The Other Reason Why I Go To Church

Hebrews 10:22-25
22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.
23 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.

Why I Go To Church

• I go to church.
  o That’s huge part of who I am.
    ▪ It is one unchanging constants in my life.
      • In good times and bad,
      • in times of poverty
      • and times of plenty,
      • when I’m up
      • and when I’m down,
      • it really doesn’t matter
        o what is going on in my life,
      • when church time rolls around
        o you can count on one thing:
          ▪ I’m going to church!
  o And, since I’m the head of my house,
    ▪ my family is coming to church with me.
  o The kids don’t even get a choice in the matter,
    ▪ because that’s just what we do.
      • We go to church.
      • On Sunday we go to church.
      • On Wednesday we go to church.
      • When there’s a special service, we go to church.
      • Any excuse we can find, we go to church.

• I go to church for a variety of reasons.
  o First of all, I go to church because I need what I get here.
    ▪ I need to be exposed to the presence of God.
  o There is something about corporate worship
    ▪ that is special to God.
      • He said, where two or three are gathered together
        o in my name – I’m going to be there!
          ▪ I’ll be right in the middle of them.
The gathering of a community of believers attracts the presence of God!

I can’t explain it, but something happens where a community gathers in the name of Jesus that is in some way different than what happens when a lone individual sets out to pray or worship God.

God likes it when there is unity, when there is community, when there is a corporate effort to come together and worship Him.

He has purposed in his heart that there will never be a time where as few as two or three gather together to worship Him that He will not invest His presence into that meeting.

That’s one reason why I go to church. I need to be exposed to the presence of God that is made manifest in the community of believers.

Another reason why I go to church is because I need to have the word of God preached to me.

I can study the word and I can dig into the word and God speaks to me through His word.

But once again, there something special about the anointing that rests upon a man of God as he ministers the word of God to the congregation.

There is an empowering anointing that rests on the minister as he speaks as the very oracle of God.

I know from experience that when God takes over the transmission of a message from my heart, as a preacher, to the heart of a congregation,
- wonderful things happens.
  - He multiplies his word
    - in the ears of his people.
  - He anoints me,
    - when I’m behind this pulpit
      - and he speaks through me.
  - Many times I find myself saying things
    - that were never in my notes
      - that were never a part
      - of my study and preparation
    - because God moves on me
      - and begins to minister through me.
  - I go to church because I need
    - the ministry of the word of God
      - to impact my life.
  - I recognize that, even as pastor,
    - I’m not in the place
      - where I don’t need
      - an anointed man of God
        - to preach the word to me.
  - That’s why I’m not the only one
    - that preaches around here.
  - That’s why Bro. Sanders,
    - or Bro Huddleston,
    - or someone from outside our congregation
      - will minister in this pulpit
        - every few weeks,
    - because I need
      - the preached word of God in my life.
  - I need that special something that happens
    - when the anointing of God
      - comes over a man of God
        - as they deliver a word from God
          - that they have studied
            - and prepared.
  - More than the results of their study,
    - I need that inspiration of the Holy Ghost
      - that happens when they
        - are preaching the word.
  - I can’t get that on my own.

- Another reason why I go to church
  - is I need to know that I am
    - a part of something that is bigger than me.
It is all too easy for me
  • to get bogged down in my life
    • and what all is going on with me
  • and forget that this thing
    • is so much bigger than me.

I am a part of a church.
  • I am a part of a community of worshippers.
    • Together we are the body of Christ
      • in this world.

I'm not just a lone ranger.
  • This is not a solo performance.

My boys play in the band at school.
  • The music that they learn and play
    • together with the band,
      • is designed for the whole band.
  • Each instrument has its part,
    • and each part is unique.
  • However, the individual parts
    • are only small pieces of the whole.
  • When my boys are practicing
    • the music that the band will play at festival,
      • their part, sometimes,
        • doesn’t resemble a song.
  • They may be playing
    • just a series of low notes,
      • an isolated melody,
        • just bits and pieces
          • of the overall end product.
      • By itself, it is not all that grand.
  • However, when it is heard
    • in the context of the whole band,
      • when all of the pieces come together,
        • the end result is great.
  • Each instrument harmonizes together
    • and together all of the individual parts
      • make up one glorious whole.
  • Then, and only then,
    • the piece of music springs to life.

