

THE BIBLE VIEW

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I'm Outta There!

Bill Brinkworth

“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: 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.” Hebrews 10:24-25

Church is the place we should hear the Word of God and be strengthened in following the Lord. Our Bible reading is one way we grow in the things of the Lord. However, God has ordained the local church to assist us also in our spiritual walk. It is there we can get more spiritual food

God has given people an appointed preacher to minister to them in the local church. Many can also hear the Gospel and be saved. It is often a place where folks can also find a place to serve Him.

Going to church is the right thing to do, but many reasons keep people from heeding God's command to attend. It is not always the devil that encourages us not to go. Often our sinful flesh, which struggles to do right, intervenes. Between the two, there are a lot of excuses and wrong decisions that people use to keep them out of church. Here are a few of them that keep too many from a Bible-believing local church:

Sin. Attending church and hearing God's Word will remind too many of their sin. To avoid conviction, many avoid church so they do not get unpleasant reminders of their wrongdoings.

Church hopping. They try this church, then that one, then go to another with a friend. Soon, they find themselves out of their routine of faithfulness where God had led them. In a short time, they are not attending any church.

Discontentment. Folks can easily find a reason for not being happy with their church. “I don't like the way the preacher preaches. He screams too much,” or “They sing too much.” There is no perfect church. If there were one, it would not be perfect after we entered.

Hurt feelings. Probably the number one killer of church attendance is when folks get their feelings hurt and leave the church. “No one shook my hand,” or “No one even said ‘hello’ to me. It just is not a friendly church.”

Lack of understanding. Many do not have a clue what the Bible teaches. If they attend a church that preaches and practices biblical doctrine, they do not understand it and may leave. Many go for the religious trappings of the denomination they were raised in and do not realize that many “religious” practices are not biblical.

Pride. The old folded-arm excuse of “No one is going to tell me what to do!” keeps many out of church. They have not realized that the preacher’s message that got them indignant and wanting to leave was from the Word of God. Ultimately, they leave, not because of what the preacher said, but what God said to their hearts.

Legitimate reasons. Legitimate excuses of sickness or vacations can become bad habits of non-attending.

Most excuses are not acceptable to keep us from God’s house. We cannot please God when we stay home from an avenue He uses to speak to us and change our way of living. Even many unsaved know where a Christian should be on Sunday morning.

God started and sent His Son to die for the local church. The local church is important to God. Be at one this week. Be faithful in attending one teaching what the Bible instructs and where you believe God has led you to attend.

“The Church is not a gallery for the exhibition of eminent Christians, but a school for the education of imperfect ones.” — Beecher

A Grateful Whale

Bill Brinkworth

A 45 - 50 foot humpback whale was rescued off the coast of San Francisco. The whale had become entangled with ropes, crab traps, and weights. The animal was so weighted down that he could hardly surface to get air. A rescue team was summoned to free the 50-ton behemoth.

Divers went into the water and discovered at least 20 crab-pot ropes, each about 240 feet long, and their weights tightly wrapped around the whale. The humpback’s tail was encircled four times by ropes. Twelve crab traps, each weighing 90 pounds, hung off the whale. (Those extra burdens entangling the creature remind me of all the sin that burdens so many sinners.)

Soon four divers were in the water cutting off the entanglements with curved knives. The whale quietly waited and allowed the rescuers to free him. The diver who cut the rope from the creature’s mouth remarked that the whale winked at him as he did his work.

After realizing he was free, the animal swam to each diver and nuzzled him. It was as if the animal were thanking each one that had a part in his new freedom. He certainly was appreciative of those that worked to free him.

Is it possible that the whale had better manners and appreciative courtesy than most people? There are too many husbands that rarely thank their wives for all the important things they do to make their lives easier.

Too many children never even think of thanking their fathers for working diligently daily to provide for their upkeep. Nor do they even consider thanking their mother for her sacrificial efforts to provide a good home for them.

Countless bosses are the topic of criticism and gossip but are rarely thanked for providing a job for their employees. Teachers put in long hours going the extra mile to grade papers and spend much of their time helping those who do not want to be helped. Rarely do they receive any appreciation.

Police spend long days trying to protect residents they do not know. Yet, the public's guardians face ridicule and threats from many that are breaking the laws. Rarely do they ever receive any gratitude.

Many make our lives much more pleasant and safe. We owe them for their work and effort.

It takes no intelligence or character to ridicule, judge, or criticize others. It does take an appreciative spirit to realize what we have and to thank others for their part in our lives. As the whale "thanked" his rescuers, many of us need to do the same to those who have helped us.

"If gratitude is due from children to their earthly parents, how much more is the gratitude of the great family of men due to our Father in Heaven." — *Hosea Ballou*

Salvation — God's Gift

Harry Todd

As you travel down life's highway
It's a broad road to destruction;
The Bible says that "All have sinned..."
And you must change direction.

Now you are helpless by yourself,
You are dead in trespasses and sin,
God hates sin; Heaven is holy,
Therefore you cannot enter in.

Someone must die because of sin,
It should be you and I,
But God loved the world so much
He sent His only Son to die.

Now Jesus paid the sin debt
Upon dark Calvary's tree,
So you and I by simple faith
Are forgiven and set free.

By grace are ye saved through faith,
Not of works or by any deed;
Salvation is a gift of God;
So of His Word, you must take heed.

He came unto His own
But they turned Him away,
Now you can be a child of God
By receiving Christ today.

Today is the day of salvation,
Tomorrow may be too late,
Behold! Now is the accepted time,
Oh! Sinner, do not wait.

“The way to be saved is not to delay but to come and take.” — *Dwight L. Moody*