

# Transformed Living

## week 3: Jumping In with Both Feet

### **SLIDE 1: (Transformed Life: week 3 - Jumping In)**

We're in week three of this six-week study called *Transformed Living*. We have been reading this book called *Treasures of the Transformed Life* and I am hoping you have kept up with the reading, I have and I can say I have loved it. The author **John Ed Mathison** shares some great insights and truths that makes it easy for all of us to understand.

I want to encourage you if haven't done your reading or if your behind on your reading, it's not to late to start, just make a commitment and join our church on this church-wide study.

Over the next few weeks, what we are going to do is continuing looking at what it means to live out a transformed life by making this commitment through our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service, and our witness.

### **SLIDE 2: (Transformed Life: week 1 - Priming the Pump)**

Two weeks ago, we talked about priming the pump. And we said, once the pump is primed and ready, the water starts to flow, and it will continue to flow as long as we continue to move forward in our faith. We said, it's this commitment to God that primes the pump.

### **SLIDE 3: (Transformed Life: week 2 - Drawing Water)**

Last week, we talked about drawing water out through our prayer. When we commit ourselves to God through prayer, God gives us an ample supply to satisfy our thirsts because we are connected to God through this ongoing conversation with him.

### **SLIDE 4: (Transformed Life: week 3 - Jumping In With Both Feet)**

Now, today we've come to the next commitment in our study, the commitment of our presence, our church attendance. Some people don't think coming to church is important but they're wrong.

Attendance in church is so important. To be committed to presence, to attendance—is what we're calling **Jumping In with Both Feet**. This is a commitment to God's people, rather than just standing on the edge of the water, you jump completely in.

This past week we've studied about being pulled together. Being a team. We're brothers and sisters in Christ, and we're all in this together. We're family. The Bible describes this gathering of believers as the community of faith, and the family of God. The Bible also tells us that each one of us has part in the church. That we have a role to play. And that's what we've been exploring this past week in this church-wide study.

As we begin this week message, let me just share with you **three truths** about the church, about **what it means to be part of a church**, a community of believers,

that is supported by our our presence.

The **first truth** we have to understand is that the ...

## **SLIDE 5: (What Does It Mean to Be a Part of a Church? 1.)**

### **1. Church is God's Family**

That's the first truth, God wants us to be a part of his family. It's God's design and plan for us. He created us, he loves us, and desires for us to be a part of his family.

## **SLIDE 6: (1 Peter 1:3 TLB)**

In **1 Peter 1:3 (TLB)** Peter says, *"..for it is his boundless mercy that has given us the privilege of being born again so that we are now members of God's own family..."*

## **SLIDE 7: (Ephesians 1:5 NLT)**

Now, listen to what Paul says in **Ephesians 1:5 (NLT)**, *"His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. And this gave him great pleasure."*

The church is important because it's God's family. It's his plan for all of us to be a part of his family, a congregation, a worshipping community. God has adopted us and treats us as members of his household. In fact, we are all princes and princesses in his kingdom. That's the **first truth** that you have to understand, the church is God's Family.

Now the **second truth** we have to understand is that the...

## **SLIDE 8: (What Does It Mean to Be a Part of a Church? 2.)**

### **2. Church is God's Family on Earth.**

I will say it again, the church is God's family on earth.

## **SLIDE 9: (1 Timothy 3:15 NIV)**

In **1 Timothy 3:15 (NIV)**, Paul tells Timothy that God's family *"is the church of the living God, which is the pillar and foundation of the truth."*

## **SLIDE 10: (Colossians 3:15 NLT)**

In **Colossians 3:15 (NLT)**, Paul writes, *"... For as members of one body you are called to live in peace."*

God in the person of Jesus came into the world and lived and died and rose again to redeem us so that we might be a part of his family. His family doesn't start when you go to heaven, it starts here on earth and continues on into heaven. In fact, the church isn't man-made, it was created by God. He created the church for his children to be connected to one another, to be God's witnesses to the world. So, again the

church is extremely important. The church is God's Family here on earth.

This brings us to the **third truth** that we have to understand, the...

### **SLIDE 11: (What Does It Mean to Be a Part of a Church? 3.)**

#### **3. Church is God's Family on Earth Who Meets Often.**

It's healthy for us to commit to being in attendance often and to be an active part of the people of God. This creates a healthy relationship among family members.

