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**Repenting
of Denominational Prejudice,
Addressing False Doctrine**

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Hillsboro, MO

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Repenting of Denominational Prejudice, Addressing False Doctrine

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Repenting of Denominational Prejudice, Addressing False Doctrine

I agree that barking like dogs, divine laughing, or other occurrences supposedly “charismatic” and evidenced by the “Toronto Blessing” are nowhere in Scripture and sound demonic. Satan does perform miracles to deceive. However, I am concerned by the extreme position some interpret John MacArthur’s *Strange Fire* to mean, namely those who appear to take by saying that all those who believe in the “Gifts” or “speaking in tongues” are in error.

To start, nowhere in Scripture do we find a clear statement that says the Gifts have ceased or will cease before Heaven. There *is* record of Christian leaders since the time of the Apostles (Jonathan Edwards, Martin Luther, John Calvin and others) saying that the gifts have ceased, but again **will we believe the Scripture** alone or accept the **teaching of men**? The much quoted 1 Corinthians 13 passage by Cessationists says that tongues will fail when prophecies cease and knowledge passes away. Applying the proper hermeneutics of Bible interpretation looks at the context and clearly raises the opposition—have all three of these passed away? No. Knowledge is still around. We live in the information age and as Daniel prophesied, many run to and fro and knowledge is increased (Daniel 12:4). And in regard to prophecy, even Cessationists (those who believe the “Gifts” and “Tongues” have passed away) believe that prophecy is still occurring as a spiritual Gift through preaching.

I grew up in a “Pentecostal church” and was homeschooled largely using “Baptist” textbooks. But I do not consider myself to be any label—“Freewill” “Calvinist” “Pentecostal” etc... I am *a Christian* and I *endeavor* to only Believe what the Bible teaches. Now, yes, I believe that we all have probably been taught something wrong in church. No church is perfect, nor any spiritual leader—if they were, we would not need to like Paul “oppose Peter to His face” at times. I enjoy discussions on doctrine when the heart of those discussing is really to understand what the Bible says. But when any church tradition is dogmatically held to as the standard, I know the conversation is going nowhere. It is dangerous to just be “Baptist,” “Catholic,” “Lutheran,” “Presbyterian,” or “Pentecostal” in one’s beliefs without ever considering what God’s Word actually says.

However, it is also very dangerous to say that all Charismatics/Pentecostals are demonically influenced. The Bible nowhere gives evidence that the so called “Gifts” have passed away and Paul warned us not to despise prophesying (1 Thess 5:20) but to test the spirits and see whether they are of God (1 John 4:1). I love John Piper’s loving but non-agreeing response to Strange Fire on his Ask Pastor John podcast, I believe the episode aired late 2013; John Piper dealt with the issue from a solely Biblical perspective.

Let me clarify that there are some false teachings (and John MacArthur makes references to most if not all of these in his book *Strange Fire*) among Pentecostalism (but there also are false teachings among Catholicism and Lutheranism and every ism); however, the issue should not be “all Pentecostals” but exposing the false doctrine just as not “all Catholics” or “all Lutherans” are unbiblical. I disagree with Mr. MacArthur as he strongly portrays that the entire group is corrupt (I hope I am wrong about him taking that stance), but agree that there are some major false doctrines circulating by primarily in Pentecostal and Charismatic groups that are unbiblical including:

- **The false doctrine of prosperity and comfort especially as a blessing for a “financial seed sown into *their* ministry.”** Yes, God gifted Joseph, Job, and Abraham with success and some business sense, but that doesn’t mean life is easy and lucrative for the Believer.

“supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.”

1 Timothy 6:5

- **False doctrine that you must speak in tongues to be saved.**

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved”

Acts 16:31

- **Unbiblical “revelations”—that contradict the Bible and supposedly need to be proclaimed as God’s truth** in today’s world.

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye

should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”

Jude 1:3

- **False doctrine of the Word of Faith Movement**—your words have the same creative power as God’s words - that’s blasphemy!

“Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that, as he is Christ's, even so are we Christ's. For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed: That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters. For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible. Let such an one think this, that, such as we are in word by letters when we are absent, such will we be also in deed when we are present. For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you. For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure, as though we reached not unto you: for we are come as far as to you also in preaching the gospel of Christ: Not boasting of things without our measure, that is, of other men's labours; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly, to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand. But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.”

2 Corinthians 10:7-18

- **Healing Crusades**—teaching people to “seek their miracle” rather than Seek Jesus.

“Asa...was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians.”

2 Chronicles 16:12

- **False doctrines of confession/declare such and so over yourself or another**—speaking into existence the “blessing you want”—this is nowhere in Scripture. However, we should pray about anything and everything to the Lord and cry out to Him.

“Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.”

James 4:3

- **The false doctrine of cheap grace**—(*this one is not distinctly a Pentecostal error, but is appearing to gain a lot of ground at least among Charismatic leaders today*) it is turning Christ’s grace toward us as an excuse for not trying to avoid sin or confess our wrongs and ask for the forgiveness of others. It is the antinomian heresy of the past that says, “I sinned, so what? Jesus died for me. I just need to walk in His grace.” Dietrich Bonhoeffer battled this in his book *The Cost of Discipleship*.
- **Unhealthy-emphasis on healing, trances, etc...** God can heal and there are a few instances of “trances” in Scripture—visions by Daniel, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Peter, John and others. However, nowhere in Scripture are we told to seek these or to claim them as “part of our inheritance.”
- **The Seeker Friendly gospel** (*again not distinctly Pentecostal, but appearing to gain ground amongst Pentecostal leaders*) seems to be growing across the board in all denominations, but I have seen a lot of it in bigger Pentecostal churches. The Seeker-friendly Gospel tries to make the Gospel appealing to

sinner and tones down or even ceases to talk about sin and our need for Christ.

“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”

1 Corinthians 1:18

- **False Doctrine of Name it Claim It**—again nowhere in the Bible.

“Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.”

James 4:3

- **Turning speaking in Tongues to another Gospel.** Salvation is not what many “Pentecostal’s” conversations are about, but experiences. This is dangerous. **William Seymour** (early Pentecostal leader) got it right when he told Pentecostals, “**Don’t go out of here talking about tongues; talk about Jesus.**”

“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”

Galatians 1:6-9

I like the [Baptist Faith and Message 2000’s](#) and the SBS’s position on the Pentecostal-Charismatic debate—neutral on Spiritual gifts. In our discussions with other Believers, we should be careful not to make the issue of the “Gifts” a point of division. If they **Believe** in Jesus and **KNOW Him** then as Jesus said, whoever is

not against us is for us. This is *not* an issue of *clear sin* and disobedience to God like homosexuality or lying. The debate is about how God's Holy Spirit interacts with Believers today based on Scripture. There should be unity around Christ and the maturity to disagree without be disagreeable as long as the Gospel message is not at stake.

We must keep the Gospel—repentance and receiving Jesus and KNOWING Him as the focal point of our ministry to others.

I attend a small Southern Baptist Church now and am in a Southern Baptist Seminary at the time of this writing. I do not call myself “Southern Baptist” or any other denomination though because often the deformational card just stirs up offense and prejudice and many unbelievers equate Baptist with Westboro right now. Yet I am unashamedly a Baptist because I have studied what the core Baptist beliefs are and I believe they are Scriptural. Yet that doesn't mean every other denomination is wrong or a heretic.

I am thankful to be a part of the Southern Baptist fellowship. I won't talk about my “denomination” often, but I know that the Lord guided me to be a part of the SBC as I sought Him for many months on the “denominational accountability” issue when pressured by the Pentecostal denomination I grew up in to keep silent about the Bible on several points or else be ousted. In fellowship with many Believers in the SBC, I am around many like-minded Believers and am thankful that Salvation is the primary issue at the heart of so many in our SBC fellowship and we keep that as our main focus—Do you KNOW Jesus? Also, I am privileged to be a part of the denomination that many evangelists have come from including: Billy Graham and Vance Havner. God's blessing has been poured out upon our fellowship in this respect.

