

The Church, Being Together When We Come Together

[Wednesday, July 14, 2016] The Church, Being Together When We Come Together
– Luke chapter 10, verses 38-42 – Craig Thurman

Tonight is a departure from what is for us a customary and systematic exposition of Scripture. About a week ago I sent to all of the members of this church an email message exhorting us to consider what it is that we do, and what it is that we should do, as a matter of priority, when we come together in our church services. My purpose for sending that message via email was to give us time to think this through and to remove the potential for embarrassment. What we do as a church, sometimes we just lose focus and one thing often leads to the next. After a while we wonder how it was that we ever got to the place that we have come.

Where will this church be at this time next year? Will it be here in this building, or meeting in the woods, perhaps in prison or a holding center, or in glory awaiting the time of the coming of Christ? That is both the reality of the time in which we live and the unknown aspect of the future which is before us all. We simply do not know where we will be. But we know One who does? The Lord in His wisdom, by His Spirit and through His Word would have us prepared at all times for that which we do not know. We do know that whatever it is that is before us, it is ordained of the Lord. Amen? Therefore, when we trust Him remain steadfast in the faith, and continue in fellowship with Him we are prepared for everything, day by day, moment by moment.

*1Ti 6:20 O Timothy, **keep that which is committed to thy trust ...***

*Re 1:3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and **keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.***

What we are at this present time is always subject to change. And I can assure you, that *if* we do nothing to be proactive the things of Christ shall fall away. That is the *natural* course of this present world. It is not evolvment, it is devolvment. It is not edification, it is entropy. Without vigilance we will not continual state of growth in Christ.

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Will you now consider with me the importance of our gathering together in our church services? We come together at the appointed times, twice in each week; once on Sunday and once on Wednesday. Of all of the other times that we have in all the rest of the week, this is the time that we have set aside for attending to a uniquely corporate exercise which cannot happen at any other time unless the church has ordained it to be so. In other words, we can gather here. We can gather in the hospital. We can gather under a tree or in a house, but unless we agree together all other meetings, times and occasions aren't the same force at all. This time is special.

Heb 10:25 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.

What is it that we should do when we come together as a church? We must maintain a biblical order and prioritize the services. There are three major things that come to mind when I think of a church service. There should be preaching, praising, and praying. The reading, teaching, and preaching of the Word of God must be a priority. Praising God and giving thanks to Him in song and in testimony must be a priority. And finally, we read in God's Word that the temple of Jesus' day, was to be called a *house of prayer*. The Scriptures also refer to the church as the temple of the Holy Spirit. (1Co.3.16) These things show us the holiness of the body of Christ. The judgment of the Lord Jesus should have reset the temple services.

*Mt.21.12 ¶ And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves,
13 And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.*

There was place for these things to be done. The temple just was not that place. Our Lord referred to that temple as *My house*. The church is called the *house of God*. The preacher is commanded to conduct himself appropriately in this house.

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*1Ti 3:15 But if I tarry long, **that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself** in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*

His conduct should be reverent, faithful, and orderly. This man must not fail to instruct the saints in the truths of God's Word. This is the primary reason that God has gifted this man or men.

Eph.4.12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ ...

And brethren you cannot afford to fail to receive instruction. If *he* will teach and *you* will hear we will grow, because that is the ordained means of the Lord for His church. Everyone be vigilant about this, else those things which we once heard, and received, and joyed in to this day by the grace of God will slip away; just drift away.

Heb 2:1 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

Of all of the things that we need, we must come around, feed and be fed the Word of God. We are to offer spiritual sacrifices together. When the saints come to this place we are to be *together*,

*Ac 2:44 And all that believed **were together**, and had all things common ...*

not off to ourselves doing our own things.

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1Co.11.20 When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. [There is such disorder and sin in the body. Together but not together ...]

*21 For in eating every one **taketh before other his own supper**: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.*

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.