That’s one of the things that church does for me,
  • it causes me to realize
    • that I am part of something
      • bigger than I am.
  • I am a part of something that matters.
And the small part that I do,
the small role that I play,
• fits into a larger,
• grander,
• master plan.

I am made whole,
• I am made complete,
• my life finds the satisfaction
  o of purpose in the church.

That’s another reason why I go to church.

I could go on and on,
• there are many reasons
  o why I go to church
• but most of them,
  • like the examples that I have given so far,
    o are focused on me.
• They revolve around
  • what I get out of the church service.
• I get the filth and crud of this world
  • washed off of me
    • by the water of the word.
• I get my spirit uplifted
  • by the corporate worship.
• I get blessed.
  • I get encouraged.
  • I get refilled.
  • I get refreshed.
    • I get
    • and I get
    • and I get.
• But for a few moments this evening
  • I would like to preach to you
    • on the OTHER reason
      o why I go to church.

Faith, Hope & Love

• Faith, Hope and Love
  o were three very important elements
    • of Christian living to the first century church.
• They are concepts
  o that are grouped together and emphasized
    • in several different places in the New Testament.
Notes by Pastor Tony McCall

The Pentecostals of Lake City

• Perhaps the most famous of those places
  o is **1 Corinthians 13:13**
    ▪ where Paul tells us
    ▪ that there are three abiding
      • characteristics of Christianity.
  o They are faith, hope and love.
    ▪ But, Paul says, the greatest of these is love.
  o No further explanation is given
    ▪ regarding what makes love
      • greater than faith and hope,
    ▪ although there has been much discussion of the matter
      • among scholars and theologians.
  o The important thing is,
    ▪ however, that the three are important.
  o They are linked together
    ▪ by the fact that they abide or remain.
  o They are lasting attributes
    ▪ of what it means to be a follower of Christ.
  o This morning we were talking about what pleases God.
    ▪ I can tell you for certain
      • that three lasting attributes
      • that please God in the life of a believer
        o are faith, hope and love.
  o But I can also tell you that the greatest of these three is love.

• In our text, Paul issues three
  o imperative commands to the church
    ▪ that mirror this triad of Christian virtues:
      • faith, hope and love.
  o They begin with the words, “Let us...”

Faith

• First Paul says, “Let us draw near
  o with a true heart in
    ▪ full assurance of faith.”
• Let us draw near to God.
  o That is something that every believer should strive to do.
    ▪ To draw nearer to God than you are right now.
      • That should be the greatest goal in your life.
• How do you draw nearer to God?
  o You do so with a true heart
    ▪ in the full assurance of faith.
  o In order to get closer to God
    ▪ you have to have faith in the precious blood of Jesus,
• faith that your conscience has been cleansed
  o from guilt and condemnation,
• faith that you have been washed
  o whiter than snow.
  o Faith in what God has done for you
    ▪ is what enables you to grow in grace.
  o Faith is what makes it possible
    ▪ for you to get closer to God.
  o Without faith you can’t grow.
    ▪ Some folks don’t grow
      ▪ because they don’t have any faith
        o in what God has done for them.
        ▪ They can’t get over their own past.
  o God has forgiven them
    ▪ but they can’t forgive themselves.
  o So they can’t draw any closer to God
    ▪ because they don’t have the faith
      ▪ that it takes to grow.

Hope

• Then Paul says,
  o “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith
    ▪ without wavering.”
  o This is a really bad translation.
    ▪ The two Greek words translated as faith
      ▪ in these two verses are quite different.
  o The word used here, in verse 23,
    ▪ is the Greek word for hope,
      ▪ which is why many modern translations,
        ▪ including the New King James Version,
        translate this verse as
          ▪ “let us hold fast the profession of our hope
            o without wavering.
  o If it is our faith that causes us
    ▪ to draw near to God,
      ▪ it is our hope that keeps us there.
  o As a matter of fact,
    ▪ the Greek phrase that is translated
      ▪ as “without wavering”
      ▪ conveys the idea
        ▪ that if our hope is shaken
          o we will be shaken.
  o If we become unsteady in our hope,
    ▪ if we lose confidence in our hope
then we will lose our hold
  on the promises of God.

- We are to hold fast to our profession of hope.
  - I know I said this Wednesday night,
    but I’m going to say it again.
  - Hope is what compels us forward
    when everything in the world is against us.

