

Forsake Not The Assembly

By Ron Boatwright

We see that the Christians in the first century "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached to them" (Acts 20:7). The Christians were steadfast and faithful in their worship of God together.

When we were baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of our sins in order to be saved "we were baptized into one body" (1 Corinthians 12:13), the church. It was then that "the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (Act 2:47). We then became a member of "the house of God which is the church of the living God" (1 Timothy 3:15). In being part of the house of God, the church, we are God's "children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:17). We then received "an inheritance...reserved in Heaven for you" (1 Peter 1:4).

But we are warned that we can lose our inheritance in Heaven. "Let no one cheat you of your reward" (Colossians 2:18). One of the ways to lose our inheritance in Heaven is to disassociate ourselves from the house of God, which is the church, by forsaking the assembly. We are warned in Hebrews 10:25-27, "Not forsaking the assembly of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the day approaching. For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries."

The command is not to forsake the assembly as some were doing then, and as some are doing today. Those who forsake the assembly are sinning willfully. If they will not repent but continue in their willful sin of forsaking the assembly, "there no longer remains a sacrifice" that will remove this sin. Even though one may be a good person, if one continues in the sin of forsaking the assembly or any other sin, he will face a certain fearful judgment and a real fiery Hell forever and ever.

Why is it sinful to forsake the assembly of the church for which the Lord shed His blood and died. The Bible says that by forsaking the assembly one "has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace"

(Hebrews 10:29). By forsaking the assembly one is saying that he no longer cares to be a part of the church for which Christ shed His blood and died. What will happen to one who continues to forsake the assembly? God says "vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord...it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:30-31). By forsaking the assembly one throws away his inheritance in Heaven and will inherit the eternal torment of Hell.

By forsaking the assembly one is likened to, "a dog returns to his own vomit, and a sow, having been washed, to her wallowing in the mire" (2 Peter 2:23). It is sickening to the Lord to see one, for whom He died, reject His salvation and go back into sin. Christ is only the saviour of the body, the church (Ephesians 5:23).

Going to Heaven should be our number one priority in this life. Jesus says, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33). After we are baptized, how do we continue to get forgiveness of sins we commit so we can go to Heaven? "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). To continue to be cleansed from all our sins as Christians we must walk in the light and **have fellowship with one another**. By forsaking the assembly we are not having fellowship with one another and will not continue to be cleansed of our sins. If we are not being cleansed of our sins, we will die in our sins and be lost (Romans 6:23). We must serve the Lord faithfully which includes our faithful attendance if we want to go to Heaven. Jesus promises us, "Be faithful until death and I will give you the crown of life" (Revelation 2:10).