Shortly after Pentecost, the first church which was at Jerusalem began meeting in the temple because the Lord had added so many baptized believers to their number. (Acts 4.23, their own company; 5.12). They were together. Though they were in the temple, and many others were present, they were together, yet apart from others. When we come into this place we ought to be together. When we pray, we ought all to pray. When we sing, we ought all to sing. But that is not the case for some of us is it? I don't know why, but some of us don't seem interested in the things that we do together in this service. Here, we have this opportunity, to fellowship together in the Spirit and we choose not to? And, finally, when there is teaching we ought all to be present being taught. The only thing that I can say about the unwillingness to these critical things is that either there is no life, or we have lost sight of the love of Christ. It is this love for Christ that concerns me. Growing complacent or cold, wreckless or careless isn't one singular act. It is a gradual, decline from the things that we knew to do and didn't. Sometimes, we just lose focus and things unwind because we did nothing to counter the work of our old nature.

This is moment we have chosen to be together. It is undeniably a special time. If we are going to pray, let's enter into prayer as our brother leads. If we going to read, let's all be looking at that Word being read as our brother reads the Word. If we are going to preach let's all listen to that message. We need set aside every distraction. Don't let lesser thing come between the more important ones. If it is being said we ought to hear it. If it's being led, we ought to follow it ... **together**. Food and drink, FaceBook and texting, the world wide web all comes later.

It is reasonable to assume that whenever the people of God came together and the Word of God was read or proclaimed, they were quiet and listening attentively. Why? Because **they had regard to God's Word**.

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(Could Read Neh.8.1-12, Ezra and his helpers instructing; Lk.4.16-20, Christ reading Isaiah)

Acts 10.30 And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,

31 And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.

32 Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee.

*33 Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. **Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.***

*Acts 22.40 And when he had given him licence, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And **when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them** in the Hebrew tongue, saying,*

1 ¶ Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you.

*2 (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, **they kept the more silence:** and he saith ...*

Before we close this message tonight, turn in your Bibles to Lk. 10.38.42. This episode involves two sisters, Mary and Martha. They sum up pretty well the way it can be with us if we haven't prioritized the services. We either take the opportunity that is before us or we miss it altogether. There isn't really an in-between state. Unless something changed with Martha it is very likely that she would continue in the habit of missing the moment. How easily this becomes a manner of life: habitually we take our opportunities or we miss them.

This plays out in our lives in so many different ways. Parents either take the opportunity to train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord or they miss it altogether. Christian workers either take the opportunity to do their work to the Lord and give witness to Christ or they miss it altogether. Husbands and wives either take the opportunity to

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witness Christ in their marriage by obedience to the Word of God or they miss it. Children either take the opportunity to study their school work and honor their parents or they miss it. Do we have to continue, as the children of God to miss the opportunities? No. Can we do otherwise? Yes. Know, receive, and apply God's Word.

Lk.10.38 ¶ Now it came to pass, as they went,

They, are the disciples and the Lord Jesus. (v.22)

that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.

*39 And she had a sister called Mary, which also **sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.***

which sat, παρακαθίσασα, nom. sing. fem. part. aor of παρακαθίζω, παρά beside, near, close + καθίζω to sit; to be set, to sit down.

LXX, παρακάθισαν, Job 2.13, and they sat down beside.

at, παρὰ, near, close.

The Greek seems to emphasize closeness to which Mary came so that she could hear the Word of Christ. To her, hearing the Word of Christ were of great importance. Mary chose this part over everything else at the moment. But her sister had another priority in mind. Was there something wrong with it. Not in itself. But in comparison to what should have been, it was not a good choice.

διακονίαν

*40 But Martha was cumbered about much **servicing,**
ministering*

was cumbered, περιεσπάτο, 3ps. imperf. pass of περισπάω, περί about, concerning + σπάω, to draw the sword.

about, περί, about, concerning.

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Martha was being *drawn about, wielded* by her own perception of necessary service. She thought that what she was doing was essential, even more important than attending to the things that Jesus was teaching. Her judgment was skewed. Since Jesus came into Martha's house she was consumed with service.

and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone?

care, μέλει, impersonal verb; to have no regard for; a disconnected concern for.

left, κατέλιπεν, 3ps. aor. ind. act. of *καταλείπω, κατά* according to, down, by or after + *λείπω*, to lack, be destitute, insufficient.

