

The Church is the Body of Christ

The accident occurred on September 13, 1848 at a construction site on the East Coast of the United States. Phineas Gage, was a foreman who on this day was making a bad decision. You see, he was tamping dynamite into a hole with a huge three and a half foot iron rod that weighed over thirteen pounds. And that's right. You guessed it, the jarring of the rod ignited the explosives and it blew the rod right out of the hole and right through his head.

Phineas was taken to a doctor who immediately plugged the holes in his head and kept him under observation. But amazingly, Phineas Gage was not only still alive, but he was fully conscious. In fact, he experienced no lasting physical handicaps. However, mentally he had totally changed. Phineas Gage was once considered a mild-mannered gentlemen and a very capable foreman. But now he was transformed into an erratic, irritable, and profane man who continually cussed up a storm. And because he was no longer a model employee, he used his status to get a job being displayed as a freak of nature at Barnum's Museum in New York City. And it was only twelve years after his accident that Phineas Gage died in San Francisco.

Now folks, I know this might be a tough question, but how many of you guys would like to have a steel bar go right through your head? You know, something to do on a Saturday afternoon? And people, the reason why I bring up the story of Phineas Gage is because it's one of the most famous examples of what's called TBI or in other words, **Traumatic Brain Injury**. And as you heard with the case of Phineas, when a person has suffered a Traumatic Brain Injury they can either become a totally different person or oftentimes, they get amnesia and totally forget who they are. **But my point is this.** What if I were to tell you that not thousands but **millions** of people **right now** are suffering from TBI and get this, they don't even know it! And here's the kicker. Can you guess who these people are? Hey, that's right! It's the American Church! How do I know? Because we've totally forgotten who we are!

People the facts are, half the time we not only acting like practical atheists by not knowing Who God Is, we're acting like we've got **practical amnesia** by not knowing Who the Church is! We don't even know who we are anymore! And the problem is this. It's not only detrimental to our walk with Christ. It keeps others from believing in Christ. Therefore, to avoid this **atrocity** of Christian's living with practical amnesia by not knowing who

they are, we're going to begin a new study from the Word of God on the people of God entitled, "**Will the REAL Church Please Stand Up?**"

And people, it's pretty simple the **first thing** we need to know about the Church if we're going to stop living like we got practical amnesia is that **The Church is the Body of Christ**. But hey, don't take my word for it. Let's listen to God's.

Colossians 1:15-18 "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy."

Now folks, according to the text, it's pretty simple. Jesus is the Head or Chief Authority over the what? Not only the universe, but what? The Church, right? **Why?** Because we're the **Body of Christ**, right? **And here's my point.** Surely, we all know that, right? I mean, surely every Christian who's ever lived knows that we're the Body of Christ, right? Well, you'd think so, but apparently, we've got some problems.

And the **first problem** we have is we don't say the Church is the Body of Christ. No! We say **The Church is a Building**.

Matthew 16:18 "And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it."

Now folks, there you have it. According to our text we see the very first recorded Christian building program, right? I mean what did Jesus say there? He's going to build Himself a what? A Church, right? And therefore, He's got to be speaking about big ol' building with a steeple and stained glass windows, right? And apparently it's going to be OSHA approved because not even Hell can knock this baby down, you know what I'm saying? And that's right, for those of you who haven't caught on yet, yes I'm being very sarcastic. **Why?** Because people, if you listen to most Christians talk, **that's exactly what they're saying!** They think the Church is a building instead of the Body of Christ!

So why in the world would Christians think we're a building instead of the Body of Christ? Hey, great question. I'm glad you asked. It's pretty simple. The **1st reason is We Repeat What Others Say and Do.** Oh, talk about your ultimate bad habit! People, we **say all kinds of things** that we have no idea where they came from, let alone if they're even true.

