

General Topics :: **“I Love Jesus But Not the Church”™ Just Means You Don’t™ Love Jesus by Grayson**

“I Love Jesus But Not the Church”™ Just Means You Don’t™ Love Jesus by Grayson Gilbert - posted by sermon

I find it puzzling that this topic is still up for debate, yet the sentiments of many Western Christians is that you can love Jesus without loving the church. Verbose arguments abound on the church not being confined to a building “that all spaces are sacred and therefore, filled with divine presence. The well-worn argument that the church does not consist of the physical space you occupy while worshipping God, but instead the body of believers, contains just enough truth to lure readers to their inevitable conclusion:

Church attendance is optional. Serving the brethren, again, is optional. Loving the brethren? Still optional. Feeling guilty about not wanting to go to church? Don’t worry about it; that’s the fault of institutionalized religion.

They then do a follow up post called *The Real Reason Evangelicals and Millennials are Leaving the Church*, where again, they pander to what people want to hear. So long as you subject the Scriptures to tokenism and appeal to sentimentalism, people will eat it up. Soon enough they’ll be in the woods celebrating “ecommunion” with Coca Cola and cookies.

I’m not denying that some churches simply aren’t churches per the definition of Scripture; what I am speaking against is the underwhelming opinion that you can somehow be part of the universal church and reject the local church, or that the local church is made up of you and your family on a Sunday morning as you lay in bed and reject communion with the saints and sitting under the proclamation of the Scriptures.

The reality is that the entire New Testament presupposes you are going to be part of an institutionalized, local church. People wish to delve into semantics and separate the location from the body of believers, but that isn’t the point of defining what the local church is. Yes, the building could be demolished overnight and the church would still exist “however, that local church still meets in time and space. That local church still has a designated structure made up of elders, teachers, deacons, evangelists, etc., for the edification of the whole man until the saints reach unity in the faith and the knowledge of Christ (Eph. 4:11-16). The church is made up of living stones that are being built up as a spiritual house into a holy priesthood for service to Christ (1 Pt. 2:5) and they are members of one another (Rom. 12:5; Eph. 4:25, 1 Cor. 12:12-27), and are present within a local community.

Even still, the author of Hebrews indicates that we are to not forsake gathering with God’s people because of the hope we have in Christ, so that we might encourage one another to perseverance in the faith (Heb. 10:19-25). The idea being presented is that the confidence we have to enter the presence of God through Christ, being able to hold to the hope we profess without wavering, and drawing near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance, is directly related to the notion that we are intimately connected to this local body.

What’s more than all of this is that a local church is not a church without some semblance of this God-given functionality and structure. A group of three people without the headship of elders and teachers is not the church. They are part of the global church “but they are not a substitute for the local church. There are always exceptions to the rule, yet the exception does not prove the rule; special provisions do not institute a normative ecclesiology. The text never presupposes the rugged individualism indicative of American Evangelicalism.

We know Paul was prohibited from communing with the saints whilst in chains. We also know that many churches are confined to secret rendezvous, have gone without official teachers/elders for a period, etc. No one is speaking of things literally barring another from being able to be among the saints and sit under the Word, or a temporary, ecclesial detriment; it is the willful forsaking of the brethren and the eschewing of God’s good gifts.

While there are things worthy of introspection from the church “I don’t believe this to be one of them. There aren’t a host of reasons why people are fleeing from the church in droves. There aren’t many reasons why professing Christians are leaving the church. There may be healthy reasons why one leaves a particular local church, but when it comes to reasons why one leaves the church entirely, there’s really only one: they don’t love the church. Synonymously, they don’t love Christ.

The apostle John is about as straightforward as one can get in saying that the way children of God and children of the devil can be distinguished is that children of the devil are those who eschew righteousness and the love of the brethren (1

Jn. 3:10). This isn't some strange new teaching ' it is what they (and we) have heard from the beginning (v. 11-13). If that's not clear enough, he then says that anyone who hates his brother remains in death and is a murderer (vv. 14-15). Furthermore, he condemns mere tokenism toward brotherly love; one must demonstrate this love in action and truth (v. 18). Much like the author of Hebrews, John maintains that by these things we will not only have knowledge that we are children of God, but assurance of our salvation (vv. 19-20).

The modern notion that you can worship God just as much by yourself as you can within the confines of the church is patently false and anti-biblical. It flies in the face of the Scripture's teaching on the importance of the body of Christ, the proper structure of the church, and the goodness of the spiritual gifts that God has bestowed for the benefit of His people.

