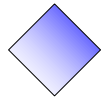


# The Voice of Truth



March 31, 2013

## Are You In The Wrong Place?

By Jimmy Pettigrew

It was during the siege of Ramah that David committed adultery with Bathsheba and planned the murder of Uriah (2 Sam. 11:1ff). David had been resting when he arose from off his bed, and was walking on the roof top when he saw "a woman washing herself; and the woman was beautiful to look upon." The question that comes to my mind is why was David home? Why didn't David go with his army into battle? Since David did not go to battle with his army, perhaps he was in the wrong place. Since David did not go to battle with his army, perhaps he had too much idle time on his hands. Indeed, there is a certain danger in idleness. David found himself conquered and led captive by his own lust, by yielding to temptation. Instead of following the example of Joseph, and turning and running, and resisting temptation, David sent and inquired about the woman. The apostle Paul said, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4).

Regarding Bathsheba, why would she so expose herself so she could be so openly viewed from the King's roof? She was in the wrong place. Why not in other room where no one could see her?

There are many Christians that work hard in abstaining from many of the temptations of life. These Christians would not be found in nightclubs dancing the night away. They wouldn't be seen in indecent, impure and suggestive clothing, either. If you are a Christian and you go to a nightclub or a party where everyone is, you're in the wrong place. However, if you are not in services when the church assembles, wherever you are, you may be in the wrong place. Now God has gone on record in **Hebrews 10:25** as saying "not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting (one another); and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh." The scripture is clear that a Christian is not to "forsake" the "assembling" together of the saints. The word "forsake" means to abandon. The "assembling" is a reference to any

and all designated assemblies together of a particular congregation of God's people. Please note that the word is "assembling" and not "assembly" indicating more than one or all appointed gatherings. If you are a Christian, where else would you want to be? Sadly, there are many wrong places that Christians may find themselves when the church assembles.

**You are in the wrong place if you are at home entertaining friends or family.** How can a Christian be of the opinion that it is all right to be at home entertaining friends or family when the church assembles? One of the best ways to show your concern for that company is not to stay home, but to invite them to go with you to worship God.

**You are in the wrong place if you are at home taking it easy when the saints meet.** You should want to worship God. Assembling with the saints is not an option? How would you feel if the Lord came back and you were at home during services taking it easy? You should want to be where the saints meet, whenever they meet.

**You are in the wrong place if you are on the lake fishing, in the woods hunting, or on the golf course.** David said that he was glad when he was told, "It's time to go assemble and worship God" (Psalm 122:1). It is obvious that David's disposition is not universal. Every Christian should have a strong desire to worship God. Do you feel the way David felt? Some don't have to answer that question. Believe it or not, some answer this question with their absence. Is it such a bother to worship God? I have more than once seen Christians with bumper stickers on their cars, or hats and shirts reading, "I'd Rather Be Fishing," and I believe it!

**You are in the wrong place if you are working on some "important" project.** What could be more important than your soul's salvation (Matt. 16:26)? Important projects will come and go, yet we only have one soul. If you are too

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busy to pay attention to your soul, something is definitely wrong.

**You are in the wrong place if you are at home doing chores.** Chores can wait for other time. Remember the one who stated he had to first bury his father. Jesus would not even take this as an excuse for not following Him (**Matt. 8:22**). Why do we think He would excuse any another reason for not putting His kingdom first (**Matt. 6:33**)?

I submit to you that when one deliberately neglects attending the services of the church, he has ceased to worship God, and has willfully sinned (**Heb. 10:26**). Assembling together is a public matter, thus if one forsakes the assemblies, he has committed a public sin and needs to repent and make a public acknowledgment of it. Brethren, let me add this, purposefully forsaking worship on Sunday morning with the idea that one can still partake of the Lord's Supper on Sunday night and be acceptable to God is a false assumption and abuse of the Lord's Supper! It is insulting, taunting, and belittling to our Lord! Many need to repent.

