

You Mean Them?
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And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. Acts 10:45

A pastor was talking with his Bible Class one morning. It was about two months before Christmas and he was asking them if they would help financially support a billboard in town to inform the community what time the Christmas worship services would be. One member questioned the pastor, "Why do we need a billboard? Everybody knows what time our worship services are." The pastor was dumbstruck for a few minutes. Then gently corrected the member, "Actually, that is not really true. Not everybody knows what time our worship services are. In fact, there are some members that aren't even sure what time we worship on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day."

I wonder just how often this happens in the Christian Church. I suppose there comes a time that we all are tempted to take it for granted that everybody knows where we are and what time we do things. But it is a mistake, and a dangerous one. For Satan is working very hard to get people not to go to worship. Satan knows that if a person goes to a worship service where the Word of God is spoken, taught, preached, sung or in any other way presented to the people, the Holy Spirit uses that Word to work faith and salvation in a person's heart.

Knowing that, telling others when these worship events happen should be of primary importance to us. And it is.

Then there was the conversation between another pastor and a member of his parish. They were talking about evangelism and how they could find new and exciting ways to invite people to come to their church. The member said that she didn't want new members in her church. The pastor was dumbstruck for a few minutes. "You don't want new members in the church? In heaven's name, why not?" The member confessed, "I don't want new members, they will only come here and change things."

That must have been the feeling of the circumcised believers who were with Peter as they witnessed the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon Gentiles. Some of the first Christians apparently didn't understand that God's salvation, won by the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ, was for all people, not just those of Jewish descent.

Thankfully, this feeling was not prevalent and did not stop the Gospel from being shared throughout the world. We can be especially thankful because most likely we are Christians because the Gospel was shared with Gentiles. The Gospel is still being shared around the world to all peoples. It will be until Jesus makes His return.

The Law and Gospel that changed the whole world – Jew and Gentile alike – is the Word that challenges us today. It may not be easy to hear or accept, but by the working of the Holy Spirit it will be a blessing to you and change your life.