

Go To Church – Heb 10:24-25

Heb 10:23-25; We're going to take a break from Isaiah for a few weeks, and focus on a mini-series titled – **Fully Engaged**

Talking about what it means to be a fully engaged follower of Christ
What it means at the most foundational level, to be all in

➤ Which God obviously desires, does he not?

I mean Jesus himself said – *No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.* (Lk 9:62); Partial engagement isn't what he's looking for
And Paul went so far as to say that we should *present* [our] bodies as living sacrifices
Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead
I'd say that's fully engaged (Rom 12:1; Phil 3:13)

And then there's Peter who said to *love one another earnestly*; And to *make every effort to add to our faith* – virtue and knowledge and a whole list of other things (2 Pet 1)
God obviously desires nothing less than our full engagement (**Intro**)

➤ Unfortunately, we often fall far short don't we?

Spinning our wheels and grinding our gears, and wondering all the while, why?
Why is this happening to me? Why do I lose to the same struggles over and over again?
Why do I face the same issues of sin, ad nauseam in my life?
Why am I plagued with the same difficulties year in and year out
And the answer, often times, is b/c we're not fully engaged in our walk with Christ

Especially when it comes to the *body* of Christ, the church

Far too many people fail to give *church* its proper position and place of importance in their lives, and suffer b/c of it; And so does the church
B/c those who comprise it aren't fully engaged

➤ And make no mistake, we're no exception; To the extent that any one of us isn't fully engaged, we'll be held back or inhibited as a church
Inhibited in what we could otherwise do, and be, and accomplish for the Lord
Which is one of the reasons we ought to heed Heb 10; Which says, starting in v23 . . .

[23] *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.* [24] *And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,* [25] *not 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.*

There's a lot there, but what I most want you to see, is that . . .

Fully engaged believers make church a priority (Heb 10:25)

They don't neglect meeting together, v25; Which means they make it a priority
They make *other* things play second fiddle, and give the Stradivarius first place
They make *other* things take a back seat, and give church the front
If the doors of the church are open, they're there

That's the pattern of a fully engaged follower of Christ

They don't neglect meeting together with *other* fully engaged followers of Christ

Which apparently, was just the opposite of *the habit of some* in that day – see it there?

Evidently, *some* in the early church were like far too many in the *current* church
Treating it with a laissez faire, take it or leave it, whatever they felt like attitude
It was easy come, easy go; And still is for many; Maybe even you

➤ Do you come when you want, and don't when you don't?

If you *feel* like it you're here, and if you don't you're not?

If your needs are met, you're in, but if they're not, you're not?

Is that you? Do you base your attendance and participation on how you *feel*?

If so, you're in *the habit of some* as the verse says

Or maybe it's an issue of *convenience* for you

If it fits your schedule, the weather's just right, the planets are aligned . . .

The service isn't too early, or too late, or too long; And the drive's just right with your parking spot still available – you're good; You're here

But if you have to walk a bit, or forego some sleep, or get a little wet, or go out of your way in any way – there's no way

“I'm not doing that”; It's a convenience thing

Or, maybe it's just *not that big of a deal* to you; I mean, church is okay for *some*, but for you? Nah; You just don't see it; And certainly don't *need* it

Even though Eph 1:23 says that the church is *the fullness of him who fills all in all*
IOW it's the full expression of Christ here on earth – the one who fills us with everything we need for life and godliness

But maybe that doesn't matter much to you; And yet this verse remains

➤ So let me ask you something; If you went to work like you go to church, would you have a job?

If you applied yourself at work like you apply yourself at church, would you be employed? Unfortunately the answer's “no” for many of you

B/c the numbers say that from one week to the next, less than half of you are here (**Graphic**); True

On any given week, only 45% of those who are here, were here last week as well

Or to say it differently, of everyone here *this* week, only 45% will return next week;

55% won't; The attendance will be the same, but the crowd will be different

That's been the pattern since we started tracking it, and there's never been an exception

And while that's the *norm* in church-world (2/3, etc) – I don't care

B/c that means far too many of you are not fully engaged believers; And *you're* not only missing out on the fullness of Christ in *your* life, but so are we*****

In the life of our church

➤ You say, “Oh, Pastor; You're a little over the top, don't you think?” Ya, I am
But I'm in good company; B/c King David felt the same way; And so did Jesus

The Bible says that zeal for God's house *consumed* them (Ps 69; Jn 2)

In fact, so passionate was Jesus for the passion of God's people, that he cleared the temple of those who took it for granted; Those who weren't fully engaged

Do you think he's any *less* passionate about his church? His bride? The one for whom he gave his life? I don't think so; He's over the top, and we should be too

Which means some of you need to make some *changes* in your life, some changes in your priorities – and go to church

You need to move from partially engaged to *fully* engaged

It needs to be a habit instead of an exception; Going *every* week, instead of every other;

Or every third; Or only when you feel like it

Fully engaged believers don't neglect to meet together

And there are 3 reasons for that; The first of which is obedience; Fully engaged believers make church a priority . . .

- **To obey the Lord (Heb 10:24-25)**

3 times in 3 verses, the author of Hebrews says – *Let us*

In v22, it's – *Let us draw near*; In v23, it's – *Let us hold fast*; In v24, it's – *Let us*

consider how to stir up one another to love and good works . . .

All the while, not neglecting to meet together

3 commands to *do* something, with a 4th to *not* do something; But a command

nonetheless – go to church

That's essentially what it's saying; B/c church is where believers *meet*, and if you don't *neglect* doing so, you go; You're there

It's a command from the Lord, and it's ours to obey; It's our responsibility to live it out

➤ And don't miss the pleading tone: Let us the writer says

Let us draw near; Let us hold fast; Let us stir one another up; And by implication – *let us* go to church

This isn't some heavy-handed means of demanding that we fall in line like prisoners of war; This is a mother hen leading her chicks across the road . . .

