

Lonely, but Never Alone

Chip Brogden

"Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me ..." (II Timothy 4:17).

There are many in the Body of Christ who are in transition between "going" to church and "being" the Church ... The more in tune with the Lord we become, the more dissatisfied and uncomfortable we become with what is being said and done in His Name. Yet, there is an uncomfortable pause between where we used to be and where we are called to be. It is a lonely time in which we will be misunderstood by many that have not seen what we have seen.

What God is impressing upon many of us who are in-between the church as a building and the church as a lifestyle is how to walk *ALONE* ... God would have us learn to fellowship with Christ, even if it means to take the lonely path.

Many times the desire to find other "like-minded believers" is not a spiritual desire. It is rather our emotion, which longs to be with people who understand us ... [Yet we] must know Christ as Fellowship. Abiding in Him, connected to the Head, [we] maintain oneness with the rest of the Body ...

Some are able to maintain a sweet spirit so long as they are in fellowship with other believers. But when God allows that fellowship to be interrupted, observe how quickly that sweet spirit turns sour. They will even acknowledge their poor state and say things like, "My temper has become awful. It is because I have been out of church. I must go back this Sunday." Then they will go back to church, feel uplifted, and the sweet spirit returns. Sadly, this is the experience of a majority of people who have not learned to take Christ as their Life. Is this walking in the Spirit? It is not ...

Let us remember that Christ's Body is a spiritual Body. Being in the physical presence of other members does not make us more of a member, and being removed from the physical presence of other members does not make us any less a member. Of course, the exact opposite is true for those meeting together as an institution: without their physical presence and support they lose place as a member; but not Christ's Body, the Church. We are not more or less of a member by reason of our physical contact or lack of physical contact with one another.

We may thirst for fellowship not so much to edify the Body as to be edified ourselves – a mindset carried over from when we used to “go to church” to “be fed” once or twice a week. If this is the case, it is no wonder that God would have us look to Him alone as our edification and learn to draw upon Him before placing us in close proximity with others. One weakness of the institutional church is that the majority of members are coming to receive, to be edified, to be encouraged, to be fed. It is all “take,” and very little “give.” Hence, there is little Life.

When we learn to draw upon Christ as our Source we will have abundance to give away. Fellowship with others cannot replace our daily abiding in Him. If we gather together in the Name of the Lord, yet outside of Christ, we will have much religious carryings-on, but little Life to impart to one another. God would have us look to His Son as our Life, and as we do, we find our need is met. Then, when we gather together, we are givers and not takers, and with all giving out of Christ, we have the blessing we sought.

Let us press into Christ with all our heart, and not be discouraged if we find ourselves temporarily without the fellowship and comfort of our brothers and sisters. Though we are lonely, we are never alone.

The School of Christ

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