

What Is the Church?

by Jason Robinson

The church is not a building, business, or club, but a gathering of the called out ones who have been born again and are committed to growing in their faith.

Duration: 57:59

Scripture: Romans 10:21, 2 Peter 3:2-4, 2 Peter 3:11-12, Jude 1:3

Topics: "Church"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher highlights the shift in society over the past 50 years, where people have become more independent and disconnected from their communities. He attributes this change to the influence of technology, such as TV and the Internet, as well as the rise of consumerism. The preacher emphasizes the importance of living for the next kingdom and not being consumed by worldly pursuits. He reminds the audience of God's judgment and the promise of a new heavens and earth, urging them to live in holiness and anticipation of Christ's return. The preacher also criticizes the superficiality of modern church gatherings, where people come together without truly knowing or connecting with one another.

Transcript

So, in light of what Alan just shared, it's my heart to be a blessing in any way that I can here. There's a lot of different voices in Christianity, pulling people every which way, and a lot of different rabid trails, a lot of different dead ends, and it's really important to learn from the mistakes of others. So, I come here this weekend not as some expert, PhD, doctor, guy with a bunch of titles before and after his name, but almost like someone that was told to wear a helmet while riding a motorcycle, and they didn't, and now they're in a hospital bed, laying there, and you come in after riding your bike to the hospital to visit them, and they look up and say, you should wear a helmet.

So, I want to look at what I believe is one of the main themes in the New Testament, central to the core of the most essential teachings in the Bible, and that's in regards to the church, and we'll look at different aspects of it during the course of the weekend. Tonight, I want to look at the necessity of the church, and it's very difficult to just jump right in a subject like this, because so many people, when they hear church, that brings so many different things to mind. So, before we can look at what the church is, we have to spend a little bit of time looking at what it is not, because, like I say, when I say church, some people may think of a building with stained glass windows and candles.

Some people may think of a building where people are jumping around and dancing and clapping hands with tambourines, and people with long robes and golden plates being passed in front of them, and various different things that people think about. The Bible says in Ecclesiastes, there's a time to tear down, and then there's a time to build up that which was torn down. So, I want to tear down this false concept of what the church is for a minute before we can build up, from the Scriptures, what God's heart is in regard to the subject of the church, because we live in a country where you can just get out on the street, pretty much any street in a city like this, and drive for five minutes and pass 10 or 15 or 20 churches, and there's 22,000 different denominations, and 80% Gallup poll says 80% of people in America call themselves Christians.

We live in a Christian nation. If you go out on the streets and talk to people, 8 out of 10 people you run into will say, yeah, I'm a Christian, yeah, I believe the Bible. But anybody that seriously looks to the Scriptures and sees what God's heart is as far as what it really looks like to be a Christian, anybody that really sees the Scriptures in a serious, literal way, could quickly look at America and say, there's nothing remotely Christian about it.

And what we need to see is, just as man is a sexual creature, man has lust towards sex, and man has lust towards money, in the same way man has lust towards religion. You can go anywhere in the world. I've been to Africa, I've been to India, I've been to Haiti, South America, anywhere in the world, the most remotest jungles in Africa where they've never seen white people, they're religious.

There's something in us that is wanting to compensate for the guilt that our conscience has. We lust, we lie, we steal, we get angry, and there's a natural guilt that is put into every man through his conscience. And so man wants to compensate or somehow get rid of that guilt, and that's where religion comes in.

And in America, for the most part, there's obviously exceptions, but for the most part, that lust for religion manifests itself in Christianity. In India, it manifests itself in Hinduism. In China, there's a billion Buddhists.

You go to various different countries all over the world, and it may manifest itself in different religions, but in America, it's Christianity, or we should say false Christianity, or a counterfeit version of Christianity. It's a Christian culture. It's culturally acceptable to say you're a Christian, you believe the Bible, you believe in creation, you've accepted Christ, you've been born again.

All these things have become so acceptable that people have been inoculated. They're immune to the Scriptures. When you take someone to the Scriptures and try to show them something, the general consensus is, yeah, I've been there, done that.

When I was in the third grade, I went to Christian camp and asked Jesus to come in my heart. I got saved when I was in the fifth grade, Sunday school. And so people are immune.

And so when we're looking at the subject of the church, it's really important that we, like taking a garbage can just filled with garbage, dump out all of this false understanding of church that we have, and then come with a renewed mind and say, God, what is this thing, church, that you talk about in Scripture? Because, again, like I say, a lot of us, when we think of church, we think of a building. Somebody will say, well, what church do you go to? Well, I go to First Baptist over there on Johnson Street. And the next guy, well, what church do you go to? I go to First Assembly over there.

And as we'll see this weekend, that verbiage and that understanding just isn't something that you see in Scripture. In the New Testament, they didn't go to a church. They were the church.

It wasn't a building they went to once a week, sang three songs, threw 20 bucks in the offering plate, heard a speech, got some donuts and coffee in the back, and said hi to Bob and Joe, and how's the weather, and I heard the Royals are going to be good this year. Yeah, and how's the job? Okay, see you later. See you next week.

