

SUNDAY MORNING (November 11th) • Counterfeit Gospels

The Judgmentless Gospel

John Lennon's 1971 song "Imagine" encourages us to imagine there is no heaven or hell. Instead, we should embrace the need to live for today. The song was a big hit when it was released and is now recognized as one of the greatest rock/pop songs of all time. The lyrics summed up the mood of the post-1960s era, a time in which people were questioning religious claims and traditional morality.

Forty years later, many—even those who claim to be followers of Jesus—are fully following Lennon's advice. We are told that the gospel is not really about the afterlife. The gospel answers much bigger questions than a person's eternal state. It's all about life today—not so much about tomorrow. In fact, there may not even be a great Day of Judgment that is coming.

In reality, the "judgmentless gospel" championed by some segments of the religious world isn't big enough to include the full picture. Of course we should see the gospel as speaking to life today. And yes, the gospel is not only about going to heaven when we die. But we must take care that, as we are surrounded by so much religious confusion, we hold together *all* the components of the gospel story.

The "judgmentless gospel" shows up in many forms. In your own words, why are these dangerous counterfeits?

- "Everybody is going to heaven" -
- "The afterlife isn't nearly as important as making the most of life here on the earth" -
- "God wouldn't ever send anyone to hell. People choose to go there" -
- "God knows my heart" -

Why is the "judgmentless gospel" so attractive and, as a result, so popular?

If the "judgmentless gospel" is a counterfeit, does it need to be countered? If so, in what ways?