

## Just a Little Talk with Jesus Makes It **RIGHT**

One Sunday morning not too long ago, long before heading off to church for worship, I was giving great thought to the whole issue of going to church. Since the weather was decent and winter is approaching, I knew that there would be some folks who would “opt out of” corporate worship of the Living God for an unlimited number of activities offered up by the prince of this world.

While still lying in bed mediating on the subject of corporate worship, I asked myself, “Just how important is corporate worship, anyway?”

Then I thought to myself; I as Pastor devote a huge amount of my week in preparation for worship. I spend a lot of time prayerfully seeking from God a clear understanding of what message He desires me to give to His followers. Which begs the question, should I really do all of that if it is not all that important?

So I must ask again—just how important is corporate worship? Is it an activity, among so many others, that we as true believers can really “opt out of” for something else?

Another question that came to my mind was, “Lord if we can take off from time to time, are there times when opting out is sinful and times when it is not sinful?”

As I laid there in the darkness of morning, it wasn't long before I asked God, “Lord is this really all that important? Does it really matter in the scheme of things for our lives? After all, I keep hearing from people everywhere I turn that they don't really have to go to church to worship You!”

Then the next question that popped up in my prayer with God was, “Lord, is church and corporate worship a big deal to You?” And another question, “If people who claim to be Yours stay away, are they hurting anybody but themselves?”

The light of morning was peeking through my window and the Lord's Day was pressing on, so I said to God, “I just sense in my heart that this thing called corporate worship is a big deal to You, Lord, perhaps even more than I can comprehend. We really need to continue this conversation, but I must get a shower and get ready for worship, so I will catch up with you later.”

I was excited to get to church. We were in the middle of a theme and the service the week before had so much energy that I couldn't wait to see what was in store for the service this week. So I put the early morning conversation with God out of my head.

Upon my arrival at church, I discovered that I was regrettably correct in my concerns and that a great number had opted out of Worship for something else. I brushed it off and set in my heart that I would worship with all those who had determined that it was a good thing to come together with like hearts and worship the King of Kings.

The service had been prayerfully thought out and put together with a special thought to minister to the more senior element of our congregation. We sang, laughed, prayed, and felt the Holy Spirit's convicting presence (a good & healthy thing, as He leads us to be more like Jesus.) The message was from God and all who gathered were glad to be in the House of the Lord.

After church Debbie and I took our granddaughter out for lunch to celebrate her 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. I told Debbie, "It just doesn't get any better than this!" and I celebrated the Joy of walking through the day with Jesus.

I was caught somewhat off guard when God later started answering my early morning questions.

I went to prayer meeting in the evening and gathered with a few of the saints. One of my people began by asking for forgiveness as they confessed that they just had a hard time focusing on worship that morning because all they could think about was all the people who were not in church. It was so distracting that they could not get their head and heart engaged. Of course I shared with them that in the past, I too have experienced that problem and gave counsel on how I overcame it with God's help.

Early Monday morning as I was again lying in bed thinking about the day before, the Lord said to me, "So you see, my child, people who don't come to worship do hurt more than just themselves!"

Then the Lord began to answer the other questions by bringing many scripture verses to my mind:

...Is it a big deal to God? God reminded me that the whole day of worship and rest made it into His list of Top Ten issues. I was astounded when God brought to my mind Luke 14:6 which says, "*He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom.*" Now it was not hard for me to connect the dots—that if the Son of God made it his custom to be in church, then us going to church is a "Big Deal" to God.

Then God took me to another verse that had to do with how He designed us. I personally told God that I thought that this has more to do with a spouse, but He made His point nonetheless. We are not designed by the creator to be by ourselves. *The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."*

We were designed to be interrelated, that is why Cain didn't get away with using the excuse, "Am I my Brother's keeper?" The answer was and still is, "Yes." O, how the Lord reminded me that as the inventor of Man He also designed this thing called corporate worship, and that it's a "Big Deal" to Him.

So it is no big stretch for us to figure out that if we have the ability to be in corporate worship we should make it our custom. And if we miss a couple times it might not be sinful, but I for one know that you can't miss too much before you are far away from God. And that, my friends, is a "BIG DEAL" with God. If you think otherwise, perhaps you should have a little talk with Jesus! I found "it puts things right!"

*Pastor Tenney*