

QUITTING THE CHURCH

Hebrews 3:12-14

INTRODUCTION:

- A. It is a sad fact of life that people quit the Church.
 - 1. Occasionally one will get mad and quit *all at once*.
 - 2. More often, it is *A GRADUAL PROCESS*.
- B. Quit means: “to stop, cease, discontinue; to leave, to depart; to give up, abandon; to release one’s hold on.”
- C. The Bible says that a person can do what this word means: stop serving the Lord. “Take heed brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.” **Hebrews 3:12**.
 - 1. The Greek word in this text for departing means “to remove, to revolt, to desert, depart, draw away.”
 - 2. People **can** quit the Church (quit serving the Lord).
- D. Let’s look at some ways in which people can quit the Church:

I. FIRST, ONE MAY PHYSICALLY WITHDRAW HIMSELF FROM THE ASSEMBLIES OF THE CHURCH.

- A. This type of quitter never attends Bible Class, Worship or any other activity.
- B. He does exactly what the Hebrew writer tells us not to do: “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as you see the day approaching,” **Hebrews 10:25**.
 - 1. This word “forsaking” means: “to leave behind, to forsake, to abandon.”
 - 2. Like a man abandons *a sinking ship*, so some abandon the Church.
 - 3. This is often a slow process: 4 services - 3 - 2 - 1 service, just Lord’s Supper, quit entirely.
- C. These folks let other things slowly become more important and eventually don’t come **any more**. What are some things that can cause this?
 - 1. Social activities.
 - 2. Sporting events.
 - 3. Family activities, etc.
 - 4. Love of money and the things it will buy.
 - 5. SIN of any type.
- D. Do you know anyone who has “quit the Church” in this way? WE ALL DO.

II. SECONDLY, A PERSON MAY QUIT THE CHURCH BY SLOWING DOWN HIS INVOLVEMENT.

- A. Sometimes in sports you will hear it said of a team, “They quit out there today.” Does

- that mean they left the field and removed their uniforms? No, but still they quit.
- B. That happens sometimes in the church: Some who once were involved and active slow to a snail's pace in involvement in church activities.
 - C. These quit giving their best service to God.
 1. "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might." *Ecc. 9:10*
 2. "Be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." *Romans 12:11*
 3. God deserves, expects, and will accept no less than our best in His service.
 - D. All this person's efforts are just token efforts.
 1. Where he used to attend FOUR services, he now attends only ONE.
 2. Where he used to be involved in various activities, he now has an EXCUSE.
 - E. EXAMPLES: No longer teach class; participate in Visitation Program, go to Nursing Homes, Visit Shut ins, stay for Fellowship meals; attend Work Days, etc.
 - E. Have you ever found yourself lessening your involvement? Is this happening to you **NOW**?

III. THIRD, A PERSON MAY QUIT IN ATTITUDE.

- A. These are always present but their hearts are someplace else.
- B. ILLUSTRATION: Little girl put in the corner: "I may be sitting down on the outside, but I'm standing up on the inside."
- C. Look at what Jesus said about such people:
 1. "This people draws near to me with their mouths, and honors me with their lips; but their hearts are far from me." *Matthew 15:8*.
 2. To some who were disciples in name only, the Lord asked, "And why call me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" *Luke 6:46*.
 - *3. Saul and the people were going through the motions of sacrifice while their hearts kept them from true obedience. Samuel told them, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams." *1 Samuel 15:22*.
- C. Jesus said real worship and service must be "IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH." *John 4:24*.

IV. REASONS NOT TO QUIT.

- A. THE POTENTIAL FOR **GOOD** THAT MAY COME.
 1. Some one may be following your example.
 2. When you get to heaven another soul may be there because of you.
 3. You may be the difference in the future of this church.
- 4. THE GOOD THAT **YOU** CAN DO.
 - a. You can ENCOURAGE OTHER WORKERS.
 - b. You can HELP IN THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL.
 - c. You can help to FINANCE VITAL WORKS OF THE CHURCH.
 - d. YOU CAN TEACH, LEAD, WORK WITH YOUTH/ ELDERLY/ AND ALL IN

BETWEEN.

B. THE POTENTIAL FOR EVIL THAT MAY COME.

1. Those who are of the world will rejoice.
 - a. Enemies of the church will rejoice.
 - b. The Devil will surely rejoice.
2. You may *INFLUENCE OTHERS* to also quit.
3. The body will suffer the *loss of one of its vital parts*.
4. Someone's **ONLY HOPE** may be **YOU**.

C. THE JOY THAT COMES WITH PERSEVERING.

1. There is a joy in KNOWING YOU FINISHED and were **SUCCESSFUL**.
2. The joy of VICTORY.
3. Don't give up! Hold on and go on.

D. THE FINAL REWARD FOR THOSE WHO NOT QUIT: HEAVEN.

1. "But he who endures to the end shall be saved." Matthew 24:13.
2. **ILLUSTRATION:** A man was lost in a snowstorm, wandered until he gave up and quit. He was found within sight of his farmhouse. He quit too soon.

CONCLUSION:

- A. Have you "quit the Church?"
- B. You haven't quit in *the usual sense* in which we make this statement, because you are here today.
- C. But think seriously: **Have** you quit the Church (quit serving the Lord)?
- D. Are you *STARTING THE PROCESS* of quitting?
- E. **DON'T QUIT.** Start again.