

Where's the Beef?

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First airing in 1984, a Wendy's commercial portrayed three elderly ladies who were served an enormous hamburger bun topped with a minuscule hamburger patty. In comes 81 year old Clara Peller, who searches in vain for customer assistance while making the outraged demand: "Where's the Beef?" "Where's the beef" became an instant catch phrase across the United States.

In today's world, many people are still asking "Where's the beef?" The difference is that they aren't asking about a burger, they're referring to the church. If God is real and Christ is who He claimed to be, then why is there not much difference between those who go to church and those who don't?

Evangelist Ron Hutchcraft once compared the church life of many people in our churches today to that of a wedding rehearsal. They have learned to say the right things and sing and act and dress the part, but at the end of the day it's only been a rehearsal without a commitment. They talk the talk and go through the motions, but their life has not been changed by Jesus.

In talking with other ministers, I have come to believe that every church has some people in it who match this description - people who honestly believe they are going to heaven, not based on what Jesus did for them, but based on how good a person they can be. While many of these are genuinely good people, the Gospel has been around them but never in them.

The answer to this need is to keep the Gospel coming. We need to keep the Gospel in front of others as well as ourselves. This is the meat we need to eat. This is where the beef is. The Gospel is the power of God to change a life.

The challenge we face is to serve this Gospel meat in a way people can better chew on it.

Often, without realizing it, we as Christians tend to get in a rut when it comes to the way we present the Gospel message. We tend to use words like lost, sin, saved, and repent as if our people know what we are talking about. Here's the alarming truth: Lost people don't understand what they mean and church people have become immune to them because we've overused them.

The message of the Gospel is not the issue. It's how we present it that might be improved on. There are numerous ways we can wet people's appetites and interests to sample it anew. And if we serve the Gospel every day, using everyday language that anyone can easily understand and digest, there will be no question where the beef is.