That whole concept is completely foreign to the Scripture. It wasn't a club that you were involved in. And then if you didn't like that club, then you would leave that club and go and join another club.

And we've got to understand the culture that we're living in. Even 50 years ago, after World War II, America began to change. Suburban boom hit, and everybody was moving to the suburbs.

The economy was booming. Before that time period there in the 50s, our culture in America was different. There was a city.

There was always a little Italy and a little Ireland. There was Chinatown. There was these parts of the city where people had community.

People knew each other, and they helped each other out, and their lives revolved around each other. There was a basic sense of responsibility and community. And the last 50 years, it's slowly gotten away from that with the invention of TV and the Internet and Wal-Mart and all of these things.

The average guy goes to work, eight hours a day. He comes home. He takes a shower.

He eats dinner at 6 o'clock. He puts on the TV, watches TV for a couple hours, goes on the Internet, and goes to bed. And he doesn't even know the name of his next-door neighbor, let alone doesn't have anything to do with them.

And that's kind of the culture that we live in now, where each person has an independent life that they're living. Their family is independent and self-sufficient, and they're just living their lives independently. And then maybe they'll go to a church once a week.

In the best-case scenario, they'll go on Wednesday night too. They have their own family. They have their own relatives.

They have their own hobbies. All the things that they're so busy doing during the week, just busy, busy, busy in the rat race, doing this, got to do that, got to do this. And then they go to a place on Sunday with a bunch of other people that have been doing their own thing all week long, and then they come and sit in a place and hear a speech.

And you're sitting next to a guy, and you have no idea if he gets mad and yells at his wife. You have no idea if he's watching pornography. You know nothing about his life.

You don't know what he's struggling with. You don't know if he's depressed. You see a woman, hey, how's it going? Good, yeah, how's it going? And she's saying good, but she's about ready to have a nervous breakdown.

But she would never tell you because there's no intimacy there. There's no fellowship. It's just fake, plastic, shallow relationships.

But we should go to church, so we're going to go here, and we're going to sit, and we're going to do this for a couple hours. And unfortunately this is, obviously there are exceptions, but unfortunately this is what we see in American Christianity. Unfortunately, this is kind of the norm.

And so what happens is people that don't know Jesus see that. They see the hypocrisy of it. They see that it's shallow.

They see that it's not real. And so they say, well, if that's Christianity, I don't want that. It's boring.

I go there. I sit. I can't relate to the music.

The sermons are long and boring, and so I'll just go to a bar instead or go hang out at a coffee shop. And so that's what is happening here in America. Churches each year are becoming smaller and smaller.

People in the younger generations are not following in the footsteps of their parents and continuing to go to the same church. And so America is becoming an unchurched nation. And I would say, good.

I'm not bummed out by that because that is a counterfeit or, the Bible says. And you're like, or? That's pretty harsh language there. But in Revelation, that's what it is.

The real church in Revelation is called the Bride of Christ. You think of this bride. She's a virgin.

She's coming down the aisle. She's dressed in white, and she's got a veil, and it's just this beautiful picture of the church of Jesus Christ. And then the Bible talks about this misrepresentation of the church of Jesus Christ.

It's this whore, this harlot. It looks like the bride, but it's defiled, and it's not innocent. It's misrepresenting Jesus.

And people that don't know Jesus are looking at this whore and thinking that's Christianity. And then they're saying, if that's Christianity, I don't want it. And so that's the problem that we find ourselves in today.

And unfortunately, many sincere, truly born-again believers are compromisers. They see things in the whore, and it doesn't bother them. And they would never use the word whore.

They would say, I just don't agree with that church, or I just don't necessarily want to go there. We don't like the music or something. But they don't see the seriousness of it.

You don't see Jesus standing in front of bars yelling. You don't see Jesus getting angry at prostitution or drunkenness or all these things. When do you see Jesus getting angry? When people misrepresent Him.

When people misrepresent God. The religious Pharisees of His day, who were the representation of God in the first century, they were the ones that believed the Bible. They were the ones that were devout and gave their money to the poor and went to the temple and prayed hours a day and they were supposed to be the chosen people of God that represented God on earth.

And Jesus looked at them and was furious because they were misrepresenting what God was like. And that is the seed that if there's anything that I could plant in you this weekend, is to have a jealous hunger for the truth. Like loving the truth.

And like David said in the book of Psalms, I hate every false way. To have a holy hatred for error, for something that's going to misrepresent God. And not just kind of compromise and say, well, I go to this church and I don't agree with everything, but what am I supposed to do? I don't know of anything better.

But to say, no, I'm not going to settle for anything less than what God's heart is. I'm not going to just settle for going somewhere and singing songs and I don't know anybody. I don't have any intimate fellowship with anybody.

I just come here. I mean, think about that. I mean, when you go and see a movie, you walk in, you have popcorn and you have pop and you sit down and you don't know the person to the left of you.

You don't know the person to the right of you. And you watch the movie and you get up and you go home. And unfortunately, many churches are like that.

