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Choosing A Church

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CHOOSING A CHURCH
Eph. 5:22-27

INT.
CURIOUS TREND has arisen in 1960s in religious world.

Attraction: Person of Christ, His Life, His Spiritual teachings.
Mahatma Gandhi, of India, great admirer, yet never a Christian.
Japanese and Chinese very impressed with Jesus—never enter His church.
Many Americans seem to feel the same: Interested in following Christ, BUT NOT affiliating with the CHURCH.


STATEMENT: Large buildings and memberships and elaborate organizations do not always lead to cold, mechanical and impersonal worship and congregational situations. I grew up in a large one and have yet to find a smaller one warmer, friendlier and more satisfying.

STATEMENTS: Many FACTORS INVOLVED IN PEOPLE'S CHOICES OF A CHURCH HOME.

A. Convenience. Some families go to the church building nearest them.
   I'll, Pecan Park, Houston. Didn't matter what Bible said.
B. Family background. Like old family ties politically or socially—Like daddy, like son. Once democrat always a democrat. Bible did not enter into their choice at all.
C. Social grouping. Church membership linked to social standing.
   I'll, Girl whose mother objected to her studying the Bible for fear it would take her away from family's social church. DID!
D. Personal preference. "I just like the way they do things." Read Bible little.
   I'll, Lawyer found church that would allow him to live the way he wanted to and still keep him free from guilt of many sins!
E. Ties of Friendship. Go where folks are big, big-hearted, warm, friendly, loving and great to be around. Genuine inspiration!
   SOUNDS LIKE the Lord has SPOKEN on the subject and INSISTS that His voice be HEARD. Matt. 7:24-29.
CONCLUSION: The Lord has spoken on the subject of Church Membership and He wishes to be HEARD. We wish to speak on His behalf.

II. PARABLE OF AN ANCIENT EVENT.

1. Youth in his 20s, dressed like Hebrew, lived in Jerusalem—N. T. time.
2. Kind, open-hearted young man who loved GOD and GOD'S truth more than LIFE.
3. Lived the day before the church was started. None to CHOOSE from that day on.

4. Let's follow him as he becomes a Christian and chooses a church.
a. Time is A. D. 33, 7 weeks and 1 day from Passover. Pentecost!
b. Occasion: Biggest feast of Jewish year and largest crowds.
c. Leaves the house right after breakfast and hears great roar "AS OF A RUSHING MIGHTY WIND." (Acts 2:2.)
d. Traces the noise to the Temple area where thousands have gathered.
e. Mystified: Dozen men on the balcony with fire dancing over heads. (as)
f. Amazed as men of 16 different nations mill around the courtyard listening to Galileans speak in 16 different tongues—YET—everyone is understanding.
g. He hears a cry: "These men are drunk—they're full of new wine!"
Choosing a church...

5. His real Christian Education begins at this point.
   a. Large man arises and denies the charge. Vs. 11:1-16.
      Proof of JOEL the prophet given. v. 17-21. Thought already saved! Not.
      Proof of JESUS' resurrection. v. 22-24.
      Proof of CHRIST'S ascension. v. 32-35.
      Proof of GOD'S elevation of Jesus. v. 36.

6. Fear raced throughout the masses. That JESUS they had crucified a few weeks before was what He claimed to be: GOD'S SON. SAVIOR. KING!
   Pleading question: v. 37. "Men and brethren what shall we do?"


8. 2,999 plus REPENTED, and were BAPTIZED into the body or church of Christ. Gal. 3:26-29. Member of God's family now. Saved in church!
   He and thousands more HEARD the GOSPEL, BELIEVED CHRIST to be God's Son, REPENTED of their sins and had their SINS remitted in BAPTISM.

   (Injected note: Same happened to Samaritans in Acts 8, Saul 9, Cornelius 10, Philipplians and Lydia 16, Corinthians 18, and Ephesians 19.) Same message! Same response! Same results!

II. WHAT DIFFERENCE DID BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH MAKE? ALL!

   A. II Cor. 5:17. John 3:3-5. Whole new way of life FOR God!
   B. Worship was different: Acts 2:42. Done TOGETHER. Togetherness is church!


INV: IN ADVISING YOU AS YOU CHOOSE A CHURCH:

1. I dare not appeal to any other source than the WORD & WILL of God. Heb. 10:31.
3. Confident same thing happen to you that happened to them. Gal. 3:26-29.
4. Know I'm right because can clearly point this course out in the Bible.
5. This course of OBEDIENCE will stand up at the Judgment: What Lord said to do!