**CHRISTIAN ATHEIST**

**Church Commitment**

Sunday, September 4, 2022

**WE Slide 1 POP QUIZ TIME- T/F** Don’t answer these out loud, just keep track in your head. **Slide 2-11**

1. The “church” can be defined as the “body of Christ”.
2. A person can attend a church but not be part of the “body of Christ”.
3. At salvation God makes a person one with Christ and through Christ one with other Christians.
4. A Christian can be one with other Christians but doesn’t necessarily have to be around Christians.
5. Christians’ unity is proof that Jesus Christ was sent by God.
6. God determines whether a Christian attends church, not the Christian.
7. It’s the job of the church staff to do the ministries of the church.
8. God’s OK with me attending church, but it’s OK with Him that I don’t connect in through serving.
9. I can be spiritually healthy/growing but rarely or never attend church.
10. God is OK with Christians livestreaming instead of personally connecting with their church family

**Slide 12 How did you do? As we go through the message today you can see whether you were right/wrong.** In our series CHRISTIAN ATHEIST, we’re looking at areas of life where people say they believe God exists, in fact as Christians they’ve asked Him to forgive them of their sin and restore their relationship with Him, but then live life as if He doesn’t exist- as if He has no say in their everyday lives. **Slide 13 TODAY:** **Christians live like atheists when we fail to regularly connect with our church family.** We want to answer this question: **Can a Christian be all that God desires them to be, to be like Jesus Christ, and not regularly worship/serve/reach together with their spiritual family, their church? God’s goal is for us to regularly worship, serve, reach together with our church family in order to grow in people/church that looks more/more like Jesus.** We’re going to look at 3 passages that summarizes what God desires for us.

**THE FIRST- John 17, pg. where Jesus is praying for you and me while He was on earth- SOME OF THE MOST POWERFUL WORDS EVER SAID.** Said by God the Son to God the Father concerning we who make up the BODY OF CHRIST today. **Did you know Jesus prayed for you while He was earth and still does today? Look what He prayed. Slide 14-16** Jesus tells us that… CHRISTIANS ARE ONE WITH CHRIST AND EACH OTHER. **You/I are ONE/UNITED, can’t tell the difference between, Jesus/each other!!**

**GOD**

1. **CHRISTIANS ARE UNITED WITH CHRIST AND EACH OTHER, John 17:20-23**
2. **At salvation God the Holy Spirit made us ONE with God the Father, God the Son and each other.**
3. We are in Christ and Christ is in God the Father.
4. We aren’t God and aren’t perfect in living out that oneness but from God’s perspective we are as one with Him and each other as He is with Himself.
5. We are more closely tied to other believers than we are to our unsaved family members- Holy Spirit vs. physical blood.
6. **Slide 17 Our ONENESS Is the Glory of God in Us- Reveals Who He Is, vv. 22-23**
7. “glory”- the revealing of who God is; think about all that is revealed about who God is/what kind of God He is through His saving us and making us one with Him through His Holy Spirit.
8. The purpose for this “ONENESS/UNITY” is so those who need Jesus will “believe/know” Jesus was sent by God, that He loves us, just as God loves Jesus.
9. Only an infinitely powerful God can bring peace and unity to diverse people.
10. Believe me the peace/unity/joy in churches that get this makes huge impact on non-Christians.
11. **SIDE NOTE:** this is why we work hard to address division/complaining/wrong teaching- it impacts our gospel effectiveness.

**Here’s the problem then for Christians who choose to not worship/serve/reach with their church family.**

1. **Slide 18 PROBLEM-** Jesus is saying, you can’t be united with people you’re not connected to; as a Christian you are united to Him and through Him united with other Christians.

**The oneness that Jesus made possible God calls the body of Christ- the church.** He writes about this in 1 Corinthians 12, look what God has him write. **Slide 19-27 Christians, when together, make up the BODY OF CHRIST.** This is a work that God does.

1. **CHRISTIANS ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST, 1 Corinthians 12:18-27**
2. ***GOD* ARRANGES Each Christian in the Body- Christ’s body, the church.**
3. “placed”- tithemi; establish, set, **arrange**; when we placed our faith in Christ we gave ourselves to God who **established** our place in the church, **arranged** us in the church as He desired.
4. Being connected to our church family isn’t an option or something that we negotiate with God- “Yes! If you give me salvation, I’ll give you 2 Sundays a month.”
5. As Christians we ARE the body of Christ, the church; we don’t attend church, we are the church.

**Paul goes on to say that there’s more to it, too, than just taking up a seat on Sunday morning. Slide 28**

1. **God BLENDS Christians Together to Serve/Support Each Other**
2. “composed”- sugkerannymi; fits together harmoniously, blends various items effectively, He matches us up- someone needs to know your story, how God worked in your life, what it is you’re struggling with. **ILLUSTRATION:** Like a master orchestra director He blends us together to create a harmonious unity so that we all care equally for each other.
3. Every Christian matters and Christians don’t choose who’s in/who’s out/who useful/who’s not.
4. No matter who needs care, we care for them.
5. If one suffers, we all suffer; if one rejoices we all rejoice.
6. **ILLUSTRATION:** Stubbing my toes- felt it in my head.
7. Don’t believe the lie that you’re telling yourself that you shouldn’t bother your church family with your struggle- GOD SAYS THAT’S A LIE AND TO LEAN ON YOUR CHURCH FAMILY.
8. Don’t believe the lie that you’re not needed or useful to your church family; that we’d be better off without you.
9. **Slide 29 PROBLEM-** You’re not being the BODY of Christ if you’re not regularly connecting with your church family.

