

Assembling Ourselves Together

For those who are unaware, I have just begun a new ministry work here in my home town of Marshfield, Wisconsin, as an extension of our newspaper and radio ministries. By God's grace, my wife, Lisa, and I were able to purchase a downtown commercial building this past May, which now houses my newspaper office and radio recording studio. But the MAIN purpose of this building is our new Ministry Center outreach, which will focus on education, mentoring, counseling and discipleship training – teaching courageous, unashamed men and women of God to be TRUE salt and light in this world... to get OUT OF THEIR SEATS AND OUT ON THE STREETS – with a POWERFUL IMPACT in this lost, confused world. We are encouraging remnant believers AND reaching out to preach the TRUTH to the unsaved and the lost. So many, you see, are SICK AND TIRED of vain religion. They are HUNGRY for the “real deal” – the TRUTH we hope to provide through this ever-expanding ministry work.

In the last edition of our newspaper, I told the story of how the new Ministry Center building came about, which was only by the direction and the grace of God... as always, WE did not do this, GOD did this. We were just obedient workers, following His direction. (That's really all God asks of us, you know... He just wants us to follow and be obedient, diligent workers). Many times in the midst of this latest work, I cried out to the Lord, as I saw the enormity of the task before me: “Lord, it's too much! I can't DO this!” I said. But each time, He stilled my heart and the Holy Spirit gave me the quiet assurance that, “Yes, Rob, you can. I would not have brought you this far if you were not able.”

Since the building was vacant for almost three years before we bought it, it took us over two months of near non-stop, 'round-the clock, HARD work to get the facility ready for public use. There were many friends who came alongside and put their time and talents to work on the project, and truly, Lisa

and I could not have done this without their help. Each one who came to help brought with them a different set of skills, and all were eager to put their God-given gifts to work in service to the King of Kings, looking forward eagerly to see what God will do here.

We also purchased several pieces of furniture that were needed for the Ministry Center, and each item came in a box marked "Some Assembly Required" – arguably the three most daunting words in the English language. We all love the idea of having the Radio Script 202 piece of furniture we purchased and putting it to use. It's the ASSEMBLY part we dread. Opening the box with a thousand pieces. Finding the instruction book that is often confusing, poorly written and badly illustrated. Yet if we want the finished product, it's up to US to assemble it. That's just how it is. It all requires real WORK.

Imagine, then, if you will, what it takes to "assemble together" an entire commercial building that has been vacant for three years and needs attention and work in every single square inch, and you have NO instruction book; only the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the wisdom of many counselors. Imagine, also the frustration of finding that every project you touch ends up taking five times as long as you thought it would, and costing ten times as much money to complete. But once again, as we were faithful to seek His guidance, God has accomplished His purposes and so now this new ministry has begun.

But it's not JUST about the physical building. In order for there to be Christian ministry work here, there is going to be "some assembly required." We will need to figure out how to do it... We DO have lots of very ambitious goals, but once again, none of this will be possible without the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the wisdom of many counselors... and GOD'S true, remnant faithful assembling themselves together.

In the book of Hebrews, we read: "Let us hold fast the

confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another – and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” The writer of Hebrews exhorts us to NOT FORSAKE the assembling of ourselves together as believers. He lets us know that there are SOME who DO forsake such assembling... but we are reminded here how important it is that we do just that, and even MORESO now, as we see the Day of the Lord approaching.

I don't think there is any question that the Day of the Lord is approaching quickly. Our world is on fire and our culture is disintegrating before our very eyes. The remedy for this is for God's people – God's TRUE, remnant believers – to assemble ourselves together and be about His business. In Luke 19, Jesus told us we are to OCCUPY until He returns. In this parable, Jesus strongly condemned those who refused to do so, who refused to be “ruled over,” and thus, wasted the grace and gifts that were given them to invest for His Kingdom.

In 1st Corinthians 12, Paul talks about the various spiritual gifts that are given to each believer in Christ, and although we are all given different gifts, we are all part of one Body – the Body of Christ. All being equally important, the Body does not function properly if one part is broken... or in our case as human beings, if one or more parts simply refuses to function out of laziness, apathy or pride.

Now let's look at Psalm 2, which, on the surface may seem unrelated, but let me quote it for you now anyway. It reads: “Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth SET themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed, saying, ‘Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.’”

I have given you several areas of Scripture to consider. Now, let me help by “assembling” them together to make my point. First of all, in Hebrews, we’re told that as believers in Christ, part of the family of God, we are 1) to HOLD FAST to our faith without wavering. We’re reminded that God is always faithful. 2) We are to be considerate of our brothers and sisters in Christ, bringing about an atmosphere of love and GOOD WORKS in the family of God. 3) We are to not to FORSAKE the assembling of ourselves together (because some “professing” believers DO), and 4) all of this is extremely important now, in these last days.

We are not to be lazy, or selfishly keep our gifts, skills and abilities to ourselves, but rather, we are to INVEST what God has given us, for the sake of the Kingdom, for our brothers and sisters in Christ and for the sake of those who are lost and perishing. God does not give us gifts just to bless US. Rather, each gift is given for a PURPOSE. The gifts we have been given have been given specifically TO us, so that God may save OTHERS, THROUGH us.... so that we can make a difference in this broken world.

