

SERMON: WHAT IS CHURCH? WHY CHURCH?

[SLIDE 2] The title of the sermon today is “WHAT IS CHURCH? WHY CHURCH?”

- Before we start, let’s get something straight. The ACT of coming to Church doesn’t save you.
- Could you be saved in Church? Yes, you could be saved while sitting in Church.
- But hopefully, you’re already SAVED and coming to Church because you want to obey God.
- Coming to Church is an act of obedience to God. It’s a good thing to do.

See this diagram I put together.

[SLIDE 3]

- Today, let’s see what the Bible says about Church. Let’s see what God has to say.
- That’s why you’re here. YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT GOD HAS TO SAY. Me too.

Within the Bible, the word CHURCH or CHURCHES is found 117 times in 114 verses.

- All of these 117 occurrences are in the NEW TESTAMENT.
- The word CHURCH or CHURCHES is not found in the OLD TESTAMENT.
- So, let’s allow GOD to define CHURCH for us in the Bible.

The New Testament QUOTES the Old Testament over and over and over again.

- When the New Testament quotes the Old Testament, we can learn from this.
- I want to show you this today as an example using the word CHURCH.

[SLIDE 4] Hebrews 2:10-12 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. 11 For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, 12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

- I want to focus on verse 12 right there. That’s a quote from the OLD TESTAMENT.
- “I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the CHURCH will I sing praise unto thee.”

[SLIDE 5] Psalm 22:22 I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.

- So the word CHURCH and CONGREGATION is used interchangeably right there.
- So what is CHURCH? It’s a congregation. A congregation is an ASSEMBLY of people.
- A church is not a building. It’s a group of BELIEVER’S gathering together: assembling together.
- A church isn’t a building. It’s not an huge organization. It’s not a denomination. It’s none of those things.

For example: The ROMAN CATHOLIC FALSE CHURCH says they are the ONE TRUE CHURCH.

- All of their “members” are all over the world. They don’t assemble together. They don’t meet together.
- That’s not a CHURCH. A church is an local assembling of believers.
- Now, if they all met together IN PERSON each week, that would be a church.
- Church isn’t ceremonies or sacraments or statues or buildings or any of that.

- You have the United Methodist Church all over the world. Church of Christ all over the world.
- The Southern Baptist Convention. Everyone is right. Everyone is the one true church.
- You have 30,000 PLUS denominations now. Hey, we're CHRISTIAN. We believe the Bible. That's it.
- I don't care what your denomination is. Believe the Bible or don't. We don't teach what man says.

Those organizations aren't church. Church is an assembling of LOCAL believers.

- You MUST come together. ASSEMBLE TOGETHER. It must be a congregation.
- And it doesn't matter where. Do you need a FANCY CHURCH with a big graven image of the cross on top?
- I don't see that in the Bible. I don't see where God says to put a cross up. It's not there.
- You don't need a fancy building. You don't need padded chairs.
- BUT YOU DO NEED EACH OTHER!!! A church is a congregation.
- Without a congregation, there is no church. You can even start a church in the WILDERNESS!!!

[SLIDE 6] Acts 7:37-38 This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. 38 This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:

- The CHURCH in the wilderness was MOSES and the entire CONGREGATION.
- They didn't have a fancy building. But they had each other.
- And it was a large church. They assembled together. They left Egypt together.
- TOGETHER is the KEY. A church is a group of people who are together WITHOUT DIVISION.
- We stick to the WORD OF GOD. We don't make up our own rules. We work together as a team.

I want you to please turn to Acts Chapter 20 in your Bible today.

- Acts is in the New Testament. Fifth Book in the New Testament.
- You've got Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and then ACTS.
- Acts is a HISTORY BOOK. It's called the ACTS of the APOSTLES.
- And we learn about the Apostle Paul in this great book of Acts.

Paul is traveling around EVERYWHERE preaching the GOSPEL. Preaching how to be saved.

- Paul is preaching to the JEWS who have their RELIGION that they trust in.
- What's he's preaching doesn't match their religion. They don't like Paul. They want to kill Paul.
- Paul's preaching: "Hey, all you need to do to be saved is BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST."
- Put all your FAITH IN JESUS, and HE WILL SAVE YOU. Jesus is the Savior. Not your good works.
- Following all the commandments doesn't save you.
- So, let's start there in verse 17 of Chapter 20.

[SLIDE 7] Acts 20:17-18 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. 18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons,

- This is Paul taking in verse 18. Do you see what Paul says there at the end of verse 18?
- Paul is a MAN OF GOD. He OBEYED JESUS once he knew the right way.
- He started out persecuting Jesus and his followers because he didn't know the truth.
- Jesus shows up to Paul and tells him that he's wrong. Paul changed and OBEYED GOD.

