
BIBLE TALK

This week the question is: ***When is it WRONG to change churches?***

People change churches for all sorts of different reasons. Some change because they have moved and their old church is too far away to attend any longer. Others change churches when they get married. Still ... others change because they are mad with the way things are going at their present church.

But did you know there are some wrong reasons to change churches? Did you know that sometimes it is actually sinful to change churches and go to a different church? That's what we are discussing this week. When is it wrong to change churches?

TO AVOID RECONCILIATION

FIRST: It is wrong to change churches in order to avoid reconciliation with your brother!

If there is someone at the services who has been offended by you, the Bible says you may not go elsewhere to worship until you have first straightened up the offence with your brother.

Matthew 5:23-24

²³ Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you,

²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

Jesus is saying here that worship is not accepted by God when the worshiper has transgressed against his brother. Until that person corrects his offence, all the prayers, all the singing and all the tithing in the world cannot make up for repentance!

If you are thinking about changing churches because you want to avoid correcting problems you have created, then changing churches for you is wrong!

TO ESCAPE DISCIPLINE

SECOND: It is wrong to change churches if a person is trying to escape church discipline!

Did you know that God has commanded His church to discipline members that are living immoral and ungodly lives?

1 Corinthians 5:11-13

¹¹ But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner — not even to eat with such a person.

¹² For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside?

¹³ But those who are outside God judges. Therefore "put away from yourselves the evil person."

Notice carefully, the church is not allowed to discipline and punish non-members. God did not give the church license to go on a witch hunt looking for people in the community to chastise. However ... He did command the church to chastise and discipline members of the church who become immoral.

A man, or woman, who is a Christian must be disciplined if they become a fornicator, covetous, an idolater, a railer, a drunkard, or an extortioner. These sins are intolerable. Even non-members and non-Christians realize these things are sin and when a professing Christian becomes guilty of such sin and refuses to repent, they must be disciplined. This unrepentant Christian must be expelled from the membership of the congregation. Other Christians are not supposed to associate with or to even eat with this wicked backslider.

Many times when a Christian becomes guilty of such sin and the congregation threatens discipline, that sinful member, instead of repenting, will simply change churches to avoid punishment. My friend, this is when changing churches becomes wrong! Rather than changing churches this person ought to repent of his immorality and begin anew living a life of holiness and purity.

TO PRACTICE UNSCRIPTURAL WORSHIP

THIRD: It is wrong to change churches when the new church practices unscriptural worship!

This is often the reason many people change churches. They are looking for a church that is more modern and up to date than the one they are at. They enjoy the entertainment and up to date innovations that many congregations have incorporated into their services.

Colossians 3:17

¹⁷ And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

All that the church teaches and practices must be done "in the name of the Lord Jesus." This means that everything the church does must be authorized by Jesus! It is wrong and sinful to do something that Jesus never authorized and then attach His name to it! This is spiritual forgery!

My friend, do you realize:

- Jesus never authorized, nor instructed His church to teach salvation by faith only?
- Jesus never authorized His church to teach that baptism was non-essential?
- Jesus never authorized His church to use mechanical music to sing praise to God?
- Jesus never authorized His church to divide the church assembly into Bible classes for the teaching of the Scriptures?
- Jesus never authorized His church to allow women to speak in the public assemblies of the church? In fact, do you realize that 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 expressly forbids this practice?
- Jesus never authorized His church to use individual communion cups when eating the Lord's supper? In fact, do you realize that Matthew 26:27 expressly commands disciples to drink from one cup during the communion?
- Jesus never authorized His church to build "family life centers" and "day care centers" to help attract and convert people?

On and on we could go. Not one single, modern day innovation in religion was authorized by Jesus.

Jeremiah 6:16

¹⁶ Thus says the LORD:

"Stand in the ways and see,
And ask for the old paths, where the good way is,
And walk in it;
Then you will find rest for your souls. ...

Rather than changing churches and looking for the most modern, up to date church around, men ought to be looking for the church that is so old fashioned and narrow minded that it practices and preaches the "old paths" found in the Scriptures. My friend, the Bible is an old book! It is 1900 years old and if we preach exactly what it says, and practice only those things that they practiced in the Bible, we will not end up being very modern will we?

It is wrong, then to change churches when the new church teaches and practices unscriptural worship! Such a church is not the Lord's church and it becomes sin to join with them in their unscriptural practices!

Psalms 127:1

¹ Unless the LORD builds the house,
They labor in vain who build it;
Unless the LORD guards the city,
The watchman stays awake in vain.

Do you hear that? Are you listening? It is vain – worthless to be a member of a "house," or church that the Lord did not build! You are not a better person, you are not pleasing the Lord and if you have not helped your soul by changing churches when the new church is unscriptural in its teaching and worship!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Well ... thanks for listening to our message this week. We invite you to visit our website www.WillOfTheLord.com. There you may download the notes and the audio file of the message you just listened to.

Call again next week when we consider a new subject on *Bible Talk*.