

A Circus Church for the Carnival Minded

By Pastor Melvin E. Barnett

When was the last time you heard a message on the Gospel? Today, there is a famine of spiritual truth in our Churches. The modern church is slowly conditioning congregations into self-serving entertainment atmospheres. The evidence of this fact is now present in our sermons, our music, our casual “come as you are” invitations, and last, but not least, our attire. My friend, we need not forget that we are sinners saved by Grace and that no matter how far we seemingly evolve in our revelations of God, He is still Holy and Righteous; and our hearts are still desperately wicked. *Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*

Churches have watered the Gospel down so much that sinners can regularly attend and sit comfortably in our services without ever being confronted with their moral state and eternal destiny. However, the Gospel isn't just to serve as an evangelistic message to save the sinners. The Gospel also serves as a continual reminder to the Saints of the power of God that saved them from their sins, their total depravity without the gift of Grace, and the consequences of sin in the lives of both saint and sinner. (Rom 1:16)

Today, many churches give focus to a Gospel that deprives the congregation of the Word. Rather, the message is filled with fluffy empty words and topped with sprinkles of false assurances to the believer – rendering it void of power and the anointing. In this atmosphere, young pastors taunt our seasoned pastors and elders concerning their simple but persevering Faith that lacked any Greek or Hebrew definitions but was filled with fire and demonstrations of the Spirit. Powerpoint presentations of seemingly deep spiritual truths led by an irreverently dressed pastor are the norm in many of our new and fastest-growing churches. Yet their messages are absent of Power and the anointing of the Holy Ghost.

There was a time that men and women were moved by the Holy Ghost as they danced and shouted down the aisles. Today that has been replaced with useless, entertaining choreographed dances often performed in immodest apparel in the Sanctuary of our God (Lev. 19:30). The fire that once burned in the messages of Pastors that moved on the heart of sinner man to run to the altar and repent of their sins has been extinguished by dry sermons and godless programs that fail to even mention subjects such as the Gospel, Hell and Sin.

Many Pastors feel that they must compete with sit-coms, reality TV, and broadband multimedia phones and trinkets to reach this generation. There is a famine in our land – our Churches are parched with dead, dry worship and sermons while our civilization drowns in entertainment on every front. More than anything, we need the rivers of living waters to flow through our men and women and saturate our altars again with the power and unction of the Holy Ghost.

My friend, we don't need another seeker sensitive church. We need a church on fire that dares to preach the Gospel and longs to make disciples for our Lord Jesus Christ and His Kingdom! We don't need a useless, antiquated shofar to mimic an alarm in the camp. We need to hear Pastors declare the Gospel to a lost and dying world!

As Churches transform each day into what looks like a circus, parishioners are demanding sermons and programs that are spiritually empty just as funnel cakes, corn dogs and cotton candy are devoid of any nutritional value. The people appear fattened, but under closer examination they are spiritually anemic and contaminated with fungus from the leaven of this world (Gal 5:9). Their countenance is ashen because of the deprivation of the fruit of the spirit. In short – our people are weak because of an immune system that lacks the power of the Blood.

My friend, we must get back to the basics. Just as you and I must have a steady portioned diet of dairy, meats, vegetables, fruits and grains to achieve optimum health in our bodies, our Soul and Spirit must be exposed to the four basic groups of the Gospel found in 1 Thessalonians 1:5 *“For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake”*.

The Apostle Paul points out the handicap of a Gospel if ministered in Word only. Moreover, a Gospel that is based on the Word coupled with emphasis on the assurance of the believer will also lack power to produce victory in the lives of new-born Christians. Balance is the key to the regenerating power of God saving the lives of sinners as well as the success of Christian living for the saints. When the Gospel is fully preached in Word, Power, Spirit and Assurance, ministers will see their churches explode with converts as well as experience much needed revival.

As a man needs food and water to physically survive, the lost as well as the saved must partake of the four basic groups of the Gospel to stay spiritually alive and fit for the Kingdom of God. We have been indulged on spiritual junk food too long. Unfortunately, the circus isn't leaving any time soon; therefore, you and I must leave the circus. Yes, it has been fun; but don't think for a moment that many have not paid a high price to sit and watch the clowns, freak shows, fortune tellers and lion tamers.

Email comments to: melvin@melvinbarnett.com
Visit online at www.melvinbarnett.com