

**6-23-19**

## **A CHALLENGE TO SUPPORT ASSEMBLING AT CHURCH MEETINGS**

Intro: Soon we will have our annual tent meeting / Bible school week. It is important that you take time to come out to these meetings. Throughout the history of the church there always have been days set aside for assembling God's people together. Sometimes we have called these meetings revival meetings, other times camp meetings. Some have called them Bible conference week, Bible school week. Because we have brother Bill Stewart with us, we have chosen to call these week "Tent Meeting / Bible School week. I believe it is important to set aside extra time where we can focus in on spiritual things. This is the week we choose to do that.

Fewer and fewer churches are having such meetings. I think that is a sign of falling away from our first love. Whenever there is a spiritual decline there is a falling away from assembling together in Christ's church. Whenever there is a spiritual renewal or revival, there has been renewed interest in special meetings and attending God's house.

This morning my message is very simple. I want to talk to you about why I believe it is important for you to support our week of special meetings.

### ***WHY YOU SHOULD SUPPORT OUR WEEK OF SPECIAL MEETINGS.***

Each year in the seventh month of our calendar year around the 15th day of the month we try to schedule a week of special revival tent meetings hosted by Brother Bill Stewart. We didn't always meet at this time, for many years our meetings were in August. They started out as a week of DVBS, then we went to platform DVBS, then I met Brother Bill Stewart and thought it would be good to combine our DVBS week with a Tent Meeting Revival week. Each year we have Brother Bill Stewart and guest speakers. This year we have Brother David Rodrigues, and Peter Accardi preaching also. I looked up in our Archives and saw that we had our first Tent Meeting Bible School with Hal Webb in 1994 that was 25 years ago. That year we were suppose to rip the roof off our building and we were not sure if that would cause a problem for our Bible school week. So we rented a tent and had our first tent meeting Bible school week that year. Back then the meetings were held in August. It was that year that I read about the feast of tabernacles being the 7<sup>th</sup> month the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month.. and started thinking maybe the Lord would have us have a tent meeting every year. In 1997 I met Bill Stewart through a friend and I think I had him come in 1998. I think in July of 1999 and 2000 we started having the meetings in July. We had the tent meetings at the Township Building. We never did that again after that. I think there is something special about having the meetings on our church grounds. So we have been having our Bible School tent meeting week now for over 20 years.

This morning I want to share some reasons I believe you should support our annual meetings. Either case, as I reminisce through the years of our special meetings, I thought it good to spend some time this morning and talk to you about why I believe such meetings are important and why you should support these meetings.

## ***I. FIRST OF ALL, I THINK HAVING SUCH MEETINGS SUPPORTS A BIBLICAL PATTERN.***

I believe that when we moved our meetings to July we were able to book the meetings the week of July 15th. Through the years the Lord seemed to give me deeper insight into the feasts of the seven feasts of the Lord. Each year I study the topic deeper as we approach our tent meeting week.

Leviticus 23:34 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the LORD.

As I read that I started trying to scheduled our tent meetings on the 7th Month and starting the 15th day of the month. That led me to do a study of the feasts of the Lord.

The feast of tabernacles was a very important feast in the Jewish calendar. Every male in the nation was supposed to drop everything to attend that feast.

In fact, in the Bible it was required that all the men of the nation come to Jerusalem three times a year. They were commanded to come..

1. At the feast of Unleavened Bread.
2. At the feast of Pentecost.
3. At the feast of Tabernacles.

Two of these feasts were suppose to be week long meetings. Think about what it took for these people to keep these feasts. Many of the people had to travel long distances to come. They could not fly, they could not drive. They had to walk or ride donkeys or horses. It was really a pilgrimage. They had to camp out, or stay in Inns, It was probably a considerable expense.

Now at this point in our yearly calendar we only meet once a year for a week long meeting. It really is not a great burden. You do not have to camp out or travel long distances.

The truth is that all the 500 years of the Kings of Israel and the 450 years of the Judges, Israel failed to obey the Lord in keeping these feasts. Because of that and also because they never obeyed the sabbath year, God sent the nation into captivity for 70 years.

There was a reason God wanted his people to assemble for a whole week.

I believe that God would be pleased if we take time off and assemble for a week of meetings also.

Now many can argue that the feasts were part of the ceremony of the law and we are not under the law in the New Testament church. That is true, but I believe the New Covenant instills the law of God in our hearts and we should by nature want to do things to please the Lord.

Jesus said, John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

My question to you this morning is WHICH commandment?