I sense that if one were to have a conversation with the apostle John on this, it would go similarly:

Objector: But what if the church damaged me?

John: Go to church.

O: But what if people hurt me at one point?

J: Go to church.

O: But what if I feel like I connect more with God in nature than with people in the church?

J: Go to church.

O: But what if I'm

J: Are you dying?

O: No.

J: Are you imprisoned?

O: No.

J: Is there anything prohibiting you from going to church?

O: Well, I feel like

J: You can't love God without loving His people and loving His people means that you die to self, bear with one another in love, and obey the commands of Scripture for your personal and corporate edification, in order that God might be glorified. Go. To. Church.

While the church can often be a motley group, Christ has enduring patience with His bride. His death accomplished her redemption, yet we live in this eschatological tension wherein we still sin against one another. In the love of the brethren, sin can be properly dealt with through a biblical, disciplinary process, or simply in overlooking the offense of a brother or sister whose actions are not indicative of normal behavior. In similar character to our Savior, we must be willing to bear with one another, in love and patience, as we are all progressively sanctified. I understand deep wounds can be caused ' yet the Scriptures give us no option to withhold forgiveness from an individual, or forsake the assembling of God's people. Summarily stated, loving God is inseparable from loving those within the household of faith. You cannot demonstrate a love for the brethren by abdicating from fellowship with and participation in service to one another.

read more: <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/chorusinthechaos/loving-jesus-not-church/>

Re: "I Love Jesus But Not the Church"™ Just Means You Don't Love Jesus by Grayso - posted by docs (), on:
/While the church can often be a motley group, Christ has enduring patience with His bride./

Amen! I've been suspicious for a while of much modern church bashing from overly critical saints who make their separation sound so all spiritual. It's easier to separate and criticize.

Go to church.

Re: - posted by drifter (), on: 2019/1/27 8:04

I agree, but going to a dead church is spiritually dangerous. "Every church is either supernatural or superficial." -Ravenhill

Re: - posted by docs (), on: 2019/1/27 8:54

Yes there are dead churches but the best solution it seems would be to find a live church instead of withdrawing from all and becoming a pretty much one size fits all church basher. Not that you have done that but many have and continue to do so.

Re: - posted by drifter (), on: 2019/1/27 18:01

David, I completely agree. I can't presently find a church in the city I live in where the manifest presence of God is, so my church is Times Square Church.

I do love the body of Christ, very much. I pray for the churches in my city, that they would be revived. But I have been in churches where the pastor is not born again and none of the congregants are either. No love for truth, no fervent love for Jesus, just a dry 5 point sermon on how to live a better life.

Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2019/1/29 10:44

Quote:
-----dead churches

a live church

It seems like we're creating an unsolvable challenge here because:

- 1) We use the term "church" for both "old wineskin" and "new wineskin" worship structures. Jesus presented them as two distinct worship systems.
- 2) We try to squeeze spiritual entities into "old wineskin" entities.

Can we keep the two distinct while being authentic within both systems?

Re: "I Love Jesus But Not the Church"™ Just Means You Don't Love Jesus by Grayso - posted by EAGLEFLY

Brother Greg,

I believe that many will not like what I am going to say however as a seasoned believer I have learned about the enemies ways.. I will obey what I believe He has showed me as an intercessor.

If he can keep us alone he has us..

I learned from an elder in a church years ago..

"There were pictures of JESUS with a crook as a shepherd" He used the crook to keep all us dumb sheep in line.. IF the enemy can get a sheep alone the wolf can get him.. If the sheep stay together they can help one another. God's heart I believe is Unity Psa 133.. Seeing the commonalities. Leaders must be accountable and we are not to sit under a teacher or pastor who is not teaching the Truth Gen/Rev.. There are many out there today who are preaching as David

Wilkerson said an accommodating Gospel.. IM not stating that.. There are still some good churches out there who are not compromising and standing on the word. Pastor Carter Conlin had an excellent word the other night in his Tue night live prayer tscnyc.rg.

1 chron 11:22-24

1 Chronicles 11:22-24 New International Version (NIV)

22 Benaiah son of Jehoiada, a valiant fighter from Kabzeel, performed great exploits. He struck down Moab's two mightiest warriors. He also went down into a pit on a snowy day and killed a lion. 23 And he struck down an Egyptian who was five cubits tall. Although the Egyptian had a spear like a weaver's rod in his hand, Benaiah went against him with a club. He snatched the spear from the Egyptian's hand and killed him with his own spear. 24 Such were the exploits of Benaiah son of Jehoiada; he too was as famous as the three mighty warriors.

