

When Does The Gospel Have Power?

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The apostle Paul wrote in Romans 1:16, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” As one considers the statement that the gospel “is the power of God unto salvation,” one must ask when does the gospel have power? Because the gospel is the word of God, it is always powerful, or better stated, it always has the potential of being powerful. That is it always has the capability, the ability, the capacity to be powerful. This implies that there are times when it is not powerful, but those times are not because of the gospel but because man has suppressed it in some way. So, when does the gospel have power?

The Gospel Has Power When Men Have the Courage to Proclaim it!

In our text, Paul is speaking of the preaching of the gospel. In Romans 1:15 Paul wrote, “So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.” The gospel has no power to the believer if it is not heard by the believer. In Romans 10:14 Paul asked these questions, “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?” The answer to the questions are obvious. One cannot call on him in whom they have not believed and one cannot believe in him of whom they have not heard. Thus, it would be impossible to come to faith if the gospel was not heard for Romans 10:17 says “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” A gospel that is suppressed because no one will proclaim it is a gospel that has lost its power. A stick of dynamite has no power if the fuse is not lit. Paul recognized that a part of the power of the gospel was in the proclamation of the gospel, and, thus, he declared that he “was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.”

When preachers will not preach the oracles of God, the whole council of God, the word of God, they suppress the life giving flow and the power of the gospel. A watered down, weak gospel can only produce watered down, weak Christians. Preachers who preach more “I think’s” and “fables” than “thus saith the Lord” should be ashamed and repent. And, Christians who tolerate such preaching should also be ashamed and repent. Has the gospel lost its power? NO! Therefore, we need preachers who will “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Timothy 4:2) for the power

of the gospel can only yield fruit if it is proclaimed. The sword must come out of its sheath!

The Gospel Has Power When Men Have the Courage to Obey It!

Remember, Paul wrote that the gospel “is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” The one who is too timid or too cowardly to believe and obey the gospel has not been moved by the power of the gospel. They are not like those on Pentecost who when they heard the preaching of the gospel, “they were pricked in their heart and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Act 2:37). As a result, “they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41).

Remember also, that “it is the power of God unto salvation.” There are those who have been moved by the power of gospel but not to the desired intent. In Acts 5:33, Luke recorded that the Sanhedrin were “cut to the heart” by Peter and John’s preaching, but they “took counsel to slay them.” Also in Acts 7:54, Luke recorded that because of the preaching of Stephen, the Jerusalem council was again “cut to the heart,” but “they gnashed on him with their teeth,” and “they stoned Stephen” (Acts 7:59). Nevertheless, there were some priests who were moved by the power of the gospel to the desired intent. Luke wrote that “a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith” (Acts 6:7).

The gospel is the most powerful tool known to man for it has the ability to change a person’s life, and it alone offers eternal salvation for it will be the standard on the judgment day (John 12:48).