- He says to the elders of the church right there: "YOU KNOW FROM THE FIRST DAY THAT I CAME THAT I'VE BEEN WITH YOU AT ALL SEASONS!!!"

What's Paul saying right there?

- He's saying: "Hey, you know me. I've been in CHURCH with you at all SEASONS with you."
- Paul was in church ALL THE TIME. Whenever the doors were opened, PAUL was there.
- That's what Paul is saying to these elders of the Church. Paul wasn't an elder or pastor in the church.
- He was a single man who worked a normal job that gave everything he had to serving God.
- What does that tell you about Paul? CHURCH was very important to him.
- Gathering together with believers was EXTREMELY IMPORTANT to him.

It didn't matter if it was cold, hot, raining, snowing, freezing rain, PAUL was there.

- He says, "I was with you IN ALL SEASONS." In tough times, Paul was there. In good times, Paul was there.
- Paul had a job. He worked hard. But when Church was open, he was there.
- Look down to verse 33 in your Bibles. It's also on the screen here.

[SLIDE 8] Acts 20:33-35 I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. 34 Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. 35 I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

- Paul says, "Hey, I have a job. My hands worked HARD to support me and my needs."
- "But, I also worked hard and supported others."
- Look, Paul had a job but he didn't put that job above CHURCH.
- He worked HARD and supported himself and others. But he didn't forget about church.
- Why? Because God is important to Paul. CHURCH is about God. It wasn't about Paul. It's about God.
- It's not about me. It's not about you. It's about God. God is telling us something today.
- Paul's saying: "Hey, I had a job. I worked HARD. But I made GOD NUMBER ONE. I chose HIM."
- My job was so I could eat and have a place to sleep.
- And so I could help others who needed food and a place to sleep.
- But as far as CHURCH, you know I was always there with you.

Why is this important today? Paul's telling us he was consistent with CHURCH.

- Consistency is the KEY to becoming closer to God. It is. There's no doubt about that.
- Did you know GOD COMMANDS US to go to Church? Why would God do that?
- He wants what's best for us. CHURCH helps us. We get understanding, knowledge, wisdom in Church.
- Hebrews Chapter 10 is talking to SAVED PEOPLE. Watch what it says right there.

[SLIDE 9] Hebrews 10:23-25 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) 24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: 25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

- Church is here so you get the amazing opportunity to gather with BELIEVERS like yourself.
- Hey, that's who I want to be with. I don't want to be around people who HATE GOD.
- I love the Bible. I want to talk about the Bible. I want to learn the Bible. I want to increase FAITH.

- Church is my FAVORITE TIME of the week. I want to be with you all. Why?
- It says it right there: "Let us consider one another to PROVOKE unto love and to good works."
- Let's convince each other to do what God says. That's good works.

When you do good things AFTER you're saved, you're building upon the foundation of Jesus.

- GOOD WORKS are works of eternal significance.
- When you share the GOSPEL and somebody is saved, that's of eternal significance.
- When you convince someone to read the Bible, that's of eternal significance.
- You see this word of God? It's NEVER going away.
- You're going to need those words throughout ETERNITY. Yeah, you got time to read it.
- But you might as well get to knowing it right now. It's only going to help you.

And then the COMMAND from God in verse 25 right there on the screen.

- "NOT FORSAKING THE ASSEMBLING OF YOURSELVES TOGETHER!!!"
- Hey, everyone who is here right now and everyone who isn't: WE NEED YOU HERE!!!
- When you come, it encourages other people. Especially when we don't have many here.
- It encourages me. It means a lot to me. It means a lot to others who are here. More than you know.
- It's you saying: "Hey, I'm here for you all. I'm here for God. Let's do this together."
- God says: "DO NOT FORSAKE THE ASSEMBLING OF YOURSELVES TOGETHER."
- Hey, that's a command. Why?
- Because we need to be together in HIS CHURCH to learn and to help each other.

Some people might say: "Well, I just don't know as much as you Josh."

- Please is what I say back. My children have taught me things over the years.
- They taught me things this week, last week, the week before.
- My wife teaches me things when we read the Bible. They notice things I don't see.
- We read the BIBLE together at home EVERY DAY, and we all learn from each other.
- You see things I don't. I see things you don't. God teaches us all different things in HIS time.
- I read and study the Bible every day for hours, and I miss things.
- When I preach up here, I learn things when I preach.
- God reveals things to those who work hard. He says, "SEEK AND YOU WILL FIND."

So, we gather together to help each other. We're a team.