Hear me now: NOT JUST IN OUR OWN CHURCHES, HOMES AND FAMILIES! No, we are to be the SALT and LIGHT of the WORLD. Jesus said if we squander these gifts, we become “salt that has lost its savor, no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled on by men.” Yes, indeed, we are to OCCUPY until our Savior returns.

Now, you may feel helpless, like you have nothing to offer God. Or you may KNOW you have many skills, but have no interest in serving God with the gifts you possess. You may be too “busy,” too distracted with the cares of this world. You may be fearful of the opinions of others. Or, let’s face it, you may just not care. As someone once said, “the opposite of love is not hate; the opposite of love is apathy.” But most likely, you may simply have no idea how to USE your gifts, because you’ve never really been asked or taught to do

ANYTHING.

But this world we live in is in terrible turmoil. Good is called "evil" and evil is called "good" in almost every aspect of life and things are getting worse. Did you ever think the day would come when men having sex with men would be acceptable to the majority of church-goers? Because we passed that majority mark a while ago. Did you ever think the idea of men "MARRYING" men would be acceptable to the majority of church-goers? We have passed THAT milestone now too. Did you ever think we would see the day when men dressed as women would be allowed to DEMAND that the whole world go along with their little game of "dress up," validate their delusion and INSIST, under penalty of law, that you call a man "she" or "her?" And what is the state of the professing "church" when THOUSANDS of helpless pre-born children are led to slaughter EVERY DAY in this country, and faithful church-goers just stick their heads in the sand, ignoring it, saying nothing...DOING NOTHING to rescue the innocent? What's more, what is the state of our Church when 99% of pastors in America will never utter one single word about ANY of these issues from the pulpits, much less teach, guide and direct their congregations as to what the Bible says we, as Christians, are to do about it?

You see, we are following a different "gospel" in America today. I believe most churchgoers are practicing nothing more than vain, powerless religion. Turn to Galatians 1. Paul said, "if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse!" Yet today – (listen now) – today our churches are preaching a non-confrontational, non-controversial, politically-correct form of "gospel." Some call it "grace." Some call it the "love gospel." Some call it "seeker-friendly." I call it "Candy Church." It all boils down to mere vain religion, and it's good for nothing... in fact, it's worse. It's very harmful, indeed. I will even go so far as to say

Establishment Churches that practice this politically-correct nonsense – at the cost of destroyed lives and lost souls – all for the sake of money and popularity, ARE INDEED, as Paul said, ACCURSED!

Let's go on in Galatians, because Paul had more to say. He asked his readers: "Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ." You see, this is where we are at in American Christianity. We have become a bunch of politically correct, non-confrontational, non-controversial people-pleasers. And I'm sorry to tell you this, but this makes us USELESS in the Body of Christ. If all we DO as our service to the Lord is spend time within the four walls of our own church buildings, working as an "usher," passing the collection plate or serving up the potlucks, facilitating the programs within the "church," we are "salt that has lost it's savor, good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled on by men."

So many of us have been taught that "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together" simply means God wants us to go to church every week. I'M telling you, that sometimes – especially if you are in one of these politically-correct bodies of "professing" believers who NEVER do anything more than stand when they're told to stand, sing when they're told to sing, and sit when they're told to sit, shake hands with your "neighbor" when you're told to do THAT, and then go out for lunch afterwards and back to your normal worldly life, then SKIPPING church may be the best thing you can do! Especially if instead, you are truly WORKING to be a part of the Body of Christ, as an effective servant and witness for GOD IN THIS WORLD that we, as Christ's disciples are supposed to be "occupying" until He returns!

You see, "assembling ourselves together" is meant to have a purpose, not just be a vain religious ritual. At our Ministry Center, and in all the ministry work I do, we are working to

BUILD A TEAM. GOD'S TEAM! Each member with a set of skills and gifts, given by God to be put to use for HIS Kingdom. To my way of thinking, "assembling ourselves together" doesn't just mean meeting together. It means DOING something. We have the POWER OF GOD within us, if the Holy Spirit truly resides inside us. Christ HIMSELF LIVES WITHIN US! What a terrible waste to squander such a precious gift, by doing nothing but continuing to live as you've always lived, by continuing to follow the pop culture of this world, never saying or doing anything to be "set apart."

Back to Psalm 2, as I close for today: "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed, saying, 'Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.'" Friends, the heathen, the God-haters are RAGING! Just look around you! And with all the politically-correct powerless pulpits, the people, left to fend for themselves, are imagining vain, ridiculous things, going along with the popular culture of this wicked world, and virtually NO ONE in our churches is willing to stand up and preach the real, hard TRUTH of God's Word.

We have to decide if we're serious about this. If the Christian life is nothing more than attending church, listening to a non-offensive, politically-correct self-help talk once a week and then going back home, you are squandering your spiritual gifts. What a waste. I encourage you today: DO SOMETHING! As I said, we are building a TEAM here:

GOD'S TEAM. Are you ready to take your faith to the next level? Are you ready to get serious? Then it's time to step outside your comfort zone and get in the game. The devil has a well-organized, extremely well-funded EFFECTIVE team, and the heathen are raging. What is your church – better yet – what are YOU doing about it? Do you want to join our team? GOD'S TEAM? Call me, and I will tell you how.

Audio CDs and transcripts of this message are available when you call me at Wisconsin Christian News, (715) 486-8066. Or email Rob@WisconsinChristianNews.com and ask for message number 202.

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