

QUESTIONS ABOUT CHURCH

Why Should I Be Involved In Church?

The Greatest Gift

1 Corinthians 13:5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil;

Love does not behave rudely. If a person is truly acting in love, he will be courteous and considerate. Love does not selfishly seek its own, but is interested in what will assist others.

Love is not provoked, but is willing to endure slights and insults.

Love thinks no evil, that is, it does not attribute bad motives to others. It does not suspect their actions. It is guileless.

1 Corinthians 13:6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;

1 Corinthians 13:7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

1 Corinthians 13:8 Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.

1 Corinthians 13:9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part.

1 Corinthians 13:10 But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

1 Corinthians 13:11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

1 Corinthians 13:12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

1 Corinthians 13:13 And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

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How Can I Strengthen My Church?

(Positive Attitudes Lead To Positive Actions)

Ice Breaker: If you could be like anyone in our church, who would it be? Why?

Be Present (Summary....The sacrifices under the Old covenant brought a *reminder* of sin, not a *remission* of sin. The blood of God's Son took care of sin once and for all. Because there is no more offering for sin, there is also no more remembrance of sin (v. 17; Jer. 31:34), and we can rejoice that we have a righteous standing before God.

Hebrews 10:1 For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect.

The law was only a shadow of the good things that were to come. It pointed forward to the Person and work of Christ but it was a poor substitute for reality. To prefer the law to Christ is like preferring a picture to the person represented. It is an insult to His majesty!

The weakness of the legal system is seen in the fact that its sacrifices had to be constantly repeated.

This repetition proved their total inability to meet the claims of a holy God. Notice the expressions used to capture this idea of repetitiveness: the same sacrifices; offer continually; year by year.

The sacrifices were utterly unable to perfect the worshipers, that is, they never gave the people a perfect conscience as far as sin was concerned. The Israelites never enjoyed the consciousness of being cleared forever from the guilt of sin. They never had complete rest of conscience.

Hebrews 10:2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins.

If the offerings had completely and finally absolved them from sin, then would they not have ceased making the annual trek to the tabernacle or temple? The regular recurrence of the sacrifices branded them as ineffectual.

Whoever has to take medicine every hour to stay alive can hardly be said to be cured.

Hebrews 10:3 But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year.

Instead of pacifying the conscience, the Levitical system stabbed it awake each year. Behind the beautiful ritual of the Day of Atonement lurked the annual reminder that sins were only being covered, not removed.

Hebrews 10:4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

The blood of bulls and goats simply did not have the power to take away sins.

As mentioned previously, these sacrifices dealt with ritual errors. They gave a certain ceremonial cleansing but they were utter failures as far as providing satisfaction for man's corrupt nature or for his evil deeds.

Hebrews 10:5 Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me.

In contrast to the weakness of the Levitical offerings, we come now to the strength of the superlative sacrifice of Christ.

By way of introduction, we are permitted to hear the Savior's soliloquy at the time of His incarnation. Quoting from Psalm 40, He noted God's dissatisfaction with the sacrifices and offerings of the Old Covenant. God had instituted these sacrifices, yet they were never His ultimate intention.

They were never designed to put away sins but rather to point forward to the Lamb of God who would bear away the sin of the world. Could God be pleased with rivers of animal blood or with heaps of animal carcasses?

Another reason for God's dissatisfaction is that the people thought they were pleasing Him by going through ceremonies while their inward lives were sinful and corrupt.

Many of them went through the dreary round of sacrifices with no repentance or contrition.

They thought that God could be appeased with their animal sacrifices whereas He was looking for the sacrifice of a broken heart. They did not realize that God is not a ritualist!

Dissatisfied with the former sacrifices, God prepared a human body for His Son which was an integral part of His human life and nature.

This, of course, refers to the unfathomable wonder of the Incarnation when the eternal Word became flesh so that, as Man, He might die for men.

It is interesting that the clause a body You have prepared for Me, adapted from Psalm 40:6, is capable of two other meanings. In that Psalm it reads, "My ears You have opened," and in the margin it says, "ears You have dug for Me." The open ear, of course, signifies that the Messiah was always ready to receive His instructions from God and to obey them instantly.

The dug ear may be an allusion to the Hebrew slave (Ex. 21:1-6), whose ear was bored with an awl to the door as a sign that he willingly indentured himself to his master forever. In His Incarnation, the Savior said, in effect, "I love My Master ... I will not go out free."