

A THEOLOGY OF GLORY VS. A THEOLOGY OF THE CROSS

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Martin Luther taught a 'Theology of the Cross' over against what he called a 'Theology of Glory.' These two basic ways of thinking about the faith have existed in the Church from the beginning, and can be found in the writings of various theologians, as well as in the theological emphases of different Christian denominations. These two perspectives may even be held by members of the same congregation. Bear in mind, however, that popular theology is not necessarily biblical theology.

THEOLOGY OF GLORY

(HEAVENLY REWARD)

= *faith is the means to obtain material success*

Perspective on Existence:

Being a Christian will make your life better in a material sense (success, wealth, happiness, etc.) if not here on earth, then someday in heaven.

Defining Quote:

"God helps those who help themselves"
(*non-biblical*)

Evangelism Goal/Strategy:

To win souls by convincing people to "buy" or "accept" the message of Christianity
(*a "salesperson" approach*)

Key Themes/Phrases to Look For:

If you do this for God, God will reward you ...
We are climbing up to heaven on the road to glory ...
When you give a seed gift, it will return to you ...
Salvation is our eternal reward to come ...
Faith is about getting into paradise ...

THEOLOGY OF THE CROSS

(TRUSTING DISCIPLESHIP)

= *faith is joining Christ in his suffering*

Perspective on Existence:

Being a Christian is being faithful to Christ, regardless of the cost; faith will not necessarily make your life 'successful' in a worldly sense.

Defining Quote:

"take up your cross and follow me"
(*Mark 8:34*)

Evangelism Goal/Strategy:

To make disciples by proclaiming the gospel of Christ, through which God changes lives
(*a "news announcer" approach*)

Key Themes/Phrases to Look For:

By grace you have been saved through faith ...
We walk through the valley of the shadow of death ...
You are called to be good stewards of God's gifts ...
Salvation is God's free gift of grace ...
Faith is about trusting in God ...