

Are We Preaching “Another” Gospel: A 31-Day Journey toward Rediscovering the Gospel of the Grace of God

by C. D. Hildebrand, 24-7-365 Version 2026

Day 4

ADDING TO THE GOSPEL

My parents' water supply came from a well, fed by an underground spring. When David and I would make the three-hour drive to visit them, long before the popularity of drinking bottled water, we used to bring bottles to fill up so that we could take this fresh water home. They had an unlimited supply and were happy to share with us. What I would give to once again drink from that well!

There is nothing so clean-tasting and satisfying as water like this. However, if to a glass of this clean, sparkling, and refreshing water, you were to add anything else, say a spoonful of poison, you would have sense enough not to drink it.

Yet, what if that spoonful of poison was added one itsy bitsy dissolving grain at a time? One little speck would probably not even be detected. How about two? Probably not. Over the years, you might not notice that what you were drinking was no longer fresh water. When it began to make you ill, would you even think to question the water you'd always enjoyed—the water your own parents were giving you?¹ Not likely. You might even drink more of it, believing it would help you feel better.

The gospel of Jesus is like perfect, clear, flowing spring water. Just as a fresh glass of water from a spring delights a thirsty body, we once drank from the living water of God. Not only did we drink, but as Jesus promised, rivers of living water flowed from our innermost being. We knew the delight of our new birth and the realization that we had become the very children of God! We longed to learn all we could to equip ourselves to be the best Christians we could be so that we might please God in every word, deed, and thought and share our joy with others. As long as our teachers did not stray into what we considered cultic theology, we embraced what they taught. Our pastors were honest, upright, and sincere people so we trusted them to teach us the truth. We believed everything they said. We filled up

¹ By no means am I questioning the good motivations of parents or spiritual leaders. I am simply making the point that when the source is trusted, we drink without fear.

multiple notebooks while taking meticulous notes. We were diligent to incorporate what we were taught into our daily living, not wanting to be like those who heard the word but did not do it.

Here's what we didn't think to consider during those years. What if the truths we were hearing and applying *weren't* completely true? What if our very upstanding pastors had been incorrectly taught? These thoughts never occurred to us because we *believed* in them. In our minds, these men wanted nothing more than to help us to be successful and productive Christians; to guide us so that we could avert the possibility that we would ever fall back into sin. These goals were noble and good. On top of that, for us to question what they taught would not only put in doubt their moral fiber, but it would be to "touch God's anointed". So, little by little, one tiny morsel at a time, the fresh spring of truth was poisoned, and we became ill, never perceiving why.

My husband and I marvel at the way we lived in fear of disagreeing with our pastors. We did not think it necessary to "prove all things and hold fast to that which is good" when it came to what *they* taught. We were taught to walk in "unity" and never say or do anything that would in any way "harm" the pastors. We wouldn't have imagined doing such a thing, for we loved them so deeply and were determined to be the type of people in whom our leaders could trust. We feared the very retribution of God if we made one little peep. So we were extremely careful to keep any questions and criticisms to ourselves—even to vanquish them from our thinking. However, our blind trust and underlying fears facilitated our gradual deception.

Perhaps, as we did, you felt the tug of the Spirit calling you to a life of service, and you responded. You studied. You lived a holy life and gained experience formulating your beliefs and your perception of what the Christian life is and what it requires. What if you were also ill-informed along the way? Could it be that you, like we, embraced "truths" that are not true?