



LET'S VISIT

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TRAGEDIES FACING THE CHURCH

When Paul criticized the Corinthians for their abuse of the Lord's Supper, one question he asked was, "*Despise ye the church of God?*" (I Corinthians 11:22) As you ponder that statement, have you ever considered the great tragedies facing the church of Christ in our day and time? Webster defines tragedy as "a disastrous event, a calamity or misfortune." Many today would consider numerous "current" issues as the great tragedy confronting the Lord's church.

There are those that would say that liberalism is one of the great tragedies facing the church. Perhaps at this point a definition is in order. Liberalism in this context is a laxness toward or breaking of the laws that God has made. Liberalism is a form of unbelief. It assumes that God did not really mean what He said and that modifications of His word are in order. Yet, as dangerous as this trend is among brethren, it is not one of the great tragedies facing the church today.

Well then, if liberalism is not one of the great calamities facing the church, then certainly legalism is. Again, a definition is in order. Legalism in this context is the disposition to make laws where God has made none. Just as liberalism is a form of unbelief, so also is legalism. It assumes that God's law does not go far enough and seeks to extend God's law by man's own wisdom and authority. Yet, just as liberalism is not one of the great tragedies facing the church today, neither is legalism.

Well, if it is not liberalism and it is not legalism, it must be uglyism that is the great tragedy facing the church. Once more, a definition. In this context, uglyism is an ugly spirit that is too quick to draw lines of fellowship and attack reputations. This was the temper of Diotrefes in III John 9 and 10. Yet,

as reprehensible as the spirit of uglyism is, it is not one of the great tragedies facing the church today.

One of the great tragedies facing the church in our day and time is an inferior standard of purity. Morally speaking there is too much of the world in the church and not enough of the church in the world. Sometimes, there are those who want to be identified with the Lord's people, but by their worldly and inconsistent living, they are in reality causing the church to be despised. When the world despises the church for its stand for the truth, that is to the shame of the world. When the world despises the church because it finds hypocrisy within it, that is to the shame of the church.

We could talk of our failure to grow. Not our failure to grow numerically as a body but our failure to grow spiritually as individuals. We often fail to grow spiritually because we do not take advantage of the opportunities afforded us to feed on the word of God. Things like Sunday Morning Bible class or Wednesday night Bible Studies. We could also talk of our failure to be soul winners as a great tragedy facing the church. Jesus told us to go into all the world and preach the gospel and most of us have never even mentioned Jesus to our neighbor next door.

Yet, probably the greatest tragedy facing the

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In Search of the Lord's Way



Tune in to this Television Ministry
KSLA 12 - Shreveport - 7:30 a.m. Sunday
DISH channel 239 - 6:00 a.m. Sunday
DIRECT TV channel 307 6:00 a.m. Sunday

Gathered Here and There



The Glory of Christ

**For The Pantry. . .
September 24 – Canned Fruit**

Tragedies Facing The Church—continued from page 1

church is a lack of real commitment and dedication. You see, every member of the local church is important and should pledge their undivided interest, steadfast attachment and sense of responsibility to the local church. Perhaps we should perform a serious self-examination and see if the local church has our undivided interest and enthusiasm. How deep is our personal commitment?

tp

**53 in '23
Invite Someone Each Week!**

Church History...is it important?

It has been said that a nation that does not know history is doomed to repeat it. The same could be said of the church. Over the years, there have been departures from the word of God in churches. There have been times of apostasy.

In our Sunday Morning Bible Class, we are studying the History of the Church. We are looking at things like the original falling away. We are going to look at the Reformation and the Restoration and how that we are attempting to restore New Testament Christianity in the 21st Century.

We would like to encourage you to come and join us on this journey. It is a 6 month study that you will find profitable to help understand why we do things the way that we do. Why do we take the Lord's Supper every first day of the week? Why do we worship without the use of mechanical instruments of music? Why do we baptize by immersion for the remission of sins?

Hopefully we will answer all of these questions with a "thus saith the Lord" as we endeavor to speak where the Bible Speaks and be silent where the Bible is Silent.

Please come and join us for Bible Class, 9:45 on Sunday mornings.

tp

On The Lighter Side. . .



**"He preaches on love too much.
That makes me mad!"**

Love!

Love empties us of self and fills us with the fullness of God. Love always finds a way to serve. Our environment may be ever so unpleasant, but if we let love pour its enchantment into the unpleasant elements, joy and peace will enrich our lives.

Love smoothes the way for other. It makes the rugged path seem lighter. It is the disarmer of criticism, it is the author of all that is good.

-selected



DECEMBER 3, 2023

NO EXCUSE SUNDAY!

Make your plans NOW to be here – NO EXCUSES!

* * * * *

Hospitality Group 2 will be in charge of this luncheon. The members of that group are: Roxie Bostick, Sarah Fletcher, Jana O'Brien and Norma Perkins.