#### **SLIDE 12: (Psalm 122:1 NLT)**

In **Psalm 122:1 (NLT)**, David said, *"I was glad when they said to me 'let us go to the house of the LORD.'"*

David had the right attitude and the right heart that we should have toward going to church and participating.

In fact, Jesus had that same attitude and heart. When Jesus was twelve years old, his parents were heading home from Jerusalem and lost track of him. When they had traveled for a day they realized he wasn't with any of his relatives and where did they find him after three days, back in Jerusalem at the temple. He was sitting with other teachers who were listening to him and asking questions.

#### **SLIDE 13: (Luke 2:49 NIV)**

Listen to what Jesus said to his parents in **Luke 2:49 (NIV)**, *"Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"*

Here another instance, when Jesus was into the Temple.

#### **SLIDE 14: (Luke 4:16 NLT)**

Listen to what the Apostle Luke records in **Luke 4:16 (NLT)**, *"Jesus went as usual to the synagogue on the Sabbath and stood up to read the Scriptures."*

The habit of Jesus was to be in the place of God for worship. Jesus set the example for us, he went to church as usual on the Sabbath and he served. When we talk about church, you, me, all of us, this family of God should meet often and worship together and serve together. You see, when we worship together, we establish our priorities and God becomes our focus.

The Author **John Ed Mathison** shared this story. There was once a Methodist pastor, by the name of Sam Jones. He was as prominent and respected in the late nineteenth century like how Billy Graham was today.

One day, Sam noticed a couple of farmers and a little dog walking down the road. For a little while, the dog walked beside one of the farmers, then he walked alongside the other farmer. Someone ask Sam, *"which farmer does this dog belong to? He seems to be with both of them."*

*Sam replied, "Well, there's one way you can tell. When the two men get to the fork in the road, one of them will go to the right and the other will go left. Then you'll know to which farmer the dog belongs to because he can't go both ways. He'll follow one farmer or the other."*

You know, church attendance is a little bit like that. It's like someone saying, "I go to church every Sunday because I want the world to know whose side I'm on." It's knowing to whom you belong to, choosing a priority, and being a part of the family.

So, again the **Church is God's Family, God's Family on Earth, and God's Family on Earth Who Meets Often.**

Now that we established what it means to be a part of Church, let's quickly look at four reasons **why we come together as the church**, as a healthy family, as the body of believers.

The **first reason** we come together is so ...

## **SLIDE 15: (Why Do We Come Together? 1. Help)**

### **1. We Help Each Other.**

Scripture tells us we weren't made to be alone but to be in relationship with God and with others. In Genesis, God created humanity in his image because God knew it wasn't good for us to be alone. God created Eve as a helper to Adam. But it even goes further than that, God created all of humanity to be equal with one another knowing we need each other. That we could help one another.

When Jesus, God in flesh came and walked the earth, he even said the greatest commandment is to Love God and to Love others and that you can't separate the two. To love God is to love others. And one way that love is shown is when we help each other.

## **SLIDE 16: (Ecclesiastes 4:9 NLT)**

King Solomon, in his old age is credited to writing this in **Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 (NLT)**, "**9** *Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed.*

## **SLIDE 17: (Ecclesiastes 4:10 NLT)**

**10** *If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble."*

## **SLIDE 18: (Ecclesiastes 4:11 NLT)**

**11** *Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone?*

## **SLIDE 19: (Ecclesiastes 4:12 NLT)**

**12** *A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily*

*broken.*

The point is this, together we can help each other, and we are stronger together.

You see, sometimes I might be on a mountaintop and you might be in a valley. And at times like these, I can reach down and help you. The the opposite is also true. I might be in the valley and you might be on the mountaintop, so you could reach down to help me. When one of us falls, the other can help pick the other up.

You know, there is nothing in the world that is better at its mission to help each other and to reach out and to support one another than the church. That's one reason why we come together it's to help each other.

The **second reason** we come together as the church is so ...

## **SLIDE 20: (Why Do We Come Together? 2. Encourage)**

### **2. We Encourage Each Other.**

The word *encourage* literally means "*to put courage into.*" Regardless of who you are, there are times when each of us needs encouragement.

