

Why You Should Not Attend The Gospel Meeting

Franklin Church of Christ
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AM Assembly

Introduction:

Next Sunday, we will be holding a gospel meeting entitled “Exploring Islam and Christianity”. It will focus on the differences between the world’s two major religions. A brief glance at the topics is enough to excite us about this meeting. However, I want you to know, there are reasons for which you should not attend this gospel meeting. And while you may have already set aside time to be at every service of this gospel meeting, I want to explain to you why you should not attend this gospel meeting.

Discussion:

- I. Why you should not attend the gospel meeting.
 - A. You should not attend the gospel meeting because you have to.
 1. For over 12 years as a gospel preacher I have argued with one person or another about whether or not you have to attend all the assemblies of the church, whether Sunday night, Bible classes or the assemblies in a gospel meeting. We are all very familiar with **Hebrews 10:25** and the various ways people apply it to our service today. But the fact is, I am tired of having this argument. I am convinced it is a “no win” argument. By that I mean, no matter where we come out in the conclusion of the argument, this church will lose.
 2. If I “lose” the argument, then those who attend the gospel meeting because they think they have to will quit attending. Every church in any location that has started teaching you don’t have to attend drops in attendance. We would be no different. In this scenario, the church here will lose because people will quit attending our assemblies.
 3. If I “win” the argument, then I will simply produce a class of Christians that attends because it wants to “toe the line” but doesn’t really want to serve the Lord. These will be as devoted to worship and serving God as is the teenager devoted to making the yard look nice when he cuts the grass. The church loses because these people won’t edify effectively. So, please don’t attend the gospel meeting because you have to.
 - B. You should not attend the gospel meeting because someone will get onto you if you don’t.
 1. Much akin to our first reason is this one. Despite anyone’s belief regarding the technical necessity of attending all the assemblies, everyone recognizes that, all other things being equal, attending more frequently demonstrates a greater commitment and growth. And everyone recognizes that our duty is to stimulate one another to growth (**Hebrews 10:24**).
 2. Following the meeting, some will call to check on those who didn’t attend. Because of this, some will attend just because they don’t want anyone to get onto them. Attending the meeting because somebody has gotten on to you or will get on to you only builds resentment between brethren. Anything you may learn or gain from the worship we will be having in this meeting will be overridden by the negative feelings governing your reason for attending. So, please don’t attend the gospel meeting because someone will get onto you if you don’t.
 - C. You should not attend the gospel meeting because you really like Andrew Roberts’ preaching.
 1. Andrew did an outstanding job when he participated in our Fall Focus last year. I have heard some preachers with whom I have not been nearly as impressed. I have heard some whose preaching was almost tiring. It sure is good when you like the preacher and his style, isn’t it?
 2. But that is not what our gospel meeting, or any other assembly, is about. Our worship is not about preachers that we like or dislike. Our worship is about God. The Corinthians had trouble with preacher following. Paul describes the trouble and gives the answer to it in **I Corinthians 3:4-6**. This meeting is not about a preacher who amounts to anything in our estimation. This meeting is about God who will cause the growth. So, please do not attend this meeting because you really like Andrew’s preaching.
 - D. You should not attend the gospel meeting because the topics sound interesting to you.
 1. I have to be honest; I am extremely excited about the topic for this meeting. I am very interested. But if we only attend because the topics sound interesting to us, then if they didn’t sound interesting, we would not attend. That is the wrong basis for worship.
 2. Far too many people only attend when the worship interests them. But upon whom is the focus of worship in that case? Is the focus of that kind of worship upon God? No. When I at-

tend only because the topics of the sermons are interesting to me, my worship is focused on me. In fact, it may not be as obvious, but there is little difference between the one who attends only because the sermon sounds interesting and the one who attends with a congregation only when they have a “fellowship supper”. In both cases what is happening is based on me and not on God. Paul explains that worship is about sacrificing myself to God, not focusing on myself (**Romans 12:1**). So, please do not attend the gospel meeting because the topics sound interesting to you.

- E. You should not attend the gospel meeting because you do not have anything better to do.
 - 1. Years ago, gospel meetings were the greatest community events of the year. There was no TV. There were few social clubs. Organized sports and school events were rare. People had nothing better to do, so even non-Christians attended the meetings. This motivation is not surprising from non-Christians. After all, they are not devoted to worship and we should not expect them to be. If they were, they would already be here, wouldn't they?
 - 2. Regrettably, however, that seems to have been the reason for the good number of Christians attending those meetings as well. I say this, because as our society has become more diversified in its ability to provide entertainment for people, even Christians have slacked off in their attendance to the worship assemblies, because they have “better” things to do. Have you ever noticed that we do not allow things to get in the way of events that are important to us? Many don't even allow worship assemblies to get in the way of events that are important to them. But, when we only attend because we don't have anything better to do, be assured that Satan will work overtime to provide us with “better” things to do (**I Peter 5:8**). So, please don't attend the gospel meeting just because you do not have anything better to do.