- Verse 25 on the screen says, "BUT EXHORTING ONE ANOTHER."
- Gather together to EXHORT one another. What's that mean? EXHORT?
- It's EXCITING one another to do good things. It's STIRRING people up.
- It's getting people out there in this world telling people about Jesus.
- It's motivating people. It's getting excited about God. It's singing amazing songs together.
- It's understand we're going to heaven no matter what. We're saved.
- It's encouraging each other. Hey, when you need help JUST ASK US. You can count on us!!!

That's what CHURCH is for and notice at the end of verse 25 what it says.

- "AND SO MUCH THE MORE AS YE SEE THE DAY APPROACHING."
- That's why we have Church 3 times per week. Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night.
- It's to help and encourage each other USING THE WORD OF GOD as the authority.

So Paul was VERY CONSISTENT. We see this in Acts Chapter 20, but we see it all throughout the Bible.

- I need to be consistent. You need to be consistent.
- Go to church every time the doors are opened. Ready your Bible every day 4 times per day.
- Breakfast, lunch, dinner, before bed. It works well. Use the Bible app. Make sure it's the King James.
- If you skip a day, that's not consistent.
- You need the word of God every day in order to live the way God wants you to live.
- Just as you need food, you need the word of God more. HE SAYS SO.

[SLIDE 10] Matthew 4:4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

- Here's a tip when you're reading the Bible and especially in the New Testament.
- That's Jesus speaking right there in that verse you see. He says, "IT IS WRITTEN."
- When you see that, you'll know that it's somewhere in the Bible already.

[SLIDE 11] Deuteronomy 8:3 And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.

- In other words, you're LIVING by the WORD OF GOD.
- God created you through SPEAKING HIS WORD.
- You see? God speaks AND things happen. That shows you HIS POWER.
- So this Bible you have in front of you is PURE POWER. It's God's word, and you need it to live.

If you want to live right according to God's word, you need to read this and study it every day.

- And then, when you come to church you'll learn even more.
- And you'll also recognize FALSE TEACHING immediately. If I have something wrong, tell me.
- I need to know. I want to get this right. That's why we're all here. I don't mind being wrong.
- I love to get things right. I'm not perfect. I want to get the word of God right. Let's work together.
- BE CONSISTENT like Paul. Be here. Study. Read. Pray.

Don't be like a FIREWORK CHRISTIAN!

- You come in with a BIG BANG. You're excited, you want to work for God, and then you disappear.
- You fall away from God. Why is that? Inconsistency. Hey, look, I know how it works.
- I've done everything wrong. I've messed up over and over again in my life.
- But one day I said: "That's it. I'm going to OBEY GOD and do what He says."
- Don't fizzle out. Stay consistent for life. When I skip reading the Bible one day, I start messing up more.
- You'll see. It's automatic. So, I've learned to not get away from the word of God ANY DAY.

[SLIDE 12] 2 Timothy 4:2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

- We need to know the word so we can PREACH the word. That's not just to a church preacher.
- We're all supposed to be preachers of God's word outside of this church. ALL OF US.
- And PREACH IT all the time. IN SEASON, OUT OF SEASON, morning, day, night. Preach it.
- To preach it, you have to know it. You have to have CONFIDENCE in the word of God.

If you read your Bible every day and come here to church, you'll know it.

- My wife says, "Hey, I never thought I would know and understand the Bible like I do now."
- I've said that too. God's helped us. If you think that too right now, stick with us and you'll see.
- Be like PAUL. Be consistence ALL SEASONS and AT ALL TIMES. Work for God because you love Him.
- Do it for God and do it for us. Let's work together. We're a team with God. It takes all of us.
- I guarantee you that HE WILL DO HIS PART. He just needs us to do OUR PART. He is the rock.
- You can count on Him. He does what He says. Can HE count on you?

[SLIDE 13] Deuteronomy 32:4 He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.

- Isn't it great to know you have someone you can count on?
- Doesn't it feel good to know that? That's why the CHURCH is here too.
- We join together to say, "HEY, YOU CAN COUNT ON US!!!" Let's do this TOGETHER.
- Let's do this as a CHURCH as a CONGREGATION.
- I want to go back to Acts Chapter 20 and continue in verse 19. This is Paul speaking.

[SLIDE 14] Acts 20:19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews:

- So, when Paul came to CHURCH, what did He do?
- He says, "Hey, I was there with you in CHURCH. But I didn't just come to church and take a chair."
- He says, "I SERVED THE LORD WITH ALL HUMILITY OF MIND, and with many tears, and temptations."
- The JEWS were lying in wait for PAUL. He used to be one of those who practiced a false religion.
- I was. Most likely if you've been in churches around here, you have been too. They were after Paul.
- But yet, Paul served the Lord with all that he had. He didn't just take up a chair. He didn't just show up.
- He listened. He learned. He studied. HE SERVED THE LORD.
- What does it mean to SERVE THE LORD? What do you need to be doing? Let's see what Paul says.

