

Sunday, March 17, 2024 pm

## A GOSPEL MEETING

In 3 weeks, our spring Gospel Meeting with Micky Galloway will begin. We have already begun making preparations for this effort. But it is good for us, from time to time to think about why we are doing this. So tonight, I want to present a lesson reminding us of some of the things this effort can accomplish IF we are willing to put forth effort to be a part of it. I am going to present this lesson as an acrostic of the words, 'GOSPEL MEETING'. I did a similar lesson about 8 years ago, but have reworked it a little tonight.

### I. Gathering Together

- a. Hebrews 10:24-25 – a passage that addresses assembling. Of note is that it is written to designate WHENEVER we assemble, not a specific assembly.
- b. Assembling is not a subject that ought to be debated among brethren (whether or not it is necessary). It ought to be a desire. As David said in Psalm 122:1, *I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go into the house of the Lord."*
- c. Acts 20:7 talks about how the disciples came together. Acts 2:42 notes how they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrines... (learning together what to do). Acts 10:33, Cornelius knew that Peter was coming to teach him the gospel so he gathered together his family to learn.
- d. Gospel meetings provide a more intensified opportunity to assemble to worship God and be with one another as brethren.

### II. Opportunity to grow

- a. 2 Peter 3:17-18 – Peter concluded his 2<sup>nd</sup> letter encouraging the brethren to keep growing “in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”
- b. 1 Peter 2:1-2 calls for us to desire to pure (sincere) milk of the word that we may grow thereby.
- c. Hebrews 5:12-14 finds the writer lovingly rebuking his readers because they had NOT grown in God’s word as they ought to.
- d. We grow in God’s word and spiritually by studying and practicing God’s word on a daily basis. BUT, we also grow when we come together to hear God’s word. This gospel meeting will afford us opportunity to grow in knowledge, and perhaps continue to grow closer to one another, etc.

### III. Sharing the good news with others

- a. Matthew 28:18-19 we find “the great commission”. In that we are reminded that God does not want us to keep the “good news” to ourselves. Instead He wants us to share it with others.
- b. 1 Thessalonians 1:8, Paul commended the church in that city because, *For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything.*
- c. Gospel meetings are still a valuable and useful tool, if properly managed (promoted and executed). They provide more opportunities for us to invite our friends, family, neighbors and others to come and hear the gospel proclaimed. More opportunities increases the likelihood someone we know will come.

### IV. Participation

- a. The success of any worthwhile effort depends on our willingness to each do our share.
- b. Ephesians 4:16 describes how the body of Christ grows when every part does its share.
- c. Recall the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem in Nehemiah – Nehemiah 3-6 describes how the people worked together (including leaders – both secular and religious, women, brethren from surrounding towns, and able bodied men, etc.). They were able to accomplish a monumental

- task while facing obstacles and other challenges. We are told the walls were completed in 52 days (Nehemiah 6:15). How did the work get done? “The people had a mind to work” (Neh. 4:6).
- d. People often describe how gospel meetings are not successful like they used to be. While I admit we are living in different times, I still believe these efforts could be more successful IF we are ALL willing to pitch in and do our share.
  - e. NOTE: Keep in mind that God does not measure success the same way that we do. He looks at the effort we put forth. He looks at HOW we participated, etc.
  - f. NOTE: Participation is more than just being here. It involves your preparation (cf. Ezra 7:10), as well as how you participate in the worship services. The point is, IF you are doing your best, you WILL benefit from the effort.

**V. Edified by His word**

- a. Ephesians 4:16 – Paul notes the result when “every part does its share” (participates). The body grows for “the edifying of itself in love”. The word edify is from a Greek word that is associated with building a house (οἰκοδομή, oikodomē). The idea is that we are being built up spiritually. In fact, Peter spoke of us being built up as a spiritual house (1 Peter 2:5). The point is we NEED to be edifying each other.
- b. God’s word is a tool that can build us up (Cf. Ephesians 4:11-16). Acts 20:32, finds Paul commending the Ephesian elders to “*the word of His grace is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among those who are being sanctified.*”
- c. 1 Corinthians 14:12, 26, calls for us consider “the edification of the church” as we assemble together.
- d. IF we are here with a proper attitude, we WILL be edified as God’s word is taught. AND, likely we will edify one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

**VI. Love that motivates**

- a. What is the motivation behind our assembling? Among the prime reasons ought to be our love for God and one another. AND our love for the souls of others ought to move us to do what we can to share God’s message with them.
- b. Remember the greatest commands – Matthew 22:37-39 – love God and your neighbor as yourself. We emphasize the importance of love often because the Bible does it also.
- c. A gospel meeting gives us opportunity to further develop that love. Consider also John 13:34-35 – others will believe in Him when we love one another as we ought to.

