

Gospel Power



"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation..." (Romans 1:16)

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Gospel or Gimmickry?

Sewell Hall

"Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to fables" (2 Timothy 4:2-4).

These verse clearly indicate that there are times when gospel preaching is in season and out of season. History indicates the same. In the first century in most places it was in season; in the middle ages it was out of season. There was a thrilling season for the gospel in middle America in the early nineteenth century, while at the same time it was largely out of season in France and Europe.

In our own lifetime, we have seen the same situation change. This writer remembers days in Chattanooga when non-Christians attended meetings in large numbers for no other reason than to hear the gospel, and ten or twenty baptisms were not uncommon in such a meeting. Simple gospel preaching does not now seem to have such drawing power.

What are we to do when gospel preaching is out of season; when people are more interested in education, entertainment, recreation, and social activities than they are in preaching;

when the wisdom of the world has more appeal than the wisdom of God?

Common Answers

"You have to take people where they are," we are told. "We have to give them what they want to attract attention. Then we can reach them with the gospel." On this basis, all kinds of gimmicks are used to entice the worldly. Many churches have turned into little more than community centers and social clubs. They are more involved with ball teams and scout troops than with Bible teaching. The highways are crowded with their buses taking various age groups to every kind of amusement area in the country from Disney World to Lake Wannesauka. Their advertising reads for all the world like a circus flyer, offering prizes, free gifts, and **fun**. Often, no promise is made of anything spiritual at all.

Others realizing that the gospel "is the power of God unto salvation" limit their activities more to preaching. But even here, appeal is still to the worldly tastes of our generation. If possible, preachers are obtained who have made a big reputation in sports, in entertainment, or in government. Otherwise, great emphasis is given in advertising to the educational attainments of the speaker or to his gifts as a "dynamic, powerful, eloquent" speaker.

God's Way

The problems of disinterested people is not new. It existed in some places even in the first century. Paul said it existed in Corinth. "For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness" (1 Corinthians 1:22-23).

Paul had the power to offer signs to the Jews and the knowledge to compete with the Greeks in worldly wisdom. The philosophy described above would have suggested advertisement of a lecture on "The Judaistic Philosophy in the Roman World." Obtaining his audience with this, he could then slip in a little about Jesus and the cross. But this was not Paul's approach, as he told us: "For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2). Human philosophy and human wisdom had no place in Paul's plan for saving the lost in Corinth.

Preaching only the gospel, of course, Paul could have announced himself as "Dr. Paul, graduate of the University of Gamaliel, noted author, world traveler, inspired and dynamic lecturer." Rather, he says, "And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God...I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God" (1 Corinthians 2:1, 3-5).

Worldly appeals simply cannot save lost men. And to attach them to the gospel is to cheapen the good news of Jesus Christ. By such appeals we may increase numbers and even "make waves," but such individuals in the local church are liabilities rather than assets. As materials in God's building they are classified as "wood, hay, and straw." Paul warns against building such material into the church: "According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a founda-

tion, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it....Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work" (1 Corinthians 3:10, 12, 13).

~via *Southport Sounder*, Indianapolis, Indiana.



Do We Lay It To Heart?

Robert F. Turner

Every parent knows the difference in "Do I have to go?" and "Do I get to go?" "Do I have to go to bed?" means the child wants to stay up. "Do I get to go to the show?" means the child wouldn't miss it for anything.

Isn't it strange that some of us will wave those same clear signals with reference to the Lord's services, and not see that we are being just as transparent as our children? "Do we have to go to Bible study?" says the same thing about our desires as it does when voiced by our child. When one asks, "How much must I give?," he is clearly saying, "I do not want to give anything, and would like to know how little will pay the bill." Either that, or he has failed to grasp the most fundamental and essential element in the spirit of acceptable service unto God.

There can be no coming to Christ except we deny or give up self (Matthew 16:24). Translated into the context of "doing" this means we must first want to do all possible (100% committed) to serve the Lord. The proper spirit must motivate the doing, or it is shallow and empty – may even be an abomination in His sight (Hosea 6:6). God told the priest of Judaism, "If ye will not lay it to heart,

to give glory unto my name...then will I send the curse upon you, and I will curse your blessing; yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart” (Malachi 2:2).

Lay it to heart! That means truly respect God; take Him seriously. The priests had offered polluted bread on the altar (Malachi 1:7); offered blind and lame animals as sacrifice (Malachi 1:8). They said of worship, “What a weariness it is!” (Malachi 1:13-14). To make this current, they said, “Do we have to do or give?” “Do it any old way, just get it over with; we want to go home to the TV.” And to top it off, when rebuked, they acted so innocent and said, “When did we ever do that?”

