

Soul Check
Are You Doubting or Delighting in Your Salvation?
So Where Do People Get it Wrong? Part 1
Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / October 17, 2010

False Hopes

I. You Might Have Settled into Your Own Custom-Made Faith with No Authority Outside of Yourself for What You Believe or Who You Think God Is

Proverbs 16:25 “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.”

Jeremiah 7:23–24 “But this is what I commanded them, saying, ‘Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.’ Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but followed the counsels and the imagination of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward.”

This new “Spiritual but not religious” community is growing so much that one pastor compared it to a movement. In a 2009 survey by LifeWay Christian Resources 72% of 18 to 29-year-olds said they're "more spiritual than religious." The phrase is now so common that it's spawned its own acronym... "SBNR"... ‘spiritual but not religious’... and it’s got its own website... and daily news at SBNR.org. Are There Dangers In Being 'Spiritual But Not Religious'? John Blake, CNN, June 3, 2010 1:02 p.m. EDT

- 2 **BJ Gallagher** is a Huffington Post blogger who writes about spirituality and she says she's SBNR... so here’s her take on it. She says there's nothing wrong with people blending insights from different faith traditions to create what she calls a ‘Burger King Spirituality -- have it your way.’
- 3 **Heather Cariou** is a New York City-based author who calls herself spiritual instead of religious... "I don't need to define myself to any community by putting myself in a box labeled Baptist, or Catholic, or Muslim. When I die, I believe all my accounting will be done to God, and that when I enter the eternal realm, I will not walk through a door with a label on it."

John 14:6 “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father but by Me.”

- 5 **Nazli Ekim** calls herself spiritual instead of religious. She was born in a Muslim family... raised in Turkey... prayed to Allah every night until she was 13. But then one day she says she decided to take charge of her own beliefs... "I had this revelation that I bow to no one, and I've been spiritually a much happier person."

Philippians 2:5-11

Jeremiah 5:30–31 “An astonishing and horrible thing has been committed in the land: the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule by their own power; and My people love to have it so. But what will you do in the end?”

Jeremiah 6:14 “They have also healed the hurt of My people slightly, saying, ‘Peace, peace!’ when there is no peace.”

II. You Might Be Trusting in Some form of Baptism as Your Assurance of Salvation

Catholic scholar, Ludwig Ott, in his book, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, gives the following explanation:

Baptism is that Sacrament in which man being washed with water in the name of the Three Divine Persons is spiritually reborn. (p. 350; Ott gives John 3:5; Titus 3:5; and Eph. 5:26 in support of this statement)

Baptism, provided that the proper dispositions (Faith and sorrow for sin) are present, effects: the eradication of sins, both original sin and, in the case of adults, also personal, mortal or venial sins; and effects inner sanctification by the infusion of sanctifying grace. (p. 354)

Romans 1:16 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for *it* is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes...”

No mention of baptism! In fact... Paul goes out of his way to say...

I Corinthians 1:14-17 “¹⁴ I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, ¹⁵ so no one can say that you were baptized into my name. ¹⁶ (Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don’t remember if I baptized anyone else.) ¹⁷ For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.”

It’s the message of the cross that has the power to save... not water!

Romans 5:1-2 “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”

III. You Might Be Actively Rubbing Up Against the Truth of God But Never Possessing it Yourself

A lot of people think they’ll be accepted by God because they faithfully attend church... and even jump into serving in different areas of the church.

“If you’re avoiding sin and living morally so that God will have to bless you and save you, then you may be looking to Jesus as a teacher, model, and helper, but ironically you are avoiding Him as Savior. You are trusting in your own goodness rather than in Jesus for your standing with God.” Timothy Keller, *The Reason for God*

“This is self-reliance rearing its ugly head. Self-reliance is the natural tendency of every human heart... Only the gospel can truly save you. The gospel doesn’t make bad people good; *it makes dead people alive*. That’s the difference between the gospel of Jesus Christ and every other world religion. All the others exhort their followers to save themselves by being good, by conforming their lives to whatever their worshiped deity is. But the gospel is God’s acceptance of us based on what *Christ* has done, not on what we can do.” *Surprised by Grace*, Tullian Tchividjian, p.56

One of the biggest false hopes that people have is that something they're doing is gonna make them right with God. And Paul torpedoed that whole concept in...

Philippians 3:3-11

3-8 “The real believers are the ones the Spirit of God leads to work away at this ministry, filling the air with Christ’s praise as we do it. We couldn’t carry this off by our own efforts, and we know it—even though we can list what many might think are impressive credentials. You know my pedigree: a legitimate birth, circumcised on the eighth day; an Israelite from the elite tribe of Ben-jamin; a strict and devout adherent to God’s law; a fiery defender of the purity of my religion, even to the point of persecuting the church; a meticulous observer of everything set down in God’s law Book.

7-9 The very credentials these people are waving around as something special, I’m tearing up and throwing out with the trash—along with everything else I used to take credit for. And why? Because of Christ. Yes, all the things I once thought were so important are gone from my life. Compared to the high privilege of knowing Christ Jesus as my Master, firsthand, everything I once thought I had going for me is insignificant—dog dung. I’ve dumped it all in the trash so that I could embrace Christ and be embraced by him. I didn’t want some petty, inferior brand of righteousness that comes from keeping a list of rules when I could get the robust kind that comes from trusting Christ—God’s righteousness.

10-11 I gave up all that inferior stuff so I could know Christ personally, experience his resurrection power, be a partner in his suffering, and go all the way with him to death itself. If there was any way to get in on the resurrection from the dead, I wanted to do it.” **Philippians 3:3-11** *The Message*

Matthew 7:21 “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name? And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”

You say... ‘How can that happen? And are there any Bible examples of this?’

Judas is a tragic example of how you can be right in the middle of spiritual things... rubbing up against the truth of God Himself... the very person of Christ... and still not possess spiritual life yourself.

“Judas is a prime example of a professing believer who fell into absolute apostasy. For three years he followed the Lord with the other disciples. He appeared to be one of them. Presumably he thought of himself as a believer, at least at the outset. It is doubtful that he joined Christ's band with the intention of turning against Him... For three years, day in and day out, he occupied himself with Jesus Christ. He saw the Lord’s miracles, heard His words, even participated in His ministry. In all that time no one ever questioned his faith. He had the same status as the other disciples. Except for the Savior Himself, who knew the thoughts of Judas’s heart, no one ever suspected that this man would betray Christ... Whatever his character seemed to be at the beginning, his faith was not real (John 13:10-11). He was unregenerate, and his heart gradually hardened so that he became the treacherous man who sold the Savior for a fistful of coins.” *The Gospel According to Jesus*, John MacArthur, p.99