[SLIDE 15] Acts 20:20-21 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house, 21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

- He says, I SHOWED YOU THE TRUTH. I taught you PUBLICLY and from HOUSE TO HOUSE.
- Do you see that today? That's why we go out HOUSE TO HOUSE and tell people about Jesus.
- I would have NEVER done that if I didn't read the BIBLE. I get my confidence from this.
- I get my instruction from THIS WORD OF GOD. He tells me what I need to do to please HIM.

So, we have to do what GOD SAYS. God says to get out there and spread the WORD OF GOD.

- That's the only thing that will bring any change in this world. It's the only thing.
- Understand that today. You can go feed the homeless. That's one meal. It's not doing much.
- You give them the GOSPEL, they accept it, that will change them for eternity.
- So what do you do? You get involved with the CHURCH.
- You bring your family with you. Don't give them an option. Say, "HEY, You need to come to church with me. I'll pick you up."

Invite your friends. Go Soul Winning with us on Saturday. 10:30 AM meet us right here.

- You can be a SILENT PARTNER. You don't have to say anything. Watch how we do it. Listen, learn.
- You NEVER have to be the talker. You can be once you're ready.
- But you'll be a part of the team working for God. The requirements to go out with us SOUL WINNING.
- What are they? The only requirement is to be ALIVE. That's it. Breathing and alive.
- If that's you, come on out on a Saturday. When the weather and day light is better, we'll go out more.

Notice what else you see in verse 21 in your Bibles or on the screen.

- Paul went to BOTH the Jews and to the Greeks. He didn't care who it was.
- Many of the JEWS hated him, but he knew there might be a few that would listen.
- He went to the Greeks. In other words, HE WENT OUT TO ALL PEOPLE.
- There is no segregation in the BIBLE. HEAVEN is for all people of all types, all races, all kinds.
- God doesn't discriminate. We don't discriminate. We need different people.

We ALL learn differently, we speak differently, GOD MADE US DIFFERENT.

- We need different people to win different types of people to JESUS.
- We don't just accept other races and other kinds here, WE WANT THEM HERE.
- If you believe on the LORD JESUS CHRIST, we want you here.
- Doesn't matter your age, OLD, YOUNG, MIDDLE, ANCIENT, NEWLY BORN.
- It doesn't matter if you're RED, YELLOW, BLACK, or WHITE, you are PRECIOUS in our sight.

[SLIDE 16] Mark 11:17 And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves.

- So Jesus is teaching HIS HOUSE, the CHURCH, is for all nations.
- And I hope you see the part where Jesus says, "IS IT NOT WRITTEN?"
- What's that mean? What He's saying is coming from the OLD TESTAMENT. He is the word.
- He wrote it in the OLD TESTAMENT too. It all goes together and fits together perfectly.

[SLIDE 17] Isaiah 56:7 Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.

- When we go out to preach the GOSPEL as a church, we don't pick and choose.
- We don't go to the rich areas because we want offering.
- We don't avoid a certain area because we know there's only old people living there.
- Or, there's only Catholics in that area. We're going out to ALL PEOPLE.

[SLIDE 18] Matthew 28:19-20 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

- That sure sounds like a commandment to me. YET, churches don't do it.
- The supposed EXPERTS don't do what JESUS clearly commands us to do.
- They'll come up with some excuse. What it tells me, though, is they don't believe the word of God.

- You don't think Jesus isn't ANGRY with the so-called churches that won't do what He says?
- You can know that He is angry with them. EXTREMELY ANGRY WITH THEM.
- With this Church, you have a great opportunity in front of you to do work for God.

He's given you the opportunity to get people to accept a gift of eternal significance.

- Do you understand what that means? You can help save someone from eternal hell.
- It only takes a MOMENT of them believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.
- It only takes a MOMENT of them putting 100% of their trust on JESUS ALONE.
- Is it easy to get most people to accept this gift? No, it's not.
- You might hit 1 to 5 people out of a hundred that will listen. But it's worth it when you find them.
- And it's awesome and amazing. There's nothing better than someone accepting the LORD JESUS CHRIST.
- You can cause a HUGE PARTY in heaven. That's what I want.

