



Mark Batterson

Mark Batterson was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota and grew up in Naperville, Illinois. Mark is married to Lora, and they moved to Washington, DC in 1994 to direct an inner-city ministry. Batterson earned a Bachelor's degree from Central Bible College in Springfield, Missouri and has two Masters Degrees from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Chicago, Illinois. Starting in 1996, Batterson has served the as lead pastor of National Community Church in Washington, D.C. National Community Church was recognized as one of the Most Innovative and Most Influential Churches in America by Outreach Magazine in 2008.[1]

As if being a pastor is not busy enough, Batterson in true emergent style, tries to cast his fame and exceeds his pastorate position by authoring multiple books, including us *In a Pit with a Lion on a Snowy Day* [2], *Wild Goose Chase*[3], and *Primal: A Quest for the Lost Soul of Christianity*[4]. His latest and most erroneous writing is "*The Circle Maker: Praying Circles Around Your Biggest Dreams and Greatest Fears*"[5] which hit book stores this last December 2011. Seems to me if he would spend less time writing and more time being a pastor he may be a better pastor, but that would go against the Emergent Pastor protocol to actually feed the members of their church.

Mark Batterson is your typical Emergent "Seeker Friendly" pastor by in which, if you mean typical by the way he commandeers Scripture and twists it to mean what it is not. Batterson is guilty falling into the trap that most Emerging Pastors fall into; the pit of narcissistic eisegesis. That is, to reading oneself into biblical text that has nothing to do with that person, situation or church. His typical Sunday message resonates more about social justice and biblical obfuscation, than actual solid exegesis of biblical Scriptures. When preaching he is guilty of Long Law preaching. In other words he is preaching more on the Law making the Law take the place over the Gospel. This can be seen in many of sermon series, including in his most recent one entitle "IF" which can be found at <http://goo.gl/epdsS>.

This sermon series is base on "IF" you do these certain things than God will.... The use of the word "IF" turns God's love in these sermons to conditions based on our obedience to Him in order for Him to love us. This is not the Gospel neither is this the truth of God's Word. God's love is not dependent on us, and what we do. God has foreknown His elect before time; Romans 8:28. If this were the case, there would be no Grace. Batterson's "IF" series violates the very tenants of Scripture and teaching on what the Grace and unconditional love of God is.

The Apostle Paul carefully lays out how we as New Testament Christians are to handle the Law, while addressing the Galatian church in Chapter 3 of the book of Galatians. Paul says the following:

Galatians 3:10-29

King James Version (KJV)

10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.

12 And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.

13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

15 Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.

16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

17 And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

18 For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

19 Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

20 Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.

21 Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

As you tell from the Apostle Paul's writing the way we are to handle the Law as New Testament Christians is not the way Mark Batterson handles it or preaches how to handle it, from his pulpit.

Batterson is also guilty of associations with new age mystics and teachings, and openly supports their writings and philosophies, which would explain a lot of his new age philosophies and principles in his preaching at NCC and in his books.

Back in April of 2008 Mark Batterson, pointed readers on his website to *Eckhart Tolle*, a New Age guru who is has been heralded by Oprah Winfrey. Batterson says that Tolle's book, *Practicing the Power of Now*, is "instrumental in the way I think about life." His public reading list also includes several other New Agers and mystics: Jack Canfield, Daniel Goleman (The Meditative Mind), Gary Thomas (Sacred Marriage, Sacred Pathways), Leonard Sweet, Tony Jones, Brian McLaren, along with several others.[6]

In another typical almost now comical Emergent swagger Batterson violates one of the basic characteristics of being a pastor, that is to be above reproach as found in 1 Timothy 3:2 and in Titus 1:7. According to Ken Silva, pastor-teacher and author of *Apprising Ministries* in his article entitled "*THE COMMENTS THAT MARK BATTERSON DOESN'T WANT YOU TO SEE*" Batterson when questioned by Silva in a blog comment erased the questioning and called Silva a "Pharisee". The full article can be found at <http://goo.gl/dKc5G>. This thus proving that Batterson believes he is above reproach.

This type of attitude as seen above is typical of not only Batterson, but many of his emergent cohorts. This type of "don't touch the visionary" leadership can not only be found at National Community Church, but many other "seeker friendly" churches that elevate the pastor over the Word of God to the level of ruler of the church.

One way of achieving this is to use "multi-site" locations like used at NCC. Multi-site locations, if you are not familiar with them, are when you have one church and with one pastor that is simulcast to multi locations thus making many little "churches". In this set up you have one pastor that led all locations and no pastors at those other locations thus leading to a figurative CEO Pastor figurehead that has reign over all sites and power. This type of site control allows complete control over each site and thus allowing that one pastor to project his "vision" of what the church should be to everyone without a challenge. This use of "multi-site" campuses can lead to a dangerous style of pastor worship in which what the pastor say

and what his “vision” calls for supersedes what the Bible teaches. Batterson seems to make use of this “multi-site” style a preaching with much effectiveness.

Over all Batterson is your typical “vision,” "seeker friendly" oriented pastor that follows the leads of his special “vision” from God that trumps the written Word of God. If you are attending National Community Church in DC or any of it’s multi-sites be very leery of Batterson and his teachings and promotion of Law over Gospel. While the Law is good for showing us our sins it won’t save you only preaching Christ died, buried and resurrected, in other words the Gospel will save you. Preaching the Law all the time will only leave you entrenched in your sins.

[1] America’s 25 Most Innovative Churches of 2008

[2] Chase The Lion

[3] Wild Goose Chase

[4] Primal

[5] The Circle Maker

[6] <http://evangelists.wordpress.com/2008/04/02/erwin-mcmanus-awaken-2008-speaker-promotes-eckhart-tolle/>