

Gospel Meetings

There are many who think the “Gospel Meeting” is passé; it has outlived its purpose and popularity. To be sure, there are a lot of factors in current culture that mitigate abandoning such events. After all, when the ol’ brush arbor meetings were all the rage, couch potatoes didn’t have televisions in front of which to ~~bow down~~ (sorry) plop down before after a long, hard day (and, these days, many start much earlier) to fritter away countless hours of otherwise productive time. It gives new meaning to the warning from Paul: **“redeeming the time, because the days are evil”** (Ephesians 5:16). Still, does the Gospel Meeting have a place in the effort to spread the Gospel?

One reason for continuing the “tradition” is based in the Bible. And, yes, very often what the Lord’s church does or doesn’t do is predicated upon pop culture or a meet-them-where-they-are mentality or the latest “flavor of the month” method of “serving” God. However, God often chooses ways in which to promulgate His Message that seem not to make sense to the masses. Hence,

“For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.” 1 Corinthians 1:21

Evidently, there are still a vast number looking for a sign (or, at least, some kind of entertainment) or a wisdom from the world (TED talks, maybe). God’s wisdom in relaying His Message through the preaching of the Word is still a most effective, successful way in which to spread the Gospel. To abandon it because a majority may choose to make poor choices, preferring something other than preaching, is a path of foolishness.

It is also noteworthy that the manner in which the Gospel Meeting is conducted can fluctuate with culture. Jesus adapted His *modus operandi* to fit His audience and did so without ever compromising truth; He only spoke those things that the Father told Him to speak (John 12:49; 14:10). Sometimes Jesus talked privately with individuals (John 3:1ff), at other times with small groups (Matthew 10:1ff) but, most of the time, Jesus spoke to large crowds. In fact, He often had trouble physically navigating through the press of the crowd to which He spoke (cf. Matthew 5:1; Mark 3:9; Luke 8:48). If Jesus’ standard operating procedure (SOP for you military folks) was to speak to crowds, how could that be wrong today? It is certainly authorized by the Bible.

Maybe, just maybe, the nay-sayers and party-poopers are less than enthusiastic about Gospel Meetings because it cramps their life-style. You know, the life-style that resides in the “#it’s-all-about-me” generation many have embraced that founds every decision in life on personal preferences, pleasure and... well, you get the idea. Gospel Meetings will be successful when we do our part. Attend the event, invite your neighbor to attend and, because of the message your neighbor will hear, **“...sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear...”** (1 Peter 3:15).

Jeff Sweeten