

## Is It a Sin to Miss Just One Service?

*Vestal Chaffin, “Dead Yet Speaketh” (1913-97)*

Men have always been prone to want to classify their sins as “little sins” or “big sins” according to man’s standard. If society looks with contempt upon a certain sin, men are prone to classify it as a “big sin.” On the other hand, if society has accepted a certain sin, men (and sometimes members of the church) are likely to classify it as a “little sin”, if they regard it as sin at all.

Many members of the church today are like some who were in the church at Corinth, concerning whom Paul said, “But they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you” (2 Cor. 10:12-13).

Among the sins of many professed Christians is the neglect to attend the various services of the church. They are wont to

classify this as a “little sin”, if they regard it as a sin at all. In fact, many do not think it is a sin for them to miss many services of the Lord’s church! It is not an uncommon thing for some members of the church to take off on the Lord’s day and go visiting, hunting, fishing, traveling, or attend some athletic contest, and miss all the services of the Lord’s day, and go on as though nothing had happened. They reason “it is not wrong to miss a Lord’s day worship once in awhile.” Our question is, “Is it a sin to deliberately miss just one service?”

Why concern ourselves with such a question? Many brush such questions as our subject aside as though there were no teaching in God’s word about it. There are many reasons why we should be concerned about this. Let us consider some of them.

**We are admonished by approved apostolic example to assemble ourselves together in worship and service to God.**

Notice these Scriptures: “And they continued daily with one accord in the temple...” (Acts 2:46). “And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ” (Acts 5:42). “If therefore the whole church be come together in one place...” (1 Cor. 14:23). “For if there come unto your assembly a man...” (Jas. 2:2). These passages teach that the early church assembled, and this serves as a pattern for Christians today.

**They assembled sometimes daily (Acts 2:46; 5:42).** They assembled regularly on the first day of the week to “break bread”, or “eat the Lord’s supper in remembrance” of Christ who died for us all (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:20-25). There is a blessing for the Christian in eating the Lord’s supper that cannot be received in any other way, at any other time, or at any other place. This is why a Christian should not miss a service of this kind.

**We are admonished not to forsake “the assembling of ourselves**

together, as the manner of some is” (Heb. 10:25). The expression “assembling” suggests that the demands of the passage are not met by any “one assembly”, but that we must assemble as regularly as the church meets.

**When we miss a service of the church, we miss meeting with our Lord.**

Jesus said, “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Mt. 18:20). Most people would not think of failing to keep an appointment with a fellow man, but think nothing about breaking an appointment with our Lord by failing to assemble with His people. Not only do they miss “meeting” with our Lord, but the reason our Lord is in the midst of those who are “gathered together in my name” is to bless them, and to strengthen them. What a loss one suffers when he deliberately fails to assemble with God’s people!

**When Christians deliberately miss a service of God’s people, they are a**

**bad example to others.** “... be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12). “In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works” (Titus 2:7). Our Lord intended that everyone of His children should be a model or pattern after which other disciples should mold their lives, in fidelity and loyalty to Christ.

**When Christians deliberately miss a service of the Lord’s church, they are neglecting the salvation of their souls.** “How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him” (Heb. 2:3). The various services of the church are essential to the development of our souls for the salvation of God.

To sum up what one does when he deliberately misses a service, note the following:

1) He ignores and

tramples under foot all the apostolic examples to assemble regularly.

2) He misses the blessing that comes through eating of the Lord’s supper, intended to give him spiritual strength.

3) He tramples under foot the command to not forsake the “assembling of ourselves together.”

4) He ignores his appointment with the Lord.

5) He sets a bad example before other disciples.

6) He is neglecting the “great salvation” provided by our Lord.

Now, how many times can one do all these things, even in one act, and not commit sin? If he does not sin when he misses one service and does all these things, then how many times does he have to miss before it is sin? The fact is, when one deliberately misses one service of the Lord’s church, he has transgressed God’s divine law, “for sin is the transgression of the law” (1 Jn. 3:4).

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