**Christians are ONE with each other as we are ONE with Christ, together are connected as the BODY OF CHRIST and then through that connection we GROW to become more like Jesus.** Look what God has Paul tell us in Ephesians 4. **Slide 30-35 God is telling us through Paul that CHRISTIANS GROW SPIRITUALLY WHEN CONNECTED TOGETHER.** He first says that it’s not the church staff’s responsibility to do everything- BTW our church gets this!!

1. **CHRISTIANS GROW SPIRITUALLY WHEN CONNECTED TOGETHER, Ephesians 4:11-16**
2. **It’s the Pastors’ Job to Train/Develop Volunteers for the “Work of Service”**
3. “equipping”- katartismos; training that fully qualifies, has the sense of mending, making something whole.
4. Putting that together with 1 Corinthians 12- pastors/teachers help mend Christians and churches who are injured, or lacking in some way, to carry out the work of service.
5. Christians are not to remain in the condition that they came to Christ, they are to be changed by Christ to become fully qualified to serve others.

**LOOK AT ALL THESE WAYS YOU CAN CONNECT, LEARN, SERVE, GROW! Slide 36**

1. “work of service”- teaching/training/serving opportunities, opportunities for spiritual growth
2. Excuses Christians give.
3. Work- do life God’s way/He promises to provide; change schedules/jobs/get involved somewhere.
4. Health/anxiety- not talking about contagious illness; isolation causes further depression/anxiety, not God’s plan for people in general and especially His people.
5. I don’t need the church- all but 2 NT letters written to local bodies of believers who were imperfect and hurt each other; that’s the purpose of the letters!

**When we obey God, sacrifice our excuses, and connect with our church family, what is the impact? Slide 37**

1. **The Impact of Works of Service**
2. “to the building up of the body of Christ”- oikodome; process of construction; connecting/growing each individual Christian and together the body of Christ- the church.
3. “until we **all** attain”- katantao; to reach a condition or goal; “**All**”- every Christian in a church is responsible to pursue this and together as the body of Christ- the church
4. Unity of the faith- “the faith”; the doctrines of God’s Word; truth that composed the gospel message.
5. Unity of the knowledge of the Son of God- “knowledge”- epignosis; thorough, experiential knowledge of Jesus; we can only truly know Jesus personally by being connected, serving His body- the church.

**By worshiping through learning/serving/reaching together is how we grow to spiritual maturity.** Together we grow to a “mature person”- spiritually mature as an individual and together as Jesus’ body.

1. “to a mature man”- teleios; fully mature, complete, having what is needed for spiritual maturity; “stature…Christ”- thinking/responding like Jesus.
2. “no longer children”- immature, unstable, easily distracted, easily tricked, wander off
3. We should be children in our trust/dependence on God but not in our spiritual/biblical understanding.
4. “toss…carried about”- They believe whatever they hear that’s connected to the Bible whether the teacher is right or wrong. **There are people using the Bible for their own selfish gain.**
5. “trickery…scheming”- kubeia: wicked dice playing; craftiness- panourgia: manipulation; deceitful scheming- methodeia; systematic, calculated wrong teaching.

**The end result is… Slide 38**

1. **We All Grow Up Together into a Body that Looks Like/Acts Like Jesus.**

**Isn’t this our heart’s desire, to be like the One who died for us, gave us spiritual life, promises to meet our needs, and will take us to heaven one day?**

1. “speaking the truth in love”- speak what people need to hear unlike those who manipulate. **This message today is me speaking God’s truth in love; we encourage each other with truth.**
2. We grow up into Him who is the head of the church- Jesus directs we who are His body.
3. Fitted- sunarmologeo; join together form a unit; looks back to John 17- oneness/unity.
4. Held together- sumbibazo; to bring together into a unity
5. Present participles- a continuous work by Jesus who does the work but we must be connected.
6. “whole body”- Body- the church; whole- no individual members are left out. **Slide 39-40** **PA Quote**
7. “every joint supplies”- epichoregia; generous giving; each Christian giving of themselves generously; not grudgingly but looking for ways to serve. **So thankful for those in our church who do this!!**
8. “proper working of each part”- every Christian has a part, no bench sitters, observers, fans in stands.
9. “causes the growth of the body”- as we make ourselves available to Jesus who knits us together through our service of each other this causes us to grow to be like Jesus Christ.
10. **Slide 41 PROBLEM-** you’re not growing spiritually if you’re not connected- worshiping/serving/reaching with your church family.

**AS THE BAND COMES…I realize I’m talking to people who are here, but there are those who just listen to the podcast and aren’t here and you know of others who aren’t here who God’s saying need to be here.** We all have a responsibility to connect with those who are drifting, not understanding what God has saved them for, and why He’s given them a spiritual family. **So what are our TAKEAWAYS? Slide 42**

**YOU TAKEAWAYS**

**Ultimately it’s Christians live like Christ and connect with your spiritual family.**

1. **Working? Sitting home?** Connect in somewhere- there are plenty of opportunities.
2. **Just attending?** Connect in through serving, Bible study.

**PODCAST: How does God existing impact my church involvement?** John 17:20-23, 1 Corinthians 12:18-27, Ephesians 4:11-16