

“I Go Just For Fun”

I recently had a conversation online with a friend from high school that I had not talked to in about 6 years. We discussed how each other's lives were going and then we got on the subject of church, as I told him I was now a gospel preacher. I asked him where he went to church in which he replied that he did not go to church at the present, but wanted to go back to the church where he grew up. I knew that it was a community church where a lot of young people went to when we were in high school. It had all the bells and whistles, including a rock band on a stage, a surround sound system, snacks and hot chocolate in the foyer, and even a t-shirt stand as you walk in. Now when I knew this friend back in high school, he was not really the spiritual kind, so I proposed the question to him that while going to this church, “Do you learn a lot about the Bible? Or do you mostly just go for fun?” His response was, “I mostly just go for fun.”

He would further go on to say that the reason he liked going to this church was the atmosphere and how everything was real laid back. Now this response did not surprise me, as this is very typical of folks who go to church nowadays, especially the young people, but it did make me think. The fact of the matter is this is a prime example that most people have no clue what church is and the purpose of why it exists.

Most people when they hear the word church think of the bible, and rightly so. Without the bible, the word church really might not be known. The term means in its original usage, *a called out body*, Stephen used the phrase in this way when he was giving his defense before the Jews. “*This is he who was in the **church** in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai ...*” (Acts 7:38). The church was the called out body of Israel. God had called them out of Egyptian bondage and led them to a land that He promised give them. So Stephen rightly uses this word church in its ordinary sense. Paul would use the word in its special sense, the way most of us know it as today. In Ephesians 1:22-23, he writes, “*And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the **church**, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*” Paul is describing the called out body who have obeyed the gospel and have had their sins washed away. Those apart of this body have been “called out” of sin, so therefore they are members of His church. It is in this way that the Bible defines what the church is. It is a called out body of people who are under the authority of Christ to His will, since he is the head of the church.

The reason for going through all that was to show the true meaning of going to worship God as a collective church. Christ being our head means we are under His authority, and when we are His authority, we must do what He

says. If He does not tell us to do something, we don't do it. So all things that we do in the church must first come from Jesus' teaching, that is, the Bible.

Sadly though that is not what we are seeing in the "churches" that meet in the name of the Lord every Sunday. They have been turned into places to go to have fun, to kick back and relax, and to listen to all sorts of feel good type stuff. This is what is known as the social gospel. Churches offer all sorts of entertainment to get people, (especially the young people) into the congregation, and then teach them a few things about Jesus. People start getting this mindset of the church, and before you know it people like my friend are going there just to have fun, thinking nothing of the Bible or Jesus at all! Friends, places like these have taken Jesus out of the picture all together. The only way to convert and save the lost is through the word of God (Romans 10:17). No other way will do, you are not going to get to heaven by having perfect attendance at your youth rallies, or how active you are in the rock band on stage.

Jesus taught of people who have this mindset. He said in John 6:26, *"Most assuredly I say to you, you seek Me, not because you not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled."* The people's error was not in following Jesus, but why they were following Him, He provided them food, they wanted more. It was not the miracle He worked they were impressed with, but the food. So He corrects them and says in the next verse, *"Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him."*

Why do you go to church? Do you go just for fun, or to have a good time? Do you go to listen to the good music, but half heartedly listen to the teaching of the scriptures? The Bible teaches us that when we go to worship, we ought to have a reverence before God. Hebrews 12:28 says, *"Therefore since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."* Our Lord warns us about doing things that we don't have authority for, and that just because we do it in the name of Jesus, does not mean it has the authority of Jesus. Sadly, many are going to learn this lesson too late on judgment day: *"Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, cast out demons in your name, and done many wonders in your name? And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you, depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"*
Lawlessness **is** sin (1 John 3:4).

Scott Vanderwood