

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

Vol. XXXIV

September 22, 2024

No. 38

“Don’t Go Around With a Fishing Rod”

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At VBS, our children learn a song which includes the admonition, “*Worship God, worship God, don’t go around with a fishing rod.*” We are not teaching that fishing is sinful, for even some of the apostles were fishermen (*Matt.4:18-22*). The needed lesson being taught is that assembling to worship God should be of much greater importance to us than other activities of this life. As adults, are we “*practicing what we preach?*” What do our children and grandchildren see in us when observing our attendance patterns?

Our 2024 attendance currently averages 99 on Sunday mornings, 82 on Sunday evenings, and 67 on Wednesday nights. What impact do you have on these numbers? For what reasons are you willing to miss worship services? In Luke 14:15-24, Jesus speaks of a great supper that many were invited to attend, yet in verse 18, “*they all with one consent began to make excuse.*” The excuses offered are all “reasonable,” at least to those making them: 1) I bought a field and need to go see it; 2) I bought five yoke of oxen and need to go prove them; 3) I married a wife and therefore cannot come. Yet in verse 21, the master was **angry** and says in verse 24, “*none of those men that were bidden shall*

taste of my supper.” How confident are you in your excuses?

When Jesus responded to the scribe’s question about which commandment is first of all (*Mark 12:28-31*), He answered, “*thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.*” Does my attendance pattern manifest my obedience to this first and greatest commandment, or am I falling short in giving all of myself to God? Attending worship services faithfully is not always easy, but am I willing to sacrifice my leisure time, my rest, or my other interests in order to come and worship God? Jesus states, “*If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me*” (*Lk. 9:23*). Can I do better?

Some may view attendance at worship services simply as a means for what I “*get out of it.*” While COVID may have taught us many lessons, one that some seemed to have learned (erroneously) is that attending worship services is not really that important. After all, with today’s technology I can watch every sermon and hear every Bible class from the comfort of my own home at a time convenient to me. I can listen to and sing along with

acapella music online, so I’m not really missing out on much if I’m not at worship services. However, have you considered what you are not able to **give** when you are absent?

Most of us are familiar with Heb. 10:25, and our responsibility in “*not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is.*” But do we overlook verse 24 which tells us, “*...let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works.*” When I choose to be absent when my brethren are assembling, am I fulfilling my responsibility to consider my brethren and provoke them? Or am I content with simply listening to the sermon or class online because I’m getting “what I need.” Verse 25 goes on to say, “*exhorting one another; and so much the more as ye see the day drawing nigh.*” How much exhorting am I doing for my brethren if I choose to be absent?

May our attendance pattern manifest the love that we must have for our brethren if we genuinely love God. “*...this commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God love his brother also*” (*I Jn. 4:21*). Will you be with your brethren at worship services, and especially the week of our upcoming Gospel Meeting?