“What Do You Offer?” (A Look At The Social Gospel Buffet)

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday October 7th, 2018

Text: Rev. 21:3-7

# Intro

1. Many people, when looking for a church to attend, ask, “What do you offer?”
	1. Should be asking, “What can I offer to the Lord’s church?” (Eph. 2:19-22; 4:14-16)
	2. Should be asking, “What does Christ offer me?” (Rev. 21:3-7)
2. Many people often leave disappointed – we apparently do not offer what they were looking for.
	1. Many people who ask “What do you offer?” are looking for a buffet line of options to choose from, from daycare to entertainment, from food bank to social clubs! (“The Social Gospel Buffet Line!”) – *I Tim. 4:1-3; II Tim. 4:3-4: People will no longer look for truth!*
3. We establish criteria for many of the things we look for in life:
	1. Boys dream of the perfect car
	2. Girls dream of the perfect wedding
	3. Men and women dream of the perfect spouse
	4. Some try to find the “perfect church”
4. What criteria do we use when looking for the church Jesus died to build and save?
5. How should/do we answer the question posed, “What do you offer?”

# What Many Are Looking For

1. Social activities:
	1. They want a YMCA with a little Scripture thrown in.
		1. Many churches boast of their softball or volleyball team and community bazaars (and events).
		2. They want a Ladies Slimnastics course and lessons on dieting.
		3. They are looking for a gym, sauna, dining room, and daycare.
	2. Faithful of the O.T. & N.T. looked for something else in their meeting places:
2. *Heb. 11:38:* The heroes of faith of the O.T. were “wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.”
3. Mt. 8:20: The foxes & birds had homes but Jesus had nowhere to lay His head – He didn’t promise His followers comfort, let alone fun & frolic!
4. *Acts 20:20:* History records that the early Christians often met in caves, tombs, catacombs and met “publicly” and “from house to house.”
5. Social contacts:
	1. They want to meet the right people.
		1. It is often said, “There’s no better place than a church to refresh the soul and make a deal.”
		2. Politicians take advantage of this every election year. They attend services with the “common people” so as to appear pious and earn a vote or two.
		3. There are those who look to attend somewhere depending on who they could meet. (Heavily taught by the “Prosperity Gospel” – Focus is on material wealth)
	2. *Mt. 10:22:* “You will be hated by all because of My name…”
		1. I Cor. 6:9-11: Early church was made up of former prostitutes, idol worshippers, adulterers, homosexuals, thieves, and conmen!
		2. *Gal. 3:28:* When gathered together, we are one in Christ and fellow heirs.
		3. *Acts 10:34-35:* God shows no partiality to one’s social standing – the one who fears Him and does righteousness will be accepted by Him.
		4. Mk. 10:28-30 (Lk. 8:21): Saints become family, and while there are benefits to knowing one another, what we can get out of it is not why we become Christians!
6. The biggest church in town:
	1. They want to get lost in the crowd – Or boast about how big they are!
		1. Someone once told me they would never be part of a church with less than 100 members for that congregation would be poor & couldn’t put on the bazaars and feed the community every quarter like they were used to.
		2. Oral Roberts (1) had the biggest hospital owned by any church (1981-1989).
		3. Robert Schuller’s Crystal Cathedral (2) had the 5th largest pipe organ in the world! (1981-2010)
		4. Jim and Tammy Bakker (3) built the 3rd most-visited theme park in the USA, Heritage USA (1978-1989).
	2. They forget personal responsibility *(Gal. 6:1-10; Js. 1:26-27).*
		1. *Rev. 2:8-11:* The church at Smyrna was proof that it is not the size or material wealth that makes a good church, but the quality of heart – Rich to God!
		2. Complaints: “Not enough young people,” or “Not enough senior citizens,” or “You don’t have enough get-togethers.”
		3. They are not looking for the presence of Christ.
7. Entertainment:
	1. They want to “go home feeling good.”
		1. They want something light, nothing convicting or anything to make them have to do or change something in their lives.
		2. They want something to keep the kids from getting bored.
		3. Some people don’t want to have to think, just go get a warm, fuzzy feeling – they want to go home feeling like they did their religious duty.
		4. They mistake “fellowship” to mean coming together for the purpose of entertainment.
	2. The N.T. church was not in the entertainment business:
		1. *Jn. 4:24:* “God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”
		2. *Acts 2:42:* “They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”
		3. *Col. 3:16:* We are to teach and to admonish each other, to sing and to pray.
		4. Rom. 14:17: The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking (Spiritual nature).
		5. I Cor. 1:10; Phil. 1:27: True fellowship in Christ is to be of one mind striving for the same purpose!
8. A good preacher (speaker):
	1. “One who makes you laugh and cry in the same lesson” *(Old Saying)*
		1. They look for someone with lots of charisma.
		2. “He’s such a good speaker.” But they often mean the ***way*** he spoke, not ***what*** he spoke.
	2. Would they have liked a preacher from Biblical example?
		1. *Ex. 4:10:* Would they have liked Moses? His excuse to God was that he wasn’t a “good speaker.”
		2. I Cor. 2:1-5: Would they have liked Paul? His message was on point: Christ and His crucifixion, and the simplicity of the gospel, without a show or flowery speech. *(Peter? – Acts 2:22-36; Stephen? – Acts 7: Both men accused their audience of murder!)*

