

Is the Gospel Powerful Enough?

I have heard it all. Okay, maybe not. But surely this is close. A church in Columbia, Tennessee, was offering gas cards to visitors. I have no doubt some folks will proclaim, “How innovative! How creative!” I say, what happened to **Romans 1:16**: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (ESV).

Do we really believe it is the power of God to save? Or do we think it lacks something? I’m sure the church offering the gas cards would say they believe the Gospel has that power. They just don’t think anyone will come hear the Gospel if they don’t prop it up with a material desire like free gas.

This, of course, is no different than numerous attempts going on each week by churches all over the country. When Vacation Bible Schools look more like county fairs with free crafts and bouncy rides, are we saying the Gospel is no longer cutting it? When assemblies are more like rock concerts or club hopping, are we saying the Gospel needs to be propped up? When we attract people to the congregation by having parties for the young people, mixers for the singles, mother’s day out for the parents, are we saying that we just don’t think the Gospel is powerful enough to save people?

No church would say they are ashamed of Christ’s Gospel. But let’s get real. When folks ask, “What have you got for my children?” and we bow our heads, kick the dirt and say, “Only the Gospel,” we are showing embarrassment. When a church is adding in all these fleshly frills to get folks to attend, they are saying, “We are kind of embarrassed that the Gospel doesn’t have what you want, so we’ll add it in. Maybe while you’re here, you might catch some of the Gospel by osmosis.”

I have two things to say about this. Perhaps if more Christians would really allow the Gospel to change their lives, more people would be enticed to check out what is going on in our churches. At the same time, if I might borrow a phrase from a bestselling book, we may need to recognize that the world just isn’t that into the Gospel. Why keep trying to make the Gospel look worldlier just to get them to show up “at church”?

I think God is powerful enough to get the folks who truly want freedom from their sins. He doesn’t need us to offer free gas in order to help Him out. If He needed that, He would have done it Himself. Do we not think that God could fill all the gas tanks in the world if that is what it would take to save people? Let’s just stick with what God has given us—the Gospel that is powerful enough.