Brethren, when you miss services of the Lord's church, you take a step on the downward path. When you miss one service you have made it easier to miss another. You hinder your prayer life. You can't pray for God to help you live a Christian life when you deliberately forsake those services which are designed to strengthen and help you. You rob yourself of growth. Growth cannot be obtained without the proper diet. To miss any service is to rob ourselves of nourishment and growth.

when an assembly is coming up in the near future, it should not be necessary for some to stand up and beg for members to please come, or we'll be expecting you. To have to miss Bible study or worship, to the Christian, brings a profound and deeply felt regret. If the Christian will die for Christ, certainly he will assemble faithfully in His presence with those of like mind. If we love the church we will be present at every assembly. Something is deeply wrong if our hearts are not thrilled at the opportunity to meet with the saints in unity and fellowship to worship God. Could I submit to you that when one forsakes the assembly, he has ceased to worship God? He is not serving the Lord. The absentee who could, but does not attend, makes it abundantly clear that he does not love God, nor desires the fellowship of his brethren. Is assembly required? Well, is thy heart right with God? Then you know it is!

Brethren, Pray that God will help us to understand the need, the purpose, and the power of attendance at Bible classes and worship services, whenever the doors are open. Pray for the courage to do your part in making the gathering of the saints a time of love, praise, and spiritual growth! *"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby"* (**1 Pet. 2:2**). It ought to be as hard to keep us from Bible study and worship services as it is to keep a baby from its milk. Will a baby stop demanding its milk because; it needs a day to rest? Or there is company in the home? Or we are working on some important project? Or we are going fishing, hunting or golfing? Or doing chores? **NO!** It is a matter of spiritual life and death, really, not only for us, but also for others whom we influence.

The congregation should be well taught enough that

**I LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AT EVERY SERVICE!!! ♦**

### Just Suppose

1. Suppose that your church membership was good only for one year at a time and that renewal depended on your faithfulness in attendance, stewardship and service. Would you retain your membership in the church?
2. Suppose that membership was limited to those who could give a valid excuse for absences. Would your absences be acceptable?
3. Suppose that some parents could look into the future and see the dreadful results of neglecting the teaching of Christ. Would they be different parents?
4. Suppose members were as enthusiastic about church events as they are about sporting events. Would there be a marked difference in the life of the church?
5. Suppose that every member attended church services as much as you did. Would we need more seating, or would the building be closed and for sale?
6. Suppose that renew our dedication to Jesus Christ. Our attendance and stewardship would increase and all would rejoice in the Lord! ♦

***A faith that will not take us to worship will not  
Take us to heaven!***

## Is Christianity "Easy"?

By Jonathan L. Perz

To hear Christians talk, you would think being a Christian is as "easy" as saying a prayer or being immersed in water; doing a few things and not doing some other things; facing an occasional bump in the road and experiencing an occasional trial or two. Then, when that "easy" is all said and done, away to heaven you go. I have come to deeply appreciate the fact that nothing could be farther from the truth.

This concept of "easy" Christianity is often rooted in a fundamentally flawed understanding of Jesus' words in "The Great Invitation." He said, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30, NKJV). What did Jesus mean when He said, "My yoke is easy and My burden is light"?

In today's vernacular, "easy" means *simple, not difficult or hard, requiring no great labor or effort*. It means *free from pain, discomfort, worry or care*. In another sense, it can mean *providing or conducive to ease or comfort*. Some use it to speak of *being fond or given to ease*; easy-going. It might even mean *not harsh or strict*. While this is how we use the word today, this is NOT what Jesus means when He says, "My yoke is easy."

The Greek word translated "easy" is *chrestos*. According to Vine's Expository Dictionary, the word primarily signifies *fit for use, able to be used, hence good, virtuous, mild, pleasant (in contrast to what is hard, harsh, sharp, bitter)*. It is used in the following passages (the word translated from *chrestos* is highlighted)...

