

The Power of God for Salvation

Most Christians know the verse from which our title comes- it is Rom.1:16. Many can even quote it verbatim. Paul wrote, *“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.”* **But do we really believe/remember that...**

- **When we find our *hunger and thirst for righteousness* (Matt.5:6) wanes?** The gospel is that *“milk”* and *“meat”* that supplies the *nutrition* of such *righteousness*, cf. Heb.5:13-14. Unfortunately, we, like the Ephesians, *leave our “first love”- the love of truth*, (Rev.2:4-5; cp. Acts 19:1-8,10,20) and seek to replace it with “programs” designed to meet our “felt needs” rather than what original brought us *to and forth* in Jesus Christ: *“the word of truth,”* Jas.1:18. This *“word of truth”* is the *gospel*.
- **When we fall into the misguided notion that *churches, church members, elderships, or preachers* are the *“power of God for salvation”*?** Though all of the above certainly have a part to play in the process, they do so only to the extent that they are *conduits* of the gospel, as Paul made clear to the Corinthians, *“What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each... So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth”* (1Cor.3:5,7); and He does so by/through *the gospel*, for such is His *“power for salvation.”*
- **When we say such things as *“The/our kids are the future of the church.”*** I think I know what they mean, but such just isn't true. No generation- *younger, older, or in-betweeners*, is the *“future of the church.”* The *“seed which is imperishable... the living and abiding word of God”* is, always has been, and always will be (as long as “time” lasts) the *“future”* of the church, 1Pet.1:23-25. This *“seed/word of God”* is the *“truth”* which not only *purifies souls* by their *obedience* to it, but also thereby is and will always be the *“future”* of the church, 1Pet.1:22.
- **When we want to *modernize and minimize* the time we spend studying the **Word**.** As our collective spiritual palates get more specialized and finicky, and our corporate attention spans get less tolerant, the emphasis on *spiritual nutrition* typically suffers. *Meatier “meals”* are replaced with “fast food” and sugary “desserts.” To add to the problem, our “away from services” time gets so over-scheduled that little to no time is left for private education and edification from what we know and readily admit is *“the power of God for salvation.”* As someone once said, “There are few problems we face in life that are helped by less teaching of and less emphasis on the Word of God.” Do yourself a favor and investigate the importance and implications for the word *“therefore”* in Acts 17:12.

As Paul identified to the Thessalonians, the basic line of demarcation between the saved and the lost will be whether or not we *“receive the love of truth so as to be saved,”* 2Thess.2:10. Do we really think we possess such affection for *“the power of God for salvation”* if we fail to *“hunger and thirst”* for the *“righteous”* product of it? If we view *churches, church members, elders, and preachers* as more important than it? If we believe *any generation* can supplant it as the *“future”* of the kingdom? Brethren, our *“faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the **power of God,**”* 1Cor.2:4-5. And again, exactly what was that *“power of God to salvation”*? (Philip C. Strong; Southport Church of Christ; 7202 Madison Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46227; online at southportcofc.org)