We are warriors and we need to get the lions in the snow..

If we do it alone we will fail. There is power with agreement and with each other..

. didnt satan think he was better than GOD???. He got kicked out because of PRIDE.. Thinking he didnt need GOD nor the others..

We are all dumb sheep and we need one another .. The is no perfect church as soon as I get there its imperfect..

Jesus is the head of the church..?? IF we cut off his head.. where are we.. We cannot love JESUS and not love the church. IS GOD still not GOD?? I believe He is cleaning up His church.. Let it start with me.. LORD for I am a dumb sheep and need your crook to help me stay with other sheep for protection. JESUS sent them out two by two. I have learned that character is over gifting.. Just my thoughts..

I agree with you Brother Greg.. If you LOVE JESUS you love His church with all her spots and wrinkles because we are the church and He will iron out all the wrinkles in me and you before He comes back. He never gave up on me so We I believe cannot give up on Him.

In Christ

Sister Frannie

Re: "I Love Jesus But Not the Church"™ Just Means You Don't Love Jesus by Grayso - posted by MichaelLiao

Dear Brother Greg,

Grace and Peace to you, dear brother. I have always appreciated the posts you have written and the wisdom shared in this website over the years, and the one time I have been able to speak to you over the phone years ago through our connection with Brother Mark Greening. My hope is that in this post I may be able to shed some light into this conversation and perhaps be able to find some common ground over this topic.

As someone who has been in the insitutional church for around 8 years I have seen many trends happen. Though I agree that the Church should be under biblical grounds and therefore being within the Body is not optional, one of the issues I have seen is the rising identification with political polarization, specifically with right-wing politics. There is a dissilusionment over what the term Evangelical even means anymore considering its activity in politics during and after Francis Schaeffer's time (1970s and 80s). Especially after Schaeffer's book "A Christian Manifesto" was written which led to the bombings of abortion clinics. One has to ask what has become of our faith in Christ if we are willing to kill over an issue? Because of the political polarization, people in the Church now are forced into a dichotomy of "you are either in my camp, or in this camp!" With 80 percent of White Evangelicals voting for President Trump who has espoused views of racism, boasts in sexual assaulting women, and marrying 3 times - the reason why they voted for him was because he was proclaiming that he is pro-life and for religious freedom, and therein lies the hypocrisy. Claiming to stand for biblical values while seemingly overlooking the unbiblical and ungodly character of this man. While somebody like Obama who was faithfully married to his wife and dedicated to his family, Evangelicals were not willing to pray for him. The point is - all political leaders have sins and flaws, and thus we should not make an idol out of them in the name of Christianity. The question that both believers and unbelievers are asking is how can Christians support this kind of stuff? The insitutional church in the way it is structured seems to have gotten sheep to line up for Trump, and that does not allow for any sort of critical thinking or healthy dialogue to take place in the Church. And this is one of the major reasons why people who are not Christian ask, "what is this what Christianity is about?" As much as this article is saying that even though Christians should go to Church despite being hurt or dissillusioned, many insitutional churches give very little reason for people to come back because there is a lack of responsibility on the leaderships part to even admit fault. Instead the person who has a different viewpoint or a victim of hurt gets blamed. Basically, in the insitutiional church you have to tow the company line. Is it not often that when sexual assault takes place in the insitutional church that leaders would either downplay the situation or blame the victim? I mean I think we can all learn from Rachael Denhollander when she talked about how sexual assault is not taken seriously in the church. Because an insitutional environment contains power structures and bureaucracy like a normal business being run, and in that environment who is accountable to anyone? Even in th

The Church I go to here in Toronto, Canada, the hateful, judgmental, and Trump-like rhetoric I hear from believers is very similar to that of the States. For the person who has been hurt, that person feels like it is not a safe place - not because they are being rebellious or treating church as optional. It's because they are confused about what they see in Christ and what they see in the Church. What they see in the Church is political power, victim blaming, and therefore not a reflection of Christ Himself who said, "A bruised reed He will not break and a smoldering wick He will not put out." The compassion of Jesus seems to be missing in the midst of all the loud noises and fuss believers seem to be making. Whenever I hear conservative Christians railing about liberals, there doesn't seem to be an expression of love and compassion for those whom they disagree with. I will also say this about the liberals with their sometimes sanctimonious railings against conservatives. And ultimately the blame goes to the pastoral staff and boards because they allow this kind of rhetoric to happen. Or, they are the ones preaching this kind of rhetoric to the congregation. Jesus treated people as human beings, not as categories to be dismissed from a Kingdom Perspective.

