



Why do we Have the Gospel Meetings?

Very few non-Christians will visit gospel meetings. If we can in this article, I'd like to point out some legitimate reasons for, and some goals we should reach for as we focus on our gospel meeting. We do want it to be effective and encouraging to all.

First things, let's not forget where the source of all faith is, that is "*faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*" – Romans 10:17. So, it's not too much to say the purpose of preaching the gospel is simple: This is God's ordained method of creating faith. Take time and re-read these verses in Romans chapter 10 verses 13-17. You'll see that no one can call on Jesus without faith, and the word needs preached for that seed to be planted, and the feet of those who plant are beautiful. Preaching may seem foolish to some who think they're wise, but "*...it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe*" (1 Cor. 1:21). If we want to reach the hearts of people, both saved and unsaved, we need preaching.

We Preach to Save the Lost: We know not one can be saved without faith (John 8:24; Mark 16:15-16). There are non-Christians who still attend gospel meetings. Friends, classmates, co-workers, walk-ins, preaching the gospel is an effort to save them. "*Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus*" (Col. 1:28). We also hold gospel meetings for every member knowing full well that Christians need preaching as says the warning, "*Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God*" (Hebrews 3:12). The quickest way to start the fall, is to stop the hearing.

What then is the Purpose of Gospel Meetings? 1. Preaching serves to save the erring Christians. Sometimes hearing the word from another preacher opens otherwise closed minds. We preach with the purpose of restoring them to the Lord (Gal. 6:1; Jas. 5:19-20). 2. Preaching is a **Testimony to the World**. When the world of old stopped up their ears, became stiff-necked, what was God's message to his prophets? It was not quit preaching! I am reminded of God's word to Ezekiel. He instructed him to go to the hardhearted in the house of Israel, knowing full well when he sent the prophet that the people would not hear. Yet, God said, "*7 But the house of Israel will not listen to you, because they will not listen to Me; for all the house of Israel are [a]impudent and hard-hearted. 8 Behold, I have made your face strong against their faces, and your forehead strong against their foreheads. 9 Like adamant stone, harder than flint, I have made your forehead; do not be afraid of them, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they are a rebellious house*" (Ezekiel 3:7-9). Remember Noah? He ministered as a "*preacher of righteousness*" for 120 years while the ark was being prepared (Heb. 11:7; 1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:5). Yet, he was only able to save his own household. Should he have done less preaching? There isn't any question that today because of what is being taught to our youth from the ground up, that many today have no interest in spiritual things. But they weren't interested in Noah's day, and he continued to preach.

Also know that Home Bible studies, internet, correspondence courses, bulletins, newspaper articles, and others are means of reaching out to those who are lost in sin. The gospel meeting is just one more method.

We also need to Protect What We Have. The preaching in gospel meetings will strengthen all Christians who attend. This helps us spiritually! What is the best way to hold the ones we have in the church, and protect them from falling? We must keep their faith strong in the Lord, lift up their weary hands. Continue to teach them the



"And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

word of God's grace. As Paul departed from the elders of the church at Ephesus, he said, *“So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified”* (Acts 20:32). By teaching of the word of God's grace we strengthen every hearer's faith. We preach the gospel to hold what we already have won for Christ.

Who would say that Less Preaching is the Answer? If we understand that preaching is the divinely ordained way to create, build, and strengthen faith, we should immediately see that less preaching will produce less faith! We must understand more preaching is the answer!

What does the fisherman do when the fish are not biting? He fishes harder, and in as many spots as possible. We are living in a time when the "fish" (non-Christians) are not biting as much. My wife will confirm what I say when they're not biting. "Just one more cast".

To say that we preach to Save Our Own Souls might sound strange, but it's not! We have a responsibility to make sure the world knows the word of God. As God appointed Ezekiel as a watchman for the house of Israel, he said, *“Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me: 18 When I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. 19 Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul”* (Eze.3:17-19). Paul had the same thought in mind when he told the elders of the church at Ephesus that he was *“innocent of the blood of all men”*. Why was he innocent? Because he declared the whole counsel of God to them (Acts 20:26; Acts 20:27). Can you truly say I'm free from the blood of all men without preaching the word of God to them? Not at all. Remember Galatians 6:7, *“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.”*

There is just No Excuse For Not Working. I want to be bold and say, the fact of the matter is that too many churches have fallen into the rut of having a spring and fall gospel meeting from habit and custom. Many Christians are not inviting their friends, relatives, and neighbors to hear the gospel preached. They do not talk to those with whom they come in contact to open doors of opportunities for the gospel. Then when no one comes to the meeting, they say, "Gospel meetings aren't doing any good anymore." Really! No lie is of the truth (1 John 2:21) my brethren. What we need is honesty, and integrity. If you've quit working to reach your friends and neighbors with the gospel--repent. Don't follow the pattern of so many who are too pre-occupied with the cares of this world to even come to the meeting themselves, much less bring someone with them. We need to repent of our sinful negligence and apathy and give ourselves totally to the Lord's work. Then I assure you brethren: You will be tremendously surprised at how much good can be done in gospel meetings.

The truth is that if every member of the body in a local congregation will put forth the effort the lost will be reached, souls will be saved, and saints will be strengthened.

In Love

Dave Scarpino