## **SLIDE 21: (Hebrews 10:24 NLT)**

In **Hebrews 10:24–25**, it says, **24** *Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.*

## **SLIDE 22: (Hebrews 10:25 NLT)**

**25** *And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.*

You might not know this but one of my favorite parts of worship on Sundays is our welcome time. I love meeting people and seeing people reaching out, welcoming one another. I especially love to hear people offering words of encouragement like I am so glad to see you this morning.

I know this is a small example of encouragement but imagine if you came to church and no one even knew or recognized you were here. You might not ever come back.

Many people don't like this welcome time but let me just say there are so many people that need that personal touch and human encounter. They go all week ignored by others and a friendly smile and touch is encouraging because someone acknowledged them.

Each of us has opportunities to encourage others all the time and some of those should go much deeper than a hand shake and a smile. There are opportunities to build relationships with people all over this church. You could join a small group, a Sunday school class, or serve somewhere at our church. It's in these group we develop these deeper relationships where we can share our lives with one another and encourage each other in our walks and like Paul says, we can motivate one another to acts of love and good works.

You see, your presence encourages those around you and that's our second reason we come together - to encourage one another.

The **third reason** we come together as the church is so...

### **SLIDE 23: (Why Do We Come Together? 3. Learn)**

#### **3. We Learn From Each Other.**

Not only do we help and encourage, but we also can learn from each other.

### **SLIDE 24: (Colossians 3:16 NLT)**

In **Colossians 3:16 (NLT)** Paul says, *"Let the words of Christ, in all their richness, live in your hearts and make you wise. Use his words to teach and counsel each other."*

The best teachers are those with whom we have developed a relationship with. Just think about it, some of the best lessons in life are not taught in front of a class, but those that are actually experienced. We all have stories. When we share our lives with one another, we develop these deeper relationships. It's through these relationships that we have the opportunities to hear from one another. It's where we learn from each other. I can learn from you and you can learn from me.

The **fourth reason** we come together as the church is so ...

### **SLIDE 25: (Why Do We Come Together? 4. Celebrate)**

#### **4. We Celebrate Together.**

One reason that families meet regularly is to celebrate. As a church, we can worship God and celebrate his goodness together. Worship is a time of celebration.

### **SLIDE 26: (Ephesians 5:19 NIV)**

In **Ephesians 5:19-20 (NIV)**, Paul said, *"19 Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord,*

### **SLIDE 27: (Ephesians 5:20 NIV)**

*20 always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

You know, it's great to celebrate and worship together. Every time we come to worship, we can celebrate the life, the death, the resurrection, and the coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Jesus is worth celebrating. He is the one who gives us life. He is the only one who can save us. He deserves to be celebrated and worshipped all the time, everyday and in all situation but especially when we come together as the church, the family of God.

**Why do we come together as the church?** Because **we can help, encourage,**

**learn and celebrate God together.**

You know I could end the message there but I want to address some of the excuses people make about church and why they don't come. There are **four excuses** as a pastor, I hear more than any other, so let me address them.

The **first excuse** I have heard is...

## **SLIDE 28: (Excuse? 1. I Am Too Busy.)**

### **1. I Am Too Busy.**

Now, if you're too busy to worship, then the fact is you are just be too busy and need to check your priorities.

In the gospel of Luke, Jesus came to the home of Mary and Martha. Martha was to busy to spend time with Jesus, while Mary sat at Jesus' feet and listened.

## **SLIDE 29: (Luke 10:41 NIV)**

Listen to what Jesus said in **Luke 10:41-42 (NIV)**, "**41** *Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed.*

## **SLIDE 30: (Luke 10:42 NIV)**

**42** *Mary has chosen what is better..."*

Don't get so busy that you miss what is really important in life. I know we live in a busy world, but don't get so busy that you miss the most important things. Don't use the excuse, "*I'm just too busy,*" when those are really the least important things of life - chores, watching television, surfing the Internet, or traveling with your kids as they play sports for example. All those things keep you busy but you have to choose what is better. And nothing is better or greater that worshipping and spending time with Jesus especially with your church family - God's family here on earth.

The **second excuse** I have heard is...

## **SLIDE 31: (Excuse? 2. I Have Been Hurt.)**

### **2. I have been hurt.**

Well, as long as you have the church, you're going to have people. So yes, we will make mistakes and we will say and do things that hurt others. As the church, that has never been our intent. In fact, we are all sinners, and we know we are not perfect. That's one of the reason we come together because we know we need Jesus.

