EVANGELISTIC FERVOR – WHY WE HAVE LOST IT AND WHAT WE MUST DO ABOUT IT

INTRODUCTION:

1. The church in apostolic days had a true passion for souls.

   (1) In the beginning on Pentecost, three thousand obeyed the gospel. Acts 2:41

   (2) Daily, people were being SAVED. Acts 2:47

   (3) Soon the number of men was about five thousand. Acts 4:4

   (4) “And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both men and women…” Acts 5:14

   (5) “The number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly…” Acts 6:7

   (6) Paul expressed his strong desire to see men saved. Rom. 10:1; 1:15; I Cor. 9:16

   (7) There was a daily EMPHASIS on teaching the gospel. Acts 2:46; 5:42

   (8) Every member was involved. Acts 8:4

2. Fifty years ago the church had a greater fervor for the LOST.

3. Today the fervor for lost souls has waned.

4. The question is: “Why has the fervor waned?”

I. WHY HAVE WE LOST THE FERVOR FOR EVANGELISM?

1. Lack of CONVICTION and LOVE for the TRUTH.

   (1) Evangelism demands that we take the gospel of Christ and wage a ceaseless warfare with error. II Cor. 10: 4 – 5; I Tim. 1:18; Eph. 6:10 – 18; Jude 3; I Thess. 2:2
(2) Only the gospel can SAVE men from SIN. Rom. 1: 16 – 17; I Cor. 15: 1 – 4; Mk. 16: 15 – 16; John 8:32

(3) Many today in the church deplore the “rooting up, the tearing down” combative spirit that is necessary to reach men in sin and error. Jer. 1:10; II Tim. 4: 2 – 4

(4) These members do not know the WAR-LIKE SPIRIT of the Christ, the Lamb of God.

A. Christ came to send a SWORD. Matt. 10: 34 – 37

B. Christ warned of FALSE PROPHETS. Matt. 7:15

C. He is “The Lion of the tribe of Judah”. Rev. 5:5

D. “In righteousness he doth judge and make WAR…” Rev. 19:11

E. He confronted and exposed error. Matt. 15: 1 – 9

F. In this warfare between Christ and religious error, the gospel does its God-appointed work of finding the “honest and good heart”. Lk. 8:15; Isa. 55:11; I Cor. 3:6

2. There has been a shift in emphasis in preaching.

(1) Preachers are now seeking to comfort the saved rather than to save the lost.

(2) Much preaching deals with “felt needs” rather than with salvation from sin.

(3) Budgets are spent more for “creature comforts” and the “right image”, than for spiritual needs.

(4) There is a greater concern for this world than for the world to come.

(5) Not much is said by many about HEAVEN, HELL, SIN and LIFE AFTER DEATH.
(6) Preaching the gospel to every creature seems to have become a LOW PRIORITY with many. Mk. 16:16; Matt. 28: 19 – 20

3. A changing world.

(1) Today, both the husband and the wife work outside the home; lives are busy.

(2) All too often, the church and the lost are no longer the center of family interest.

4. Love for the world:

(1) We are too much at ease in the world, and with worldly possessions. Mk. 4: 19

(2) Too much worldliness is found among God’s people. 1 John 2: 15 – 17

5. Our Mobile Society:

(1) People freely move from place to place.

(2) Family ties are not as close as they once were, when people remained in the same communities where they were raised – consequently religious influences are not as strong.

(3) ENTERTAINMENT is a predominant force in the lives of many people today. II Tim. 3:4

(4) Worship, by comparison, often seems dull.

(5) People want the worship “jazzed up”, and a preacher who entertains.

6. The salt has gone out of the lives of many members. Mk. 9:50; Matt. 5: 13 – 16

II. WHAT CAN WE DO TO RECOVER THE THRUST OF EVANGELISM?

1. We need a CLEAR VISION of the MISSION of the church.

(1) We must cease seeing the church as a substitute for the country club.
(2) It must not become simply an organization for parties, socializing, and seeing our friends.

(3) The church is the body of Christ, with the same mission He had when He came into the world – “To seek and to save that which was lost…” Lk. 19:10; John 3:16

(4) We must lift up our eyes and look on the fields and see they are white already to harvest. John 4:35

(5) We must see “The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few…” Matt. 9:37

(6) We must, “Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest…” Matt. 9:38

2. We must turn our eyes HEAVENWARD and recognize that “This world is not my home”.

(1) Col. 3:1-2

(2) I Pet. 2:11

(3) ABRAHAM Heb. 11:10

(4) Job 16:22

3. We should know the meaning of personal involvement in the work of the church:

(1) Too many have fallen into the habit of going, sitting, leaving and forgetting.

(2) It becomes easy, then, to criticize and to speak of what “they” are doing or not doing.

(3) What about “US”?

(4) What are “WE” doing?
4. We must recognize the value of a soul – millions are NOW LOST! John 8: 21, 24

(1) Matt. 16:26

5. We need to seek the proper balance of being “in the world, without being of the world”.

(1) John 17: 14 – 16

(2) We can be citizens of this world, enjoy its bounty, go about our daily lives, and partake of its blessings, without at the same time become worldly-minded or lovers of this world. I John 2: 15

III. LET US LOOK AT WHAT TRUE EVANGELISM IS:

1. It is the preaching of the gospel to a world LOST in sin. Mk. 16: 15 – 16; Matt. 28: 19 – 20; I John 5: 19

2. It is CONFRONTING a world steeped in RELIGIOUS ERROR with the TRUTH OF GOD’S WORD. II Tim. 4:2; Eph. 5:11; Col. 1:28

3. It is “Fighting the good fight of faith…” I Tim. 6:12

4. It is URGENT preaching of the gospel “in season and out of season” that leaves a lost world without excuse. II Tim. 4:2; II Cor. 2:16

5. It is to open the eyes of the spiritually blind, to lead them out of eternal death to HOPE of eternal life in Christ. Acts 26: 18

6. It is our duty to preach and leave the results to God. Isa. 55:11; I Cor. 3:6

7. Evangelism is a mission that reaches beyond this world into the world to come.

8. We need to “lift up our eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest…” John 4:35
CONCLUSION:

1. Let all of us be more involved in teaching the gospel to others.

2. May these truths weigh heavy on our hearts that we might do better.

3. THIS SINFUL WORLD IS DAILY DRIFTING FURTHER AWAY FROM ANY SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY TO GOD, AND ONE DAY HIS MERCY WILL GIVE PLACE TO HIS WRATH AND "The heavens will pass away with a great noise, the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up..." II Pet. 3:10

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