Attitude Towards The Church
Do You Despise It?

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October 6, 2011

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1 Cor. 11:22

Religiously we can have an attitude that brings blessings from God, or one that brings disfavor from Him. We studied our attitude towards God, Jesus Christ, and the gospel; now we shall study our attitudes towards the church.

The attitude that one shows toward the church is a matter of great importance.

1 Cor. 11:22, "*What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.*"

One of the most arresting questions ever asked by the Apostle Paul is the one of our text, and it concerns our attitude toward the church.

The question Paul asked was primarily in connection with the Corinthian's abuse of the Lord's Supper.

Paul saw that they were perverting it by making it a common meal wherein everyone brought food from home, and for this reason Paul rose up in protest. 1 Cor. 11:17, "*Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse.*"

But this question, "*Despise ye the church of God?*" goes beyond the Lord's Supper; it can be applied to all of our relations to the church.

"Despise" — "To look down on with contempt; to undervalue; to disregard; to slight; to pervert; to neglect."

How can the church be looked down upon with contempt, undervalued, disregarded, slighted, perverted, and neglected?

We can despise the church by rejecting Christ as its head.

- 1 Cor. 12:27, "*Now ye are body of Christ, and members in particular.*"
- Eph. 5:30, "*For we are all members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.*"

In this metaphor we see the fellowship of the church and the great New Testament principle of unity. Just as there is harmony in the physical body, so there should be unity in the body of Christ, which is His church.

Rom. 12:4-5, "*For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.*"

But why is there concord in the physical body? Because every member of the body is subject to the head and only one head.

If all who profess to be members of Christ's body would recognize Christ as the supreme Head, there would be no such things as denominations, factions, and divisions.

Christ was not made the head of the church until after He was raised from the dead. Before His death He acknowledged that He could do nothing of Himself. John 5:19, "*...Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.*"

But after His resurrection he said, Matt. 28:18, "*... All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*"

But Christ was raised from the dead to die no more. Rom. 6:9, "*Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.*"

He defeated death and still lives among us, but in the Spirit, not in the flesh. Therefore, Christ will never die again and relinquish His place as Head over His church to any mortal. He still maintains that power and authority that God gave Him.

Jesus shall continue to be the head over all things to the church until His second coming. Eph. 1:22, "*And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,*"

He still gives direction to the church. 1 Cor. 15:24, "*Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.*"

This will happen at His second coming.

Therefore, we do not have to look to any mortal on earth as the head of the church, and any institution of which some man or woman is the head just cannot be Christ's church, because Christ is still the head of the church.

We can despise the church by non-attendance of its services of worship.

Each Christian should be very conscientious concerning the habit of regular church attendance. We should go as a matter of conscience, privilege, and duty.

We should be at the Lord's services because that is the Lord's command. Heb. 10:25-26, "*Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,*"

Every time we are assembled together for worship services, every Christian should be glad to be there.

We should have the same kind of attitude that David had concerning the assembly. Psalms 122:1, "*I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD.*"

We see in these words the pleasure which David took in approaching the house of the Lord and entering therein to worship God. David was glad when he experienced this privilege.

- Psalms 84:1-4, "*How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O LORD of hosts, my King, and my God. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah.*"

- Psalms 84:10, "*For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.*"

Such a great attitude David had for the assembly!

John 4:24, "*God is a Spirit: and <u>they that worship him must worship him in spirit</u> and in truth.*" We must worship God according to the pattern He gave us, and we should also worship Him with Spirit of gladness.

The early Christians worshipped the Lord regularly. Acts 2:42, "*And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*"

They were stedfast in the assembly. They didn't let anything interfere with it.

Acts 11:26, "*And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.*"

Yes, the early church was stedfast in their assembly. How often? Acts 20:7, "*And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.*"

In the workplace for most people payday is Friday. They expect to be paid every Friday. 1 Cor. 16:1-2, "*Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.*"

Brothers and Sisters, the word of God **does** tell us the assembly was every Sunday. *Upon the first day of the week* – "kata mian sabatoon" – "every first day of the week".

We can despise the church by failing to make preparation for the worship services.

God is to be worshiped "*in spirit and in truth*" (John 4:24). Whoever is preaching ought to prepare his message. He ought to study, think, meditate, and pray about any subject that he prepares for the edification, exhortation, and encouragement of God's people.

Also, the congregation should prepare for the worship in the house of the Lord. Men should prepare themselves for anything whereupon they might be called to participate: Lead a song, prayer, Lord's Supper, etc.

But we all should prepare our hearts for the service.

With regard to the Lord's service, Jesus said: Mark 4:24, "*… Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given.*"

Listen to what is taught. Check it out. Don't be like the worldly churches where the things taught arenever checked.

He also said in Luke 8:18, "*Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.*"

Is your mind upon something you wish to do after services are over? Are you thinking about a ballgame you watched the day before? Are you only listening to a little bit of God's word being preached because something else is distracting your mind. "*Take heed therefore how ye hear…*"

In the assembly of the saints in worship there should be reverence and respect, for our Lord has said He is present with us when we are assembled in His name.

- Matt. 18:20, "*For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*"
- John 12:26, "*… where I am, there shall also my servant be…*"
- Psalms 89:7, "*God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.*"

This is a time to reverence God.

Our church assembly is to be a solemn occasion, just as it was for the children of Israel. I've been in some congregations where everyone was standing about chatting and the leader had to shout for the assembly to come to order; and I've been in other congregations where everyone was seated and quiet in readiness a few minutes beforehand.

God told the children of Israel: Exo. 20:8, "*Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.*"

We should also remember to keep the Lord's assembly holy, because He is here with us.

We can despise the church in our lax religious beliefs and convictions.

We ought to know what we believe and why we believe it.

1 Pet. 3:15, "*But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:*"

Know what we believe in the deity of Jesus, in His virgin birth, His Lordship, His kingdom, His death and resurrection.

Know that salvation is only through Jesus and His church.

- John 14:6, "*Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*"
- Acts 2:47, "*Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.*"

Know that His word is to be kept pure.

- Acts 4:20, "*For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.*"
- Rev. 22:18-19, "*For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*"

That's pretty serious, isn't it!

We can despise the church with worldly and inconsistent lives that do not match our profession.

Christians are to hold up all standards and ideals of conduct in their daily lives as taught in the word of God.

Rom. 2:21-24, "*Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.*"

Ours lives throughout the week is to be holy. 1 Cor. 10:31-32, "*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God:*"

If Christians make this profession in their daily lives, then they are truly followers of Christ.

Matt. 5:13-16, "*Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.*

Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Do others say to you that you must be a Christian? It has happened to me. It makes one feel pretty good. 1 Tim. 4:16, "*Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.*"

We might be the only Bible some have. Show it in the way we live. 2 Cor. 3:2, "*Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:*"

Conclusion.

There are two classes of people who despise the church:

- Those who are not Christians at all and have no connection with the church. They look upon the church with contempt; they undervalue it; they disregard it; they slight it.
- Those in the church whose attitude toward the church is not right. They say by their actions that the church is not important because they push it secondary to other things in their lives. They neglect it.

Won't you give your best, your all, to Christ today?