

The Church – Part 8 The Book of Acts

We're continuing our study today about God's local church, God's church, and as we look at this, we need to be reminded that there are some today who call themselves churches who are not really God's church. They're not representing my Savior when they do the things that they do. They're not representing God. You say that's being judgmental. Well, the Bible tells me that, according to the Word of God, the Word of God is the judge. The Word of God is what we measure things by. It's not by what I think, but it's by what God says in His Word. And we're studying through the local church here, and we're seeing some things that are wrong that's prevalent in some local churches.

I'm not saying that all local churches are bad. What I'm saying is this, that there are some who are not doing God's work. They're not in God's will. And we found in our last study that biblical doctrine has become irrelevant in some of these churches, not important. There are shorter messages to become relative, in other words, change with the circumstances. Things change, in other words. They say you've got to be up with the times. This is done to draw bigger crowds.

And also people become comfortable. They become comfortable in the local church and God says that we're to be stirred up. We're to be happy. We're to be joyful when we come into His house, and we're to go out charged up, ready to serve God, not to serve this world. We don't come there to be entertained, as some people believe. And the Bible tells me that I'm to be interested not in the entertainment or what goes on there other than the Word of God and the fellowship that comes by being with other Christians.

Psalm 122:1 says, *I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD.* We need to be glad. We don't need something to get us excited except we need Jesus Christ as Savior. We need to follow His teachings in His Word.

Last time, I mentioned that the modern church has grabbed the worldly philosophy of pragmatism, in other words, concerned with results rather than principles. A big crowd does not mean success. Success in the local church is doing God's will, going there to serve Him and then going forth and bearing precious seed, going and sowing that seed of the Word, telling people how that they can be saved, not going out and saying, "Oh, we have such a good time at our church. We have sings, we have a band, we have this, we have dancing, we have whatever you want in this world. We've got it and you need to come to our church."

Folks, might I say that that is the wrong thing to do. We need to go out and present Jesus Christ as Savior and tell them that only Jesus Christ saves. We don't need to go out and tell them that they going to have a good time when they come to our church. We need to go out and say, "You're going to have a good time in the Lord because you trust Him as your Savior and that places joy in your heart."

Well, pragmatism sucks the truth out of biblical teaching more than any other scheme Satan has devised to date. And we also see that pragmatism, evolution, and secular humanism, along with relativism, have been very effective in crippling the church today and down through the years.

Relativism says that there is no right or wrong, no absolutes, no truth or error. It all depends on the circumstances of the time.

Relativism says this: It doesn't make any difference how you get them to church. We live in a new age. It doesn't make any difference if you let non-saved people take part in the worship service, the music, advice to the congregation, and so forth. That doesn't make any difference. They're human beings. They have a right to do that. That's what relativism says.

And the Bible says that we are not to allow people who are unsaved to do anything in the local church. Now that may shock you, but God's house is His house, and I realize some of you are going to say, "Well, we're the temple of God." That's true. So why don't you act like it. Why don't you treat your body as the temple of God and quit going about serving this world and doing the things of the world? But when we go into the house of the Lord, to the place that He's called us to join our hearts and our minds and our souls together to hear the Word of God, we need to go there to worship God and Him only.

Relativism says that when you call sin sin in somebody's life, you're being mean spirited, judgmental, and what you see as wrong according to the Bible may not seem wrong to someone else. Don't tell someone to open their eyes to the unsound doctrine or heresy being taught in their local church. Don't tell someone that, unless they receive Christ as Savior, they're going to Hell. That's being judgmental. That's being mean.

And one person has observed this: In the world it is called tolerance, but in Hell it is called despair. The soul that believes in nothing, cares for nothing, seeks to know nothing, interferes with nothing, enjoys nothing, hates nothing, finds purpose in

nothing, lives for nothing, and remains alive because there is nothing for which it will die.

Relativism also says this: You shouldn't call attention to something that you see is wrong in a person's life even if what you see is wrong based on what the Bible says. After all, it's only your opinion as to what you think the Bible says. And might I say that it's not up to me of what the Bible says. It's up to God and what He says... He says.... and what He says is truth, and nothing will change that. As long as we stand upon His Word, we're not going to go wrong.