And pleading with them to stay the course; And get going; And stay focused; And hide in the shadow of her wings b/c the danger is great (Ps 91:4; Mt 23:37) . . .

And the opportunity on the other side is even greater

And this is the writer of Hebrews, undoubtedly a church *leader*, pleading with *us* under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit

Pleading with us to obey; To do something *we must*; Something for our own *good*

Something for the good of *others*; Something that's key to living a fully engaged life in Christ

And this is me, pleading with you; Pleading with you to do the right thing; To obey instead of disobey; To do what God says even when you don't feel like it

And what he wants, even when you don't want to

Let us go to church to obey the Lord; And so avoid the danger of those who don't, while seizing the opportunity of those who do

Make it a priority, and you'll be well on your way to a fully engaged life in Christ

2nd, go to church . . .

- **To learn about the Lord (Col 3:16)**

Fully engaged believers make church a priority – in order to *learn*

To learn about God, his ways, his desires, and his salvation; Col 3:16

The Apostle Paul is writing here, and says . . .

[16] *Let the word of Christ* [i.e. the truth of who he is, what he's done, and why] *dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom* [stop there]

In order to *let the word of Christ dwell in you richly*, you have to learn it; You have to know it; You have to soak it up

Which you can do on your *own* – for sure; And should; But it happens best in community; It happens best with other believers . . .

Who are *teaching and admonishing one another* as the verse says

IOW one of the means in this verse of letting *the word of Christ dwell in you richly*, is learning in the context of other believers, who are *teaching* the Word

And the place where that happens most, the place where the Word is taught and it's authority proclaimed without apology – is the church; Or at least it should be

Which is why fully *engaged* followers of Christ, go

➤ Not only that, but the church is one of the primary places and means of gaining *wisdom* B/c the teaching and admonition as the verse says, is to be *done in all wisdom*

Which Solomon tied together hundreds of years earlier in **Prov 8:33**; Saying – *Hear instruction and be wise, and do not neglect it.*

He ties wisdom and instruction together, and just like meeting together, tells us not to neglect it; Which takes us right back to Hebrews

Not only should we go to church, but do so to learn and grow in wisdom*****

➤ So how about it? What's your habit in that respect?

Do you come to church each week with a hunger for God, and a hunger for his Word? Eager to soak up the truth, and the wisdom of his ways?

Longing to be reminded of the things you already know, even if you've heard them a hundred times? Is that you?

Do you love to learn more and more about the Lord? Do you love to plumb the depths of his knowledge time and time again? And scale the heights of his love over and over?

And know the rule of his reign, and the extent of his kingdom, and the riches of his grace like you've never known before? Is that you?

Or are you satisfied with milk when the meat awaits?

I hope not; I hope that learning about the Lord is one of your greatest passions

And that wild horses wouldn't keep you away

And that your own Bible study only *increases* your desire to learn at church

It's another mark of a fully engaged follower of Christ – they go to church to learn about the Lord

And then last, is . . .

- **To worship the Lord (Col 3:16)**

Fully engaged believers make church a priority – in order to *worship* the Lord

Look again at v16 – *Let 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.*

That's worship – *singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in [our] hearts*; Thankfulness to God

Don't miss those 3 prepositional phrases – *with thankfulness; in your hearts; to God*
B/c without them, your singing, our singing – isn't worship; It's just singing

True worship springs from a heart of gratitude for all that God is, and has done

True worship is directed to *God* as the object

True worship has *him* as the focus; True worship is directed to *him* as the intended recipient; That's the kind of worship *Paul's* talking about

- And just like with learning, it's not only something we can and should do on our *own*, but something we should do with *one another*
B/c the Greek word for *you* here in Col 3, is plural
Let the word of Christ dwell in you, as a church; By teaching and admonishing and worshipping together

It would be like me saying – “*You* are very attentive this weekend”; With the “*you*” being plural; Referring to you as a group; Which I just did again
So Paul's talking to the church in Colossae as a *whole*, saying that they should come together for worship

- And so should we; We're no different; In fact, *throughout* history God has told his people to gather for worship
Like the Psalmist says in **Ps 135:1-3**, speaking to the congregation in the temple
He says – *Praise the LORD! Praise the name of the LORD, give praise, O servants of the LORD, [2] who stand in the house of the LORD* [i.e. who've come together for worship], *in the courts of the house of our God! // [3] Praise the LORD, for the LORD is good; sing to his name, for it is pleasant!*
So we do, week in and week out; And this is one of the reasons for it

Old and New Testament alike – God tells his people to gather for worship
And fully engaged believers make it a priority; They make *church* a priority, b/c *worship* is a priority – corporate worship
Singing and making melody in our heart, as *one*
Praising him, *together*; Exalting him, side by side*****

None of which you can do, if you're not here; Or *in* here
You can't *worship* in church, if you don't *go* to church (**Summary**)
You can't *learn* in church, if you don't *come* to church

- Aren't you glad you're here this weekend? But be honest – are you fully engaged?
Or does your life consist of spinning your wheels and grinding your gears?
If so, it's time to make a change; It's time to make church a priority; It's time to make a *new* habit – for your sake, *and* ours

Pray – Lord, find us faithful as you are faithful; Give us a hunger for you, and your word, and your worship; And help us as we make changes in our lives to make church a priority

And receive our tithes as an expression of our love – our love for you, and for your church

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