I know of many churches where I'll meet someone and say, you go to that church? Yeah, oh, I know a guy that goes to that church. Do you know Bob Jones? No, I don't know him. Really? He's like a leader in the church.

No, I've never heard of him. I mean, how is this possible? I mean, is this a body? Is it a family? Or is it like going to a Royals game or something? You know, you don't know the people next to you. And yeah, when somebody hits a home run, you might give somebody a high five.

Hey, how's it going? Yeah, we won. But you don't know them. There's no intimacy there.

So, it's really important that we see that the church is not a building. It's not a place you go to. It's not a business, corporation, where you're trying to grow.

You know, our goal is to grow as a church. That's not what I'm talking about this weekend. That's not what I mean by church.

When I speak of church, I'm talking about something that is more committed. Even more committed than the typical house church, what people would call house church. You know, a lot of people begin to see the things that I just spoke about as far as the system of religion or the traditions of American Christianity.

They begin to see that, and they come out of that, and then they just kind of settle for hanging out. You know, let's just hang out. Yeah, we'll read the Bible.

We'll hang out. We'll sit around the living rooms and read a verse. Hey, what do you think about that? I think this.

What do you think about that? I think that. Just kind of sit around, and nobody really has any authority. They haven't really studied it out.

They're just kind of waxing eloquent. That's not what I'm talking about either. Bible studies are a really big thing nowadays.

Yeah, I go to this Bible study on Tuesday night. Yeah, but what church are you a part of? Well, you know, I'm not really part of a church, but I go to this Bible study. That's my church.

Well, it may be good that you're not in a traditional church or a whore, but that's not... Having a Bible study isn't the church. It's good, but that's not the church. Hanging out with Christians is good.

Going to a coffee shop, talking about the Bible, that's good, but that's not the church. So we need to see the importance of the church. So let's look at Acts chapter 20.

This is a very important thing in the heart of God. Acts chapter 20, verse 28, Paul is speaking here to the elders of the church, and he says in verse 28, So how important is the church? It's so important that Jesus gave his own blood for it. Look real quick at Acts chapter 8. There's an interesting truth here in verse 3, talking about Paul before he came to Christ, and it says, His name was still Saul.

It says in verse 3, So Paul was going in, capturing Christians, and throwing them in the jail, but notice it says he made havoc of the church, and he was persecuting Christians. Flip over to chapter 9. We know the story. He's in the desert.

He's going to Damascus. He's got a letter. He's got authority now.

He's going to kill more Christians. He's going to go and persecute the church up there, and Jesus appears to him in verse 4, and Jesus says, Now, what's interesting about that verse is he doesn't say, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting the church? He says, why are you persecuting me? Now, was Paul persecuting Jesus? No, he was persecuting the church, but therein lies the truth. The church is so important to Jesus that if you come against the church, you're coming against Him.

We have to see the church this way. It's not just something that I half-heartedly do once a week, two hours in the morning on Sunday. We have to see the church the way Jesus sees the church, and He sees it so important that if you come against the church, you're coming against Him.

So, what is the purpose of church? If it's not going to a building and singing songs and hearing a speech, then what is it? What is God's heart with the church? Well, think back to the Old Testament. There was a temple, and the priests would go there, and they would sacrifice animals. That was where the sins of the people were atoned for for the next year.

That was a central place where they worshiped God. That's where God's presence was. And then as we come into the New Testament, Jesus says to the woman at the well, it's not going to be like that anymore.

It's not going to be a place where you go to worship God. You're going to be able to do it anywhere, as long as you do it in spirit and in truth. Jesus dies, raises from the dead.

The Holy Spirit comes at chapter 2, and suddenly as we start reading in the book of Acts, salvation now is being offered to not only Jews, but to Gentiles. And they start taking the gospel all over Asia Minor, and Gentiles are able to receive the Holy Spirit and have salvation without going to the temple, without having to sacrifice a lamb and be subject to the Levitical priesthood. Once a man comes to Christ, he's now born again.

He's a babe in Christ, and he has to grow, but there's no temple anymore. And so herein lies the need for the church. Now you have all these people that have been born again.

They're willing to renew the whole way they've fought for years. They need to learn the scripture. They need to be encouraged, instructed, disciplined.

They need to learn how to pray, and all these things. So this is why God, I know this is very simple, but this is why God made the church. It's a place for people to come and be encouraged and to grow and to learn, to be disciplined, to hear preaching that's going to cause them to be edified, to be built up, to be rebuked, to be reproved for sin.

Many of us, when we come to Christ, we have no knowledge of sin, and as we go to church and we hear instruction, we begin to realize, oh wow, that was a sin. I didn't know that was a sin. I didn't realize I was coming off on Christ like when I did this or that.

And so that's the purpose of church. It is a place for those who have been born again to come together and be edified. In fact, the word church in the New Testament is from the Greek word ekklesia, which simply means the called out ones, and they're called out to assemble.