**VII. Minding the things of the Spirit as we follow His pattern**

- a. Romans 8:5 – what do such efforts show about what is really important to us? Are our minds on the things of the flesh or the spirit? Only ONE answer helps us to be prepared to stand before God.
- b. That is why, when we have efforts like this, we strive to keep in mind God’s pattern. We are not trying to attract others, OR even our own members, with entertainment, social programs or prizes. We are striving to glorify God and His will. The only thing that we will offer is the uncompromised word of God. Why? Because that is the ONLY thing that if it attracts has lasting value. Everything else is gimmicks.
- c. Col. 3:17 calls for us to do all in the name of the Lord, meaning by His authority.

**VIII. Examples to others**

- a. Gospel meetings give us opportunity to SHOW others what is important to us. People are always watching – our neighbors, friends and associates. They are looking to see what we are going to do.

- b. When we determine to not let worldly pursuits overtake our faith, we are letting the world AND our fellow brethren know how important God really is. We are declaring how our lives are enshrouded in our Lord (cf. Galatians 2:20)
- c. Matthew 5:16, Philippians 2:15, etc. emphasize the importance of being a godly example.

**IX. Exposing the works of darkness**

- a. In a confused world, some are looking for real answers. While they may be few and far between, there are still some who want the uncompromised truth.
- b. Gospel preaching not only exhorts and edifies, it also reproves (convinces) and rebukes (2 Timothy 4:2-3). The gospel is described as, “the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God (Ephesians 6:17). See also Hebrews 4:12.
- c. Those genuinely seeking truth want to know not only what is truth, but also if what others are teaching is NOT truth. Heed Paul warning in Ephesians 5:11.

**X. Taking time to Worship God**

- a. I will be the first to admit that gospel meetings are challenging. They interrupt our routine and makes our lives a little more tiresome. Most of us still have jobs to do and tasks that need to be met. We have to MAKE TIME, which usually means sacrificing some of our “down time” for the week.
- b. BUT, if our heart is where it ought to be, we will gladly “spend and be spent” (cf. 2 Corinthians 12:15) for what we deem to be a worthy cause.
- c. Considering all that God has done for us, He IS worthy of our praise and worship. He is worthy of a little extra time for a week.

**XI. Invitations need to be extended**

- a. Romans 10:13-15, while speaking of one “calling on the name of the Lord” notes that how can one do that if he doesn’t hear. That is why preachers are sent.
- b. How will others know about this effort IF we do not take the time to invite others – our friends and neighbors?
- c. The prepared lessons will not only edify us, they will also introduce the gospel to those who are searching. Each evening, as we always do, we will offer an invitation (cf. Acts 2:40, Matthew 11:28-30, etc.). AGAIN, only those who hear that invitation will have opportunity to respond.

**XII. NOW is the time to prepare.**

- a. Our meeting is still 3 weeks out. That means we have some time to make preparations. Don’t wait to the last minute. Start planning now and you will not be rushed then.
- b. Again, in our studies of both Ezra and Nehemiah we have seen the value of taking time to prepare BEFORE engaging in an effort.
- c. 2 Corinthians 6:2 reminds us that “NOW is the day of salvation”
- d. AND with this let us not forget that we do not know how much time we have overall. This might be the LAST opportunity for someone (cf. James 4:14, 2 Corinthians 5:10-11).

**XIII. GO! Get busy!**

- a. As I conclude this lesson I just want to encourage us to go. Get started and do what we can.
- b. Matthew 28:18, which we started with. Jesus told His disciples, “Go...!” Matthew 10:7, earlier He had told His disciples, “And as you go, preach...”
- c. The life of a Christian is about going and doing.
- d. Just ask, If everyone was like me, what would happen during this effort?

And thus we have a description of a GOSPEL MEETING. Some reasons why we are having this meeting and what we need to do about it.

Many congregations have either eliminated or reduced (both in number and in length) efforts such as this. While each congregation is certainly autonomous and independent and makes choices based upon its own circumstances (and we must respect their choices provided they are authorized), it is disturbing to me to see this as the trend. For the foreseeable future it is our hope that we will be able to continue to offer Gospel meetings as a work of the church here. But for such to be viable depends on each of us making every effort we can to make this effort successful, not only for us personally, but also pleasing to God. I know these weeks are long and tiresome, but it is still worthwhile and will build you up if you put effort toward that end. So, can we count on you? Think about it!