

**Are We Preaching "Another" Gospel?: A 31-Day Journey toward
Rediscovering the Gospel of the Grace of God© C. D. Hildebrand
Prologue and Introduction**

Prologue

If you are looking for a book that is hostile toward pastors or one which seeks to defame the organized church, this book is not for you. I feel I need to say this up front for two reasons. One, I want pastors to read this book. When I wrote it, you were on my heart and mind. I want you to know that as former pastors, my husband and I deeply respect you and what you are called to do. While I disagree with what is commonly being taught in churches today, you will not find within these pages anything but respect concerning your calling and labor of love.

The second reason I want to make the above perfectly clear is I don't want this book to fan the flames of anger commonly felt by some who wake to realize that their beloved teachers pointed them in a wrong direction; a path that likely caused pain and even devastation. If this describes you, please consider this. When you were ill-taught, you had a Bible. You had a brain. You chose to believe what ended up binding you. Ultimately, we are each responsible to "prove all things and hold fast to that which is good". I urge you to work toward forgiveness so that you may share the message of the gospel of grace—with grace.

Being a user of social media, I am continually reminded that written communication apart from relationship falls miserably short at times. In discussing, even disagreeing with someone who knows and loves you well, the writer has an advantage which contributes greatly to the possibility of being "heard," even if the topic is controversial as I understand this topic to be.

An example of this was evidenced with my most critical proofreader—in the good sense, who strongly disagreed with me as she began to read, painstakingly commenting to me throughout my manuscript her questions, comments, and concerns; but knowing me and loving me as she does, she pressed forward and was able to understand more fully the question I am asking.

Ideally, I could sit down with each person reading this and talk with you as you read, as I did with my friend above, answering questions as they arise, and discussing difficult concepts. However, written communication doesn't allow for such. Thanks for your patience. When you finish the book, please join the discussion on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/cdhildebrandgrace>.

Another major concern of mine while writing and editing this book was the same one our nephew, Rick, also a minister, pointed out to me—specifically that *he* knew what I was saying because we discussed these things over the years, but he wondered if someone who had never considered this topic would follow my points unless I clarified them more fully. This is why every effort has been made to present this topic as if the reader has never heard it before (or who hasn't heard it in many years) but hopefully without insulting the intelligence of those who likely possess degrees far higher and knowledge more extensive than I ever will. It might help to know that in the early chapters of the book ideas are introduced that are expounded upon later.

I am deeply dependent on the fact that all believers have the Holy Spirit dwelling within them and that He is speaking to each of our hearts. If what I am saying is true, He will be in the reader's heart affirming that truth. If I have erred, He will point that out, too. Though, of course, I *believe* what I have written *is* true, I do not pretend to "know it all".

So, please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Cathy Hildebrand. I am a daughter of God, wife of David, mother of Christina, Joella, and Tim, mother-in-law to Eric, Ben, and Amanda, and grandmother to Emma, Levi, Joel, Grace, Nathan, Amy, Annie, Joshua, and Alice¹.

I was "raised" in the church, born again at a young age, tried not to believe in God for a short season in college, and returned to full faith in Jesus at age 19 in 1974.² Unable to attend a traditional Bible school because of my role as a stay-at-home mom and pastor's wife, I enrolled in a correspondence school through our denomination. I was licensed with the Assemblies of God and later ordained (my husband also). We were in ministry about ten years as youth and college ministers and also served as home missionaries for five years. When full-time ministry became unavailable to us in 1987-89, we allowed our credentials to lapse, and we began "secular" careers. It was shortly before this time that we had what we now call a "grace awakening," which I briefly describe in this book.

During this time, God opened the door for me to work as an educator. My ministry, therefore, for many years was as wife, mother, and an elementary and high school teacher. I enjoyed each and every moment of these labors of love, embracing them as my present calling. All the while, I knew in my heart that as these responsibilities decreased, God had a call on my life to minister more extensively and to write.

About nine years before this book's publishing, God began to open to us new doors of ministry. It began with working in a Christian school where

¹ In the years after publishing this book in 2014, I also became grandmother to Sam and Summer Joy.

² Without a doubt, that is the shortest testimony I have ever given!