I have written because I am concerned that many Pentecostals place too much emphasis on experience and too little emphasis on learning the Scripture, teaching sound doctrine, and discipleship. I understand better perhaps than some having grown up and beginning my ministry in the Pentecostal movement. Generally, Pentecostals have been very successful in many respects of evangelism and zeal and in that, we all can learn from them.

But in an effort to be balanced, I am equally concerned with liturgical traditions such as Catholicism and Lutheranism that place so much emphasis on repetition that the heart and life of Christ's Spirit can be sucked out of the local church. Yet to their

credit, liturgical traditions have continued to faithfully expound many of Scriptures doctrines throughout the coming and going of changes in the Church throughout the centuries and we can all learn from that, especially from the conservative Lutherans.

What should be our Non-negotiable issues?

1. Do you KNOW Jesus?

I take Jesus' statement literally—many will cast out demons, heal the sick and raise the dead, but yet they won't know Him. This statement by our Lord picks my heart primarily for Pentecostals, but I am also pricked for the “attendees” of every church that have never surrendered to Jesus as Lord and just have “accepted” Him as fire insurance.

“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

Matthew 7:22-23

2. What Sin Is

What Sin is—anything you think, say or do that breaks God's heart (Child Evangelism Fellowship).

“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.”

1 John 3:4

3. Who Jesus Is

Who Jesus is-- Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples

as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord. [Genesis 18:1ff.](#); [Psalms 2:7ff.](#); [110:1ff.](#); [Isaiah 7:14](#); [53](#); [Matthew 1:18-23](#); [3:17](#); [8:29](#); [11:27](#); [14:33](#); [16:16,27](#); [17:5](#); [27](#); [28:1-6,19](#); [Mark 1:1](#); [3:11](#); [Luke 1:35](#); [4:41](#); [22:70](#); [24:46](#); [John 1:1-18,29](#); [10:30,38](#); [11:25-27](#); [12:44-50](#); [14:7-11](#); [16:15-16,28](#); [17:1-5](#), [21-22](#); [20:1-20,28](#); [Acts 1:9](#); [2:22-24](#); [7:55-56](#); [9:4-5,20](#); [Romans 1:3-4](#); [3:23-26](#); [5:6-21](#); [8:1-3,34](#); [10:4](#); [1 Corinthians 1:30](#); [2:2](#); [8:6](#); [15:1-8,24-28](#); [2 Corinthians 5:19-21](#); [8:9](#); [Galatians 4:4-5](#); [Ephesians 1:20](#); [3:11](#); [4:7-10](#); [Philippians 2:5-11](#); [Colossians 1:13-22](#); [2:9](#); [1 Thessalonians 4:14-18](#); [1 Timothy 2:5-6](#); [3:16](#); [Titus 2:13-14](#); [Hebrews 1:1-3](#); [4:14-15](#); [7:14-28](#); [9:12-15,24-28](#); [12:2](#); [13:8](#); [1 Peter 2:21-25](#); [3:22](#); [1 John 1:7-9](#); [3:2](#); [4:14-15](#); [5:9](#); [2 John 7-9](#); [Revelation 1:13-16](#); [5:9-14](#); [12:10-11](#); [13:8](#); [19:16](#). (The Baptist Faith and Message 2000)

4. Repentance

“repent ye, and believe the gospel.”

Mark 1:15

5. The Word Of God—The Sole Authority

That the Word of God is the final authority and if you teach or Believe something that isn't in the Bible then you're wrong.

“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

2 Peter 1:20-21

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.”

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (ESV)

“Do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you and you be found a liar.”

Proverbs 30:6 (ESV)

About the Author

Ryan M Marks (B.A. in Communications and pursuing an MTS in Theology from Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary) has taught in two local churches and served as an evangelist throughout Missouri. Having begun preaching and writing at 15 following the Lord's call, Ryan has authored a number of books. He serves as Director of and contributor to the blog and online ministry of FocusingOnTheMarkMinistries.com which provides resources for evangelism and discipleship globally.