

WD April 26, 2021
Pastor Matthew Woods

“Church, Why We Bother.”

A Perfect Solution for Imperfect People

1 Corinthians 12:12-14; ¹² Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For we were all baptized by^[e] one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. ¹⁴ Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

Church, why we bother? “It’s full of hypocrites, failures, and wanderers right?” Yes. That’s exactly right. We call ourselves sinners. It’s full of sinners—sinners who just so happen to need what fellowship with other Christians can provide.

The Corinthian Church was a church plagued by many things that divided the congregation from one another. Some segregated themselves by wealth leaving the poorer members hungry. Factions had formed because some believed of their ability to speak in tongues set them above others who didn’t have that same gift. The Corinthians were being heavily influenced by their culture as we are often influenced by our own culture. And yet Paul writes vigorously not to give up on the Church. He urged the Corinthians to get back to the fundamentals of faith in Jesus and love others as Christ did. He defends the church because he understands how important it is to be a part of the body—a living breathing thing. So, Paul speaks about the church as a body with many parts. All those parts are vital to giving life to the body. All of those parts are alive because they are connected to the body which is connected to Jesus. Each part gives life to the other parts. And when one part is wounded the rest of the body works to bring that part healing. Everyone’s gift is important for the whole but the life blood of the body is the love of Christ. Without it we are only a resounding gong or pointless noise. So, the first reason we bother with church is because worship is where life happens to the body. It is also where connections with others happen, and where we can be encouraged.

Jesus, The Lord of the Sabbath, Practiced Regular Worship With Others

Jesus Himself believed it was important to establish His church through the Apostles. Jesus believed in the Sabbath and made it a point to be visit Synagogues weekly and even preached in many of them including His home congregation in Nazareth. Jesus would often read from the Old Testament and then He would preach from that text. And those who were there heard Him. The boys from Emmaus were preached to for seven miles. The Word of God opened their minds in ways that they had not seen on their own. This too is why we bother with church. The Word is prominent. It’s spoken so that we hear it. And it is learned. Someone who knows that Word, or who may have life experiences other than our own may be able to open our minds to become more discerning and mature in our understanding. This in turn equips us to be more aware of obstacles to our faith and more aware of opportunities for our faith.

Meeting Together Brings Joy

During Covid Social Distancing has disrupted the fellowship of families and of worship. So now the question I hear some asking themselves is when should I go back to church? Now that the Covid Pandemic is winding down and vaccinations are being passed about are we ready to trade in our Pandemic PJs that we usually wear on Sunday mornings for our church clothes again? It is tempting to keep “playing it safe”. For a few this may be true, perhaps even necessary. But for most this is changing. We will continue to have Covid in some form with us as we have the flu with us in some form every year. Yet, being apart is not something that we can or should keep doing. So, consider some other reasons why we bother with church. These are some of my favorites.

Acts 2 gives us a glimpse of how getting together with others brought joy, purpose, courage, and a greater faith. Acts 2:42-47 says. ⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

The early Christians were having fun living as Christians and doing Christian things. They devoted themselves to the Apostles teaching which was the truth passed to them by Jesus. They were fearless and regularly went into the Temple courts unafraid of those who once condemned Jesus. The resurrection made followers as courageous as the disciples had become. The greatest miracle of those disciples was their courage from the resurrection. The disciples went into those Temple Courts instead of hiding from them. They boldly preached there as if to reclaim the ground that was stolen from the people of God. They continued to meet together in the Temple courts. They also celebrated the Lord’s Supper and ate together in each other’s homes.

We bother with church because there is joy in it. We bother with all the dinners and cookoffs and activities because it gives opportunity to interact and grow closer to the other members of Christ’s body. The Gospel tells us that we do not have to be afraid of anything but encourages us to keep meeting together. To receive communion and to interact with others. To receive hugs again and see one another’s faces in person. It is the interaction that makes it fun and meaningful. Worshipping together brings a reality to the Gospel message. Seeing others inspires us to see what they have overcome. Being with others encourages and allows us to actually experience the presence of the rest of the Body. It gives tangibility to the love of Jesus.

We Bother With Church Because It Brings Us Closer to Jesus.

We bother with church because it brings us closer to Jesus through other Christians. This is the bottom line. This is why a Sabbath is vital to life and essential to overcoming the world instead of being overcome by it. Maybe you are not sure about coming back to church. Maybe you don’t want to give up your PJs and your comfy sofa. Or maybe you simply can’t yet for health reasons or distance—if this is your case then let us know how you are doing so we can pray for you. And if you are still on the fence about it all I would invite you back to the church and to the family who misses you. It will be great to see you again. In the meantime, blessings to you wherever you worship. Hope to see you soon.

And now the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look on you with His favor and give you His peace in Jesus. Amen.

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John 3:30