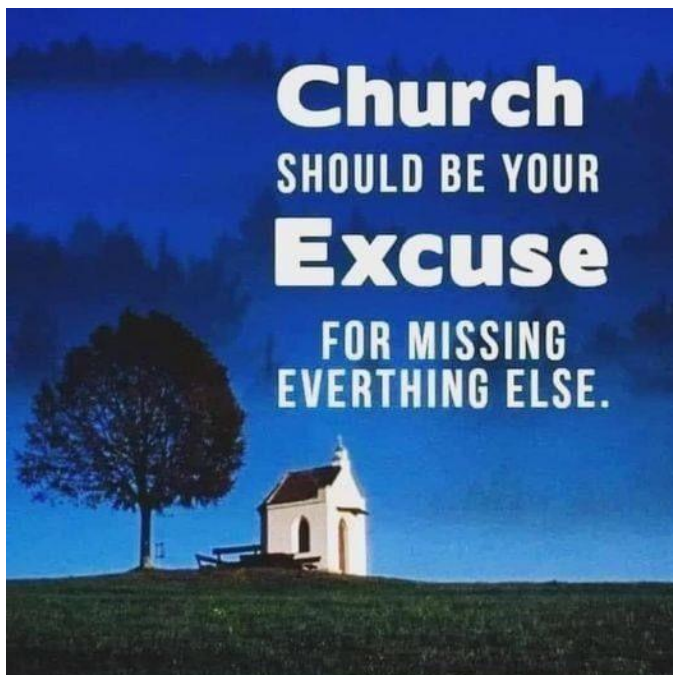
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September 27, 2023

6:00 p.m.

Please make your plans to come and join us.



OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Roxie Bostick , Gene Bradshaw, Martha Bradshaw, Martha Jean Golden, Geneva Graves, Alice Hall, Thelma Hinton, LaResa Livingston, Mike Lout, Mike O'Brien, Debra Pate, Jerry Pate, Wayne Sims, Betty Willis

"EXTENDED FAMILY" AND FRIENDS

Cody Anthony (LaResa Livingston's nephew) **Mitchell Anthony** (LaResa Livingston's brother), **Minion Bean**-(Mike O'Brien's mother) **Aleshia Bradshaw** (Gene & Martha Bradshaw's granddaughter in law) **Brenda Bradshaw** (Gene Bradshaw's sister in law) recovering from knee surgery; **Curtis Bradshaw** (Gene Bradshaw's brother) recovering from pneumonia;. **Ron Cone** (Laura Miller's dad), **Hugh and Pat Fletcher** (Sarah Fletcher's brother and sister-in-law dealing with multiple health issues) **Gail Foster** (Cancer) **Bobbie Gray** (Jerry Pate's Aunt) **Geneva Harrison** (Mike Bostick's mother) **Glynn Hartt** (friend of Cissy Amos) **Suzanne Ihlo** (Martha Jean Golden's sister recovering from a stroke) **Debbie Lynn** (Abbey Perkins' mother dealing with memory issues) **Lamar McCormick** (friend of Sarah Fletcher, multiple health issues) **Reba Miley** (friend of Debra Pate) **Vervyn Pate** (Jerry Pate's brother) is being treated for stomach cancer. **Al Reick** (Robbie Holt's brother-in-law) pancreatic cancer. **Stephanie Richard** (Friend of Norma Perkins) cancer; **Calvin Smith** (Debra Pate's uncle) heart and blood pressure issues; **Michael Smith** (Debra Pate's cousin) is being treated for lung cancer in Green Acres; **Buddy Sowell** (friend of Debra Pate) **Suellen Swank** (friend of Norma Perkins) **J. C. and Pat Tate** (Jana O'Brien's mother and father) **Myrtle Turner** (Norma Perkins Mother) **Wes Wiesemer** (Gene Bradshaw's nephew) recovering from a stroke and also suffering with cancer: **Clark Paul Williams** (LaResa Livingston's cousin)

THOSE IN THE MILITARY AND FOREIGN SERVICE

Cole Barbee, Adam Bradshaw, Leland Bradshaw, Michele Bradshaw Rosie Tate and Lucas Tate

Make your plans to be in Bible Class

9:45 Sunday Morning

7:00 Wednesday Evening



Across The Preacher's Desk

It was James who wrote, "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16). Paul would write, "Pray without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17). The poet Tennyson would write, "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of".

Have you ever thought about prayer and how important it is? There is a prayer for every moment and every need of life. There is prayer when our heads are bowed in reverence and our hearts feel shame. Those times when we are barely able to stammer out our sin and humbly ask for God's forgiveness. There are those times we pray on bended knee with outstretched hands which plead with God for help. Help that can only come from God. There is the prayer when we wrestle with God in agony until we are able to say "Thy will be done", and accept God's will for our lives. Yet, there are also those prayers when we stand at attention before God and take our orders for the day from the God of Heaven.

