

The Hybrid Bike

When I moved to China, my American driver's license was not valid so I had to resort to getting rides. This worked out okay until I got a job at a local school. The walk would be too far to do every day, so I decided to get a hybrid bike that uses a motor, but also has an option to pedal. As I rode the bike to school each day, it dawned on me that my ride to school presented a beautiful depiction of our journey to heaven, and the hybrid bike beautifully illustrated how we are saved in a way that clears up some of the misconceptions that so many Christians today have adopted. Let me explain.

Like my journey from home to school, the Bible often refers to our life on earth in terms of a journey, calling it a "race" or a "walk" (1 Cor. 9:24; Gal. 5:16). It is a spiritual journey that believers must take once we accept Jesus. Paul refers to this as a moral walk, also known as the process of "being saved" (1 Cor. 1:18). And this is where some Christians become confused. Many think that we are either saved or lost, and do not understand the concept of "being saved," which is known as the process of "sanctification," or becoming "holy" (1 Thess. 4:3; 1 Pet. 1:15). But how does this work. How can sinful people become holy? The hybrid bike illustrates the process beautifully.

The bicycle is a hybrid with three options. First, if you don't turn the power on, it will work manually. It will ride just like a regular bike. However, without the power you will be riding in your own strength, solely by your own effort. This is how many people view the journey to heaven. They seem to think that God buys us the bike, but we must depend on our own efforts to get to heaven, basing salvation solely on their own works. Second, the bike has a fully automatic option. If you turn it on fully automatic, the bike goes even if you don't pedal it. It goes without any effort. This is another trap people fall into. Some think that once God saves them, He will get them to heaven apart from their own effort, so they don't need to try.

Most of the world today is caught up in one of these two deceptions. Most religions are caught up in the first lie. They teach that the heart is good and we must use the goodness within us to make ourselves better. That is like riding the bike without turning it on. The problem comes when they realize the journey to heaven is too vigorous and their own efforts are not sufficient to make it. Still, many professed Christians today have gotten caught up in the second deception, thinking that once we accept Jesus, we no longer have to make any effort to keep the law, or to strive for holiness. They say that since no one is perfect, God will have to accept us as we are.

The Third Option

Since nobody is perfect, many Christians claim that it is foolish to try and live a perfect life, but the Bible says otherwise. God says, "Be holy, for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:16). Jesus said, "Be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). And Paul says, "Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me" (Phil. 3:12). John adds, "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness... Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him" (1 John 3:4, 6).

The Bible says sin is "lawlessness," as in breaking God's law, the Ten Commandments. Those people who continue in willful sin while still thinking to get into heaven are deceived. The last chapter of the Bible says only those who "do His commandments" will be allowed to "enter through the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:14). Those who continue in sin, refusing to keep God's laws, even though they claim to be believers and do "wonders in Your name" will soon be met with the words, "depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness" (Matt. 7:23)! God is looking for people who utilize His power to resist sin and obey His holy law. But how do we do this?

That is where the third option of the hybrid bike comes in. The third feature is the one I typically use. It is the hybrid feature, which means it is part bike and part me, which beautifully illustrates our spiritual walk. Still, please don't confuse this with works in any way. That doesn't mean that I'm the one giving the power. My efforts merely show that I am choosing to go, while depending on a power outside myself. When I turn the power on, but leave it manual control, the electric power only starts when I start to pedal. When I stop pedaling, the power turns off, so I am not riding in my own power at all. I'm depending on the bike's power, but I must make the effort to ignite the power. When I move, the power is supplied.

If I want the bike to go, I have to constantly keep turning my legs, but in turning my legs I'm not using my power. It's igniting the power in the bike. Turning my legs is simply my choice, shown by my effort, which then ignites the power. What a beautiful illustration of the gospel! God has power to give us, but we need to get up and say, "Okay, I'm going to move," and when we move, God supplies the power. This is illustrated throughout the Bible. All through the Bible, God calls people to act by faith, often calling them to do impossible things, and when the faithful obey His word by faith, God then supplies His power to their efforts! That's the gospel!

Experience the Impossible!

When God's people were told to cross over the Jordan, it looked impossible, but they obeyed, and when they walked, God parted the water (Josh. 3:13-15). When Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "Rise, take up your bed and walk," Jesus supplied power to the man's efforts (John 5:8). If the man did not try to get up, he would have remained paralyzed. Again, when Peter asked Jesus to call him out onto the water, Jesus said, "Come," and when Peter got out of the boat, Jesus supplied the power and Peter walked on water to

go to Jesus (Matt. 14:29). We see this theme repeated throughout the Bible!

When we make a move, Jesus begins to work in us, “Christ in you,” giving us His power to do the impossible (Col. 1:27). How do I know? Because He did it in me! God worked miracles in my life. He did things through me that I could not have done on my own. It was impossible. And skeptics will say, “It’s not impossible. People can motivate themselves to do anything.” If that is so, why do we keep excusing our sins? Because we all know that sin is impossible to overcome in our own power, and yet God calls us to overcome sin! God is telling us to do the impossible and just like Peter walking on water, we must step forward by faith, then God will supply the power.

Often people ask, “How can you believe in the miracles of the Bible? You’re crazy to believe those miracles,” and yet millions of people across the globe believe. Why? They have experienced the miracle in their own lives. God has changed addicts, murderers, rapists, racists, homosexuals, thieves, and yet those who have never experienced the power of God will never be able to understand the gospel. It is not until we start to put forth effort to pedal the bike that God adds His power to our efforts. That’s why Paul says, “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13, 14). God wants to give you His power, but we must make a move.

If you will pray to God and then step forward in faith, He will supply the power and your faith will produce good works. That’s why James says, “I will show you my faith by my works” (Jas. 2:18). God wants to work in you, but He is waiting for you to move. God is calling you to give up the sins in your life. You say, “That’s Impossible,” but so is walking on water! Isn’t it time to experience God on a new level? If you will just start pedaling, God will supply the power. God is ready to do great things in you, but you must make a move. What are you waiting on?

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