- **Matthew 11:30** – "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."
- **Luke 5:39** – "And no one, having drunk old wine, immediately desires new; for he says, 'The old is better.'" "
- **Luke 6:35** – "But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is *kind* to the unthankful and evil."
- **Romans 2:4** – "Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the *goodness* of God leads you to repentance?"
- **1 Corinthians 15:33** – "Do not be deceived: 'Evil company corrupts good habits.'"

- **Ephesians 4:32** – "And be *kind* to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you."
- **1 Peter 2:3** — "...if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is *gracious*."

The Greek word *chrestos* does not use the modern day application of "easy" in of those translations. It is only translated that way once out of seven uses.

There is another Greek word translated "easy" that does have the meaning we typically employ. It is *eukop-teros*. Observe its uses in the New Testament...

- **Matthew 9:5** – "For which is *easier*, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'?" (Note also **Mark 2:9** and **Luke 5:23**)
- **Matthew 19:24** – "And again I say to you, it is *easier* for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." (Note also **Mark 10:25** and **Luke 18:25**)
- **Luke 16:17** – "And it is *easier* for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail."

This clearly demonstrates that Jesus is not necessarily suggesting "easy" in our commonly used sense of the word, but in a limited sense of the word. Yet, saying what it does not mean doesn't quite explain what Jesus does mean.

Employing the figure of a yoke (an implement used to bind a beast to another beast and then to a burden), Jesus is telling us that being yoked to Him is pleasant and good. Yet, even this understanding doesn't grasp the full sense of Jesus' metaphor because His words suggest a comparison with "labor" and "heavy laden." "Labor" means *to grow tired with toil*. "Heavy laden" comes from the Greek word *phortizo* and means *burdened*. Therefore, Jesus is telling us that we are exchanging our burden (*phortizmo*) for His burden (*phortion*), our labor (*kopiaio*) for His yoke (*zugos*). He is telling us His yoke fits more comfortably than labor we experience without Him. He is telling us His burden is light in comparison to the burden of sin we are carrying without Him.

This is a far cry from saying Christianity is "easy." As a matter of fact, Christianity is anything but "easy." It has its

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own unique struggles, challenges and burdens. It is wrought with persecution, sacrifice and cost. It requires commitment, devotion and surrender. It involves fighting, striving and contending. A quick read through the New Testament will illustrate this and so much more. Just read what the apostle Paul endured for Christ (cf. **2 Cor. 11:23-33**). Does that sound "easy"? As Jesus said, "...whoever of you who does not FORSAKE ALL that he has cannot be My disciple" (**Luke 14:33**, emphasis mine, jlp). Does Christianity still sound "easy"?

easy, everyone would be doing it." That is so true! The next time someone tries to tell you Christianity is "easy," remind them what Jesus says. *"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it"* (**Matt. 7:13-14**). If you don't find THE WAY you are going "narrow" and "difficult," perhaps you are going the wrong way! Christianity might not be "easy," but it is definitely better!

Credit: [www.moodychurchofchrist.com](http://www.moodychurchofchrist.com) ♦

I recently read the following quote: "If Christianity were

**GOD HAS A RIGHT**

Author unknown

- God has a right to a definite part of your time
  - He has the power to take all of it.
- God has a right to a definite part of your money
  - He has the power to take all of it.
- God has a right to be glorified through your tongue
  - He has the power to take all of it.
- God has a right to be honored through your influence
  - He has the power to take all of it.
- God has a right to your life
  - He has the power to take all of it. ♦

A faith that will not take us to  
Every service of the Lord's church  
Will not take us to heaven!

*Don't think you can ignore the Lord in this life and  
He will give you a crown in the Life to come.*

**What Must I Do To Be Saved?**

- Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3
- Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24
- Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30
- Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21
- Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27
- Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17

**About the Hillcrest church of Christ**

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**Schedule of Assembly**

**Bible Study:** Sunday, 9:00am  
**Worship Service:** Sunday, 10:00am  
**Bible Study:** Wednesday, 7:00pm\*

\*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month