

## Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God

### I. Keep looking forward.

1. This has been a sad ending for the Minneapolis Church.
2. Though this is the end of the Minneapolis Church, it should not be the end of your Christian walk.
  - A. Individual churches don't last forever.
  - B. Some get sick and eventually die (**Rev 2:5; Rev 3:1-3**).
  - C. A local church is a body made up of members (**1Co 12:12-14, 27**).
  - D. When a body dies, the remaining members need to be grafted into another body.
  - E. The Minneapolis Church is a body on life support.
  - F. Like the organs of an organ donor, the members can be inserted into another body where they will be beneficial (this is only an analogy -- I am not advocating organ donation).
3. We cannot turn back time, but we can keep marching ahead faithfully.
4. Forget those things which are behind (but learn from them), and press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (**Php 3:13-14**).
5. A just man falls seven times and rises up again (**Pro 24:16**).
  - A. The Lord will not allow a good man to utterly fall (**Psa 37:23-24**).
  - B. God delivered you from a life of sin, false religion, ignorance, and deception when He brought you to faith in Christ and into His church.
  - C. If you remain steadfast and faithful, He will continue to deliver you from this wicked world for the rest of your lives (**Job 5:19-20; 2Co 1:10**).
  - D. This may seem like a dark time in your Christian life, but the Lord will be a light to you (**Mic 7:8**).
  - E. Get up, shake off the dust, and keep serving Jesus Christ in His church (**Isa 52:2**).
  - F. If you are upset with me for leaving to pastor another church, don't let that stop you from presenting your body as a living sacrifice to God in His house (**Rom 12:1**).
  - G. Your commitment to Jesus Christ must not be conditioned on the actions of others.

### II. The church of Jesus Christ is the most important place in the world.

1. The church is the house of God, the pillar and ground of the truth (**1Ti 3:15**).
2. We ought to have a *zeal* for it like Jesus did (**Joh 2:13-17**).
3. There is nothing more important in a Christian's life than to be in God's church.
  - A. A Christian should seek *first* the kingdom of God (**Mat 6:33**).
  - B. We should desire to be in the church all the days of our lives (**Psa 23:6**).
  - C. It should be the one thing that is desired above all else (**Psa 27:4**).
  - D. They who dwell in God's house are blessed (**Psa 84:4**).
  - E. A day in God's house is better than a thousand days anywhere else (**Psa 84:10**).
  - F. God loves His house more than any of ours (**Psa 87:2**).
  - G. The church should be preferred above one's chief joy (**Psa 137:5-6**).
  - H. If you are going to flourish in your Christian life, you must be planted in the house of God (**Psa 92:13-14**).
4. We must never forsake the assembling of ourselves together (**Heb 10:22-25**).
  - A. Forsake v. - 1. *trans.* To deny (an accusation, an alleged fact, etc.). *Obs.* 3. To give up, renounce. a. To give up, part with, surrender (*esp.* something dear or valued).

Passing into sense 4. 4. To abandon, leave entirely, withdraw from; *esp.* to withdraw one's presence and help or companionship from; to desert.

- B. To abandon or withdraw from a local church and not join and assemble with another one is to forsake the assembling of the saints which is sin.
- 5. Sometimes being part of a church means being a nonresident member. Some examples are:
  - A. The Ethiopian eunuch (**Act 2:41-42 c/w Act 8:38-39 c/w Isa 56:3-5**)
  - B. Onesimus (**Col 4:9**)
  - C. Epaphras (**Col 4:12**)
  - D. The saints that were scattered from Jerusalem because of the persecution (**Act 11:19**).
  - E. The men of Israel were required to travel to Jerusalem three times each year to worship at the house of God (**Deu 16:16**).
  - F. They were in effect nonresident members of the church in Jerusalem.
- 6. My advice is that nonresident membership should only be a means to an end.
  - A. Your goal should be to assemble with the saints as much as possible (**Heb 10:25**).
  - B. Assembling with the church a few times or less per year as a nonresident member may meet the minimum requirement, but do you want your service to God to be only the minimum requirement?
  - C. Some people may not be able to move to be a resident member of a church, and if that's the case, then God accepts what you have (**2Co 8:12**).
  - D. But if you can move to be a resident member and you choose not to, then you are missing out on a blessed and rich Christian life that you could have.
  - E. You will get out of your religion what you put into it.

III. If you fervently desire for there to be a church here in Minneapolis again, God might grant it.

- 1. The Jews returned to the land after the Babylonian captivity (**Ezr 1:1-6**).
- 2. They earnestly desired it (**Psa 137:1-6; Neh 1:1-11**).
- 3. The temple (the house of God) was rebuilt after it had been destroyed, but not without much work (**Ezr 2:68-69; Ezr 3:6-13; Ezr 4:4-5; Ezr 6:13-15**).
- 4. In our own generation churches have died and been rebuilt.
  - A. The church in Pennsylvania died in the 1990s, but many of those brethren came back and eventually were constituted into a new church there in 2017.
  - B. The church in Edmonton died in 2012, but the Lord raised up a new church of like-faith in Edmonton in the last couple of years.
- 5. If you want it, ask, seek, and knock earnestly for it (**Mat 7:7-8**).
- 6. In the mean time, join a true church and serve God to the best of your ability.
- 7. If you are faithful with little, God may commit more to you (**Luk 16:10-12**).