

THE CHURCH THAT JESUS BUILT

Daily Briefing • Day 4 of 5 • Only Half of Church?

WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE

By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.
John 13:35

Sunday we looked at a church that gathered in the temple (large group) and in homes (small groups). Both, not one or the other. Today we consider the two ways people quietly deprioritize one or the other. You can watch or listen to the sermon at 1mso.church or on the One Missoula app.

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I pray that You would give me a desire for both worshiping You on Sunday morning and putting myself in positions to know and be known in life groups. If there are lesser things getting my attention, devotion, or loyalty, I pray that You would point those out so that I can make the necessary changes. God, I want to see You add disciples to our church, so I commit to champion the values and behaviors that You reward. In Jesus' name, I commit myself to You. Amen.

TODAY'S TEACHING

Every church wants the last line of Acts 2: "And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved." However, not everyone in church wants the line right before it, where they gathered for large corporate worship in the temple (large group) and in homes (small groups). What Acts 2 describes, the rest of the New Testament prescribes. Do not neglect to meet together (Hebrews 10:24-25). Teach and admonish one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs (Colossians 3:16). Bear with one another, forgive one another, and confess your sins to one another (Colossians 3:13; James 5:16). Those are commands, and they are functionally impossible for anybody who forsakes gathering. So anybody who wants the reward (Jesus adding disciples) without the methods (corporate worship and life-together relationships) has a question to answer. Can you tell God the thing He uses does not matter while still expecting what it produces?

People deprioritize this in two different ways. Some skip Sunday worship because they do not like the singing. Underneath that is an assumption worth saying out loud: that the singing is for us. It is not only for us. It is first a thank-you note. Imagine someone handed you ten trillion dollars and it changed every second of every day. Pausing once a week to say thank you in a way the benefactor likes is not a difficult or burdensome demand. And rescue from everlasting judgment is worth more than a trillion dollars. Singing praise is also for the people standing next to you, who need truth declared over them and need to see worshiping God treated as normal (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). Singing is for the outsider, who witnesses people love God the way he has only seen people worship politicians, celebrities, and athletes. And it is for you, because something happens when you say out loud that there is someone on the throne who is not you, and that rescue came through Jesus rather than false gods of money, technology, politics, science, or education. Music drives that into beliefs and behaviors that plain speech does not reach.

An alternative reason may have nothing to do with music. It is travel, recreation, and entertainment. It is the slopes, hunting season, camping trips, the lake, a sports tournament schedule that runs through Sunday morning. None of those are sins; they are blessings. But they turn into something else when they go on the calendar first while worship gets sprinkled in around them. Here is the reality: most people refuse to take time off work for any of it. Work gets protected. Recreation gets protected. God gets leftovers.

Other people love Sunday. They love the music and the crowd. What they hate is small groups, and the reason they give is that people are messy. They are right. A small group means sitting with someone who talks too long, someone who disagrees with you, and someone whose life is hard to be around. But that is exactly the point. God does not build patience in people who are never inconvenienced, and He does not sharpen anyone in isolation. Iron sharpens iron (Proverbs 27:17), and that has never been a quiet process done in solitude. Scripture tells us to bear with one another and forgive each other (Colossians 3:12-13), which would be a strange instruction if the people around us were always easy.

There is a second reason underneath that one, and nobody says it out loud. Some people do not believe they need sharpening. It shows up in the decision instead, because a person who has arrived has no reason to sit in a room with people who might suggest otherwise. So answer it plainly. Are you perfected? Is there nothing left in your thinking, temper, marriage, money, health, parenting, or habits that God is still working on? Only the most arrogant will say yes to that question. So one question remains: will you accept that He changes you through community, or will you demand He work in you in solitude?

READ & MEDITATE

Hebrews 10:24-25

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Colossians 3:12-16

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Read Hebrews 10:24-25 and notice it is an instruction, not a story. Then read Colossians 3:12-16 and count how many times the phrase one another appears. The singing in verse 16 is aimed at the same difficult people named in verse 13.

REFLECT

Reminder: honest introspection and Scripture-informed self-assessment are far more beneficial than self-delusion and wishful thinking.

Colossians grounds bearing with people not in how easy they are, but in how God has already treated you.

What does that tell you about the standard God uses for how His people treat each other?

Fill in the blank from Colossians 3:16:

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing _____ in all wisdom." (Colossians 3:16)

*These fill-in-the-blank questions use the ESV text. Your Bible may use different words for the same idea.

Work gets protected. Recreation gets protected.

Look back over the last three months. What actually decided whether you gathered?

If someone had only your calendar, what would they say you value most?

The people who are hardest to be around are often the ones God is using on purpose.

Who in this church have you quietly written off as more trouble than they are worth? Pray for that person.

A person who has arrived has no reason to sit in a room with people who might suggest otherwise.

Which half of church are you avoiding, and what is the real reason underneath the one you usually give? Do some honest introspective self-assessment before moving on.

PRAYER

Write your prayer or pray out loud. As we've read, God's ear is not dull. Talk to Him like He is listening and wants to hear from you.

MEMORY VERSE

Write or recite John 13:35 from memory:
