

The Church – Part 7 The Book of Acts

We're presently studying through the subject of God's church, and as I look around today, I see there's many different ways that people are trying to get people to come to church, and some of those churches are really not God's church. G. Campbell Morgan said this.... He was a great man of God who preached the Word of God. He passed away in 1945. Even back then, he said, "When amusement is necessary to get people to listen to the Gospel, there will be failure. And this is not the method of Christ. To form an organization and provide all kinds of entertainment is to be foredoomed to failure" (G. Campbell Morgan).

Another evangelist said this: "God's first and foremost method for communicating His Word to this generation is preaching." Titus 1:3 says, *But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour.* "God has not chosen drama," this evangelist goes on to say. "He's not chosen drama, movies, and concerts but preaching as his primary means of revelation. We have no right to dilute, delete, diminish, or dummy down anything that God said in His Word. We are to declare it exactly the way He said it. This God-hating, sin-saturated society needs authoritative preaching." Dr. Tom Farrell said that.

What do we find in our day? First of all, I see that Biblical doctrine has become irrelevant. In other words, it's not important. First Timothy 4:1 tells us why and how this is taking place. We see this more and more as we look around. First Timothy 4:1 says, *Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.*

God, the Holy Spirit, says in I Timothy 4:1 that those who say Biblical doctrine is irrelevant... in other words, not necessary... are listening and teaching doctrines of devils, in other words, demons. And in I Timothy 4:13, Paul tells Timothy to pay attention, to give attendance to doctrine, he says there. What doctrine? It's the whole counsel of God, the teaching of the Scriptures. First Timothy 4:13 says, and Paul is speaking to Timothy, *Till I come, give attendance... in other words, attention, pay attention... to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.*

Those who teach that the Scriptures are irrelevant are walking on dangerous ground. Second John 1:9 says, *Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.* Those who are going around today teaching fairy tales and things that do not pertain to Christ, they are wrong. That verse in 2 John 1:9 talks about the doctrine of Christ. Many of the modern preachers today say that is the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, that is the Gospel. That is how a person gets saved, is realizing and understanding about the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. But the Bible goes ahead here and says the doctrine of Christ.

The doctrine is the teaching of Christ. He says, *He that abideth in the doctrine... the teachings... of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.* The person who is teaching and listening to and studying the Word of God, that person is the one who is growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. We're going to see more about that in just a few moments.

This is one thing we find in our churches today... "churches"... that the Bible, the Biblical doctrine has become irrelevant, not important. And we also find this about the messages that are being preached or taught or presented. There are shorter messages because it needs to be more relative... in other words, relative changes with circumstances. "Relative" means that you're able to relate to the people more. "Relative" means this changes with circumstances. I believe that word is interchangeable there. Well, why is this done? Shorter messages draw bigger crowds, according to what some people believe.

One modern preacher has said this. "People will forgive even poor theology as long as they get out before noon." In other words, it's better to keep the congregation comfortable. In Acts 20:9, we read of one person in the Bible who got so comfortable that he fell three stories and died. Acts 20:9 says, *And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.*

I want to draw your attention to a couple of things in that verse. First of all, we see that this young man was seated or he was up three floors. There was evidently, and there were, a lot of people present during this time of preaching from Paul, and Paul was long preaching. He was long-winded, in other words. He was preaching the Word of God, and as he was preaching, people evidently knew he was going to be preaching long, but notice, the place evidently was so packed with people coming to hear the Word of God that this young man had to go three floors up to get in on this to hear the preaching. Well, he fell asleep and he fell to his death. And of course, later on you keep reading this section of Scripture in Acts 20 and you'll see how that

this young man was raised from the dead, not in the sense that our Christ was raised from the dead, but this young man evidently, once again, died later on. He was brought back. God raised him and would to God that some people would be raised in our local churches today.

There are so many people who are dead in trespasses and sins in local churches. They believe that they're on their way to Heaven because they've gone there and they see so-called saved people who are listening to and partaking of the things of this world. And they believe that as they look at this so-called Christian, that Christian's living like the devil and so they believe they're as good as that Christian and so therefore they're on their way to Heaven, as well. God help the people of this world and these so-called local Bible-believing churches who are straying and have strayed from the Word of God.