But here's the thing, being hurt should never be an excuse because if you're willing to jump in with both feet, you have to be willing to forgive and also ask for forgiveness.

## **SLIDE 32: (Colossians 3:13 NLT)**

In **Colossians 3:13 (NLT)**, Paul says, "**13** *Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.*"

If you have been hurt, your attitude ought to be one of forgiveness. Remember the enemy wants to keep you separated from your church family and will use a hurt as a weapon to make you walk away. So, instead of retreating, fight the enemy back and offer forgiveness when you've been hurt.

The **third excuse** I have heard is...

### **SLIDE 33: (Excuse? 3. My Needs Are Not Being Met.)**

#### **3. My Needs Are Not Being Met.**

Let me just say that the church isn't here to meet our needs. It's not about us. It's about God. We come to worship God. We come to give rather than receive.

### **SLIDE 34: (Philippians 2:3 TLB)**

Listen to what Paul wrote in **Philippians 2:3-4 (TLB)** to the church in Philippi, **3** *Don't be selfish; don't live to make a good impression on others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourself.*

### **SLIDE 35: (Philippians 2:4 TLB)**

**4** *Don't just think about your own affairs, but be interested in others, too, and in what they are doing.*

You know, have you ever noticed that when we're meeting the needs of others, our own needs get met.

There was a single, middle aged woman who moved to a new city without knowing anyone. She joined a church, but that church didn't specifically have a ministry for singles or older adults, so making friends was difficult.

That woman saw a need in the church to help with the Wednesday night meals, and she began serving and cleaning up afterwards. Soon she was in charge of the Wednesday night meals and met other volunteers and workers. Before long, she had lots of friends.

She didn't set out to get her needs met, but God knew what she desired and wanted, and he rewarded her. For this woman, her unselfish service to her church became life giving for herself and others.

And that's what God does, instead of complaining and making excuses, become a giver, a worshipper and God will meet your needs.

The **fourth excuse** that I have heard is...

### **SLIDE 36: (Excuse? 4. I don't Need To Go To Church.)**

#### **4. I Don't Need To Go To Church.**

There are a lot of people who use this excuse, "*I don't need to go to church. I can worship God by myself.*" Well, that's only half true. We can worship God with our lives but God created us to be in relationship with others, a part of his family.

There was a great illustration from this week's reading about this piece of charcoal in the fire. One piece of charcoal just can't survive by itself. It has to feed off of and give fire to other pieces of charcoal. That's the only way the fire is sustained.

That's what it's like as the church. We are better together. We are God's family. People can't survive in isolation. You see, God never intended for us to be alone. God created us to be a part of his family.

#### **SLIDE 37: (Romans 12:4 NLT)**

In **Romans 12:4-5 (NLT)**, Paul says, "**4** *Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function,*

#### **SLIDE 38: (Romans 12:5 NLT)**

**5** *so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.*"

Each of us finds our meaning and function as a part of Christ's body, the church. We are part of a community and we can't do it by ourselves. We need each other because we belong together.

#### **SLIDE 39: (Transformed Life: week 3 - Jumping In)**

Let me just close by saying that every member of the church family is valuable. No one is considered unnecessary.

In **1 Corinthians, chapter 12**, Paul goes into detail every part of our body - fingers, hands, ears, eyes, feet - and each part contributes to the team, creating the unity of who we are and what the church does.

I just want to encourage you to **Jump In with Both Feet**. Church is God's family here on earth. And a healthy families always meets together regularly, and we don't let excuses keep us away. We affirm who God is, and we affirm that every person is important, and work together to accomplish God's will, here on earth.

As commitment primes the pump and prayer draws the water out by being connected to God, our presence puts us in a community of faith where we have so much to give and so much to receive. We are a family and we work together as a team.

Don't underestimate the witness you make when you simply show up at church to **encourage, help, learn, and celebrate** together.

Let me encourage you today, **Jump In with Both Feet** and make a commitment with your presence.

**Let's Pray.**

...

**Song:**

**Tithing:**

**Announcements:**

...

**Pray Out:**

*May the Lord bless you and keep you; may the Lord make his face to shine on you and be gracious to you; may the Lord lift up his blessing on you and give you peace; may we quench our thirst by our prayers and our presence. **Amen.***