What a difference it would make to life if we always began the day with God. What a difference it would make if before we met our fellowman, we had taken the time to meet God. It matters not what our need might be, that need will find its answer in God through prayer. Yes, prayer makes a difference!

it's something to think about.....tlp

**The Lord's Plan
For Evangelism –
Each one Bring one!
53 in '23!**

WHAT WE NEED TO CHANGE TO MAKE WORSHIP MORE ENJOYABLE

Wes McAdams

Supplement to Let's Visit
September 24, 2023

For many Christians, the worship assembly feels like a “duty,” in the worst sense of the word. Coming to the worship assembly is something they feel they must do, but not something they *enjoy* doing. This has left many saying, “It shouldn’t be this way; worship should be enjoyable!” I wholeheartedly agree! But I’m afraid the way many are trying to make worship more enjoyable is resulting in making worship shallow, meaningless, and not even worship at all.



Why Worship Should Be Enjoyable

Praising God with our Christian family should be the thing we find more enjoyable than any other. It should be something we look forward to all week long. It should be our joy and delight.

This is true for the same reason that the night a football team wins a big game, the fans can’t wait to talk to one another about the big win. They call each other on the phone, they post about it on social media, and when they see each other in person, they excitedly say, “Can you believe it?! Wasn’t that incredible?!” **They enjoy talking about it almost as much as they enjoyed watching the game in the first place.** Everyone who has ever enjoyed something knows this feeling. When we’re on a great vacation, we almost

can’t wait for it to be over so we can get home, tell people about it, and show them the pictures. When we have a great meal, we can’t wait to share with someone how great it was.

In fact, we could say, half the enjoyment is found in **expressing our enjoyment**. Isn’t it frustrating and disappointing to experience something great, but yet be unable to share it with someone? C.S. Lewis wrote about this, saying, **“We delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment.”**

When we truly enjoy God for who He is then we will be longing, aching, dying to sing out to someone, “Isn’t God awesome?!” And when they answer back, “Yes! Yes, He is awesome!” we experience the greatest pleasure available in this life.

What We Don’t Need to Change

But when people don’t experience the pleasure we intuitively know worship should bring, they often try to manufacture it through artificial means. They adjust the lighting, update the music style, incorporate drama and skits, use video and other technology, all in an effort to manipulate people’s emotions and “help them enjoy worship.”

But is this even worship? Are those who are enjoying this experience really enjoying God or are they simply enjoying an entertaining show? If it takes a change in lighting – or a change in music style – for you to enjoy sharing with your church family how great God is, maybe you need to stop and ask yourself if what you’re doing can even be called “worship.”

Worship comes from a heart that has been stirred by the goodness of God – as revealed through the Gospel – and NOT by a heart that has been manipulated by dimmed lights and talented performers.

What We DO Need to Change

If we want to make worship more enjoyable, here is what we do need to change....our hearts!

We need to fill our hearts with the “word of Christ” so it dwells within us “richly” and then we’ll be able to, “[sing] psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in [our] hearts to God” (Colossians 3:16).

When we daily allow God to reveal Himself to us through the “word of Christ,” then our enjoyment grows and grows throughout the week, finally being completed when we assemble to, “[address] one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in [our] hearts to God” (Ephesians 5:19). And this weekly assembly is just the foretaste of the great assembly that will gather around God’s throne in heaven to enjoy Him forever!

Sadly, many of us don’t think of the worship assembly in this way. We don’t look forward to it. We’re not longing, aching, and dying to come together with our church family and sing to another, “Our God is an awesome God.” Some are content to simply show up and say, “I’ve done my duty.”

But God is not honored by the praise of people who do not enjoy Him. If we don’t enjoy worship, we don’t need to change the music or the lights, we need to change our hearts. We need to start enjoying God every moment of every day, and then we will desperately long for our enjoyment to be completed by praising Him with our church family.

Wes McAdams

How Hollywood Taught Us to Worship

By Wes McAdams

Hollywood seems to make a lot of movies with no real plot. The story makes very little sense and is not very intriguing, in and of itself. The characters are one-dimensional and the audience feels no real connection to them. However, these movies still make money because what they lack in substance, they make up for in cheap thrills. Playing on the audience’s emotion, rather than on their intellect, Hollywood fills the plot holes with multi-million dollar explosions.

Worship, amongst many religious groups, has followed this pattern. Because there is no depth of spiritual knowledge, they substitute theatrics to draw a crowd. Reverence, fear, and awe have been traded for the cheap thrills of a rock concert.



Alexander Campbell had very strong words for those who used an instrument in worship. He said such a thing was only necessary for those who had “no real devotion and spirituality.” In other words, when people have no spiritual depth, they resort to amusements to excite their souls.

True worship does not need light shows, loud music, and fog machines to excite the soul. True worship is expressed when a person realizes he is in the presence of a holy God, “Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire” (Hebrews 12:28-29).

Don’t trade worship for theatrics.