

## EMPTY PEWS

NEGLECT IN ASSEMBLING FOR WORSHIP AND STUDY IS ONE OF THE MOST PREVALENT SINS IN THE CHURCH TODAY. CHECK ALMOST ANY CHURCH BULLETIN AND YOU WILL NOTE A FORTY TO FIFTY PERCENT INCREASE IN ATTENDANCE FROM SUNDAY MORNING TO WEDNESDAY NIGHT. WHY? A FEW ARE ABSENT DUE TO AGE AND PHYSICAL INFIRMITY. HOWEVER, THE MAJORITY EVIDENTLY HAD RATHER RELAX, RECREATE AND BE ENTERTAINED BY THE HOLLYWOOD SET.

THE EMPTY PEW IS A DISPLAY OF THE LAODICEAN SPIRIT. THE “SUNDAY MORNING ONLY” CROWD IS CHARACTERIZED BY LUKEWARM DEVOTION. THEIR THIMBLE-SIZE CAPACITY FOR SPIRITUALITY IS QUICKLY FILLED. THEIR COMMITMENT TO THINGS DEVINE IS EXHAUSETED IN ONE HOUR PER WEEK. LIKE ISRAEL OF OLD, THEY VIEW THE WORSHIP ASSEMBLY WITH A SPIRIT OF BOREDOM, DECLARING, “WHAT A WEARINESS IT IS” (MALACHI 1:13). THEY VIEW THEMSELVES AS GLOWING WITH SPIRITUAL HEALTH WHILE GOD REGARDS THEM AS “WRETCHED, AND MISERABLE AND POOR AND BLIND, AND NAKED.” (REVELATION 3:17)

THE EMPTY PEW IS AN EXPRESSION OF CONTEMPT FOR THE BLOOD OF CHRIST. IT POINTS AN ACCUSING FINGER TOWARD THE SPIRITUALITY TEPID MEMBER WHO HAS EXCHANGED THE CROSS FOR A LAZY BOY RECLINER AND A TELEVISION PROGRAM. GOLGOTHA HAS COMPLETELY LOST ITS MEANING TO ONCE-REDEEMED SOULS WHOSE SPIRITUAL THIRST CAN BE QUENCHED IN A WEEKLY HOUR OF WORSHIP. IN CONTRAST, THE DEVOTED CHRISTIAN WILL DEVELOP, THE ATTITUDE OF THE SISTER WHO DECALRED “I CAN HARDLY WAIT FOR SUNDAYS AND WEDNESDAY NIGHTS!” THE ASSEMBLIES OF THE WORSHIP AND STUDY ARE MARVELOUSLY WONDERFUL OCCASIONS. THEY EDIFY, STRENGTHEN AND ENCOURAGE.

SOMETHING IS TRAGICALLY WRONG WITH THE CHRISTIAN WHO CAN NEGLECT THEM WITHOUT COMPUNCTION OF CONSCIENCE OR A SENSE OF LOSS. GOD STILL SPEAKS CLEARLY THROUGH THE VOICE OF THE WRITER OF HEBREWS, CONCERNING OUR ATTITUDES TOWARD THE ASSEMBLY: “AND LET US CONSIDER ONE ANOTHER IN ORDER TO STIR UP LOVE AND GOOD WORKS, NOT FORSAKING THE ASSEMBLING 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 IS 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 JUGEMENT, AND FIERY INDIGNATION WHICH WILL DEVOUR THE ADVERSARIES.” (HEBREWS 10:24-27)

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VIA FAIRHOPE BULLETIN