

Wednesday Bible Class

Maybe the worst attended assembly of the church is mid-week Bible class. I have often wondered why. I personally love all the Bible classes the congregation offers and whether I was teaching or not I would not miss one of them. But back to mid-week classes. For many years people did not argue that classes were not mandatory but in recent years more and more people are beginning to argue that the only time we “have to attend” is the Sunday morning “main” assembly where we take the Lord’s Supper. They say all other assemblies are optional and that Hebrews 10:25 only applies to the one “main” assembly and that is it. So I thought it might behoove us to take a look at this verse and see what it really says.

Hebrews 10:23–25 (NASB95) — 23 *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; 24* *and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 25* *not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.*

I have often said we must look at the context to help us understand what a verse is trying to tell us. So what is the Hebrew writer trying to teach us, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, in these few verses?

Note first in verse 23 he encourages us to “hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering.” This is very difficult in the hustle and bustle world around us. Everyday of our life we face many challenges to our faith. That is the reason we are warned to “*Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*” (1 Peter 5:8, NASB95) So knowing this we need to be prepared each and every day to face an adversary that is out to destroy us if he can. And of course all this is possible because God is faithful, “*God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*” (1 Corinthians 1:9, NASB95)

This will bring us to verse 24 where we are told “*let us consider how to stimulate one another*” For a moment consider that word “stimulate,” Webster’s says “to excite to activity or growth or to greater activity.” No Christian is an island unto him/herself. God has given us the greatest support group known to man and it is called “the church.” Though we are

individually “Christians” we cannot be Christians separate and apart from the collective which is the church. “*So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.*” (Acts 2:41, NASB95) “*praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.*” (Acts 2:47, NKJV) Thus the command to “stimulate one another.” So we are to excite each other to grow in love and good deeds. How difficult is this for us to do when we just see each other one hour a week?

Now that we have the context let us look at the verse that seems to be their justification for their idea that we only “have” to meet with the church one time on the first day of the week. Somehow Bible classes are not mandatory. First let us look at the word “forsaking” it comes from a Greek word which means “to forsake, abandon, leave in straits, or helpless.” (Vines Expository Dictionary) The English word forsake means to “abandon, desert, leave, leave high and dry, turn one's back on, cast aside, break (up) with; jilt, strand, leave stranded, leave in the lurch, throw over; informal walk out on, run out on, dump, ditch, can.” (This definition comes from the Dictionary on my computer) So we are not talking about someone who is sick or has to work, but someone who purposely chooses not to attend that which can be defined as an assembly of the church. What is being spoken of is “our own assembling together,” what assembly is this talking about? Without any modification it could only mean whenever the church assembled they were not to “forsake” that assembly. To get anything else out of what is written requires modification of the text. It becomes necessary to add to the text something like “our own assembling together on the first day of the week.” But of course the verse does not say that nor does it even imply it. If we just take the verse for what it says when the church assembles and we forsake that assembly it would appear that we are in violation of this command.

So when you can attend Sunday morning Bible class or Sunday evening services or even Wednesday night Bible class and you don't you are “forsaking the assembling of ourselves” together just as you do when you miss Sunday morning services and you could otherwise be there.