In the New Testament we have this command:

Hebrews 10:24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

Hebrews 10:25 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.

You say, "when should I assemble together." I believe you should assemble when the church decides to assemble.

I have people say, "no where in the Bible do I read that we are to come to Church for Sunday School, Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and Wednesday evening services.. NO? LET ME SHOW YOU WHEN THE EARLY CHURCH MET:

Acts 2:46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

Acts 2:47 Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

The early church meet daily! For most people that is too much, so in our Baptist Churches, we have decided to meet three times in the week, Sunday Morning, Sunday Evening and Wednesday. You say preacher you don't understand I am too busy to do that. No, you do what you want to do.

Before I was saved, I was a bartender. I would see men who would come to the bar every night after work, spend half their pay check in that bar, some would come there after work and crawl out of that place late at night go to work and then come back after work.

Paul said:

Romans 6:19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

Why cannot we not be zealous for God like we were zealous to sin?

Peter Accardi has a message entitled ADDICTED TO THE MINISTRY.

I Corinthians 16:15 I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,)

People are addicted to a lot of things that kill them. Why cannot we not be addicted to serving Jesus Christ. Why cannot we say, that by the grace of God I will be in church every time the doors are open for services?

Because the children of Israel did not obey God and keep their Sabbaths, God dispersed the. God chastened them.

The number one reason you should support our week long meetings is because it is Biblical to do so. It follows the pattern of Scripture.

When I discovered that we by chance scheduled our tent meetings the 7th month the 15th day of the month (IN OUR GENTILE CALENDAR) just like the feast of Tabernacles I dug a little deeper and studied out this feast. Then I discovered that this is the one feast that Jesus, when He comes back to earth, is going to mandate that every nation celebrate this feast globally.

We read this:

Zechariah 14:16 And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.

Zechariah 14:17 And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain.

Zechariah 14:18 And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.

Zechariah 14:19 This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.

The Lord is going to mandate that everyone come up to Jerusalem and keep this special feast. So there is something about this feast that is to be held in the 15th day of the 7th month that the Lord feels will be beneficial to the gentile nations as well as the Jewish nation.

In the Millennial Kingdom the Lord will mandate the men of all the nations to attend this feast. It seems to me we as Children of God could keep a one week tent meeting for His honor and glory.

SO FIRST OF ALL, I BELIEVE YOU SHOULD SUPPORT OUR TENT MEETINGS BECAUSE IT FULFILLS A BIBLICAL PATTERN.

## ***II. YOU SHOULD SUPPORT OUR MEETINGS BECAUSE IT WILL HELP YOU SPIRITUALLY.***

Understand this, that God only commands you to do things because He has your best interests in mind. Now if you lived in the Old Testament days, and you wanted to obey the Lord and keep this week long feast you would have to plan to do so. So too, if you want to attend our tent meeting week you need to make plans to do so. You need to re-arrange your schedule. Some people could plan their vacation week around that week.

I could hear someone say, PREACHER, I don't want to waste my vacation week to attend tent meeting week. WHY NOT?

Think about all those people who saved up and planned their dream vacation and went to Dominican Republic only to get sick and some even died. The reason God mandated His people to attend the feasts was for their own good.

The reason people are getting sick on these vacations is because of what they are eating!

The Bible says,

Luke 4:4 And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

I Peter 2:2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

God knows that we need a little more intensive time in the Word of God, and tent meeting week does just that. It gives you extra time in the Word.

It is for your good.

It is for your spiritual health.

### **III. YOU SHOULD SUPPORT THESE MEETINGS BECAUSE IT MAY HELP SOMEONE ELSE.**

#### **1. Invite visitors out:**

Tent meeting week is a time when you can invite others out to something special and get them out to church. You never know who you might help spiritually by inviting them out to these meetings.

Many years ago my wife and I were at Sam's club and there was an elderly gentleman sitting and checking people's receipts. My wife poked me and whispered in my ear. Give him a flyer. I thought man, this is too far away for him to visit our church. But I gave him a flyer anyway. We were wonderfully surprised when Al Miller and his wife May came out to our meetings and shortly after that joined our church. You never know who you may help by inviting them out to the meetings. You can't invite them out if you are not going to be here.

#### **2. MAKE SURE YOUR KIDS ARE HERE EACH NIGHT.**

I am amazed at how zealous people are to have their kids involved in sports, because of the little bit of profit they may experience from that activity.

The Bible says,

I Timothy 4:8 For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

I have never yet seen where when parents get their kids involved in sports and encourage them to skip church for that sport where those kids when they get older are faithful to church. I have been pastoring for 36 years and I cannot give you one instance where what I am saying is not true.