“Oh, that there were one among you that would shut the doors, that ye might not kindle fire on mine altar in vain” (Malachi 1:10). Better to close up shop – call it off – than to play at worship, and not “lay it to heart.”

~via *The Gospel Observer*, Avondale, Pennsylvania.



Attitude, What Is It?

Glen Young

Space travel fascinates me. The early days when men were locked into a capsule placed on the end of a gigantic bullet, and shot into space were electrifying

Achievements in the space program came with risks. One such risk was re-entry into the atmosphere of the earth. There were men called “retro-officers” whose sole responsibility was to see that the spacecraft came in safely.

The risk had to do with ‘attitude’. If the attitude of the spacecraft was incorrect, it could penetrate the atmosphere of the earth too steeply and burn up or it could bounce off the atmosphere like a stone skipping across a lake.

One of NASA’s retro-officers defined ‘at-

titude’ as, “Attitude is where you are in relation to where you ought to be.” Upon re-entry, a spacecraft must be in relation to the earth where it ought to be or it will fail to land safely.

There is another attitude that is important to you and me. It is the attitude of mind found in all of us. While growing up, our parents confronted us over our ‘bad’ attitudes. Bad attitudes have caused many a young man much grief. This makes us to ask, why do we have them and what can we do about it?

God made us to be sentient beings. This means He created us to have perception and consciousness. He made us so that we could experience sensation or feeling. Therefore, attitude in man is his state of mind or disposition toward a thing. We form an attitude about a particular thing based upon how we feel about it. If our attitude is good, it is appropriate for the accomplishing assigned responsibility. Good attitudes are extremely important in life. Without them, man flounders in a life of disappointing failure. A good attitude in religion is essential. Man’s disposition toward God has eternal consequences.

How do we know if we have an appropriate attitude? Solomon will do as an example. The death of David brought about Solomon’s ascension to the throne. Solomon went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices (1 Kings 3) where the Lord appeared to him in a dream. Solomon showed his good attitude when he asked for wisdom to rule the people of God. He knew where he was in relation to where he ought to be. As we read the text, we find that Solomon loved God (v. 3), he was humbled by the task (v. 7), and he sought God’s help by asking for wisdom (v. 9) and he worshiped the Lord (v. 15).

The next time you find the challenge to grow spiritually too difficult, the services too boring, the Bible class without substance, or the preaching without edification, ask yourself, is my attitude good? You might find that you are not where you ought to be in relation to God.

~via *Road Creek Bulletin*, Elkhorn City Kentucky

News & Notes

THE SICK: *Millinea Word's brother, Paul McCafferty*, is in the ECM Hospital in Florence in ICU and not doing well ... *Millinea Word's sister, Collista Shelton*, is now at home after spending a couple of days in the hospital in Athens... *James McConnell father, Albert McConnell*, had surgery this past Monday in Huntsville and is now at home ... *Rodney McCrary's sister and Rocky Rose's aunt, Becky Rose*, had surgery on her knee on Friday and is at home .. *Jerry Dickey's mother, Pat Dickey*, moved back to the Florence Comprehensive Care Rehabilitation this past Friday ... Remember *Scottie Goode's father, Hubert Goode*, as he is taking treatments in Athens... *Kerry Cox's grandfather, Coy Lowman*, continues about the same at home ... *Millinea Word* is taking medication treatments ... *Mattie Blanche Word* continues at home and not able to be out .. *Millinea Word's mother, Nola McCafferty*, and *Aldeen Noles* are in the SunBridge Nursing Home in Lawrenceburg .. *Sheila Moore's mother-in-law, Laurene Whitehead*, is in the Athens Convalescent Center .. *Mary Best's nephew, Shannon Johnson*, who is at home ... *Tisha Thomas' grandmother, Nellie Hunter*, who are both in the Meadow Brook Nursing Home in Pulaski.

OUT OF TOWN: *The Rogers: Mike, Tisha, Zachary and Jacob* are in Indiana visiting over the holidays.

VOLUME 8 ENDS: With this issue, Volume 8 of the *Gospel Power* closes. The *Gospel Power* is mailed into 630 homes each week and I hear words of encouragement from many of the readers. At the end of the year let me express my appreciation for the all the kind words of encouragement concerning this work and for the readers of this bulletin each week. I hope that as we read the articles each week that it will help to grow in faith, love and dedication to Christ. If you ever have any comments or questions I would be glad to hear from you.

Gospel POWER

is published in interest of New Testament Christianity and to enhance the work of the Anderson church.

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Bible Classes 9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship 10:45 a.m.
Evening Worship 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Classes 7:00 p.m.

Anderson church Home Page

Anderson-church.org

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