

“I Just Don’t Go To Church...”

by Bill Crews

“But he, desiring to justify himself, said...” (Luke 10:29). These words were uttered by a certain lawyer, and how like that lawyer many of us become. We desire to justify ourselves, to excuse the sins we commit before God, to minimize, to overlook our own transgressions or neglect. May God help us to face our sins, to have a sense of sin, to be aware of our weaknesses, to be penitent and humble, to confess and forsake our wrong, to amend and serve anew.

One of the most common and, indeed, most tragic statements made by weak and unfaithful brethren is this: **“The only thing wrong in my life is that I just don’t go to church.”** Surely such a confession exhibits the height of misapprehension and understatement. Be it understood that one sin persisted in before God is enough to condemn us, but, brethren, how can any one of us forsake **“the assembling of ourselves together” (Hebrews 10:25)** without being guilty of a number of sins?

When we *cease* to meet with our brethren to worship God, we will soon *cease* to read our Bibles, *cease* to pray unto the Father, *cease* to teach our friends and neighbors and others, *cease* to train our children in things holy and spiritual. We may continue to be morally upright, honest, sincere, charitable as far as men are concerned, but we have **turned away from God**. When we “just don’t go to church,” do we obey God’s instructions to eat the Lord’s supper **together**, to sing **together**, to lay by in store of our means, to pray **together**, and to study and learn **together**? We cannot remember the sacrifice of God’s Son nor show forth His death until He comes again; we cannot teach and admonish one another; we cannot help to edify the saints and to glorify God; we cannot stand behind and support the work of God in this world; we cannot grow in grace and knowledge **without faithfully assembling in the appointed periods of Bible study and worship!** One Christian does not a congregation make, and the Lord’s supper cannot scripturally be eaten privately at home (**1 Corinthians 11:20-34; Acts 20:7**).

A young couple who had not been to such services for a number of years asked: **“What have we done wrong besides not going to church?”** They had robbed God of thousands of dollars (**1 Corinthians 16:2**; cf. **Malachi 3:8**); they had forsaken the Lord’s own memorial supper (**1 Corinthians 11:23-26**); for years their voices were unheard in the praises of the saints, their petitions and thanksgivings absent from the prayers of the saints, and their knowledge of God’s word stifled and fading, while their spiritual growth was completely neglected – to say nothing of the bad example set for and the wrong influence exerted upon others around them! Indeed, their souls had become dead to God, and yet they ask: **“What have we done wrong besides not going to church?”** May God help us to see ourselves as He, according to His word, sees us!

Brethren, we need God and His church, and we need the local congregation. We need to serve and honor Him as God in the divinely ordered way of His will. Let us not forsake **“the assembling of ourselves together.”** And let us remember that all sins are not matters of transgression; many are sins of neglect – a failure to do what God requires of us. **James 4: 17** reads: **“To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”** But there is good news in **1 John 1:9** and **2:1-2**. Christ is the propitiation for **our** sins, as well as for those of the whole world. And, **“if we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”** Implied in this confessing of our sins is genuine repentance and earnest change of life.

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