Is the Gospel still enough?

“Christ came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief,” said the apostle Paul. It was Paul’s zeal for Christ that gave us a major part of the New Testament and helped to establish churches in the greater part of Asia. The good news of Jesus combined with his extensive knowledge of the Law and the prophets were the apostle’s only tools to lead people to salvation. The Gospel was enough even to sustain Paul while he was locked in the Miramar prison in Rome. It was enough that the apostle could face the grace of the Gospel with sweet assurance while sitting on death row. The Gospel has saved innumerable souls… but is it still enough today?

Growing up and living in the “Bible belt” of America, I have been privileged to have had an endless supply of churches to attend. Whether it be in revivals, vacation bible schools, ordinations, bible studies or music schools, I have attended more churches than I can count or remember. Some of them approached worship similarly while others did things a little differently, but all of them had a focus on one thing: The Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Today we can turn on our televisions and find worship delivered to our living rooms. We have churches that conduct worship on multiple campuses that utilize as much technology as Microsoft or Apple. There are more than a few worship styles that are out there. In an effort to reach the younger generations, we add music that is more appealing, lighting and sound effects that rival a Hollywood production, coffee shops, and more. Please don’t misunderstand; those things can be wonderful tools for reaching a fallen people if they are just that: tools. Certainly the larger churches that have those tools at their disposal are attracting a larger number of un-churched for worship, and as long as the Gospel that is being preached is true and unchanged people will have an opportunity to be saved. This is awesome!

Now, what about the smaller churches with neither the budget nor the people to put on the Hollywood productions? Those that still prefer a traditional style of worship filled with hymnal singing, a single piano or perhaps an organ to accompany the singing, a few testimonies mingled in with the worship and a preacher who has never been to seminary or had any formal education in the ministry. Sometimes it is easy for those churches to think that they cannot compete with the larger churches… and they may question, “Is the gospel still enough?” Church members see the mission trips, the crowds at worship and the extras that were previously mentioned and it is easy for them to get discouraged. Paul told the Galatians, “Be not weary in well-doing, for in due season ye shall reap if you faint not.” I say be of good cheer because the great commission which Christ left his disciples and subsequently everyone who has ever believed in Jesus to the saving of one’s soul, *is not a competition*. In order for a church to be effective it cannot make anything other than the Gospel of Jesus its primary focus. The moment our worship style, number of services we can provide our guests, or the lack thereof becomes more important, we have missed the mark. When our worship attendance becomes nothing more than a social gathering, we become ineffective. We must keep the Gospel at the center and build around it.

So, is the Gospel still enough? Absolutely! It is not just enough; it is all that we need! God has chosen to use his churches—large or small—to communicate the Gospel. “For it pleased God that by the foolishness of preaching that souls should be saved.” Without the Gospel we are no church at all, at least not one that will impact and shape our communities and our world.

Yours In Christ,

Mark Dennis