[SLIDE 19] Romans 10:12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

- There is no difference in people the BIBLE says. It's for all people.
- It for ALL that call upon HIM. We don't get to say: "Oh, I'm not going there because of this or that."
- Instead, we do what God says. He takes care of the rest. Trust HIM.
- Usually, if you don't want to do something it ALWAYS turns out with the best results. Watch and see.
- Rich, poor, old, young, all colors, all races, all nationalities. We go out to all. ALL NEED GOD.
- Who should go out with us? EVERONE. We go out to everyone and everyone can go out.
- Little Emma there? She goes out with us. Callie and Taylor? They're silent partners being trained.

Now, I think you have a better idea of what a CHURCH is and what a CHURCH should be doing.

- But let's learn more about what CHURCH is by using the Bible.
- Some people think Church is Sunday School or going to the Gym at Church and playing basketball.
- "Well, I'm at Church so it must be a good thing!!!"
- "Hey, I went to Church and played basketball so that counts!!!" No, it doesn't. That's not church.

Church is the gathering together of believers to learn the word of God through preaching and teaching.

- Sunday School for different age groups, for male only, for female only, for this ONLY.
- Do you think that's CHURCH? No, it's not church and it's been VERY HARMFUL to church.
- You have people teaching different things that aren't even reading and studying their Bible.
- Oh yeah, it happens every SUNDAY in tens of thousands of churches in this country.
- How do I know? I've done it myself before. I witnessed it every Sunday for most of my life.
- Do more people teach Sunday School who know the Bible or that don't know the Bible?
- Way more teaching Sunday School that don't know ONE THING about the Bible.

You don't need Sunday School. You don't need to split into different groups.

- That's not CHURCH. Church is a GENERAL ASSEMBLY of people.
- That means ALL PEOPLE in the CHURCH gather together in ONE PLACE and hear the same WORDS.

[SLIDE 20] Hebrews 12:23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

- "TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND CHURCH OF THE FIRSTBORN."
- That's the church of JESUS CHRIST. It's a GENERAL ASSEMBLY.
- That means it's the ENTIRE CHURCH together at once. All at the same time.
- If someone says, "Well, you can't come into the ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS."
- Then it isn't CHURCH. And God commands us to go to CHURCH. Assemble yourselves together.
- All believers are invited into CHURCH.
- The little ones are ESPECIALLY INVITED.

They have a special invitation here to sit there with their parents and listen and learn.

- We don't send them out of CHURCH. They sit there and listen.
- I KNOW if you read the Bible at home with your children every day, and bring them to church every time the doors open, and they hear the sermons here THAT THEY WILL MOST LIKELY BE SAVED at an early age.
- And that's what you want. That's what changes those children FOREVER.
- If they get taken out of CHURCH where they never hear the word of God, that's not good.
- That's MISSED OPPORTUNITIES. That's why we want them here in Church with their parents.
- Being SAVED is the most important thing you could ever want for your children.

So, in other words, if certain people aren't allowed, then it's not CHURCH.

- Sunday School isn't church. Playing basketball at church isn't church. Nothing like that is CHURCH.
- Having a buffet dinner at church isn't church.

In other words, Sunday School isn't a substitute for church.

- Reading the Bible on your own isn't a substitute for church.
- Soul winning isn't a substitute for church.
- Watching sermons on TV isn't a substitute for church.
- You aren't gathered together with people IN PERSON. You aren't assembling together.
- Listening over the phone is not a substitute for church. Understand that today.
- The church in the wilderness with Moses? EVERYONE IN THE CONGREGATION WAS INVITED.
- The little children were there. JOSHUA preached to the little children too.

[SLIDE 21] Joshua 8:34-35 And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law. 35 There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them.

- So, all the men, all the women, and all the little ones were there.
- THIS IS WHY WE HAVE CHURCH LIKE WE DO HERE. We don't need Sunday School here.
- The children aren't dumb. A lot of them are smarter than me. Don't put the children down.
- "Well, they can't understand." OH YES THEY CAN.
- You know what? Taking the children away from the word of GOD is OFFENSIVE.
- To me, that's evil and sick. You don't take the children away from PREACHING of GOD'S WORD.
- It's for all people. The men, the women, and the little children.

[SLIDE 22] Luke 17:2 It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.

- So, look, I think it's OFFENSIVE to take the little children away from God's word being preached.
- Why? Because you take away opportunities for those children to learn and to be saved.
- Do you see that? That makes ME ANGRY. We want the children to be saved.
- And what's happened in so-called churches all over this world?
- The little children have been molested.
- They're taken into rooms with sick and nasty adults who should receive the death penalty.
- NOT HERE. They will NEVER be taken away from their parents. EVER.
- Don't trust ANYONE with your children. LET THEM HEAR THE WORD OF GOD.

