



## Heart and Soul

**A**ll over this world people are dying from despair and depression. Opioid abuse and addiction is unprecedented, as people vainly attempt to medicate themselves from the pain and heartache of their lives.

Christ-less religion insists that people be convicted of how bad they are. That's no news flash! People already know how bad they are. People already know the bad news. What people need to know is the good news of Jesus Christ, and of the love, grace and mercy of God.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is Christianity without the religion—the gospel is irreligious. Those who discover the gospel of Jesus Christ have the audacity to dig down and discard all the religious rubble that has obscured and buried the gospel in order to finally arrive at the foundation of faith. And that foundation is Jesus!

As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:11, *“For no one can lay any other foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.”*

**The Heart and Soul** of the gospel of Jesus Christ is an invitation to become a religious non-conformist—Jesus invites his followers to question and challenge the religious status-quo. **The Heart and Soul** of the gospel of Jesus Christ is an invitation to embrace the grace of God—a radical grace because few people are willing to unconditionally receive God's grace.

Jesus is the **Heart and Soul** of Christ-centered Faith! Christ-less religion dispenses what it calls “god” much like a doctor or a pharmacy does. People feel pain, alienation, shame and guilt, so they go to a brick-and-mortar building

with a sign outside that says “church”—in many such buildings they receive a God-fix. They are told what to do and how often they must do it, in order to please and appease God.

The people leave, their problems are briefly repressed—their problems are sedated—they feel as if they have kept an angry and upset god at bay for another week, and then the next week they need to return to have their prescription refilled.

Of course, many churches within Christendom will teach and preach that God has forgiven us...but when the rubber of their teaching and preaching hits the road, the message is that God has forgiven us *until next week*. Next week we are told we need the prescription filled again...we are told we must beg God for his forgiveness all over again. It's an endless cycle, trapping people in a religious hamster wheel.

A Christian is a follower of Jesus. Christ-followers are not addicted to religion and all of its trappings—Jesus has rescued his followers and set them free.

Christ-less religion, in order to control people, insists that people are bad, rotten and, according to John Calvin, “depraved.” To the degree that people don't already carry a huge load of guilt and shame, when they exit the front door of Christ-less religion that load of guilt and shame will have been multiplied...all the better to control people.

Christ-less religion, in order to control people, will fill them with fear of what God will do to them if they do not do exactly what religion tells them to do.

Christ-less religion is all about the

monstrous myth of eternal torture in hell which, according to religion, God will send you to if you fail to do what religion says (and by the way, God will send you to hell because he loves you).

When one follows Jesus they are saved from the endless programs and requirements of religion. Jesus saves us by detoxing us from religious addiction.

Christ-followers are saved by Jesus from forever worrying about whether God is mad at them and whether they have done enough to please him.

For Christ-followers, Jesus is the center of all reality. For religious captives and addicts, their church and their religious ceremonies and traditions are the center of all reality.

Christ-less religion tries to fix and improve Jesus.

Christ-less religion attempts to confine, control and harness Jesus.

Christ-less religion tries to manage Jesus and turn him into a manageable object—a ceremony, a book, an icon or a ritual.

*But Jesus is no religious mascot. Jesus is who he is.*

**HE IS THE HEART AND SOUL OF OUR FAITH.**

Jesus is our rock. Jesus is our foundation. Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith. Jesus is our living water, and he is our Bread of life. Jesus is the true vine, our good shepherd. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. □

—Greg Albrecht

*Join us for the complete message of “Heart and Soul” at the audio teaching ministry of Christianity Without the Religion, the week of October 6, 2019.*