Now, as we look at this, we see that the church today has become comfortable. They want to be comfortable, entertained. First Corinthians 13:11 says, *When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.* Instead of being entertained in church by the things of the world, we need to be interested in the things of God.

You know, when my grandkids would come in and they would come into the home, one of the first things they wanted to do, they wanted to play. Well, that's the way it is as we look in a lot of the churches today. When people come into the church, they think it's a playground. They understand as a child. They speak as a child, because they've never been taught the Word of God. They've never got into the Word of God. Paul said that, when he was a child, he thought as a child, but when he became a man... That means in this Scripture it's teaching us that when we grow in the grace and

knowledge of Jesus Christ we're going to put away childish things, and we're not going to be thinking of the things of this world, but we're going to put our minds and our lives into the hands of Jesus Christ and we're going to learn what He has to say to us.

Luke 24:32 says this: *And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?* Our hearts need to burn and yearn for the Heavenly manna from Heaven, the everlasting Word of God. Now, these people on the road to Emmaus as Jesus had risen from the grave and He was walking with this people, they didn't know who He was at first. As He was walking with them, they heard Him speaking and later on they said, "Didn't our hearts burn within us." We don't have Jesus Christ in the flesh walking with us, but we have Him in reality in His Word, in the Word of God, as we study it, we look at it, and our hearts should burn and yearn as we receive that Heavenly manna from God, the everlasting Word of God.

Well, messages become a little shorter and more comfortable, and people go to be entertained, and they go to be interested. In Psalm 122:1 it says, *I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD.* That's the way we need to be. As the children of God, we need to be happy. We need to be glad when the doors are open. We need to be there to worship our Lord, not to go there for the entertainment that is possibly offered but go there to hear the Word of God.

Now, the modern church has grabbed the worldly philosophy of pragmatism. In other words, they're concerned with results rather than principles. Well, that philosophy has worked for the Jehovah Witnesses, the Mormons, the Church of Christ, the mega-anything-goes church, and so forth.

Pragmatism will work if a church wants to abandon the principles of God. Now, I'm not saying all mega churches, big churches, have abandoned the principles of God. What I'm saying is, if they're using pragmatism, if they're using entertainment, anything that deviates from the Word of God, they're wrong and this needs to be stopped.

Notice something else about pragmatism. Pragmatism sucks the truth out of biblical teaching more than any other scheme Satan has devised to date. In Matthew 7:26, the Bible says, *And every one that heareth these things of mine and doeth them not shall be likened unto a foolish man which built his house upon the sand.* A local church who forsakes the principles of God, the Biblical teachings found in the Word of God, is likened to the person who builds a house upon unstable ground. Oh, the church may grow in numbers but not for the Lord. Man can devise all the programs he wants but it is God who gives the increase in His local church. God does not measure the success of a local church based on the number of people who attend. Success is not measured by numbers but by doing God's will.

First Corinthians 3:7 says this: *So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.* If we're depending on anyone or anything else other than God to build His church, then we're wrong. We need to get back to the old preaching. We need to get back to what the Bible teaches. We need to get back and do what God wants us to do as the children of God and as the preachers of God.

Now, my question to you today is have you trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior? Do you know Him as your Lord? The Bible says to as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the children, the sons of God, and

that's the only way that we go to Heaven is by receiving Jesus Christ as our Savior.

Lord, forgive me of my sin. Come into my heart and save me. I want to go to Heaven. I want to be with You one day. I want to serve You, Lord, while I'm alive on this Earth.

If you'll ask Him to come into your heart today, sorry for your sin, asking Him to save you, the Bible says that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. And if you are saved, you need to be serving Him today, not for the entertainment, but because He wants you to serve Him in spirit and in truth.

Let's pray.

Father, I pray that you would use this message today and this teaching to help those who are listening, help those to find Jesus Christ as Savior, and help those who are saved to do Your will in all things, for it's in Christ's name we pray. Amen.

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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.