

Ponderings from Pastor Paul – July 2022

Blame who you want, but nobody likes seeing \$5.19 a gallon for gas. That is today's price. I'm afraid to guess what it may be by the time you read this.

I heard a report that people significantly change their plans beginning at about \$5 a gallon. That means some of us are now reconsidering vacations, carpooling, or even short trips into town. Life is less convenient. Families will opt for fewer adventures. You might have to break the piggy bank to go for a Sunday drive. For many in our world, some of these choices simply no longer exist. Filling the tank and putting food on the table are the only considerations.

It is amazing how a negative stimulus like \$5 a gallon for gas can so drastically impact our lives. Wouldn't you think that a negative stimulus like hell would change lives as well?

I'm generally not a hellfire and brimstone preacher. I much prefer the carrot as opposed to the stick. I love to share the joys and promises of eternal life in glory. However, every now and then we need to be reminded that the other option is a very bad option.

People believe our world has gone to hell in a handbasket. My friend, \$5 a gallon doesn't even come close. Hell is a bad place, and you don't want to go there. You know that. I would guess the vast majority of those reading this are not much concerned about hell. You aren't concerned because you know the love of God poured out on the cross for your sins. You are confident of your eternity because of what the Bible says. Hell simply does not provoke fear for you.

But what about your neighbor or your co-worker? What does their eternity hold for them? What about your best friend or your family member? What are the odds you'll see them in heaven?

I'm not suggesting you get in their face and try to literally scare the hell out of them. I think Christian scare tactics are rarely effective with non-believers. I'm really hoping to scare the hell into you. I think providing hope with the good news of Jesus is much more effective.

We all know far too many people who will not be spending eternity with us. Shouldn't that scare us? Don't you think that scares God? I think hell should scare Christians, not for our futures, but for the futures of those around us.

I want to ask you to do something. The next time you fill up your vehicle or the next time you talk about the price of gas... pray. Pray that God would put someone in your life in the next hour who needs to hear the good news of Jesus. Pray that God's Holy Spirit would create fear in you for the future of that other person. Pray that you would have such great confidence in your salvation, that you could risk an eternal conversation. Pray that you could do it all in the most loving and hope filled manner possible.

Certainly, there are many things in our world that produce anxiety for us. The world going to hell should be at the top of the list. I pray for your financial future. I pray for your spiritual future. And I pray that God will use you to drastically impact the eternal future of someone near you with the wonderful news of Jesus.

God loves you and so do I!

Pastor Paul