- When get stuck,
  - when we get bogged down,
    - when the weight of this world becomes too much,
      - hope is what compels us to press on.
  - It is the hope of glory,
    - the hope of the promises of God,
    - the hope that God will do
      - what he said that he would do.
  - And we know that he will
    - because he that promised is faithful.
  - You can trust in him
    - because he is trust worthy.
  - If your hope is in God,
    - then nothing in this world
      - should be able to shake that hope
        - because God will always
          - deliver on his word!

- So we have faith
  - that enables us to draw closer to God.
- And Hope
  - that helps us stay close to God.
- What about love?

**Love**

- The third imperative is found in verses 24 and 25.
  - Many people want to look at these two verses
    - as separate and distinct
      - and some have even gone so far
        - as to propose that verse 25
        - represents a fourth imperative.
  - However, that approach does terrible damage
    - to the original language.
      - In the Greek, verses 24 and 25
        - are one single sentence,
          - one imperative,
            - the third in the list.
• It begins this way,
  o “Let us consider one another
    ▪ to provoke unto love and to good works…”
• What makes this so interesting is that,
  o of the three fundamental Christian virtues,
    ▪ only love requires a community of believers
      • in order for it to be fulfilled.
  o You can draw nearer to God
    ▪ through your faith
      • on your own.
  o You can hold fast
    ▪ to the profession of your hope
      • when you are all alone.
  o But you cannot “consider one another”
    ▪ and “provoke one another
      • unto love and good works”
    o on your own.
  o There has to be a community of believers
    ▪ before that can happen.
  o There has to be “another” with you
    ▪ before you can consider one another.
  o Faith I can manage on my own.
    ▪ Hope I can cling to alone.
      • But the expression of love
        o is not something I can do
          • on my own.
• The word here is actually agape love.
  o Agape love is selfless love.
    ▪ It is the kind of love
      • that was shown to us on the cross.
  o It is the giving of oneself
    ▪ so that another can be blessed.
  o That kind of love requires
    ▪ the presence of another.
  o That kind of love cannot be expressed
    ▪ in isolation.
  o I can’t manifest agape love by myself.
• Let me remind you, there are three that abide:
  o Faith, Hope and Love.
    ▪ But the greatest of these is love!
• And it is the only virtue that I can’t express alone.
  o Love requires the community of believers,
    ▪ it requires the fellowship of the church.
  o That’s why the sentence goes on to say,
“not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together,
  • as the manner of some is;
  • but exhorting one another.”

• You have to be a part of a community of believers
  o before you can manifest Agape Love.

The Other Reason

• Let me tell you the other reason why I go to church.
  o It is so I can be a blessing to someone else.
    ▪ You see agape love is not about me.
      • It’s not about what I get.
      • Its not about what I need.
      • It’s about someone else.
      • Its about what I can give!
    o Its about letting the love of God
      ▪ be manifest in my life
        • to bless someone else.
  o The other reason I come to church
    ▪ has nothing to do with me
      • and everything to do with someone else.
  o Somebody needs to be encouraged,
    ▪ somebody needs to be provoked to good works,
      • someone else needs to know
        o that they are not alone in the fight...
          ▪ So I go to church!
    o I go to church because that’s the only place
      ▪ where I can stand shoulder to shoulder
        • with a brother who is weak and weary
          o and encourage him
          o to continue in the fight.
    o I got to church because that is the only venue
      ▪ where I can reach out to a brother
        • who is in need,
      ▪ not just of a financial blessing,
        • not just of a material gift,
          o but of the gift of my time
          o and my attention.
  o You see, if I don’t go to church,
    ▪ I’m not just robbing myself.
      • I’m robbing the community of believers.
    ▪ I’m robbing someone else
      • of the good thing that God
        o wants to do in their lives.
Somebody needs to hear my testimony.
  • Someone needs to see that I’m still in the fight.
• Someone needs to be encouraged
  • by the fact that I’m standing with them.
• That’s the other reason why I go to church!

• When we read Hebrews 10:25, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together…”
  o We tend to focus on ourselves.
    • We think it’s about us,
      • so we give ourselves a pass.
  o We know we should go to church
    • but we convince ourselves
      • that it won’t do us too much harm
        o to miss a service every now and then.
• But we’ve missed the whole point.
  o The reason for not forsaking
    • the assembling of ourselves together
      • was never about us.
  o It was about the community of believers.
    • It was about the fellowship of the redeemed.
      • It was about being there,
        o when the church comes together,
          • so that we could encourage one another.
• When you are here,
  o it is an encouragement to someone else.
• When you are here
  • it is a blessing to your brother
    • or sister in the Lord.
  o That’s the reason why you shouldn’t
    • forsake the assembling of yourselves together.