II. Why you should attend the gospel meeting.

- A. You should attend the gospel meeting because God deserves it.
 - 1. In **Revelation 4:11**, the elders and living creatures before the throne of God claimed, “Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things...” The Psalmist said, “I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, And I am saved from my enemies” (**Psalms 18:3**).
 - 2. We are having a meeting because God is worthy of our worship. God created us and sacrificed His Son for us. He doesn't deserve our excuses, our procrastination and equivocation. He deserves our worship. In the meeting we will have ample opportunity to offer that to God. So, please attend the gospel meeting because God deserves it.
- B. You should attend the gospel meeting because Jesus died to give us this opportunity.
 - 1. Perhaps so many other things take precedence over the assemblies of a gospel meeting in our minds because assemblies happen so frequently. Because we have them every Sunday, it is easy to take them for granted and not value them. Maybe, it is because all we see when we worship is other people. Not extremely important people. But other people just like us. We spend some time together performing the “acts of worship” we have heard sermonized and then we separate to get on with our real lives. For these reasons, we may miss what is really happening when we assemble.
 - 2. Christ's church is called the “house of God” (**I Timothy 3:15**) to bring to our minds the Jerusalem temple, which was the “house of God” (**I Kings 8:10-11**). When you gather here with the saints, you are coming to the temple and house of the living God (**Ephesians 2:21**). We are priests gathering here in the holy of holies (**I Peter 2:9**). We are coming to God's dwelling place (not this building, but this assembly). What right have we to come into the very presence of God? What right have we to approach the throne of God? How is it that we, weak, pitiful and sinful as we are, can come into the presence of the great and mighty God, creator and sustainer of the universe?
 - 3. **Hebrews 10:19-25** explains. We have confidence to enter this holy place by the blood of Jesus. Jesus died to purchase for us this ability to gather here and praise God. Jesus' death secured for us the ability to make our supplications to God and cast our cares upon Him. We can do this only because Jesus died. We can have our gospel meeting only because Jesus died to give us the opportunity. That is how valuable this is to God. How valuable is it to you? Please, attend this gospel meeting because Jesus died to give you this opportunity.

- C. You should attend the gospel meeting because you need it.
1. Our worship is not about something God needs (**Psalm 50:10**). We worship because we need it. We need the reminder of the sacrifice of Jesus. We need the reminder of our place before God. But what we need most of all is the building up assembling in worship provides.
 2. Our kids get upset when we tell them not to play in the street, but it is a rule for their own good. Just so, we get upset, at times, that God has commanded us to assemble. But it too is a law for our own good. As demonstrated by **Hebrews 10:25**, what we are doing here is stimulating each other to love and good works. We are encouraging one another.
 3. What happens when we don't attend? We miss the stimulation and the encouragement. I am amazed that when people become stressed or distressed, the first thing to go is the worship assembly. They think that is the only time they have for rest, so they don't come. It becomes a self-defeating cycle because the one place we can come for true encouragement to carry on through the difficulties is the assembly. And next week you will have two more opportunities to come and be with your brethren. You have two more opportunities to receive that pick me up and boost to continue on serving the Lord in the midst of all the wickedness that goes on around us. So, please attend the gospel meeting because you need it.
- D. You should attend the gospel meeting because your brethren need you.
1. In addition to the encouragement you will receive from the worship, the preaching and the brethren around you, you will do some encouraging. I don't know if you feel this way, but I am encouraged every week to keep on striving to serve the Lord. Because I see you here, on Mondays I know there are more than a hundred others also trying to serve the Lord.
 2. When you are not here, encouragement is hindered. In fact, it is downright discouraging. There are times when the absence of brethren causes me to wonder, "What am I trying for? If others don't have to or don't want to, why should I bother?" If I feel this way, who as a preacher am somewhat protected from the evil influences most people have to face, how much more do your brethren who have to work in the midst of sinners every day feel this way. They need your presence and your encouragement that there is a point to all of this. They need to know their labor and toil is not in vain and your presence will provide that encouragement (**I Corinthians 15:58; Hebrews 10:25**).
 3. Additionally, we know from **Ephesians 4:15-16** that this church will only grow to the extent that every joint within it is strengthened and provides more growth. Your brethren, this congregation, need you to be here so you can grow from what is being done. That will help us, as a group, grow. Please attend the gospel meeting because your brethren need you.
- E. You should attend the gospel meeting because you don't have anything better to do.
1. Next week, you will have an increased opportunity to give praise to the God who created you. You will have greater opportunity to give thanks to the Lord who saved you. You will have more opportunities to obey the Spirit who revealed His will to you. You will have two more opportunities to come into the holiest of holies with your brethren, in the very presence of God, even as we are doing this morning. You will have greater opportunity to build up your brethren. And you will have greater opportunity to be strengthened and stimulate to love and good works. Can you think of anything better to do than that?
 2. I know some have obligations with work (fulfilling another command of God in **II Thessalonians 3:10** and **I Timothy 5:8**) and with regret you will miss some of the assemblies. But I would like for every one of us to consider if we miss the assemblies of this gospel meeting, what we are saying about what is important in our lives. Consider the other events that you would have made sure to attend even under those circumstances. Would you have still gone to work under those circumstances? Would you have still made it to your child's school play under those circumstances? Remember, the things that are important to us don't get easily set aside because we are tired, busy or distracted. We find ways to do what is important to us. Find a way to attend this gospel meeting, because you don't have anything better to do.

Conclusion:

I hope I have convinced you of why not to come this meeting, thus helping you deepen your devotion to worship and strengthening you to attend for the reasons that you should. You need to be here and we need you to be here. Please, worship God with us in our meeting.