

Can't Afford To or Can't Afford Not To?

John Isaac Edwards

Some have decided not to have gospel meetings or cut out the support of gospel preaching thinking, “We can’t afford to...”

The Value of the Gospel. The value of the gospel is seen several ways. *The gospel saves.* Paul penned, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth...” (Romans 1:16). Thus, Paul spoke of “the gospel of your salvation” (Ephesians 1:13). Surely we have not lost sight of the fact that souls need to be saved or lost confidence in the ability of the gospel to save! *The gospel stablishes.* Romans 16:25 records, “Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel...” Do we no longer need to be stablished? *The gospel has begetting power.* Paul informed the Corinthians, “...for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel” (1 Corinthians 4:15). Do folks still need to be begotten? *It is by the gospel that folks are called.* “Whereunto he called you by our gospel...” (2 Thessalonians 2:14). For folks to answer the gospel call, the gospel must be heard!

The Gospel Must Be Preached. Like a sower and seed (Luke 8:4-15), the gospel and preaching go together (1 Peter 1:23, 25)! The Lord commissioned, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned”

(Mark 16:15-16). “...it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Corinthians 1:21). God “...manifested his word through preaching...” (Titus 1:3).

How Shall They Preach, Except They Be Sent? Paul asked, “And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” (Romans 10:15). For preachers to go preach, someone must send. Churches in the New Testament sent preachers (Acts 11:22; 13:3-4) and sent to preachers (Philippians 4:16-18). Perhaps we need to be reminded that the church is “...the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15) and “Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel” (1 Corinthians 9:14).

We need a healthy respect for the value of gospel preaching! Is it possible that we have become lazy and apathetic, don’t want to attend gospel meetings, don’t think gospel preaching does any good, or allowed “cares and riches and pleasures of this life” (Luke 8:14) to get in the way? We need to think hard and long at just what is being cut when gospel preaching and support of such are eliminated. Remember, “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost” (2 Corinthians 4:3). Spiritually minded and sacrificial brethren need to step up and say, “We can’t afford not to...!”

God's Power to Draw and Save

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Many have lost sight of the power God uses in drawing and saving man.

Not a Building. Fancy buildings are impressive. However, God's power to draw and save is not in an elaborate and ornate edifice. "God...dwelleth not in temples made with hands" (Acts 17:24). Just a modest "assembling place" (Acts 4:31; Hebrews 10:25) is all that is needed.

Not an Eloquent, Well-Educated Preacher. Paul said, "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified....And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Corinthians 2:1-5). It was perceived that Peter and John "...were unlearned and ignorant men..." that "...had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13). The Scriptures warn of those who "...by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16:18).

Not Relaxed Standards. Some have become less strict than the Lord. Worldliness goes unchecked, sin is tolerated, and discipline is left unadministered. Those who would take a stand are viewed as troublemakers. A casual atmosphere, slackened rules and discipline, and a kinder, gentler approach may be attractive to some, but God's threat of punishment upon sinners is just as real today as it has ever been (Hebrews 10:26-31; Revelation 20:15).

Not Food, Fun, and Frolic. Banquets, carnivals, concerts, sports teams: if you want it you can find a church that has it. The Lord's church, however, is still "a spiritual house" (1 Peter 2:5). Romans 14:17 still says, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink..." The Lord never put His church in the entertainment and recreation business!

Just Christ and the Simple Gospel. Jesus said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32). Paul wrote, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation..." (Romans 1:16). If the cross and simplicity of the gospel of Christ are appealing to you, we have what you are looking for.

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