

I WANT YOU TO ATTEND EVERY SERVICE

In my sermon this morning I'm going to try to persuade you to make a commitment to God, to yourself, to your family, and to this church to attend every Bible class and every assembly of this church, from now on, when it is reasonably possible for you to do so.

But I'm going to admit to you, right here at the beginning of the sermon, that. . .

- a. There is no one passage in the New Testament that specifically commands you to attend every service.
- b. This church is not required by God to meet on Wednesday night, and it is not required to meet twice on Sunday.
 - ▶ This church could decide to meet on Sunday morning only, without violating any command of God
- c. Attending all the services of the church is not proof that a person is a faithful servant of God.
 - ▶ I know an adulterer who was involved with his secretary for several years who attended all the services of the church -- until his adultery was found out
- d. Attending all the services of the church cannot substitute for other duties and responsibilities that are not being fulfilled.
 - ▶ A Christian who neglects other Christian responsibilities is not truly faithful to Christ, even if he attends all the services of the church
- e. Some Christians who do not attend all the services of the church are a better asset to the church than some Christians who do.
- f. Attending all the services of the church is not a Christian duty that supersedes all other Christian duties.
 - ▶ There may be times when you will have to choose between two opportunities to do service to God:
 - ▶ "Shall I go on to church, or shall I continue this Bible study with my neighbor?"
 - ▶ "Shall I go on to church, or baptize this person into Christ?"
 - ▶ "Shall I go on to church, or shall I take my wife (who is having a heart attack) to the hospital?"

So, I readily admit that attending the services of the church is not the sole criteria by which faithfulness is to be judged, and I know most certainly that it is not the one Christian duty that supersedes all others.

But, having said all that, I still want you to make a commitment to attend every assembly and every Bible class when it is reasonably possible for you to do so -- because I'm convinced that's what the Lord wants you to do.

1. If you understand what the church is, and what we are trying to do when we come together, it will not be difficult to persuade you to make the kind of commitment I'm asking you to make.

Matt 12:49 says Jesus stretched out his hand toward his disciples and said,

“Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father is My brother and sister and mother.”

In Eph 2:19 Paul says, “So you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but you are fellow-citizens of **God’s people** and members of **His family**”(Williams’ Translation).

- a. If you are truly a Christian, the church is your *family*: God is your *Father*, and Christians are your *brothers and sisters*.
- b. And you look upon church meetings as *family gatherings* where brothers and sisters come together to show their love for their Father and for one another, to learn more about their Father’s will and how to please Him, and to encourage one another.
- c. It’s obvious the earliest Christians felt that way about it: **Ac 2:41-46**.
 - ▶ “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. 42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. 44 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, 45 and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. 46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,”

2. If you have the kind of attitude toward the worship of God, the word of God, and the house of God that David had in the Psalms, then you will be more than happy to make the commitment I’m asking for.

Listen to the attitude of the godly man toward the **worship of God**:

- a. “I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the congregation I will praise you” (Psa 22:22)
- b. “My praise shall be of You in the great congregation; I will pay My vows before those who fear Him” (Psa 22:25)
- c. “Oh come let us sing to the Lord! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; Let us shout joyfully to Him with Psalms. For the Lord is the great God, And the great King above all gods. . . Oh come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker” (Psa 95:1-3, 6)
 - ▶ See also: Psa 100

Listen to the attitude of the godly man toward the **house of God**:

- a. “Lord, I have loved the habitation of Your house, and the place where Your glory dwells” (Psa 26:8)
- b. “I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go into the house of the Lord’” (Psa 122:1)

Listen to the attitude of the godly man toward the **word of God**:

- a. “Blessed are You, O Lord! Teach me your statutes” (Psa 119:12).
- b. “Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day” (Psa

- 119:97).
- c. "I long for Your salvation, O Lord, And Your law is my delight" (Psa 119:174).

Anyone who has that kind of attitude will not need my sermon this morning.

3. But, if you aren't willing to make the commitment I'm asking you to make, then I believe there is real cause to be concerned about your spiritual well-being.

Your unwillingness to make the kind of commitment I'm asking for would indicate that you do not have the kind of interest in, and concern for, your brothers and sisters in the congregation that you ought to have.