And so some people would translate it the assembly, a called out assembly is probably the best understanding of that word. Called out of the world and called to assemble together. I'm not on some tangent or anything, but I prefer not to use the word church just as an attempt to get away from the religiosity of it when I'm talking to my kids, and they'll say, hey dad, we're going to be late for church.

You mean the meeting? Yeah, yeah, the meeting. That's what I mean. The assembly.

We're going to assemble. We're not going to church. We're going to assemble.

In the process of trying to come out of dead religion, we need to renew our minds about some of the vocabulary that we use. It's not really important. Many people that are a million times more godly than me use the word church, so it doesn't make you holy if you don't use it or anything like that.

But because of all these false concepts in our mind, I think it is important to think of a church as a gathering, an assembly. We're going to assemble with other people that have been called out of the world. And therein lies the air of the emergent movement or even the emerging movement and a lot of the seeker-sensitive or seeker-friendly churches.

The church, the called-out ones, they've come out of the world to assemble. It's not going to the world and reaching out to them in the form of a meeting. That's done through personal evangelism, going out, reaching out to people for Christ.

That's kind of an air that's happened here in the last 20 or 30 years is what people have done is they begin to invite people into the assembly that don't know Jesus. And so they've catered the architecture and they've catered the time, how long the service is, how many songs we're going to sing, what type of songs we're going to sing. Everything has kind of been catered to be palatable to somebody that doesn't know Jesus.

And in the process, they have compromised the integrity of what the meeting is supposed to be. The meeting is supposed to be for people that are called out of the world coming together. It's supposed to be a meeting that we're thinking the whole time, Jesus, is this making you happy? Are you pleased with this? We're not thinking, is this guy over here that doesn't know Jesus happy? Is he cool with this? It's just like the house here.

This is the way they had the furniture set up in here when we got here. How incredibly arrogant would it be for me to say, you know, I don't like that couch there. I think it looks ugly there.

I'm going to put it in the kitchen. I'm going to take the fridge and put it here and just start rearranging things. I mean, nobody would do that in their right mind, but people do that with the house of God, with church, with the assembly.

God has laid out clearly in the scriptures, especially in the epistles, what the church is supposed to be and function and how it's supposed to work. And that's God's heart. That's where he's put the furniture.

And what man has done through their natural mind, through their reasoning, is they've said, yeah, I don't really think that that's good. They just change things around. And that's, I think, why we're in the mess we're in right now.

Because God isn't pleased. We're not doing it his way. Let's look at 1 Corinthians real quick and look at this concept of the church.

Because there's two types of ways that the word church is used in the New Testament. The first type is here in 1 Corinthians chapter 1 and verse 2. To the church of God, which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, both theirs and ours. So as we see here, he's saying to the church of God, which is at Corinth.

So if somebody from Europe says, somebody says to me, where do you live? I say United States. Two days later, somebody in, say, Springfield, Missouri, says to me, where do you live? I would probably, if I lived in Kansas City, I'd say Kansas City. So which one is it? Do you live in the United States or do you live in Kansas City? It's both.

And so the same concept is here in 1 Corinthians 1. There is the church of God, which is made up of all who have been truly born again and they've been baptized into the body of Christ and they are his bride. That is the church. And then there are those in a local area whom God has organically birthed a local body to represent him in that area.

So that's how you get this phrase here in chapter 1, verse 2, to the church of God, which is at Corinth. And notice, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus called to be saints. The church is those that have set aside themselves for they've come out of the world.

It's not just, you know, Alan gets together and meets with Mark and Max and I think they're kind of cool too, so I'm going to get together with them. But I'm addicted to porn. I'm totally, I just don't think there's a problem with that.

But I think Alan's cool, so can I come? That's not a church. You see what I'm saying? It's those that have come out of the world that are wanting to set themselves apart from the world. That's what the word sanctified means.

In the Old Testament, God would take a vessel and sanctify it. He would set it apart as holy. And in the New Testament, the church is comprised of those that have said, I'm done with my own life.

I'm separating myself from this world and now I need other people that have made the same decision to keep me encouraged to continue to do that. And so hey, I met this guy that has the same heart. Let's get

together and meet.

So anyway, it's important to note that because some people will say, yeah, I don't go to church. I am the church. Well, yes, that's true, but they're just looking at one aspect, the body of Christ, what they would say universal.

But there are local assemblies. Look at 1 Corinthians there, chapter 16. 1 Corinthians chapter 16, verse 19.

The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord with the church that is in their house or the assembly, the people that assemble in Priscilla and Aquila's house. So Priscilla and Aquila lived in Corinth and there was a group of people that would meet in their house.

Pretty simple. I mean, nothing like revolutionary here, but again, it didn't say they went and had a big sign out front. You know, first Priscilla and Aquila church at Corinth or anything like that.

It was just big. There were people that just gathered in their house. Look at the Colossians chapter 4 and verse 15.

Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, in Memphis, and the church that is in his house. So this guy had a church. He had an assembly that would meet in his house.

One last one. Look at Philemon. Philemon and verse 2. It says to the beloved brother Aphii, Archippus, our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house.