So look, don't try to make your very own substitute for Church either.

- "Well, I don't have the clothes OR I can't get up that early OR this or that."
- EXCUSES. Guess what? In the Bible, GOD NEVER accepts an EXCUSE. EVER.
- There are no excuses with God.
- In other words, don't try to get out of church.
- Why? Because there's something VERY IMPORTANT going on.
- God's trying to tell you something. He wants you coming to church because it's best for you.
- Now, look, if it's a FALSE CHURCH, then it's better to just stay home.
- You don't want to learn the wrong things. And that's everywhere around here.

If you have a church like this around who actually gets the SIMPLE GOSPEL in the Bible correct, then you don't want to miss church!!!

- Why? Because you might miss out on something important.
- I want to show you an example of someone in the Bible missing out on something VERY IMPORTANT.
- They missed out because they MISSED CHURCH. They didn't show up. They had some excuse.
- Please, listen to this, you don't want to miss church. Please come back. Why? Let me show you.

[SLIDE 23] John 20:19 Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

- The first day of the week is SUNDAY. Sunday evening right there in John Chapter 20.
- They were assembled. They were having CHURCH. They shut the doors and started CHURCH.
- Look who shows up!!! JESUS CHRIST comes and shows up to CHURCH.
- You don't want to miss that. But, let's continue reading.
- Let's see who was missing from CHURCH, and let's see what HE MISSED.

[SLIDE 24] John 20:20-23 And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. 21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. 22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: 23 Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

- Do you see this? JESUS shows up IN CHURCH to give HIS DISCIPLES the gift of the HOLY GHOST.
- Let's continue in verse 24. I want you to see this.

[SLIDE 25] John 20:24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

- “Hey THOMAS, where were you man???” Why didn’t you show up today?
- Well, I had something else to do. I was busy. My car broke down.
- If your car breaks down, call me. I’ll come get you. I’ll even delay the start of church. We’ll wait for you.
- There is no excuse. Look what THOMAS missed!!!
- He missed the LORD JESUS CHRIST after HIS RESURRECTION.
- And Thomas can NEVER get that back. HE MISSED IT.
- He MISSED receiving the Holy Ghost from JESUS. Do you see this?
- Jesus breathed on the ones who were there. Thomas wasn’t there.

Please don’t miss CHURCH. Good things happen in church.

- We learn things in church that we never would have learned.
- Jesus shows up when we have church here. This is HIS CHURCH.
- He doesn’t show up in FALSE CHURCHES who twist HIS WORDS and preach the opposite of what He says.
- We GATHER together in the name of Jesus here. ALL OF US TOGETHER.

[SLIDE 26] Matthew 18:20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Is church important to God? Is you coming to church important to God?

- Is the gathering together of HIS PEOPLE important to HIM?
- Let’s look to the Bible and see what God says.
- I want to go back to Acts Chapter 20 verse 28. This is Paul speaking.

[SLIDE 27] Acts 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

- Wouldn’t you say the CHURCH is important to GOD.
- If you’re a SAVED BELIEVER, then you’re part of HIS CHURCH.
- That means, HE wants you coming to CHURCH.
- “He hath purchased with OWN BLOOD.” He bought the CHURCH. HE PAID FOR IT.
- Not with money. WITH THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST.
- Without that, there wouldn’t be a CHURCH. So, look, the church is important to HIM.
- He’s going to FEED US with HIS WORDS, HIS KNOWLEDGE, His wisdom every time we come here.
- He’ll help us, be with us, look over us, protect us, and provide what we need.
- HE WILL because He said HE would. We are HIS.

Let’s look to Acts Chapter 20 to learn more about church.

- I want to go back to verse 7 and start there. I want you to see this example today.

[SLIDE 28] Acts 20:7 And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

- So, this is a Sunday and Paul is preaching to the church. It was a congregation, a gathering of people.
- And they were receiving God’s word through PREACHING.
- But notice, Paul continued his speech until MIDNIGHT. He didn’t stop preaching.

- So, if you think an hour sermon is too long or an hour and a half sermon is too long, see that today.
- Do you know whose conditioned people to hear a 30 minute sermon? The churches.

“Well, I don’t want to go to that church because the sermon is too long.”

- Hey, if you don’t want to hear a long sermon, then something is wrong.
- You should be here to want to hear what God wants. God knows if you care.
- Do you want to learn about God? You see: ME, I want to learn about God.

I would stay here all day and all night IF it gets one person SAVED.