Relativism says this as well: There are no absolutes in the Bible. When you see something in the Bible called sin or wrong, it is simply your preference or conviction concerning what the Bible says. After all, there are no absolutes found in the Bible. Well, that's what relativism says, and relativism is wrong, and that's where a lot of local churches have gone wrong. They've been listening too much to the things of the world. They've been listening to the things that the devil has placed in front of them to keep them entertained. And let me remind you that that's pragmatism. Going to church to be entertained, that's pragmatism.

What's happened to the local church? Satan's goal has always been to tempt men to trust their own feelings and methods over the Word of God. The Bible tells us that the heart is desperately wicked; it's deceiving. Your heart, what you feel, will fail you. We shouldn't go by what we feel. We need to go by what God says.

And Christ was even tempted by Satan to do the things that were not right, according to the Word of God. Matthew 4:1 says: *Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.* With each temptation, to give into human feelings, Christ said, "It is written." Well, where is it written? It was written in the Word of God. Jesus quoted the

Old Testament Scriptures. And when man is tempted to build a church on man's methods instead of following God's will, the right answer to the temptation is what Christ said, "Get thee hence, Satan" (Matthew 4:10).

Temptation is not the sin; giving into the temptation is the sin. And I would say to you today the liberal church is discarding and downplaying preaching in favor of newer means such as drama, dance, humor, comedy, variety sideshows, histrionics. Histrionics is overdone emotion, done for the show, in other words, the tears will flow as long as the crowd is approving of it, as long as they can get the emotion worked up. That's histrionics.

We also see the pop psychology involved here. Dr. Phil, you have him with the pop psychology. You have all of these television preachers who are using pop psychology and I don't have to name the names, but you know who they are. Modern methods are being used to become more entertaining and to be more relatable. People relate, they think, to what's going on. That is, the saved person wants to relate to that unsaved person.

You're different. The Bible says come out from among them. You're different. Let them see something different in your life. Let them know that Jesus saves, and that He can lead them into life everlasting by receiving Him as their Lord and Savior.

Well, the truth is this: The Bible is not at all relativistic. It is absolute truth. First Thessalonians 2:13 says: *For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God,, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.*

And Biblical separation, truth is not determined by testing what works and what doesn't. John 17:17 says, *Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

First Peter 4:17: *For the time has come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin in us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?*

Acts 5:29: *Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.*

Something else... spiritual and biblical truth is tested for one criterion and one criterion only: Does it match with what the Bible says or not? Second Timothy 3:16 says, *All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*

Now, if we trust worldly methods and ways, we automatically relinquish the power of the Holy Spirit. John 16:13 says: *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*

Paul said in I Corinthians 2:4: *And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.*

If we use manmade methods of relying on gratuitous humor and entertainment and storytelling to soften the message to appeal to the people at the expense of straightforward Biblical preaching, we are telling God we want to do it our way and not His. Proverbs 16:25 says, *There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.*

A local church should never attempt to build a church man's way. Why? Because it leads to death. A local church that let's God build His church His way will be more concerned with leading souls to Christ than with filling the building. Doing it God's way means eternal life.

Now, the truth is this: II Corinthians 6 :17 says, *Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.* The truth is this: The truth does matter.

Have you found Jesus Christ as your Savior? He's looking for you. He's speaking to your heart now and saying, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

If you've never trusted Him, you need to say something like this: Lord, I'm sorry for my sin. I know I can't save myself and I believe Your Word where it says whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved, and I'm asking you right now, Lord, to save me. Come into my heart and save me so I can go to Heaven and be with you one day.

Father, thank you for this time. I pray for that soul that needs Christ today. May that person be saved. May that person call upon You. And I pray for that Christian today, Lord. May that Christian grow in Your grace and knowledge and serve You for Jesus's sake. Amen.

You've been listening to It's a Good Life Radio. To request a free transcript of this program, you can write to Dr. Woodard at 497 Judith Avenue, Fruitland Park, FL 34731.

Visit our Websites, www.LRWM.org or www.ItsAGoodLifeRadio.com. We know you will be blessed.

This program is listener-supported. Support your local church first. Any gifts to support this ministry can be sent to:

LRWM
497 Judith Avenue
Fruitland Park, FL 34731

Until next time, this is Doug Anderson reminding you it's a good life living for the Lord. May the Lord bless you richly is our prayer.