For instance, how many times have you heard it said, "**An apple a day keeps the doctor away?"** Yeah, we say that all the time, don't we? But folks have you ever stopped to ask yourself where it came from or if it's even true? No, of course not! **We repeat all kinds of things we know nothing about.** So why do we say it? Well, apparently back in the 1800's,

apple sales began to drop and the apple growers blamed it on the Christians who kept saying the apple was responsible for the fall of man. So the farmers came up with the slogan to boost their sales and apparently it worked because we not only keep saying it, but we keep buying those apples **to keep that doctor away!**

Oh but that's not all. How about this **saying**? Why do we say "**God bless you**" when somebody sneezes?" Have you ever stopped to think about that? And why do we say it only when somebody sneezes and not when they cough? In fact, one time in Bible College I tried it. I couldn't take it anymore. Every time somebody sneezed in class, fifteen super spiritual Christians would say, "God Bless you." And so I couldn't take it so I decided to test it out on a cough. You know, inquiring minds want to know. And so I waited for somebody to cough and declared out loud, "God Bless you!" And man, you wouldn't believe the looks I got. It was like I turned into the antichrist, or something. It was if people were saying, "What, are you nuts or something? Don't you know that you are only suppose to say that when somebody sneezes?"

And people my point is this. Why do we **say this** and where did it come from? Well, hey, thanks for asking. Apparently it started way back in the Dark Ages when people were very superstitious. And back then they

thought a sneeze was caused either by demons leaving the body or it left one vulnerable for demons to enter the body. And so people would do **two things**. **One**, they would make the sign of the cross in front of the mouth, which is where we get the custom of covering our mouth when sneezing and **second** they would do is say “God Bless you” as a way of asking God to protect them from demonic harm.

And people I think the point is pretty obvious here. We obviously repeat what others say all the time without even thinking about it, right? Exactly! But that's not all. That's only half of it. We not only repeat what others say, but we **do what others do** without thinking about it, like this lady did.

“There was a husband and wife who had been married for a little while and the husband noticed that every time his wife would make meatloaf, she cut a portion of the meatloaf off on each side before she put it into the pan. And for the life of him, he couldn't figure it out. To him, she was wasting perfectly good meat. So, he asked her why she lopped off both ends of the meatloaf before she stuck it into the pan.

To which she said, ‘I don't know. That was the way my Mom always did it.’ So, they called up the mom and asked her why she lopped off both ends of the meatloaf before she put it into the pan. And she said, ‘I don't know. That's the way your grandmother always did it.’

So finally, they tracked down the grandma and asked her why she lopped off both ends of the meatloaf before she stuck it into the pan. And the grandma replied that back in her earlier days, the pan she had to cook meatloaf in was too small. So in order to get it to fit, she had to cut both ends off!”

And people, my point is this. I bet you we do all kinds things **just like that** without thinking about it. For instance, maybe it's the way you decorate the Christmas tree every year, or maybe it's the way you set the table for supper or how maybe it's the way you discipline your kids. But whatever it is, it's obvious we do what others do all the time without even thinking about it, right? Exactly!

And here's my point. If we're not careful, this tendency to repeat what others say and do will spill over into what we say and do as Christians. And if you don't believe me, let's take a test. If somebody asked you what you do on Sunday mornings what would you say. "**Why, I go to Church.**" Wrong people! The Church is not a building, it's the Body of Christ. Or how about this one, "You won't believe it. Somebody stole the computers by **breaking into the Church.**" Wrong people! The only way we can be broken into is called surgery! Or how about this one, "Well, I've got some bad news everybody. Last night, an arsonist came and **burned down the Church?**" Wrong people! If we burned down it'd be a case of spontaneous combustion, right? People, **stop and think about what we're saying.**

But you might be thinking, "Gee whiz, Pastor Billy. Aren't you making a big deal out of nothing? I mean, so we **say and do** things that imply the Church is a building. So what? What's the big deal? Big deal? I'll

tell you what the big deal is. If we can't stop repeating a simple **false belief** that the Church is a building instead the Body of Christ, then gee, maybe we'll start repeating other false beliefs as well. Well guess what folks, it's already happening.