- a. Heb 10:24 says, "And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works . . ."
 - ▶ Is it out of your careful consideration for the needs of others in the church, that you would absent yourself from some of the assemblies and Bible studies?
 - ▶ Would anyone who is really concerned for the spiritual well-being of others in the church seriously suggest that we ought to spend *less* time together in worship and study? (It's only 4 hrs out of 168 hrs now)
- b. I think a very good case could be made for meeting together *more* frequently, and for *longer* periods of time . . . but I wouldn't begin to know how to make a case for having *fewer* assemblies and Bible classes.
- c. But sometimes people say, "I just don't think I need to be there."
 - ▶ Anyone who says something like that has a very selfish, self-centered approach to the religion of Christ
 - ▶ What about the needs of others? what about the needs of the church?
 - ▶ The passage does not say, "Consider **yourself** . . ." It says, "**Consider one another to stir up love and good works**"
 - ▶ And listen to Paul in **Php 2:4**, "**Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others**"
- d. And sometimes people say, "I just don't get anything out of it."
 - ▶ But you do get something out of it!
 - ▶ You get God's approval . . . you get the approval and respect of your brethren . . . you get the approval, respect, and appreciation of the preacher, and the teachers, and the elders
- e. But, of course, it is also the fact that you do *need* to be here, and you will *get something out of it* when you put something into it.
 - ▶ And if you really don't know that, then your problem is even more serious!
- f. Point: Anyone who is really thinking of the spiritual needs of others in the church, and trying to do all that he can to help and encourage them to faithfulness, is going to be here when the time comes for worship and Bible study . . . and he is going to be an enthusiastic participant.

Your unwillingness to make the kind of commitment I'm talking about would indicate that you are neglecting your own salvation.

- a. **Heb 2:3** asks the question, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation . . .?"
- b. You don't have to completely *abandon* your salvation to be lost. If you *neglect* your salvation . . . you will lose your salvation.
- c. But someone says, "What does it mean to *neglect* your salvation? How do you do that?"
 - ▶ Answer: you neglect your salvation when you neglect the things that contribute to your salvation
 - ▶ When you neglect to read and study your Bible, you're neglecting your salvation -- because the Word of God is able to build you up spiritually.
 - **Ac 20:32** -- "So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified."
 - ▶ When you neglect prayer, you're neglecting your salvation -- because prayer will strengthen your faith and draw you closer to God.
 - **Jude 20** -- "But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, . . ."
 - ▶ When you neglect association with other Christians, you're neglecting your salvation -- because association with other faithful Christians will encourage you in your efforts to be faithful.
 - **Rom 1:11-12** -- "For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established-- 12 that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me."
 - ▶ In the same way, when you neglect the assemblies and the Bible study periods, you are neglecting your salvation -- because the assemblies and Bible studies are for that very purpose.
 - **1 Cor 14:26** -- "How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification."
- d. Point: In **2 Pet 1:10** Peter says, ". . . be even more **diligent to make your calling and election sure . . .**" and anyone who is really trying to do that will be *diligent* about those things that contribute to our spiritual strength -- and that includes the worship services and Bible classes.

Your unwillingness to make the kind of commitment I'm talking about would indicate negligence and unfaithfulness in other Christian duties as well.

- a. **Lk 16:10** -- "He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much."
- b. I have never known anyone who was lax about the assemblies and Bible classes, but diligent with regard to all other Christian duties and responsibilities.

- ▶ I have never known anyone who was lax about the assemblies, but diligent in studying the Bible, diligent in trying to teach the lost, diligent in trying to restore the fallen, diligent in visiting the sick, diligent in practicing hospitality toward the brethren, etc
 - ▶ Those who can be depended upon with regard to these other Christian duties can also be depended upon when the time comes for Bible class and worship
- c. Point: Anyone who is truly faithful to the Lord in *anything*, is faithful to the Lord in *all things*.

Your unwillingness to make the kind of commitment I'm talking about would indicate that you are not measuring up to the standard of diligence others have set -- and that calls the sincerity of your love into question.

