It is astonishing how the gospel of Christ, our Lord, has in many ways been turned from a free gift into something bound by conditions. Some may argue that such restrictions are a sign of order or modern civilization, but biblically this was never Christ's plan when He called His apostles. In fact, such restrictions hinder the advancement of the gospel. Today, let us reflect on this truth through Scripture.

When the disciples encountered someone ministering in the name of Jesus without being part of their group, notice what Jesus told them:

> "Teacher," said John, "we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us."
> "Do not stop him," Jesus said. "For no one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, for whoever is not against us is for us."
> (Mark 9:38–40)

The disciples were offended that this man was casting out demons, preaching Christ, and possibly even baptizing—yet he

was not officially part of their circle. Instead of rejoicing that the name of Jesus was being glorified, they tried to silence him. Perhaps they even threatened him, warning him never to use the name of Jesus again without their approval. His only “fault” was that he *did not follow them*.

Can you imagine the discouragement that man felt? The fire in his heart for the gospel was suddenly quenched. He may have continued preaching secretly, in fear that the apostles might see him again and oppose him. The very ones who should have been his first supporters became his first opponents.

This same stumbling block remains in the church today. Many who desire to preach Christ—through sermons, books, or songs—are hindered by man-made restrictions. Some ministries claim ownership over certain teachings or music, requiring permission and even payment before others can share or use them. The gospel has been turned into a business, protected like a trademark rather than proclaimed as the free gift of God.

Yet Scripture clearly teaches:

> “Freely you have received; freely give.”
> (Matthew 10:8)

The message of Christ is not our property—it is His. Paul himself declared:

> “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.”
> (Romans 1:16)

The gospel is God’s power for salvation, not a commodity to be marketed. If someone takes a Christian book or teaching and reprints it freely to bless others, why should that trouble us? If a song written for the glory of Christ is sung elsewhere without mentioning the composer’s name, should we be offended? If our true motive is the advancement of Christ’s kingdom, then we should rejoice when the seed we have sown multiplies—even if our own name is forgotten.

Paul captures this beautifully when addressing those who preached Christ from different motives:

> “But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.”
> (Philippians 1:18)

Christ Himself never demanded permission slips for His name to be proclaimed. The man in Mark 9 did not seek Jesus’ approval before casting out demons, yet Jesus defended him. How then can we, who do not even see Christ physically, place restrictions on others who seek to advance His kingdom?

Dear pastors, teachers, evangelists, gospel singers, and writers: do not become a stumbling block to the gospel. Do not hinder its free flow with unnecessary conditions. The message of salvation belongs to Christ, not to us.

Let us remember Paul’s words:

> “We do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake.”
> (2 Corinthians 4:5)

The gospel is not about us—it is about Christ. May we labor not to protect our names or ministries, but to magnify the name of Jesus and see His kingdom expand without barriers.

Shalom.

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