So Archippus had an assembly of people that met in his house. There's the body of Christ of all those who've been born again and then there are local assemblies. Just right here in scripture, there's a local assembly at Priscilla and Aquila's house in Corinth and then there's all these local assemblies.

You see them in Revelation 2 and 3 and they're meeting. They're assembling. They've come out of the world.

They've forsaken their past life. Their sinful self-willed life. They've forsaken mother, father, wife, children in their heart.

Not necessarily physically, in their heart. Anything that was preventing them from being yielded to God. They've forsaken it.

They've met other people that have made the same decision and they're coming together and they're meeting in houses. It's real simple, real basic, but it's foundational for us to see that that's what they were doing. Just humble little gatherings like this except the room was probably this big and it probably had 50 people in it.

They were crammed in. In many cases, being persecuted. Having to sing quietly because they didn't want people to hear them.

They'd come in and break the meeting up. And so, when we look at the New Testament, that's the simplicity of church. Small assemblies of people that come out of the world.

And so, I want to look at the purpose of church. You're coming together to be encouraged. Let's look at Matthew 24.

When you come together, when you assemble, you're assembling in the name of Jesus and the purpose of that assembling is to be encouraged. It's to have that courage reinforced that it is worth it to die to yourself. That it is worth it to not live for the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life.

Let's say we're going to meet on Thursday night and all week long you've been tempted to lust. You've been tempted to steal. You've been tempted to lie.

You've been tempted to love money. You've been tempted to get drunk and you're overcoming that temptation all week long and you're walking with Christ and you're just getting bombarded and now, okay, we're going to get together tonight at Mark's house and we're just going to worship Jesus. And you come there and you limp in there.

Maybe you fell a couple times that week and you're kind of discouraged. Okay, Lord. And you come there.

Boom. Like tonight, the first song. Okay, Lord, you're awesome.

I love the song. Now you're refreshed. You're encouraged.

It should be a place of encouragement. Encouragement to continue to live for the next kingdom and not this kingdom. And that's what we see here.

Look at Matthew 24, verse 10. He's talking here about the end times. And he says in verse 10, And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.

And many false prophets will arise and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. In the Greek, when it says many, it's the many, in reference to believers.

Verse 13, that he who endures in the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness unto the nations. And then the end will come.

The King James says, the many, the love of the many, the believers, will wax cold. You think of a candle and you light that candle and then you forget about it and you go to bed and that candle's just burning all night long and it's just waxing cold, waxing down and down and down. And then you get there in the morning and it's just all the way out, And that's what's happening with many believers.

They came to Christ, they were born again, and they loved Jesus and they read the scriptures and they witnessed the people and they prayed and they just had this love for people when they were young. But their church isn't encouraging. It's not prophetic.

It's not anointed. It's not real. It's dry.

It's boring. It's lifeless. It's traditional.

And then it's not causing them to continue to be encouraged to live for the next kingdom. And so their heart begins to wax cold. Things that used to convict them before, things that used to bother them before no longer bother them anymore.

And they begin to slowly give in to the lust of their flesh more and more, the lust of their eyes more and more. And then ten years later they look back and it's like, how did I get here? I never would have thought in a million years I would have been here ten years ago. One of the reasons is because they weren't in a church where there was reality.

It just wasn't real. It's like a fake play. And everybody knows it's fake.

And it's just not powerful. It's not effective. It's just dry.

And so it's like, okay, I gotta get going. NFL pre-games are starting here at noon. Out the door.

And so we got a nice boat. It's summertime. I'm gonna go water scan.

Let's put our time in here and leave. And so, instead of going to a place where conviction of sin comes, where the thoughts of their heart are shown to them and they're broken. And, oh my goodness, I can't believe it.

I'm totally living for this world. And they're brought to repentance on a weekly basis. See, that's the purpose of church.

It's a constant reminder that this world and all that is in this world is gonna be judged by God. Come out from the world. Live for the next kingdom.

Your life here is a vapor. It's a blink of an eye. It's not worth it.

What shall a prophet man if he gained the whole world and loses soul? We need to be constantly reminded of this. You know, it says in Hebrews, exhort one another daily, lest you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. So what that verse teaches me in Hebrews is my heart can become hard in 24 hours.

It's like some foods. Some foods are nice and soft, but if you set them outside a refrigerator, they'll be hard in 24 hours. 24 hours from now, my heart could be hard and I could be totally giving into my flesh.

That's why I need to be in an assembly, a body of people that will exhort me daily. Notice it doesn't say exhort one another once a week, Sunday morning, 10 o'clock. It doesn't say that.

It doesn't say also Wednesday night, 7. Daily, daily exhortation. That word exhort in the Greek means to come alongside. To come alongside someone.

We were just talking about it here, about being sober minded. I just said something to Eric and Spencer. Just a little exhortation about just being sober minded.

We need that. Not that there's nothing wrong with laughing and joking and stuff, but we need exhorted. When you see something in me that's unchrist-like and I give you the liberty and the freedom to say, hey, that wasn't Jesus.

And maybe I didn't realize it. They say we have a blind spot and I didn't even realize it. And you say, hey, that wasn't Jesus.

