



The Scandalous Gospel of Jesus

Peter J. Gomes

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Jesus came preaching, but the church wound up preaching Jesus. Why does the church insist upon making Jesus the *object* of its attention rather than heeding his *message*? Esteemed Harvard minister Peter J. Gomes believes that excessive focus on the Bible and doctrines about Jesus have led the Christian church astray. "What did Jesus preach?" asks Gomes. To recover the transformative power of the gospel—"the good news"—Gomes says we must go beyond the Bible and rediscover how to live out Jesus' original revolutionary message of hope:

"Dietrich Bonhoeffer once warned against cheap grace, and I warn now against cheap hope. Hope is not merely the optimistic view that somehow everything will turn out all right in the end if everyone just does as we do. Hope is the more rugged, the more muscular view that even if things don't turn out all right and aren't all right, we endure through and beyond the times that disappoint or threaten to destroy us."

This gospel is offensive and always overturns the status quo, Gomes tells us. It's not good news for those who wish not to be disturbed, and today our churches resound with shrill speeches of fear and exclusivity or tepid retellings of a health-and-wealth gospel. With his unique blend of eloquence and insight, Gomes invites us to hear anew the radical nature of Jesus' message of hope and change. Using examples from ancient times as well as from modern pop culture, *The Scandalous Gospel of Jesus* shows us why the good news is every bit as relevant today as when it was first preached.

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