1. 80% of Christians say the Bible teaches, "That God helps those who help themselves."
2. 12% says the name of Noah's wife was Joan of Arc.
3. 49% says the Bible teaches that money is the root of all evil.
4. 56% say that the Bible proclaims that the single most important task in life is taking care of one's family.
5. 47% says that Satan does not exist.
6. 29% say that when Jesus lived on earth, He committed sins like everybody else.
7. 55% says the Bible has errors in it.
8. 25% agreed that it doesn't matter what faith you follow because all paths lead to heaven.
9. 49% of Pastors no longer have a Biblical worldview.
10. 93% of Christians no longer have a Biblical worldview.

Now folks, I don't know about you, but I'd say the American Church's got a few problems with **their beliefs**, how about you? **Why?** Because if we can't stop repeating what others say and do, we're going to fall for other lies too! And if we can't even figure who we are believers in Christ, then how do we expect others to believe in Christ? And I don't know about you, but I'd say that a pretty big deal.

Oh, but that's not all. And the **2nd problem** we have is we don't say the Church is the Body of Christ. No! We say **The Church is the Body of Man.**

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.”

Now folks, according to our text, the Bible’s clear. When you and I get saved, we what? We don’t belong to ourselves anymore, do we? No! We were bought at a price, by the blood of Jesus Christ, right? **And my point is this.** Surely every Christian who’s ever lived know this basic truth, right? Well, you’d think so, **but that doesn’t seem to be the case. Why?** Because, if you listen to most Christians talk, you’d think they still belonged to themselves. They still act like they’re the masters of their destiny.

So why in the world would Christians think we belong to ourselves instead of Christ? Hey, great question. I’m glad you asked. The **1st reason** is **We Repeat what Society Says.** People, whether you realize it or not, we live in a society that absolutely hates and utterly detests that thought that we do not belong to ourselves. Why to say anything else is not only a sign of weakness but a societal blasphemy. Everywhere we turn it’s this attitude that life’s all about you. You are your own person. You can do whatever you want. You have to love yourself. You are the center of the universe. The only person that matters in life. It’s all about you, you, you! And people, the point is this. **If we’re not careful,** we’ll start repeating this self-centered lie of society in what we say as Christians.

For instance, how many times have you heard Christians say something like this. “Gee **I** wonder what God wants **me** to do with **my** life,” or “**I** sure need a change in **my** life,” or “**I**’m so glad **I** asked Jesus into **my** life.” Excuse me? What did the Bible say? This is not our life. Are you kidding! We’ve been bought at a price. We don’t belong to us, we belong to Christ!

Oh but that’s not all. The **2nd reason** we think we belong to ourselves instead of Christ is because **We Repeat what Society Sings**. People, it’s bad enough we don’t pay attention to what society says **and how it influences us**, but we don’t even pay attention to the **songs they sing**.

For instance, how many of you guys have ever sang this song. “**Three blind mice**, See how they run! They all ran after the farmer’s wife, Who cut off their tails with a carving knife, Did you ever see such a sight in your life, As three blind mice?” Great song, right? I don’t think so! Have you ever stopped to think about what were singing? It’s actually a gruesome story about murder. The “farmer’s wife” was Queen Mary I of England who got mad at three guys and she killed them. But not with a carving knife, just burned at the stake. Hey, great song, huh?

Oh, but that’s not all. How about this one. “**Ring around the rosies**, pocket full of posies, ashes, ashes, we all fall down!” Great song right? I

don't think so! It's actually a song about the a person dying from the Black Plague! As it turns out, a **ring around the rosies** spoke of a rosy rash which was the first symptom of the plague. And a **pocket full of posies** were carried to sweeten the air from the stench of death. And then the person would start coughing up flecks of the dried blood from their lungs which looked like **ashes, ashes!** And the final stage they'd **all fall down** do what? **Die!** Wow! What a songs to teach to our kids, huh?