Jesus wouldn't have done that. And I say, yeah, you're right. And see, now I have light on myself.

But if I was just this maverick by myself, maybe me and my family or whatever, and there's no one else there and they're exhorting me, then I continue to walk blind in that area. So, the purpose of church is to continue to put myself in a situation where other people are going to encourage me, exhort me, reprove me. Reproofs of instruction are the ways of life.

As iron sharpens iron, brothers are sharpening each other. They're just constantly encouraging each other that it's worth it to live for the next kingdom. You know, you think about the word disobedient in Scripture.

What's the first thing that comes to your mind when you think of disobedient? I don't know about you. For me, I think of some gross sin like killing or drunkenness or adultery or something. But there's another way that that word can be translated from the Greek.

The word disobedient in the Greek is apotheia. Think about that. What does that sound like? Apathy.

Apathy. So, you think of apathy, just being apathetic. A lot of people, not that I'm not into politics at all, but a lot of people are apathetic about politics.

What does that mean? They just don't care. And that's fine when it comes to politics. But a lot of people are apathetic about God.

And they're apathetic about truth. They just kind of grow into this apathetic state. And it actually means not persuaded in the Greek.

Apotheo means not persuaded. When I tell my son, I have a one-year-old son and we have a wood burner, and I say, okay, no touch. He's not persuaded that that's going to burn him.

And then he touches it. And then he gets persuaded really quick. Any time my son disobeys me, he's just manifesting that he's really not persuaded of two things.

Number one, he's not fully persuaded that I love him and that I know what's best for him and that's why I'm telling him that. And number two, he's not persuaded that the thing that I told him not to do is he's not persuaded that that's bad. And it's the same thing with us.

So the word disobedient means not persuaded. You're not persuaded that it's a sin to look at a woman and lust after her. And that's why you keep doing it.

You're really not persuaded. You may be able to point to verses in Matthew chapter 5 and say, I know the Bible says if a man looks at a woman to lust after her, he's committed adultery with her in his heart. And if he doesn't pluck his eye out, he's going to go to hell.

If he doesn't cut his hand off, he's going to go to hell. I know that's what the Bible says. That's what I believe, brother.

But if you continue to look, what you're manifesting is you're just really not persuaded. Intellectually persuaded, but if you really believe that Jesus was standing in front of you and said, if you, the pretty girl walks by, if you look at her in lust, you're going to go to hell right now for eternity. Would you do it? If you were persuaded that he was right, you wouldn't do it.

If Jesus isn't physically standing right there, you see the verse, but he physically isn't standing right there and you do it, even though his word says you'll go to hell, you're just manifesting that you're really not

persuaded. Intellectually, you may believe it, you may assent to it, but do you really believe it? If you're disobeying God, you're manifesting that you're not persuaded. And so, the purpose of church is to come around in gatherings and be re-persuaded.

You see? Because we've kind of, during the week, we've kind of lost that persuasion. We're in the rat race. We're busy.

We're having to deal with people all the time that are in business, that are just jerks and unreasonable and all this stuff is constantly happening and we need to be reminded of the truths of Scripture. We need to be reminded to obey Christ. Let's look at some of these real quick.

Romans chapter 10 and verse 21. But to Israel, he says, all day long, I have stretched out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people. Well, let's put the word, instead of disobedient because we have such a wrong concept of disobedience, let's read that again with the Greek word.

All day long, I have stretched out my hands to an apathetic and unpersuaded people. If you're apathetic and not really persuaded, saying here, I keep reaching out to these people. I keep reaching out to them.

People keep saying no. They're just apathetic. There's no fear of God.

There's no brokenness for sin. They're just, yeah, I know that's wrong. I'm just human.

I'm working on it. That's disobedience. They may not be smoking crack and going to prostitutes It may be that they just have lost that love in their heart.

That intimate love for God. And they know it. They know there was once a time in their life where they loved Jesus more.

But they're just kind of apathetic about it. You know, just, oh, how long is this guy going to talk? Gee whiz, I got to get going. It's Friday night.

You see, it's just apathy. You see? And that's disobedience. And that's why we need to come together.

Look at Titus chapter 1. Here's the same word used in Titus chapter 1 verse 15. He says, To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but even their mind and their conscience are defiled. They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him, being abominable and apathetic, disqualified for every good work.

They're disobedient. They're apathetic. They're not letting God persuade them that he knows what's best for them.

So they're saying, I don't need the scriptures. I know this is your instruction manual for life. I know that you created me and know what it takes to make me fulfilled, but I'm not going to listen to you.

I'm going to put the directions down and try to put the thing together without the directions. You ever done that? Nine out of ten times I do it, it's like I'm insane. I always didn't put part three on and nothing will work because I didn't do that.

And then I have to take the whole thing apart, break it, taking it apart and then have to take it back. We have instructions on how to live life. We're not persuaded that he knows what's best for us.

We still think that we know more than him. And notice it says in verse 16, they profess that they know God. So many people.

