

ADVOCATING RECONCILIATION

I DON'T BELIEVE
IN THE CHURCH

MESSAGE SERIES

PRECEPT

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-14

¹² Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. ¹⁴ Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

PROMISE

God created the church to be a safe place where we can all experience unconditional love, mercy, and grace. God intended it to be a place of joy, hope, and peace, and a place where we can carry each other's burdens where we can encourage and pray for one another. Sadly, this is not what we're seeing in a lot of churches today. Surely, there is no perfect church, and reading even a portion of our Bibles reveals that this is an enduring reality of life in this fallen world. For most people, it is not the church as a whole that hurt them, but an individual in that church. The hurt we have experienced from the church challenges us not to allow our pain to shut us off or isolate us from other believers; for the truth is, by being in fellowship with other imperfect people, we will be hurt and we will also hurt one another. Our churches aren't perfect by any means, and the people serving in those churches are sinful, fallen human beings as well. Despite the fact, there are still many people in the church who love with their whole hearts and strive to obey God with their best. Truly, there are many excellent reasons to believe in the church. Here are some truths about the church that we can take into account:

THE CHURCH IS THE ONLY INSTITUTION THAT DEALS WITH ETERNITY. It is the only institution that deals with the important issues of life; meaning, purpose, eternity, judgement, and forgiveness. Without the church, people will lose their sense of eternity and that will create chaos in the society. It is the church that teaches us how to live a life in preparation for eternity. We can be assured that judgement will come to those who abuse and take advantage of God's people and He will reward those who use His church to spread His light.

THE CHURCH IS THE ONLY INSTITUTION THAT VALUES HUMAN DIGNITY. The church also teaches us to value others, for we are all created in the "image of God" and we are called to treat each other with utmost respect and dignity. Jesus even instructed us to love one another, care for one another, pray for one another, accept one another, and forgive one another, just as the same way He does to us.

THE CHURCH IS THE ONLY INSTITUTION THAT PROMOTES OBJECTIVE MORALITY. Without the teaching of the Bible-believing churches, people will base morality and goodness on their moods, personal preference, and what the majority has decided. That is going to be scary and will create havoc in society.

THE CHURCH IS THE ONLY INSTITUTION THAT PROVIDES A LOVING COMMUNITY. The church is the only institution where we can find love, healing, forgiveness, accountability, and support in a community. In God's Word, a loving community has been promoted more than 100 times from 94 verses in the New Testament. We are also commanded and taught to be at peace with one another, to accept one another, to be kind, tender-hearted, to seek the good of one another, and to love and serve one another, and much more. We cannot find those instructions and commands in any other institutions.

Let's remember Christ as the head of the church and commit again not to give up on the church or one another. Let us remember those who have helped us keep the faith with gladness.

PRACTICE

1. Church Hurt. Have you experienced church hurt? How did you recover from it—or how are you recovering from it right now?

2. Growth in the Community. How can your faith community grow to become a safe place for people in the messiness of life? Whom can you talk to about helping make that happen?

3. Your Gifts. What gifts do you bring to the body? How can you use them to build up the church?

PRAYER

I. LCC Launching

- Pray that the Lord will draw people to our church who are in need of salvation & relationship with Christ.

II. Life Groups

- Pray that God will lead new people into the right small groups for their growth in their faith & love of Christ.

III. Discipleship

- Pray that we will all obey God's command in making disciples; discipling our family and circle of influence.

IV. Gospel

- Pray that the Gospel will reach all the ends of the earth through faithful men of God and churches.

V. Faith

- Pray for stronger faith for all Christians, in good times & in bad & in the many changing seasons of life

VI. Volunteers

- Pray that many would be led to volunteer in our church & that He'll strengthen and sustain all our volunteers.

VII. Leaders

- Pray for our pastors and leaders to remain steadfast in their faith and abounding in the Lord's work.