

CHURCH: WHY BOTHER?

Joe Slater

You go to school to get an education so you can make a living. You go to work to make money to pay the bills. You go to the lake or golf course to have fun. But church? Why bother?!

Sad to say, many look upon church attendance as a bother – an unnecessary burden to be avoided – a perfectly good hour wasted in order to keep the preacher, the elders, or our parents off their backs. Are there any good reasons to “bother” with church? Indeed, there are!

First, God is worthy. Our word “worship” comes from an older English word, **worthscipe** (worth-ship). In worship, then, we show that God is worthy of our praise and adoration. He is worthy because He is our creator, having made us in His own image (Genesis 1:27). God’s creation demonstrates His unlimited power as well as His boundless wisdom, both of which call for our profound reverence.

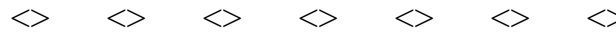
**You are worthy, O Lord,
To receive glory and honor and power;
For You created all things
And by Your will they exist and were created.**
(Revelation 4:11)

Not only did God create us, He also sustains us, “upholding all things by the word of His power” (Hebrews 1:3). We depend upon Him for “life, breath, and all things” (Acts 17:25). Yes, we may work to pay for food, clothing, housing, medical care, and the like. But who gave us health and strength to work? Who supplies us with air to breathe? Who made the earth, the crops that grow upon it, and that natural resources within it? Surely God is worthy of our devotion!

In addition to being our creator and sustainer, God is our savior. Our sins separate us from Him, making us liable to eternal destruction. In His loving kindness, however, God provided a way for us to be forgiven of our sins so that we may live with Him eternally in Heaven. Jesus, the very Son of God, carried the burden of our sins in His own body as He hung upon the cross of Calvary, where He poured out His blood for the forgiveness of our sins (see 1 Peter 2:24 and Matthew 26:28).

**Worthy is the Lamb Who was slain
To receive power and riches and wisdom,
And strength and honor and glory and blessing!**
(Revelation 5:12)

God is worthy of our worship! This alone is reason enough to “bother” with church. There are other reasons, though. Lord willing, we’ll review them next week. (Matthew 16:26).



Which Way?

Engraved on a tombstone were the following lines:

Pause, my friend, as you walk by
As you are now, so once was I
As I am now, so you will be
Prepare, my friend, to follow me

A visitor, upon reading that epitaph, and added two more:

To follow you I'm not content
Until I know which way you went

Follow Jesus! We know which way He went!

Keeping the Head and Heart Alive

This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far away from Me (Matthew 15:8 NAS).

A certain preacher reported the following: "While I was being driven by a friend through the southern part of England, we came to a country town where I noticed on a brass doorplate the names of two attorneys that aroused my interest. I exclaimed, 'What a strange name for a firm of lawyers, Head and Hart.' 'Yes,' said my companion, 'and poor Hart died and has left Head all alone.' 'Alas,' I said, 'how often that is true in Christian work, but may it never be so with you and me. Let us put both head and heart into our work.'"

Serving the Lord demands both the head and the heart. We cannot omit either if we seek to serve the Lord successfully. There are some who merely accept Jesus in an intellectual fashion, but their heart is far from the Lord. "Mental assent" is not enough. If I say, "Yes, I believe Jesus is Christ, my Savior," but I don't truly embrace Him personally, I give only head acknowledgment. If I have only head knowledge of Jesus, I do not truly know Him. Paul said he gave up everything so that he could "know Him" (Philippians 3:10a). I might know some facts about Abraham Lincoln, but I don't really know him. I have no personal knowledge of him. People may know some facts about Jesus, even that He is the Son of God, but that knowledge alone will not save them (Luke 6:46).

On the other hand, if I emotionally embrace Jesus as my personal Savior but disregard His commandments, I have omitted head knowledge, which is equally important. Many put their hearts into serving false gods, but they lack knowledge of the true God. Sincerity is not enough. *"There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death"* (Proverbs 14:12 NIV). We should never trust our feelings alone. Feelings are deceiving and feelings are fleeting, but the word of God stands forever.

Someone once rightly said that the Gospel contains facts to believe, commands to keep, and promises to be enjoyed.

We must strive to keep both head and heart alive and well! The loss of either means death! Together means life!

--Rob Redden (Arroyo Grande, CA)