Yeah, I know Jesus. Yeah, I've been born again. Amen.

Praise the Lord. Hallelujah. I know Jesus.

But he says don't look at what people are saying. He says in their works, they deny him being abominable, apathetic, disqualified for every good work. Don't look at what somebody says.

Look at how they live. Look at the fruit. Look at it and see if there's Christ likeness there because a lot of people say a lot of good things.

First Peter chapter two and verse seven. therefore, to you who believe he is precious, but to those who are disobedient, OK, apathetic, unpersuaded, the stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. They stumble being disobedient, unpersuaded to the word to which they were also appointed.

People stumble because they will not let God persuade them. Again, there's some interesting truth that we can glean from the Greek. The word ungodly.

We think of ungodly. What do you think of? Some guy smoking crack or somebody killing somebody or something. That's what I think.

That's ungodly. But the word simply means an unwillingness to yield when a bunch of guys you see in the movies are in the military and they're in the barracks and then the sergeant walks in and they go, and they all lie up in front of the beds and then as he walks in they're falling back to him because they're under his authority. The word ungodliness just simply means an unwillingness to fall back when God says something.

God says, don't do this and you won't fall back at it. You just do it anyways. Again, all this is in the context of why we need assemblies, why we need meetings.

We need to be reminded in practical ways where we're not falling back at the word of God. Somebody needs to take the scriptures in a real practical where the rubber meets the road way and say, hey guys, this is not what you're doing. This is what the Bible says.

You're just not obeying the Bible and they need to make it practical. One of the things I'm going to teach on tomorrow and I hope everybody can come if you're at all able to. One of the things I'm going to teach on is overcoming sexual sin because that's a practical way that there's so many verses that God has instructed us about overcoming fornication, adultery, pornography, things like that and it's not even spoken on in many, many, many churches because it makes people uncomfortable or maybe because the preacher is defeated by pornography himself and he doesn't want to speak on it.

But here there's tons and tons of verses that talk about this and it's not even spoken on or if it is spoken on, it's real vague and doesn't really help young people. This word is practical to us and we need to come together and be reminded of it. Look at Jude there.

And again, remember the word ungodly simply means an unwillingness to yield, not yielding when God shows you something. And he's talking about it here in Jude and he says it over and over and over again

and instead of saying ungodly, we can insert an unwillingness to fall back. Let's just read Jude and just let the scripture speak for itself.

Jude, a bond servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James to those who are called, that's the assembly, okay, in the Greek, the ecclesia, the sanctified by God the Father and preserved in Jesus Christ. Mercy, peace and love be multiplied to you. Beloved, while I was very diligently to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you, exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith, which was once for all delivered to the saints.

For certain men have crept in unnoticed who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. But I want to remind you though once you knew this that the Lord having saved the people out of the land of Egypt afterward destroyed those who did not believe and the angels who did not keep their proper dominion but left their own abode. He has reserved an everlasting change under darkness for the judgment of the great day as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities round about them in similar manner to these having given themselves over to sexual immorality and have gone after strange flesh are set forth as an example suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority and speak evil of dignitaries. Yet Michael the archangel in contending with the devil when he disputed about the body of Moses dared not to bring against him a railing accusation but said the Lord rebuke you. But these speak evil of what they do not know and whatever they know naturally as brute beast and these things they corrupt themselves.

Woe to them for they have gone in the way of Cain they've run greedily after the heir of Balaam for profit and have perished in the rebellion of Korah. These are spots in your feasts. Notice they're in the church they're coming together they're having feasts and these people are in their church.

While they feast with you without fear serving only themselves they are clouds without water carried about the winds late autumn trees without fruit twice dead pulled up by the roots raging waves of the sea foaming out their shame wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness and darkness forever. Now Enoch the seventh from Adam prophesied about these men also saying behold the Lord God comes with ten thousand of his angels to execute judgment on all to convict all who are ungodly among them that all of their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way and all of their harsh things which they have ungodly sinners have spoken against him. He's just nailing it.

Ungodly, ungodly, ungodly and again we think of that being some scandalous thing. They're just ungodly. They're just killing people or something.

No they're just not yielding to God when God in that one area in their heart says son it's talking about Christians okay this whole chapter this whole book is written about Christians that fell away from the faith.

These are people when God put his finger on their heart and said I don't want you to do this anymore they wouldn't yield they wouldn't fall back and they're ungodly and that may not manifest itself in drug use in pornography in murder it may simply manifest itself in some area that's hidden to anybody else and you don't even know if the person's ungodly but there's just one area where they're not yielded to Christ and they know in their heart they're not yielded maybe they're given to masturbation maybe they're you know struggling with pornography maybe they're struggling with loving money and God's telling them to give more money and they won't they won't give it up they are greedy about money they just love it they love

the comfort of knowing that they have a lot in their bank account

and the economy's pretty bad there's some area where God's putting his finger and they won't yield they won't yield in that area and according to that Greek understanding of the word they're ungodly and so he says right here in verse 16 these are grumblers complainers walking according to their own lust and their mouth great swelling words flattering people with gain advantage but you beloved remember the words that were spoken before by the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts these are sensual persons who cause divisions not having the spirit but you beloved building yourselves up in the most holy faith praying in the Holy Ghost keep yourselves in the love of God looking for