- a. That is exactly the warning the apostle Paul issued to the church at Corinth with regard to the contribution they were to make to help the poor saints in Judea.
- ▶ Paul was urging the Corinthians to be generous in their giving, and he held up to them the example of the Macedonian churches -- and, in effect, he called upon them to measure up.
 - ▶ **2 Cor 8:8 -- "I speak not by commandment, but I am testing the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others."**
- b. In every congregation I have ever seen, there were some who could be depended upon to be at every service -- even when they were tired, or had a headache, or the weather was bad, etc
- ▶ We have a number of Christians in this congregation who have shown that same kind of diligence -- and for many years
 - ▶ One example: the Stiners have a one-hour drive, one way, to get here for services, but they are here every time the doors are opened.
 - ▶ Other examples: (1) my mother, (2) commitment of time required to be a part of secular groups: high school football team, or high school band, or high school theatrical group, etc (see **Lk 16:8**), (3) AA meetings: everyday for 90 days, then 2 meetings each week for the rest of your life.
- c. Point: The example of diligence that others have set puts the sincerity of your love to the test.

Your unwillingness to make the kind of commitment I'm talking about is frustrating and discouraging to those who are trying to teach you and build you up spiritually: the elders, the class teachers, and the preacher.

- a. It is a fearful responsibility to be a preacher, or an elder, or a Bible class teacher.
- ▶ Elders: **Heb 13:17 -- "they watch out for your souls, as those who must give an account"**
 - ▶ Teachers: **Jas 3:1 -- "My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment."**
- b. Those who are willing to accept such fearful responsibility, and show themselves to be diligent in their work, deserve your appreciation, your encouragement, and your full cooperation.

- ▶ But I know how frustrating and discouraging it is to prepare sermons for people who are not here to hear them.
- ▶ And I know how frustrating it is to our teachers when they spend hours preparing material to teach you, or your children, and you're not here.
 - I've heard some of our teachers express their frustration.
- ▶ And it has to be frustrating to the elders
- c. You should take notice of the fact that if you make the commitment I'm calling for (to be here for every assembly and Bible class period), that commitment of your time will not come close to the commitment of time that has been made by those who are your teachers.
 - ▶ For every hour spent in the pulpit preaching, many hours are spent in preparing a sermon to preach.
 - ▶ For every hour spent in the class teaching, many hours are spent in preparing the material to teach.
- d. Point: You should want to do everything you can to encourage and help those who preach and teach - and nothing to frustrate and discourage them in any way.

Your unwillingness to make the kind of commitment I'm asking you to make will hinder your example as a Christian and set an example of negligence that may encourage others to follow to their hurt.

- a. If you are a sincere Christian, then you will take the matter of your example very seriously.
 - ▶ You cannot consider yourself only.
 - ▶ Your "rights" and "liberties" are not the only consideration -- and they are not the primary consideration
 - ▶ **Matt 5:13-16 -- "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. 14 You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."**
 - ▶ **1 Cor 8:9, 13 -- "But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak. . . . 13 Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble."**
- b. It would be a terrible tragedy to set an example of negligence with regard to the church services that ended up contributing to the ruin of your husband, or wife, or son, or daughter -- or anyone else.
 - ▶ It could happen -- and it has happened.
- c. On the other hand, the power of a good example is inestimable. Listen:
 - ▶ *"She was a Christian, he was not, but they loved each other. He went to church services with her before they married, but he had already made up his mind that once they married he would quit going to church and he would see to it that she quit also."*

- ▶ *“The first Sunday after they were married, as she was getting ready to go to services, he tried to get her to stay home with him. But she went to services alone. This went on for several years.”*
- ▶ *“Then came their first child. She missed two Sundays when the child was born, but the next Sunday she and her baby went to church services and he stayed home alone.”*
- ▶ *“One Sunday while she was dressing, he went outside and disconnected the coil wire on the car. She and her baby got into the car but it would not start. So she wrapped her baby up and started walking to the building which was about 2 miles away. Feeling like a heel, her husband called her back, told her what he had done, asked her to forgive him, and took her to services. That night he went with her. Two weeks later he was baptized into Christ. Sometime later, this man started preaching the gospel.”*

Conclusion.

That's the kind of commitment I'm asking you to make this morning -- every one of you.

- a. Is there any good reason why you cannot make that commitment? No.
- b. Is there any good reason why you shouldn't make that commitment? No.
- c. But there is every good reason as to why you should.

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