

How Important is it to  
"FORSAKE NOT THE ASSEMBLING..."

Hebrews 10:25

One might as well ask how important is it to please God? It might be said according to the following passages that pleasing God is and should be the greatest desire of every Believer.

*"...without faith it is impossible to please God..." ( Hebrews 11:6) "am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God" (Galatians 1:10) "...trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:10)*

Yet the desire to please God has often been subverted by the desire to please and appease men. We become afraid to offend man's senses or to be misconstrued by the general populace for our actions. Their accusation is you don't care for our safety or your faith in God is intruding on our self-preservation and putting us in danger!

However, trials and difficulty come into our lives not to get us to run from God but to get us to run to Him! It reveals what you truly & genuinely believe and trust in! Deuteronomy 8:2 states, *"God has led you in the wilderness (a dangerous place might I add)... that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart."* Moses was inundated with indictments when he obeyed God's command such as; you've made us look bad in Pharaoh's sight... and you've put our life in jeopardy (Exodus 5:21), followed as well by intimidating questions like, *"Why have you brought us up from Egypt, to kill us and our children?"* (Exodus 17:3) And *"Have you taken us away to die in the wilderness?"* (Exodus 14:11) NO! *"DO NOT FEAR! Stand by and see the salvation of the Lord which He will accomplish for you today!"* (Exodus 14:13) was God's response through Moses.

No doubt it is clear that God has ordained and established all authority in our lives (Romans 13). However, all authority, save God's, has its limitations and boundaries. Jesus put it this way, *"render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's"* (Matthew 22:21). Therefore, when God commanded His disciples to *"Go into all the world and preach the Gospel,"* (Mark 16:15), it was a command which had no stipulation or clause to allow for extenuating circumstances or governmental interpretation. As in the case when authority (the leaders in Jerusalem in Acts 4:18) over stepped their boundaries by forbidding the disciples to *"speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus"*, it was not the disciples resisting authority but their accusers. For this reason the disciples declare we must "give heed to God" (Acts 4:19) which always takes precedence over giving heed to man!

In the same way, God has declared His resurrection a holy day not only making it the first day of the week (John 20:1, 19) but a day in which His Spirit would come upon His people (i.e. 50 days after Passover, Passover that year being on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, 49 days later a Sabbath day... therefore the 50<sup>th</sup> day being the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week- "pente"= 50 pentecost, Acts 2:1). This day therefore became "the day" in which the church would gather together. Acts 20:7 says,

*“on the first day of the week, when we were gathered together...”* Furthermore, *“the first day of every week”* would become the time when the brethren would be called upon to care for one another. (1 Corinthians 16:2) Commands would be given to those who would gather together on this day such as *“greet one another with a holy kiss (or physical embrace in the imperative- 1 Corinthians 16:20)”* and *“employ [your spiritual gift] in serving one another”* (1 Peter 4:10). It is important to note that neither can be appropriately fulfilled while apart! (Note: Romans 1:11,12) Yet the need for the Body to gather together on this day was not only to celebrate the resurrection of their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and not only to unite the Body of Christ in serving one another but to declare the supremacy of their Lord in their lives as they boldly proclaimed Jesus to be above all *“both in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities”* (Colossians 1:16) testifying unapologetically that *“at the name of Jesus every knee will bow,... every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord...”* (Philippians 2:10,11) No where is this declaration expressed so emphatically as in the command Jesus gives His disciples.

This command is introduced in Matthew 6:33 as Christ compels His disciples to *“Seek ye first His kingdom and His righteousness.”* As true Believers we are to be ever and always committed to put Him first as we avow to *“hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering”*. Hebrews 10:23-25 gives practical application to Christ command to “seek first” in the mandate *“not forsaking our own assembling together.”* This command is clearly without stipulation or exception. It should also be noted that this command was written at a time when one might severely jeopardize life & limb as well as the safety of family and friends! Note: Hebrews 10:32-34 interjects words and phrases like *“great conflict of sufferings... made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulation... accepting joyfully the seizure of your property.”* All of this was recorded that we might understand that meeting together was not without great cost. Their decision and action to gather together would not only distinguish them as faithful followers of Christ, it would make them identifiable to their tormentors and recognizable by their assailants. Thus the moment they physically came together in the place they were known to meet as well as the time they would always gather placed them in a most conspicuous predictable position making them appear, from man’s perspective, both vulnerable and foolish. Yet in this setting, Hebrews 10:35 warns us, *“Do not throw away your confidence which has a great reward.”* It goes on to say, *“If we shrink back God has no pleasure in us!”* (Hebrews 10:38) To put it another way, without faith or when we don’t put our trust in Him by putting Him first, it is impossible to please Him!

The world has never understood why God’s people do what they do! 1 Peter 4:4 says it is surprising to them that we don’t follow the beat of their drum. So what! We don’t seek to please men! We have been given the opportunity of a lifetime to declare our faith – don’t throw it away! Please God!