the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life he says keep yourselves in the love of God so tying this back to what's this church thing it's a place where you keep yourselves in the love of God you come to be reminded of the areas in your life where you're not yielded there's a parallel passage and let's look at 2 Peter here to wrap this up there's a parallel passage of Jude it sounds very similar it's 2 Peter chapter 3 and it almost sounds exactly the same if you read it but for sake of time he's reminding them of something here verse 1 2 Peter 3 verse 1 Beloved I now write to you the second epistle in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder so we see here that we need to be constantly reminded of something he's talking about the end times he's talking about the

second coming of Christ verse 2 that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Savior knowing this first that there shall be in the last days scoffers walking after their own lust see it sounds like Jude and saying where is the promise of his coming for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation for this they say willingly and are ignorant of that by the word of God the heavens of old and the earth standing out of the water and in the water whereby the world that then was being overflowed with water perished he's talking here about the flood he says in verse 7 but the heavens and the earth which are now by the same word are kept in store reserved

under fire against the day of judgment and partition of ungodly men but beloved be not ignorant of this one thing that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day the Lord is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness but is long suffering to usward not willing that any of us should perish but that all of us should come to repentance but the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up seeing these seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved what manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness he's saying look God in the same way

that he judged the world with the flood with water and it flooded now it's going to be fire he's going to judge this world he's going to set up his kingdom this is real he's saying I need to remind you guys about this and then verse 11 seeing that these things are going to happen what manner of person should you be in all manner of holiness and godliness look at verse 12 looking for and hastening under the coming of the day of God wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved and the elements shall melt with fervent heat nevertheless we according to his promise look for a new heavens and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness wherefore beloved seeing that you look for such things be diligent that you may be found of him in peace without spot and blameless ye therefore beloved

seeing that you know these things before you know this is going to happen before it happens what should you do beware lest you also be led away with the air of the wicked and you fall from your own said steadfastness there was a time in your life when you were steadfast there was a time in your life where you were persuaded that heaven was real hell was real and you wanted to live for that next kingdom but through the rat race and the business of life and the cares of the world and the lust of other things and money and marriage and you slowly begin to have that word of God choked and your heart waxes cold and you no longer really believe it and that is why you need church it's one of the safeguards to constantly be there to remind you this is real this is real someday you're going to

stand before God it's there to continually persuade you of this coming judgment and it has to be a place that is teaching this and this is why a lot of Christians find themselves in such a hard time in such a hard predicament as far as where should I go to church because a lot of places they go everything is taught in such a way to not offend people and just kind of tickle people's ears an introduction a body conclusion a couple nice illustrations a couple funny stories encourage people to I'm okay you're okay we're all okay peace peace and then everybody goes home unchanged we need to put our life in such a motion to where we're setting ourselves up for future times knowing that the probability of my heart being hard is really high so I want to now before it gets hard set my life in such

a motion where I'm going to be nailed by people you know what I mean when I start to get out of line I know Grady's going to rebuke me he starts to see something in me like that doesn't look like Jesus he's going to say something I know I'm going to hear good teaching I know I'm going to come into a place where the worship is real and it's not traditional or dead or I'm putting my life in such a motion where I know there's going to be reality and if you can't find a body like that then raise one up you don't have to go to Bible school none of these believers you know these guys the churches in their house Priscilla and Quilla didn't go to Bible school there was no Bible school they just got saved and said hey let's meet around in Jesus' name but there was a seriousness about it there was

a commitment to it and that's what I want to look at tomorrow when it talks about coming out of the world when it talks about the ecclesia the called out ones it's a serious sober minded group of people that have seen the reality of hell and they're wanting to come out and meet in Jesus' name it's not just a club you know we're going to have some coffee and donuts and yeah we don't like the traditional church so we'll meet at Elisa's house and it'll be kind of cool we'll just kind of hang out yeah Alan will talk about the Bible a little bit but that's not church it's a serious committed thing with those that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart we'll look at that tomorrow let's pray Father in heaven we ask that you would do a work in our hearts take away any apathy take away any area of

our hearts where we're not persuaded that you are true and that your word is true we just come to you we give you our heart and we ask if there's any area in there where there's still love for this world still love for sin that you would drive it out just purify our hearts purify our minds re-persuade us of the reality of eternity and just use this weekend to manifest to those here how much you love this thing you call church this body and the importance of it being in a local expression if it's your will and your timing I ask that you would add people here bind them together give them one heart one mind that you would keep away wolves and those that are half-hearted manifest your will to these people we love you we worship you tonight thank you for dying for us thank you for washing us

you're awesome you're just so merciful and patient and long suffering we're nothing we're nobody's you are God of the universe and yet you're our dad and we love you for that and we just want to thank you and

just be with some of us tonight as we go out and help us to cross the paths of people that need to hear about your son

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