

WHEN THE CHURCH IS HARD TO LOVE

PRECEPT

John 7:24

²⁴ “Stop judging by mere appearances, but instead judge correctly.”

PROMISE

What makes the church hard to love? When God's people play favourites, it can become an issue. We all have favourites, preferences, and favouritism is built into our human DNA, and it's not wrong. There are parts of it that are not wrong at all. When the church allows favouritism to become an issue, the church becomes divided. When the church becomes divided, that means that Jesus is not reigning. A divided church is hard to love because it's not a safe place, and the church needs to be a safe place for sinful people to come to find Christ and to find meaning, to find hope. We have to keep in mind that it is not about us. It can never be about us. It has to be about Jesus. Always about him, and keeping him at the center. It's also hard to love the church when God's saints wink and go light on sin; we become worldly. It happens because we boast about grace; we develop a worldly mindset, thinking that if we become lenient on sin, more sinners will come and join. When sin is weak, the church becomes hard to love because it becomes like the world, and the challenge is for those of us who have been in the church for a long time. Yes, keep associating with them, go for a walk, embrace and encourage them, but be separate from them. If grace is all we're about, we're going to set things up for trouble. Now, is grace an important thing because without grace, none of us can make it. Without grace, none of us can actually be transformed, no matter how hard we try. If there is no grace, we might as well give up right now. We still have a sin nature, and we need the grace of God to overcome as we're growing. Lastly, the church is hard to love when growth and blessings exceed the available resources; the pressure becomes immense. Remember, the building is not the church; we are the church, and yet sometimes we get confused. Sometimes when we think of going to church, we think of a building rather than the people. Without people in the building, it's just an empty building because you are the church; you're the body of Christ. And when the people multiply, so do the pressures. The demands and expectations continue to increase, and it's very common when the blessings of growth exceed the resources that we have.

The church can be messy, difficult at times, and very hard, but in the midst of it, if Jesus is kept at the center, the church can be the most amazing place on earth. For the church to continue growing and be blessed, it needs to have greater resources. And those resources are not coming from somewhere else; they have to come from here, from us. If you're not giving to this ministry, can I encourage you to start wherever you decide God would have you? Just start giving and giving regularly. Whatever you're giving right now, or about to give, could make a huge difference in the growth of the ministries. There are all kinds of underpinnings, but one thing that will not get removed is the people. Invest in people. Invest in leadership. The leadership and the people are the heart of the church.

PRACTICE

- 1. Church.** Are you struggling to love the church?
- 2. In action.** What practical step can you take or show (love, kindness, and unity) to love the community? And how can we pray/encourage you regarding this?

PRAYER

I. Ministries

- Pray that God will equip our ministries.

II. Life Kids

- Pray for more volunteers and for our children to encounter God.

III. Life Sports

- Thank God for a healthy body, abilities, and the gift of sports.

IV. Life Link

- Pray that our ushers will serve our brethren filled with the Holy Spirit.

V. Life Worship

- May they continue to wholeheartedly serve God and His people.

VI. Life Line

- Pray that we foster genuine connection through our social media postings.

VII. Love

- May God help us to reflect His love.