And people, the point is this. **If we're not careful**, we'll start repeating the self-centered lies of society **not only in what we say**, but in what we sing! For instance, how many of you have ever sang songs like this, "**In my life** be glorified," or even "**Change my heart** oh God," or "**My life** is in you Lord." Excuse me? What did the Bible say? This is not our life. Are you kidding! We've been bought at a price. We don't belong to us, we belong to Christ!

But you might be thinking, "Gee whiz, Pastor Billy. Aren't you making a mountain out of a molehill? Okay, so we say things and sing songs that imply we belong to ourselves. So what? What's the big deal?" Big deal? I'll tell you what the big deal is. If we can't stop repeating the simple **false behavior** that our lives belong to us **instead of Jesus**, then gee, maybe we'll

start repeating other false behaviors as well. Well, guess what folks? It's already happening.

1. 47% don't have a commitment to the Christian faith as a top priority.
 2. 58% don't have being active in a local church as one of their top goals in life.
 3. 42% believe that it is more important to achieve success or win acceptance from other people than to please God.
 4. 35% of Christians say that to get by in life these days, sometimes you have to bend the rules for your own benefit.
 5. 50% of Christians say there is no absolute truth.
 6. 33% of Christians say homosexuality is okay.
 7. 39% of Christians say its okay for couples to live together before marriage.
 8. Christians are now more likely than non-Christians to get divorce (27% vs. 24%).
 9. 49% of Christians don't have a problem with the distribution of pornography.
- 10.64% of Christians say its okay to be a Christian and a witch.

Now folks, I don't know about you, but I'd say the American Church has got a few problems with **their behavior**, how about you? **Why?** Because if we can't stop repeating what society says and sings, we're going to start doing the very same things. And the problem is when people come to us looking for Jesus, they won't be able to find Him, like with this girl. A high school girl wrote the following letter to a friend:

"I attended your Church service yesterday. Although you had invited me, you were not there. I looked for you, hoping to sit with you but I sat alone. As a stranger I wanted to sit near the back but those rows were all packed with regular attenders.

So an usher took me to the front. I felt as though I was on parade. During the singing of the hymns I was surprised to note that some of the Church people weren't singing. Between their sighs and yawns, they just stared into space.

Three of the kids that I had respected on campus were whispering to one another throughout the whole service. Another girl was giggling. I really didn't expect that in your Church service.

The Pastor's sermon was very interesting, although some members didn't seem to think so. They looked bored and restless. One kept smiling at someone in the congregation. There were several people who left and then came back during the sermon. I thought, 'How rude!'

I could hear the constant shuffling of feet and doors opening and closing as the Pastor spoke about the reality of faith. The message got to me and I made up my mind to speak to someone about it after the service. But utter chaos reigned after the benediction.

I said good morning to one couple, but their response was less than cordial. I looked for some teens with whom I could discuss the sermon, but they were all huddled in a corner talking about the newest music group.

My parents don't go to Church services. I came alone yesterday hoping to find a place to truly worship and feel some love. I'm sorry, but I didn't find it in your congregation. And I won't be back."

Now gee folks, I don't know about you, but I'd that Church wasn't doing a very good job of **being the Body of Christ**, how about you? I mean, it almost appeared like they'd totally forgotten who they were. And what was it doing? It not only affected their walk with Christ, it kept that girl from coming to Christ!

And people, this is why if we can't stop **playing Church** instead of being the Church then maybe it's time to **get out of the Church? Why?**

Because being a Christian is not a game. What we say and do literally affects the eternal destiny of people around us. Therefore, it's high time we get rid of our **practical amnesia**. We've got to remember who we are! People the Church is not a building and it doesn't belong to itself. People the Church is a Body, its **The Body of Jesus Christ!**

To find the way to God, to understand the *truth* of God's Word, and to receive the gift of eternal *life*, begin by repentance and faith through a prayer like this:

“Dear God, I understand that I have broken Your Law and sinned against You. Please forgive my sins. Thank You that Jesus suffered on the cross in my place. I now place my trust in Him as My Savior and Lord. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.”