Granted, I believe that those who have been disillusioned by church should come into the Church to be the light and change that they are searching for. That there should be a responsibility on their part. But, I believe the leadership also has a responsibility to repent of their ways, apologize, and actually see people for the creation that they are in Christ so that people will be given a reason to trust the Church again. If there is not any repentance on the leadership's part, then Christians will go into Church after Church after Church only to feel that they've walked into the same den of lions over and over again - being chewed up and spat out over and over again. I mean would you stay or go back into an abusive environment over and over again simply because "The Bible says so"? That would be very rigid and it does not allow for any grace or understanding in the matter. If a woman is being abused by her husband, should we just simply say "The Bible says this, so therefore go back to your husband and be faithful." I have seen cases like this where things can go horribly wrong because it is setting that woman up for more harm.

Brother Greg, my prayer is that this post I have written is a gracious and gentle consideration and that there is no animosity towards you or anyone else in this forum. I am still part of an institutional church here, but I have been quite saddened by what I have seen. I have even engaged individuals who have left the institutional church to listen to what they have to say about their experience, and not for the motive and agenda to try and debate them, to dismiss them, to judge them because they think differently. But to hear them out as Christ would. That is what I believe humility to be - to put yourself aside for the sake of others. The question I must ask is what does it mean to be Christ to those who have De-Churched? How can I love these people without any expectation? Some of these people I have engaged are still genuine believers and by discerning their lives I can tell that Christ truly dwells within them. The fellowship I have with them is phenomenal. Their words of encouragement in Christ are of eternal value and I cannot be more thankful to God for their roles in my life. I hope what I have written is a consideration for all my brethren here on SermonIndex, a ministry which has been a miracle in my Christian life when I was looking for God. May grace and peace envelop us all in the knowledge of our God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit!

Your Servant in Christ's Name,

- Michael Liao

Q&A with Frank Viola: Does the Church care about the poor? - posted by MichaelLiao (), on: 2019/2/16 7:17

Q&A with Frank Viola: Does the Church care about the poor?

<https://relevantmagazine.com/article/281/>

Re: brother Michael - posted by JFW (), on: 2019/2/16 8:52

That's an interesting judgment you make of the current POTUS,... it seems that King David would also fall short of your standards considering he committed adultery, fathered a child by this action, and of course had one of his most faithful servants murdered, and yet God didn't give up on him:)

Or Paul, being a murderous, racist, bigoted Pharisee seems to also come up short in your measure... yet again, God didn't give up on him :)

I do understand the point you are making regarding the alignment of the church, however isn't it just an excuse considering the church has been aligned with a political system since Augustine?

Romans 13:1 Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God. 2 So anyone who rebels against authority is rebelling against what God has in

stituted, and they will be punished. 3 For the authorities do not strike fear in people who are doing right, but in those who are doing wrong. Would you like to live without fear of the authorities? Do what is right, and they will honor you. 4 The authorities are God's servants, sent for your good. But if you are doing wrong, of course you should be afraid, for they have the power to punish you. They are God's servants, sent for the very purpose of punishing those who do what is wrong.

It seems you accuse the current while excusing the former (POTUS).... both were placed by God and just like you and I, neither are perfect-

But to suggest that a political administration is ever an excuse to not participate as an active member of Christ's body is, at best, a misguided/misinformed position. Rather we are commissioned to pray for both the church and the political leaders, being all the more active in the church (where God allows) leading by example of following Jesus :)

We serve God, and He has instituted a means for us to advance the kingdom on all sides,... the church :) Most all political grievance is just flesh, save a formal government mandate that inhibits or prevents us from worship/serving God.

Re: - posted by DougRenz (), on: 2019/2/16 15:04

I live now in the south in America, where a high population goes to a "church" and calls themselves a Christian. I have been a believer for almost 36 years and been to a lot of "churches", but the reality is more how do you know the people you go to church with are true "believers" in Jesus? anybody can call themselves a Christian. So how do you know what kind of church to go to? any? just for the sake of going to church is not good enough. The current state of America and the church has been commingled with a plethora of doctrinal positions and beliefs, confusing to say the least. Yes go to church, but make sure you're a believer first.