be one truth. Amen. One of the best advice I ever got as I was probably a teenager, and the pastor that we had growing up in my church who dedicated me as a baby, who later married Danny and I, he was back and he preached a sermon, and the message, I can't remember where he preached from, but I remember his point was, does it match?

You know, is what you're thinking or feeling or seeing, does it match what Scripture says? If it matches, good. If it doesn't match, you're wrong.

Well, and Scripture is right. And so, but that takes a humble heart. And so, like you talked about, that takes spiritual discernment, because you, your sins have been exposed to you.

[ 9 : 42 ] You realize the weight of your sin, and that Christ had to come, Christ had to die, to bear your burden, to carry your sin, right?

To die for it, so that you could have eternal life. So we realize that. And so it takes a humble heart, having been saved, to be able to come to God's Word in recognition that, well, I'm wrong sometimes.

You know, I'm wrong. I had it wrong. God's Word is right. Another, this will have to be the last question. We'll give some more time for discussion.

But one thing I thought was interesting, I think it was, it was Tony Jones, who said that the message of the church has evolved.

And so I wanted to ask you is, do you think that's true? And what is dangerous about making a comment like that?

[ 10 : 45 ] Why is that a dangerous comment to make? So obviously I've kind of answered the first question as far as where I'm going is I don't think that that's true. But I guess what would be the, what is dangerous about saying that the message of the Bible, that the gospel message has evolved over time?

Michael? The danger of it, I mean, if we believe that the Bible is 100% true, then the message never changes from start to finish. And the danger of changing that message is changing the Bible itself. We're no longer looking at the truth of the Bible, we're looking at our own truth. Good answer.

Thank you, Michael. Yeah, and that leads into the next thing that I believe it was Tony Jones as well, that he said that we all have the right to interpret Scripture for ourselves.

ourselves. And so, I'm preaching to the choir here, I know. But does something, Julia, you want to have, because that goes along the same thing where what we're being told in our culture is, you know, you live your truth, you determine what is true, you come to the Bible and you basically tell the Bible what it says.

And I think we have a culture that acts like that's something good. Yeah. But in reality, shifting sand is beyond frightening.

[ 12 : 06 ] And when you look at our culture, I think if you peel away a lot of that misconception and really get to the heart of things, people want something that they can believe in.

Yeah. They want something that is rock solid, unchanging, beyond anything they've experienced in their life. And so, I think that part of the beauty and the value of saying the Bible does not change is that it is a gold mine for people that are hurting and seeking something that they say, okay, I can truly depend on this.

Good. Yeah. Another great observation. Because, you know, like we're living in a deconstructive world where, you know, to look smart is to be skeptical of everything.

And we do have an overly skeptical culture, cultural culture, but I think, you know, like Julia said and others have commented, like Michael said too, is that the world that we're living in, the culture that we're living in, though it may not look like it, they're starving for truth.

You know, they're starving for certainty. And so, you know, as we've been talking about on Sunday mornings following Jesus' example of evangelism, and, you know, we've had six of those principles that we've seen.

[ 13 : 26 ] Well, one that just comes to mind is how certain he was that what he was saying was true. How certain he was that he could help the woman at the well.

How certain he was that he was the living water. He didn't have any questions about any of that, right? And so, when we share the gospel too, we need to come with that same certainty as well. You know, you know if you've been saved that you've been transformed, and you know that God's word is true and so when we share it, we should share it in a loving way, in a kind way, but also with boldness and courage that, you know, I know that this is true.

And I'll never forget and I'll close with this, I've shared the story of sharing the gospel with my best friend in college and the one thing that he would say, he wasn't saved when, after we had that first conversation, but it always stuck with him because he said, it was that, that certainty that, you know, you spoke with, that you knew and I never forgot that because especially as we go off into this world and you're encouraged to find your own truth, well, I think eventually that gets exhausting for people and though we have a lot of, we live in a self-centered culture where we'd like to think that we have all the right answers, I mean eventually people will realize that they don't, they just don't and like the Bible says, we all, I believe everybody knows that there is a God and so we need

to go with, with boldness and courage and love to share the truth of what we know with him. So that's a good start and as you see we're gonna really start getting into the meat of the matter. I'll save a little bit more time for discussion afterwards. Thank you all for your participation and it's encouraging me, to me, to hear your answers too and even, I heard a little, a few groans at different points in time so, holy groans I guess of what they say, like heartbreaking holy groans not let's go find them and with pitchforks and you know, yeah, but oh, this is heartbreaking.

[ 15 : 42 ] Alright, I'm gonna close in prayer. Lord, thank you for this time that we've had together. Lord, we thank you for your word and we thank you for truth that though we live in a culture that wants to have us believe the lie that the truth resides within us, Lord, we know that we are sinful human beings, that we have fallen well short of your glory, that Lord, we are in desperate need of your word to act as a lamp unto our feet to guide our past, that we need its truth and so Lord, we thank you that you have given it to us, we thank you that we have it, that we can live through this world and that we can know what is true, that we can know what is right and wrong, that we don't have to rely upon our thoughts and our feelings and our opinions and believe that those things come before your word because they don't and so Lord, we're thankful that you've given us your word, we thank you that you've given us your son, we thank you Lord that though we are sinful and though Lord, all of our sin has been ultimately committed against you and you are holy, that you are also loving and merciful, that you chose to send Christ to us to bear our sin and to give us his righteousness when we come to faith in Christ that Lord, we know that we have an eternal hope in him, that we have been forgiven, that your wrath and your love, that they aren't at odds but that at the cross they come together in an awesome and in an amazing way.

Lord, we pray that as we would continue on with this study that you would continue to use it to help us sharpen one another but Lord, we pray that as we've been thinking about how important it is that we go and make disciples and thinking about how we are to model your example in sharing the gospel, I pray that we would take the little that we've talked about tonight to heart that people are hungry and they're starving for truth and that you've given your truth to us and you've called us to go and be your ambassador so Lord, I pray that we would answer your call and that we would go and that we would share the good news of Jesus Christ and that you'd be glorified by all that results from that.

We give you the praise and the honor and the glory and we ask and pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.