- I would stay here all week if it gets ONE person SAVED. It’s not about me.
- If God wants to teach me ONE THING, I’ll stay here all night to learn that one thing that He wants me to know.
- We don’t have Sunday School here. We sing to God, we pray, and we PREACH THE WORD.
- That’s church. It includes everybody together as ONE CONGREGATION. We all learn the same thing.
- Nobody misses anything. We’re all on the same page with each other. We all hear the same thing.
- We’re here for about 2 hours total.

Churches that have Sunday School, smoke coming out of smoke machines, lights flashing, rock star performances, and all of that don’t even hear the word of God.

- You have people up there singing “LOOK AT ME!!! Look how great I am.” That’s what you get.
- Hey, it’s not about you!!! It’s about singing to GOD and for GOD. It doesn’t matter what you sound like.
- So, at these other churches, you’re there for a longer period of time and hear MUCH less about God.
- Stay with us for a while, and you’ll see how much you learn here BECAUSE this is God’s design for CHURCH.
- God knows better. If you have questions, we’re all right here AFTER the preaching.
- I’ll stay here and answer any questions you have.
- We’ll talk about anything you need and learn from each other.
- That’s why we’re here. I’m in no rush. You need help? I’m here. We’re all here for you. That’s church.

Let’s go back to Acts Chapter 20 and continue.

- And remember Paul had already preached to midnight. But, he’s doesn’t stop with the preaching.
- Continuing in verse 8. Watch this.

[SLIDE 29] Acts 20:8-9 And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together. 9 And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.

- Paul was preaching a long time. Many hours he was preaching.
- This man named EUTYCHUS was listening but he fell into a deep sleep. Not lightly. DEEP SLEEP.
- I’ve seen people snoring in church before. But this man was sitting in a window with it open.
- They were in the UPPER CHAMBER. They were 3 stories up.
- Don’t sit in a window 3 stories up and take a nap. But, here’s the KEY to this story right here.

EUTYCHUS is in church BUT think about what’s going on there.

- Outside of the church, out that window, is the world.
- This man is halfway inside the church and halfway out in the world.

- As he sinks down to sleep, he allows the flesh to take over. He's tired.
- He's not interested any more in the preaching.
- He falls out into the WORLD. He's half in church and half out of church.
- He allows the flesh to take over, and he falls out of church. That's the whole point of this story.

This is an example for us to learn from TODAY.

- Don't be HALF IN and HALF OUT. Don't continue in worldly things like bad movies, bad TV, horrible music.
- And then come to church and expect everything to be okay.
- That's called HALF IN and HALF OUT just like that man in the window.
- When you're half in and half out, guess what's going to happen? The worldly half is going to win.
- I've been there. Done that. I lost. I didn't die BUT I could have.
- EUTYCHUS. Did he die? They thought he was dead. This is a warning today.
- Get out of the world and get into GOD for good. Let's see what happened.

[SLIDE 30] Acts 20:10-12 And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him. 11 When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed. 12 And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.

- Notice that Paul stayed and talked a long while EVEN until morning. Why? Because it's important.

So this young man was alive THANK GOD. But it was a VERY close call.

- He made it even though he was half in and half out.
- Sometimes GOD will wake you up. He sure woke me up. Notice this was a YOUNG MAN.
- You all know when you're a teenager or even into your 20's it's EASY to be half in and half out.
- You want to see what that other half is all about. You listen to your friends over others who know.
- You don't trust what someone whose already been there tells you.
- You want to try it for yourself. Well, here's the warning. Don't try it!!!
- Don't try drugs. Don't try alcohol. Don't try partying. Don't try bars and clubs. Don't try fornication.
- There's NOTHING good for you in any of those things. You don't need to try it.

Understand that young man almost died because he was HALFWAY in the world OUT that window.

- He wanted to see what was going on out in the world. He was interested in the world.
- But he also wanted to see what was going on in the church. Been there. Done it.
- If you do that, you WILL FALL OUT INTO THE WORLD. It's no good out there. It hurts. It's sad. It's painful.
- It's tears. It's not fun. When you find God, you'll see how those things are NOTHING compared to HIM.
- That's why He doesn't want you out there. He's NOT trying to hide good from you.
- He's trying to keep you from HURT, PAIN, SICKNESS, TEARS. Understand that today.

As we head towards closing this sermon out, I want you to know this today.

- GET EVERYTHING INTO GOD!!!
- What do you do? First: BE SAVED. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and HIM ALONE.
- Understand it's not you that saves yourself through your works. It's through FAITH ALONE.