I had opportunities to share with my students about God's love for them. A couple of years later, David and I became "lay" workers in the church we attended, sharing in small groups some of what we had learned. Later, we were asked by the pastor to found and teach in a church Bible institute, at which time we were re-ordained by our denomination.

We knew that our understanding of the gospel had radically changed beginning in 1987-89 until the time of merging back into ministry, but there had been little opportunity to share what we were learning with more than our children and friends. As we began to teach in the Bible school, something happened we hadn't anticipated. Many of our students were seemingly waking up to His love and grace and coming face to face again with their first love, just as we had so many years before. We didn't even know they *needed* to wake up, let alone were we trying to wake them. We were simply teaching what we then understood and challenging them to "prove all things and hold fast to that which is good".

As to my motivations for writing, or what one might call my mission statement, I say with all sincerity that I simply want to speak the truth in love so that the church may reencounter the *true* gospel of Jesus Christ and forsake teaching "another" so that we may return to our first love and be set free to receive what He longs to give us and to be what He longs for us to be. Though my personality wants to please and prefers acceptance, which would lead me on the course of "just living my life and minding my own business", His love and grace compel me to speak up.

Fully aware of my gender, I can't help but consider that my intended audience might be predominantly male. Admittedly, this concerns me due to the corrective nature of this book. Even though we know that the word for "man" can also be translated "husband" and "woman" can also be translated "wife" in 1 Timothy 2:12, still many Christian men find it objectionable, even prohibitive, that a woman would "teach" a Christian man anything, let alone *correct* him. If this is the case; if you are not able to consider the contents and nature of this book without being offended by my gender, I *lovingly* invite you to *please* skip to the end where I have listed multiple works on this topic for your consideration, all written by men.

How thankful I am for my husband who values me as his equal partner in ministry and who points out to me, when I get discouraged about the gender gap that still exists in the church today, that both Priscilla and Aquila pulled Apollos aside and explained the way of the Lord to him more accurately.

Thank you for considering this topic and for having a heart that is willing to learn.

Sincerely in Him,

C. D. Hildebrand

Introduction

Several years ago during the Sunday morning worship time, I found myself once again with my face in my hands praying that the song we were singing would get over sooner rather than later. It was one of those repetitive melodies that we'd sung so many times I was beginning to fall into a mental stupor. Admittedly, this wasn't the best attitude for someone of my age and maturity, but perhaps you can imagine, in light of what was about to occur, the humor of my anguish.

It was in that frame of mind when suddenly, one of those crystal clear moments broke through; when I heard God speak sweetly to my heart. It actually surprised me since my prayer had nothing to do with seeking the will of God for my life, but was something more along the lines of, "Lord, please make them STOP!"

He asked, "Are you willing—"

Now, there was no pause in the upcoming question, but I remember a split-second moment of being aware He was not only *speaking* to me, but was going to call me to do something, and a certain surprised anticipation rose up within me. He had my attention! God was getting through to me even through all the noise and frustration in my mind. As I listened carefully, my heart immediately began answering when He said, "Are you willing to preach the gospel to the *saved*?"

Knowing instantly what He meant, I replied, "Yes, Lord. I am willing." Sitting there somewhat stunned and entirely delighted and amazed, I could hardly wait to tell my husband, David, who then embraced this calling as one for both of us. Since that moment, this is what we have dedicated ourselves to doing; to sharing the gospel with God's beloved children.

Why do the *saved* need to hear the gospel?

"Let him who has ears to hear, hear."

*But by the grace of God
I am what I am,
and His grace toward me
was not in vain;
but I labored
more abundantly than they all,
yet not I,
but the grace of God which was with me.*

*But none of these things move me;
nor do I count my life dear to myself,
so that I may finish my race
with joy,
and the ministry
which I received
from the Lord Jesus,
to testify to the
**gospel of the
grace of God.***

Acts 20:24

*I marvel that you are turning away so soon
from Him who called you
in the **grace of Christ**,
to a **different gospel**,
⁷ which is not another;
but there are some who trouble you
and want to **pervert the gospel** of Christ.
⁸ But even if we, or an angel from heaven,
preach **any other gospel** to you
than what we have preached to you,
let him be **accursed**.
⁹ As we have said before, so now I say again,
if anyone preaches **any other gospel** to you
than what you have received,
let him be **accursed**.*

Galatians 1:6-9