

I Love Jesus But Not the Church

Introduction:

- A. QUESTION: As Christians (followers of Christ), must we love what Jesus loved?
- B. On January 10, 2012, Jefferson Bethke posted a video on YouTube called, “Why I Hate Religion, but Love Jesus” that today has been viewed over 32 million times.
- C. Many have been vocal since the video was first posted, about not going to Church but still loving Jesus.
 - 1. According to the Barna Group, 73% of Americans say they are a Christian.
 - 2. Less than half of Americans attend church, only 31% (this just indicates they attended once in the last month, not weekly).
- D. The Easter cover story for Newsweek Magazine was an article called, “Christianly in Crisis” by Andrew Sullivan. The premise was for people to forget the Church and just follow Jesus.” (April 2012).

QUESTION FOR CONSIDERATION: Is it possible to love Jesus but not love the Church?

Why Some People Love Jesus But Hate the Church:

- A. They have been hurt or wounded by people in the church.
- B. They have seen too many hypocrites.
- C. They feel they can find God elsewhere (nature, surroundings, etc.)
- D. They feel the church is not relevant to them and the lifestyle they are living.

What We Know About Jesus and the Church (Eph. 5:25-32):

- A. Jesus is the Head of the Church (Eph. 5:23-24)
 - 1. QUESTION: What does it mean to be the head of something (head coach, head boss, etc.)? What does that mean for us as the church?
 - 2. Matt. 16:18 – “Upon this rock I will build my church...”
 - 3. The church belongs to Jesus and thus are subject to Christ as the head.
- B. Jesus Loves the Church (Eph. 5:25a)
 - 1. Paul compares the relationship of Christ and the church to an early marriage relationship.
 - 2. The church is the bride of Christ.
 - 3. Jesus nourishes and cherishes the church as His own body (Eph. 5:29).
 - 4. How do we think it makes Jesus feel when people talk about His bride?
 - 5. ILLS: I want nothing to do with someone who hates my wife.

- C. Jesus Gave His Life for the Church (Eph. 5:25b).
 - 1. Jesus purchased the church, every member of the church, with His own blood (Acts 20:28).
 - 2. QUESTION: Who are what would you be willing to die for?
- D. Jesus Will Save Only Those Who Are in His Church (Eph. 5:23, 29-32).
 - 1. Christ is the savior of the body (v. 23). What is the body? The body is the church.
 - 2. If we are not a part of the body (the church), we cannot be saved.
 - 3. According to Jesus, only a few will be saved (Matt. 7:13-14; 21-23).

We Must Stop Trying to Divorce Jesus From His Bride!

- A. If Jesus loves the church and sees her as important, then so should His followers.
- B. Christians who claim to love and follow Jesus, must love and support the church.
 - 1. People want to argue that what's important is being a part of the universal church and not the local church.
 - 2. If the local church were not important, why would Paul, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, write letters that inform and instruct us about local congregations of the church?
 - 3. If the local church were not important, why would we, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, be told not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together (Heb. 10:24-25).

Important Things to Remember About the Church:

- A. The church is made up of imperfect people for imperfect people.
 - 1. There will be times when people in the church, Christians, mistreat or hurt you.
 - 2. We should never judge the Lord's Church based on the actions of a few imperfect people.
- B. God uses His church to help fulfill His mission and make His plan known to mankind (Eph. 3:8-12).
- C. We must be careful not to allow our criticism of the church to have a negative impact.
 - 1. Jesus views the persecution of His church as persecution of Himself.
 - 2. Acts 9:4-5 – Paul was persecuting the bride of Christ and ultimately, Christ Jesus Himself.
- D. We must love what Jesus loves if we are going to faithfully follow Jesus.

Conclusion:

- A. If we are going to have a relationship with Jesus, we must have a relationship with His bride.
- B. Instead of allowing what we don't like about the church to keep us away, why not try to be the example we would like to see.
- C. We cannot claim love for Jesus but loathe His church!