• Paul even points out
  o that there were some in the New Testament church
    • who had developed the habit
      • of missing church.
  o He very pointedly says to the readers of the letter,
    • you shouldn’t be like them.
      • You should be here.
• If you are not going to go to church
  o for the myriad of reasons that you need to be at church
    • then come for the other reason.
• Someone else is counting on you being at church.
  o There is a brother that is broken,
• there is a sister that is discouraged,
• there is a fellow saint who lost their job today,
• a father who got bad news from the doctor,
• a mother who needs a shoulder to lean on.

• The world aggressively seeks to destroy faith,
  o to discourage hope,
  • and to rob us of love.

• It is at the church house
  o where our faith is encouraged,
    • our hope is affirmed
      • and we discover that
        o the true reward of love
          • is found in giving
          • rather than receiving.
  o Someone at the church needs your love.
    • That’s why you need to be at church.
  o Someone at the church
    • needs to be encouraged by your ministry.
      • Someone needs to hear your testimony.
      • Someone needs to see your consistency.
  o If you’re not going to come to church for yourself,
    • by all means come to church for me
      • because it does my heart good
        o to see you at church!

The Approaching Day

• In the final phrase of verse 25
  o Paul says that church becomes even more important
    • the closer we get to
      • the approaching Day of Judgment.
  o In light of that,
    • I find it interesting that the word
      • for “assembling of ourselves together”
        o occurs only one other place
          • in the New Testament.
  o Paul uses it in 2 Thessalonians 2:1
    • where he says that
      • when Christ returns for His church
        o at the Rapture
          • we will be gathered together to Him.

• I believe Paul was intentional in his wording.
  o I believe he was telling us
    • that the gathering together at the rapture
      • will be a lot like the gathering together
• And Paul makes the point
  o that if you don’t want to miss that final
    ▪ “assembling of ourselves together”,
  o then you should make it a habit
    ▪ not to miss the other times
      ▪ when the church
      ▪ assembles itself together.
  o As a matter of fact,
    ▪ I’ve got a feeling that heaven
    ▪ is going to be a whole lot like church.

Close

• Tonight I want to draw your attention,
  o once again,
    ▪ to the priority that we are emphasizing this month.
      ▪ Priority: Relationships.
• There are certain relationships
  o that need to be in a place of priority in our lives.
    ▪ Chief among these is our relationship with God.
• Next to that is our relationship to our family:
  o our spouse;
    ▪ our children;
    ▪ our parents;
    ▪ and our siblings.
• Those relationships are important.
  o And one key thing that you learn
    ▪ about those relationships,
      ▪ as you mature,
        ▪ is that they don’t revolve around you.
• My relationship with my wife
  o is as much about what I do for her
    ▪ as it is about what she does for me.
• It is a two way street,
  o and it has to be or else
    ▪ the relationship would never survive.
  o If I was always the taker
    ▪ and never the giver,
      ▪ she would get tired of that after a while
        ▪ and either I would have to change
          ▪ or we would have some problems.
Another very important relationship to your salvation is your relationship with the people of God.
- Your relationship with the church is as much about what you bring to the service as it is about what you get out of it.
- You matter to this church.
- You matter in every service.

Paul said that we were to provoke one another to love and good works. When you provoke someone, it is normally not a good thing.
- To provoke someone is to irritate them, to prod them, to poke at them. It makes them uncomfortable.
- But Paul uses it in a good sense.
- To provoke someone in a positive sense is to be persistent in your encouragement, to not let up, to not let down, to prod them to keep on keeping on.
- One writer used the word picture of a runner who is running the race when another runner comes along side of him and begins to encourage him, come on, you can do it, I believe in you, I've got faith in you...

Someone here needs you to come along side of them.
- Someone here needs you to provoke them.
- But you can't do that if you aren't here.
- Let me encourage you this evening to recognize the other reason why you need to be at church.
- Let me provoke you to good works!

This is what I want to do.
- Brother go to a brother, sister go to a sister, and I want you just to share a prayer request.
- We are going to serve one another for few moments tonight.
- That's the other reason why I go to church!