### What many people look for in a congregation has nothing to do with spiritual matters!

# What Christ Offers

1. Freedom from sin
	1. *Jn. 8:31-32:* Christ saw sin for what it really is: a cruel master (Rom. 6:16). Truth sets one free!
	2. *Is. 59:1-2:* Sin separates man from God.
	3. *I Pet. 1:18-19:* Christ freed mankind from sin with His blood. *(Jn. 12:32: He would draw all men to Him with His sacrifice – Eph. 2:13-16: Reconciled man to man and to God!)*

#### A way of life – A New Way *(Rom. 6:4)*

* 1. *Mt. 7:13-14:* A narrow way.
	2. *Mt. 20:20-28:* A way of service.
	3. *Jn. 14:27; Phil. 4:6-9:* A way of peace.
	4. *I Pet. 1:14-16:* A way of holiness.

#### Citizenship & Family in His Kingdom

* 1. *Mt. 3:1-2; Col. 1:13:* He came to establish His kingdom.
	2. *Rom. 5:6-11:* Citizenship gives us fellowship with the Father.
	3. *Phil. 3:20:* “For our citizenship is in heaven…”
	4. *Mk. 10:28-30; Rom. 8:14-17; 12:4-5; I Tim. 3:15:* Family the world over! (the church)

#### A home of eternal rest

* 1. *Mt. 11:28-30:* Christ says, “Come unto Me…and I shall give you rest.”
	2. *Jn. 14:1-3:* Jesus said He went away to prepare a home for His followers and that He will return one day to bring them home.
	3. Rev. 21:3-7: He who overcomes will inherit this home in glory! Better than any social events man can offer. ***The ultimate joy offered by Christ!***

E. Christ offers far more than what most people look for in a church: Eternal glory!

#  What Should I Look For?

1. The church for which Jesus died *(Mt. 16:18; Eph. 1:19-23; 5:25)*
2. Sound doctrine (I Tim. 4:6; Titus 1:9; 2:1) – In contrast to those who will no longer “endure sound doctrine” – I Tim. 6:3-5; II Tim. 4:3)
3. Like-minded souls *(I Cor. 1:10; Phil. 1:27; 2:1-5)*
4. People content to be Christians ***only*** *(Acts 11:26)*
5. To do that which is pleasing to God over what is pleasing to me! *(II Cor. 5:9; Col. 1:10)*

# Conclusion

1. We are 2,000 years removed from where the church was founded in Jerusalem. *(Acts 2)*
2. The temptation is to change the ways and reasons we do things and justify it by saying, “We are the modern church.” (Sometimes the church uses the wrong bait; Sometimes people look for the wrong bait! – Jn. 12:32: Jesus would draw all men to Himself)
	1. I Pet. 1:22-25: The word of God does not change. (God’s laws that governed morality apply today as they did in times of old) – *Luke 8:4-15: The seed didn’t change!*
	2. I Pet. 4:11: We have no more right to change the message than the Christians in 1st c.
3. The seed of the kingdom is the word of God *(Lk. 8:11). No room for a buffet line of doctrines!*
	1. Therefore to be a citizen of God’s kingdom, one must obey His seed, which is the gospel.
4. How do we answer, “What do you offer?”
	1. The gospel preached (II Thess. 2:14), righteous living (Titus 2:11-14), and teaching to strengthen our faith (II Tim. 3:16-17) that we might all get to Heaven, the Home of the Soul (Rev. 21:7)!
5. If you are not a Christian, what are you looking for? Only Social events? You’re in the wrong place. Eternal rewards? Repent and be baptized and join His kingdom today!
6. If a Christian with sin in your life, what are you waiting for? Tomorrow may be too late! Repent and be renewed, knowing that sin separates you from God.
7. Whatever your requests, let them be made known ***NOW*** while we stand & sing!

**Sources:**

* 1. Oral Roberts’ City of Faith Medical and Research Center:
	2. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CityPlex_Towers#Completion>
	3. <http://www.voiceofhealing.info/04twogiants/roberts.html>
	4. Robert Schuller’s Crystal Cathedral:
	5. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crystal_Cathedral>
	6. <http://sacredclassics.com/bigpipes.htm>
	7. Jim and Tammy Bakker’s Heritage USA:
	8. <http://io9.com/5882369/jim-bakkers-christian-amusement-park-is-now-a-post-apocalyptic-ghost-town>
	9. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heritage_USA>