

The Brown Street Beacon

"...Shine out among them like beacon lights,

holding out to them the Word of Life" (Phil 2:15-16)



Volume 3

March 29, 2015

Number 6

What If Everyone in Your Local Church Was Like You?

People make up local churches. Thus, the stronger the individual Christians are who make up a particular local church, the stronger that church is. What if everyone in the local church was just like you? Would it be a church that is strong or weak? Would it be a church that is pleasing or displeasing to Christ?

If everyone in the church was like you, what kind of attendance would there be? Would visitors come and find an empty building on Wednesday nights? Do you make a habit of attending every assembly of the saints? The Hebrew writer commands us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together (Hebrews 10:25). Do you comply with this simple command? It should be a joy for Christians to get together and serve and worship God and enjoy fellowship one with another. Does worshipping God bring you pleasure? If not, you need to ask yourself why? It really is not that hard to spare four hours a week to give to God in collective worship with other saints. Do you spend more than four hours a week watching TV? If every member in the church was just like you, would there be any need to have an assembly at all?

If everyone in the church was like you, how many people would hear the gospel of Christ? God relies on His children to preach the gospel to the lost. He did not have to arrange it as such but that was His will. God chose to use earthly vessels to get His saving Word out to those who need it (2 Corinthians 4:7). When was the last time you told someone about Christ? I know some people have more opportunity to preach the gospel than others, but when an opportunity presents itself to you, are you willing to speak? We must not be ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16). If we, as God's people, fail to take the gospel to the lost, they will perish in their sins (Romans 10:13-17). We all need to do a better job at trying to reach the lost, but there are some among us who do not try at all. Ever! How many people would be saved and added to the Lord's church if everyone in the church was just like you? How many people would hear the saving message of Jesus Christ if every member of the church was just as active or inactive as you are in reaching the lost? What if every member of the congregation was just like you?

If everyone in the church was like you, what kind of love would be in it? Do you love your brethren in Christ? This is what God expects of you. He has commanded you to do just that (1 John 4:11-21). Jesus said, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you that ye also love one another" (John 13:34). This is important. There is no way that we can be what God wants us to be if we do not love one another. In fact, if we do not love one another, we cannot really say that we love God. Read the passage in 1 John again. That's exactly what John says. The local church cannot flourish without love. That's why Paul encouraged the Thessalonians to in-

crease in brotherly love even though they already had a great deal of it (1 Thessalonians 4:10). For this church to reach its full potential brotherly love must continue. What if everyone else in the congregation had as much brotherly love as you have? Could it be said that we are a loving congregation, or would we be deficient in this area?

If everyone in the church was like you, what kind of stand for truth would the church take? Most denominational people think that doctrine is not very important. I am afraid that a lot of brethren are beginning to feel the same way. How do you feel about doctrine? Is it important to you? Do you think it is essential to stand for the truth? Remember John teaches us that abiding in the doctrine of Christ is essential to maintaining a right relationship with God (2 John 9). If everyone in the church was like you, would we be a church that cared about truth? Would we be a church that is willing to take a stand on doctrinal issues or would we be a church more likely to compromise the faith? If everyone was like you, would we be tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine or would we be grounded in the truth, always ready to make a defense of the gospel? What kind of congregation would we be, if everyone was like you?

If everyone in the church was like you, what kind of contribution would the church have? As Christians we are expected to give as we have prospered on the first day of the week (1 Corinthians 16:1-2). Financial obligations of the church are to be met by the free-will offering of saints on the first day of the week. The passage cited above reveals to us God's will on how He wants the church to raise money. There is no authority for the church to raise money in any other way. Are finances important to a church? Yes! The threefold work of the church (evangelism, benevolence and edification) can be done to a greater extent if a church is generous in its giving. If everyone in the church were like you, how much benevolent work would it do? If every Christian gave the way you give, how much evangelism would the church be able to accomplish?

If everyone in the church was like you, what kind of Bible knowledge would it possess? Believe it or not, some Christians do not particularly enjoy studying the Word of God. I once heard a Christian say that he would rather read a good novel than the Bible. Do you feel the same way? It is important that we have the ability to discern between the doctrine of Christ and the doctrine of devils. John once said that we should try the spirits (1 John 4:1). That necessitates some knowledge. Paul said that we must rightly divide the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15). That necessitates some knowledge. Peter said that we must always be ready to give an answer (1 Peter 3:15). That necessitates some knowledge. Having knowledge of God's Word is important for both the individual Christian and the local church. If every member of the church had the knowledge of God's word that you have, could it be a pillar of truth? Would it be able to defend the truth against false doctrines and uphold the blessed gospel to a lost and dying world? If the whole congregation was like you, what kind of Bible knowledge would it have?

We said in the beginning that a congregation is only as strong as the people that make up its membership. A good reputation does not make a congregation strong. Godly men and women walking after the Spirit by following the divine instructions of God's Word is what makes a local church what it ought to be. If everyone at this church was just like you, what kind of church would this be?

Don