

Why Sunday Is the Most Segregated Day of the Week—But Not the Way You Think

“Are any church leaders paying attention to God’s Word?”

“Seriously, are any of them paying attention?”

Or how about this question: “Will any church leaders rise up and repent for being defiant against God and His Word?”

Wow, these are some bold questions! They are also questions—very serious questions—that need to be unpacked. What do I mean by “repent for being defiant against God’s Word”?

Let me begin my answer with these powerful words from Jesus: “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35). In case you didn’t notice, Jesus wasn’t talking to sinners. He was speaking to His intimate group of 12 disciples whose feet He had just washed. In fact, here Jesus sets the course for evangelism. “Boys, if you want to reach the world, the unchurched, the first step is for them to see you loving each other as I have loved you.” Powerful!

Now, I’m going to make my own powerful statement that I believe with all my heart: The church as we know it today *is not ready to win the lost*. Yes, I said it! The state of the church today is pathetic, apathetic and should be embarrassed of itself. Don’t believe me? Just look at what the statistics are showing: The church is not having the effect on the world that Jesus intended when He commissioned her into action.

In her article called "It's Hard to Go to Church," Emma Green writes how science has become a more widely accepted method for investigating and understanding the physical world than religion is. As the United States has become more secular, people have slowly begun drifting away from the faith. Green goes on to say while there have been changes in this kind of private belief and practice, the most significant shift has been in the way people publicly practice their faith: Americans (and particularly young Americans) are less likely to attend services or identify with a religious group than they have at any time in recent memory.

The Pew Research Center recently released a survey that showed that one in five adults who attend church monthly or more say they do not "usually" feel God's presence; one in four don't usually feel a sense of community; and four in 10 don't "usually" feel connected to their faith's history.

Look at that last statistic again. Four in 10 don't "usually" feel connected to their faith's history. Astounding! What is it that makes people feel so disconnected from their spiritual roots?

In the book of Acts, we see the first church being established in Chapters 2-4. In these chapters, we are given an account of how the church was to perform and what the results would be. For example, when a manager awards a position to a new employee, that manager makes it abundantly clear how he or she is to perform and what the outcome should be. If you're hired to flip hamburgers, for example, your performance is to get nice big hamburger patties on the grill, and the intended result is nice, tasty burgers.

For the church, their performance was to learn God's Word, fellowship together, keep the sacraments, eat meals together, pray for the sick and for the needs of the people, and to be united around this plan. If they remained united around these six directives, the outcome would be exactly what Jesus

intended for it to be: signs, wonders and thousands added to the church daily. Did you catch that? Monumental church growth!

However, according to recent statistics, not just here in America, but in other nations as well, the church is living the exact opposite. Indeed, we certainly hear about pockets of explosive growth, signs, wonders and all sorts of great outpourings and renewals scattered across the world, but not in the way we see it in the “job description” given to us in Acts. Somewhere shortly after the creation of the early church, Jesus’ bride became grossly divided and drifted completely away from the pattern of success. This includes eliminating activities led by Holy Spirit such as praying for the sick and doing things that would result in signs and wonders—not annually, not monthly, and not even weekly, but daily.

In 1 Corinthians 2, Paul reminds the church in Corinth that, when he first came to them, he did not come with fancy speech or in man’s wisdom. Rather, he built that church through demonstrations of the power of the Holy Spirit. So let’s ask ourselves: Why are we not seeing great demonstrations of the power of the Holy Spirit today? Simple. Our church leaders have been living in defiance of God’s Word by continuing to lead us the people in disunity. We are not a united church. We are a divided church.

Every Sunday morning, the world watches us fight with each other as we go to our own corners and worship, with the hopes that maybe today will be the day we see that “great outpouring” every pastor proclaims is “on its way.” In reality, Jesus is looking down from heaven in disgust because we are living in disobedience to Him.

Could it be that we do not belong to Him because we are so divided? Isn’t that what Jesus said to His disciples? If we’re united, we belong to Him. If we’re divided, wouldn’t that mean

we do not belong to Him? This is something that needs to be talked about. These are questions that need to be taken seriously. Could it be that denominations are the worst thing to happen to the church?

Now, I know I will get a lot of hate mail on this from defenders of their certain “corners.” However, if I were to take this message to the unchurched, I wonder what they would say about us? Could it be that they are more united around their lifestyles than the church is? Could it be that the church is in such disarray that the world is looking at us and saying to themselves, “No way! Those people do nothing but fight with each other. I’ll stay home.”

We live in an age in which our adversary has completely deceived the church into disunity, resulting in no *dunamis* power. The result is what the apostle Paul calls a “different gospel.”

Yes, the church is not ready to win the lost until we drop our titles and become united as one church—just the church.

God help us to repent from being so internally divisive to the point where the Holy Spirit is now quenched or (at best) limited in His work. {eoa}

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