People want to blame the church for not having this or that. What did the early church have? Our problem is that we want all these fun activities for kids, but unless they get saved and get a hunger for the Word of God they will be goners. If you do not teach your children to put God first I tell you when they get older don't expect them to continue with the Lord.

Think about the poison they are being feed by the world. Where is that going to be offset? They are in church for 1 hour a week and in school for 30-35 hours and then you have them playing sports and skipping church on the weekends and do you really think anything good will come of it?

Look, when I was young, I had a cousin that played football. He played for Penn State and was hit in the head and had a massive injury to the head and died. I tell you every time I mentioned going out for sports in our school my mom would say things in Italian that I knew were not good. All because she knew the risk of injury far out weighed the benefits I would receive from the sport.

Years ago, my wife and I were in a car accident and we went to an attorney to settle our accident. In the process of talking he said, the worse thing he ever did was play football in college. He has bad knees, arthritis, aches, and pains that he will have to live with for life.

## **HOW DANGEROUS ARE YOUTH SPORTS FOR THE BRAIN?**

### **Should kids play football? Or hockey? Or soccer? Or any contact sport?**

Some experts advocate for banning many youth sports altogether. Dr. Bennet Omalu, the neuropathologist portrayed by Will Smith in the movie Concussion, has called for an end to football.

Many seem to agree, as a national poll found that nearly 50% of Americans would encourage children to avoid playing contact football altogether.

Legislators in Illinois and in New York have proposed eliminating youth tackle football.

A school board candidate in Clark County, Nevada even ran his campaign on the platform of eliminating high school football. The candidate expressed concern that, "The human brain is not designed to play the collision sport of football. We do not have an airbag between the brain and the skull."

These people are arguing just from the physical risk of playing sports, but I say to you the spiritual risk is far greater.

The youngest member of our band, Danny Degennaro was fresh out of high school when he came to play guitar with us. He was close friends with all the football team and student body in Pennsbury high school I know for a fact all of them regularly did drugs and smoked pot. That was in 1974. For the limited benefits you think your kids are going to receive by being involved in these activities, I say to you the risks of being exposed to the wrong friends, the wrong crowd, the wrong activities far outweighs any good.

Get mad at me if you want, but I speak from experience. I do not know one young person who got deeply involved in playing sports and skipped Sunday service to be involved in sports that is in church today.

Then the greatest problem is this, when that young person hangs with unsaved kids, who do you think they are going to yoke up with someday when they get to the age where they are going to look for a boyfriend or girlfriend?

What do you do with this verse:

II Corinthians 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

II Corinthians 6:15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

II Corinthians 6:16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

II Corinthians 6:17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

II Corinthians 6:18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

You need to have your kids in Bible School. You need to teach your kids that the Lord comes first, and the way that you show that the Lord is first in your life is by making sure you obey him and assemble in Church whenever the doors are open.

### **Conclusion:**

We read a severe warning in the Bible to those who find it unprofitable to serve God and do what He wants us to do. Listen to what the Lord told the nation Israel.

Malachi 3:13 Your words have been stout against me, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee?

Malachi 3:14 Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts?

Malachi 3:15 And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.

Here is the danger, some people will not attend our revival meetings simply because they think it is vain and of no profit just like we read in Malachi.

So in essence such people are saying,

It is of no profit to listen to the Bible preached.

It is a waste of time to come to such meetings.

It is vain and unprofitable, to be convicted and come to the altar and pray.

I fear that many actually could be indicted as these we read about in Malachi.

Do you call the proud happy?

Do you think the wicked are set up and established??

Do you think they who tempt God are going to be the happy ones, the ones who will be safe and delivered?

Now only God knows your heart. I hope this is not the case with you.

But let us face the fact, when you do not support our Tent Meeting / Revival meetings, and you can, but choose not to, are you not saying in your heart these very things the Lord is angry with Israel about. Your actions are speaking for you.

I am not the judge, I am just the messenger. God alone knows your heart and mind. That's too big a job for me. This is what I know:

I believe you need to support your local church. This is the will of God in your life.

I believe the Bible teaches you it is good for you to take a week off and spend some extra time with His people listening to the Word of God.

I believe it is good for you to try to seek the spiritual salvation of others especially your own family and children. Invite them out.

Now the question is what will you do? This is up to you.

I cannot force you to support our meetings.  
God will not force you to do what you suppose to do.  
You know what you can do and what you can't do.