Oh Lord, Mary has abandoned me to serve alone.

bid her therefore that she help me.
 should

bid, εἶπέ, 2ps., aor. imper. act of *εἶπον*, cf. *ἔπω*; tell.

she help, συναντιλάβηται, 3ps. aor. **subj.** of *συναντιλαμβάνομαι*, *σύν* with, together + *ἄντί* against, contrast + *λαμβάνομαι*, to take or receive. (cf. Ro.8.26, the Spirit *helpeth* our infirmities.)

Get the picture. The Lord Jesus is giving forth His precious Word and Martha might have leaned over and interrupted the Master and brought this complaint against her sister. Lord, Mary has abandoned me. You tell her to help me. Certainly you can see my poor plight and her negligence.

41 And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:

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you are careful, μεριμνᾷς, 2ps. pres. ind. of μεριμνάω, to have care, to take thought; as in *being anxious*.

troubled, τυρβάζῃ, 2ps. pres. ind. mid. of τυρβάζω; I cannot tell for certain, but the Greek appears to be related to the Latin *turbare*, to agitate, disturb, trouble, and from this comes our English *turbulent*.

Care for the Lord, for the work of Christ, for the servants of Christ, for one another, for husbands and wives, and children would have been totally appropriate had it not been that it became a distraction and a cause of turbulence in our hearts. For this, Martha was missing the most important issue. (It is proper in its place: 1Co.7.34; Phl.2.20) She became *troubled, agitated, disturbed* in what could have a blessing ... had it been the right time for it. And for Martha this wasn't the only time that she had been like this. Jesus said, *thou art careful and troubled about many things*. Somewhere along the way Martha had begun this *busy-ness* in the name of the Lord and she needed to be turned back so that the Word of God took preeminence in her thinking. Mary knew the seriousness of the moment and refused to allow it to pass her by.

42 *But one thing is needful:*

necessary, is a necessity

and Mary hath chosen

chosen out for herself

that good part,

share

hath chosen, ἐξελέξατο, 3ps. aor. ind. mid. of ἐκλέγω, ἐκ of, out + λέγω, the matter.

good, ἀγαθὴν, acc. sing. of ἀγαθός; there is the *good ground*; the *good part*, the *good remembrance*, the *good hope*, a *good conscience* (2), all *good fidelity*. By comparison this is the best part, the good part to be chosen.

part, μερίδα, acc. sing. of μερίς, or *share*.

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which shall not be taken away from her.

There were two parts or shares in this house, when there should have been one. Each sister chose a different share, part for themselves. They were together in the same house yet divided in their priorities. Jesus said, Mary hath chosen out for herself that good part. That part was to sit at His feet and to learn. Martha chose the part that was not necessarily bad in itself, but in comparison to Mary's choice, her's wasn't good.

Think about this for a moment and we close. In this instance, no one would disagree that we all need to eat food. My assumption is that this was the service about which Martha had been busy. Martha and Mary were together in the same house, but they were not together at the feet of Jesus when He was teaching. The time was to hear His Word. Everything at the moment takes lesser priority. All of the other things come later; whether it is food or drink; personal conversions and entertainments; playing with children, or surfing the web.

Encourage one another to participate by participating. Come together and be together through each facet of the services of this church. When we sing, let's sing with great joy from our hearts to the Lord for the great things He has done. When we have Bible readings and lessons, let us all give full attention to the Word of the Lord through His servants. When we pray, let us all come at once before His throne grace with our requests. And when we come into the time for preaching let us all be together, seated or standing, listening and learning the truths that our Lord would teach us that day. Let none of these things in our services drift away.

1Thes.5.16 ¶ Rejoice evermore.

17 Pray without ceasing.

18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

19 Quench not the Spirit.

20 Despise not prophesyings.

*21 Prove all things; **hold fast that which is good.***

22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.

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23 ¶ *And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

24 *Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it*