

The Wednesday Word, August 8,2023: Bathed in the Gospel - Part 3

Gospel faith is mighty, not in itself, but mighty because of its object, the Lord Jesus Christ. Just as the Spirit of God always points away from Himself, so too, gospel faith always points away from itself towards the Lamb of God (John 16:13-14). A faith-filled Church will be a Christ-centered Church and a Christ-centered Church will be a faith-filled Church. If the gospel, however, is not the center of the church, there will be no genuine exploits done for God. Without a Christ center, service in His cause becomes an inconvenient chore. The Pastor will continually plead for volunteers to help with evangelism and other forms of service and yes, he'll get plenty of 'volunteers' if he can make them feel guilty enough ... but what a mess they can make of the cause of Christ.

If the gospel does not hold first place in our Churches, it holds no place. Unfortunately, in much of today's church, the gospel is continually being given a subordinate role. Either it is misunderstood and presented as Christ's work within the believer, or it is seen as useful only to get the lost saved.

Like the ancient Christians at Corinth, many believers today are occupied with their experiences rather than by being captured by a love for Jesus. The condition of the believer's heart, like a spoiled child, is demanding center stage. If we are Spirit led, however, we will learn from Paul and his words of wisdom to the out-of-balance church at Corinth. They were in a mess because they were totally absorbed with themselves and their experiences. What does Paul say to them? Let's re-read his words,

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also you have received, and wherein you stand; by which also you are saved, if you keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless you have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." 1 Corinthians 15:1-4.

History is repeating itself! That which happened at Corinth is once more happening to many of our Churches today. Well-packaged false teachings have come in among the believers, saying, "You have the gospel ... that's fine ... just what the Doctor ordered to begin the Christian life. Now you must go on and rise higher in God. We bring to you the mystery of the deeper life, the 'full gospel', the real secret of victorious living and the crucified life. "

In short, Jesus Christ, His person, work, and offices have now become too boring and unexciting for many Christians. Many church services are held and Christ Jesus is paid lip service only. In many cases, we have lost the desire and the ability to gather together unto Him. On the contrary, Church meetings are now all about the believer and his Christian progress (divorced from the cross) and about how good he can feel. This is the road to apostasy! The gospel has been demoted to something unimportant for the Church. Christ Jesus has been given a back seat and will shortly be thrust out the door. But let Christ crucified be preached and the Church will undergo revival and awakening.

I like what Spurgeon said,

“The Gospel never was unsuccessful yet when it was preached with the demonstration of the Spirit and with power. It is not fine orations upon the death of princes, or the movements of politics, which will save souls. If we wish to have sinners saved and to have our churches increased; if we desire the spread of God's kingdom, the only thing -you need is plain Gospel preaching, the lifting up of Christ; for "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."

And that's the Gospel Truth!