[SLIDE 31] Romans 3:28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

- Once you're saved, you can choose to OBEY GOD or go up against GOD.
- Let me tell you, going up against God isn't going to end up good. HE IS THE ALMIGHTY GOD.
- He loves you and wants you close to HIM. He will punish you to bring you back to HIM. To protect you.
- So don't test HIM because HE DOES WHAT HE SAYS. How do you stay close to HIM?
- I never knew what that meant, but now I do AND I want you to know exactly what you need to do.

To stay close to God and OBEY HIM every day, you need HIM. You can't do it on your own.

- What does this mean? Here's what I do and it works. I want to give you an example.
- Wake up. Open your eyes. Pray to God as soon as you wake up. THANK HIM FOR ALL THINGS.
- Make time to read your Bible. Take an EXTRA 15 minutes at Breakfast. Make the time to read.
- Sit down, pray before you eat, read your Bible. At lunch and dinner, do the same thing.
- Read your Bible for 15 minutes or more each time you eat.
- Then at bed time read your Bible. Before you fall asleep, pray to God. Thank HIM.

[SLIDE 32] 1 Chronicles 16:34 O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.

- Be thankful to God in all things at all times.
- Throughout the day, you'll have the word of God in your head from reading.
- You'll have the psalms, spiritual songs, and hymns in your head.
- Don't listen to other music. The so-called Christian music isn't Christian music.
- It doesn't teach you the right doctrine. It has false teaching within it.
- You hear it all the time and you start to think it's correct. No. You need the word of GOD in you.
- Don't watch nasty TV shows. The more you read your Bible you'll see that TV is sick.
- Instead of watching TV, download a sermon from our website and study it.

Start studying the Bible on your own in your free time instead of TV, movies, and games.

- Study words. For example, study the word HATE and ABHOR in the Bible.
- How do you do this? The Bible App on my phone allows me to search for those words.
- It gives you all the instances of the word.
- I'll tell you what I use for studying the Bible. It's called SWORDSEARCHER.
- It has the Bible, easy word searches, concordances for Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words.
- You can get a quick listing of all the verses with specific words.
- Simply studying the word HATE and ABHOR will tell you SO MUCH about the ONE TRUE GOD.
- The world has a false god. They tell you that God doesn't HATE at all. Search the Bible. You'll see.

So pray throughout the day, read the Bible, study your Bible.

- When church is open, be in church if at all possible. If you're sick, that's okay.
- Download the sermons, study the sermons.
- Go SOUL WINNING with us. Be a silent partner unless you want to be a leader.
- Learn how to win souls to Jesus Christ.
- Doing all of these things is BEING ALL IN FOR GOD. Jump all in. Don't be a firework Christian.
- Don't come with a BIG BANG and then fizzle out and stop following God.
- Doing all of these things will help you to GREATLY reduce the amount of sin in your life.
- Doing all of these things is what it means to WALK IN THE SPIRIT.
- You have the WORD OF GOD in your life continuously.

[SLIDE 33] Galatians 5:16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

- When you walk in the Spirit, you don't sin. Your mind doesn't wander. You want what God wants.
- When you reduce sin in your life, your life gets SO MUCH BETTER. You have peace in your life.
- And I mean TRUE PEACE in your life.

[SLIDE 34] Philippians 4:7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

- Why is heaven such a great place?
- Let me tell you: It's a great place because GOD IS THERE.
- But it's such a great place because there is no sin. NO SIN THERE!!!
- You don't have to worry about people doing you wrong there.

THERE IS NO SIN IN HEAVEN. So, you might as well get a little piece of heaven on earth each day.

- That's a GOOD LIFE. That's a PEACEFUL LIFE.
- STOP SINNING by doing the best you can each day by depending on GOD.
- You have the HOLY SPIRIT within you. Choose to obey HIM or not. Obeying leads to GOOD THINGS.
- When you do your best to stop sinning, you are LOVING others.
- You're doing what's best for OTHERS when you OBEY GOD.
- If you OBEY GOD, you fulfill EVERYTHING HE WANTS.

[SLIDE 35] Matthew 22:36-40 Master, which is the great commandment in the law? 37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

- So, you should see how LOVING GOD is OBEYING GOD.
- When you do that, you FULFILL EVERYTHING HE WANTS FROM YOU!!!

[SLIDE 36] 1 John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

Do what He says, and understand He will take care of you.

- You'll always be doing what's best for others BY following GOD'S COMMANDMENTS.
- Walk in the SPIRIT and NOT IN THE FLESH. Church is a VERY IMPORTANT piece of that.
- Church is a commandment from GOD.

Showing up to church leads to special things in your life.

- God teaches us things in CHURCH that we won't get anywhere else or at any other time.
- Church is very important to GOD. I hope you see this today.
- He commands us to BE IN CHURCH because it really is that important.

To close, let's pray.