

UNPACKING THE WORD

MAY 24TH SERMON - "I AM A CHURCH MEMBER" INTRODUCTION

EPHESIANS 4:4-6

THIS SERMON (MESSAGE) INTRODUCED OUR 7 PART SERIES ON THOM RAINER'S BOOK TITLE ABOVE. HE WROTE THE BOOK IN 2013 YET IT IS VERY RELEVANT AND MANY CHURCHES HAVE GROWN BY USING IT WITH THEIR MEMBERS. WE, TOO, HAVE USED IT SPARINGLY AT CALVARY.

MY MAJOR REASON FOR USING IT NOW IS THAT I BELIEVE WE HAVE A GRAND OPPORTUNITY TO GO BACK TO DOING CHURCH IN BETTER WAYS THAN WHEN WE LEFT FOR THE PANDEMIC. EACH OF THE SIX CHAPTERS CONTAINS HELPFUL TIPS FOR BEING A SPIRIT - FILLED AND UNIFYING CHURCH MEMBER.

BEFORE ANYONE CAN REALLY FOCUS ON BEING A GOOD MEMBER, THEY SHOULD ASK THREE QUESTIONS. I HAVE INCLUDED AN EXCERPT OF MY SERMON...

"In the introduction of the book - entitled a tale of two church members, there were two couples - Michael and Karen

and Liam and Lana. Liam and Lana decided to leave the church because of certain problems they saw. They pointed out hypocritical members, pastoral sermons that did not feed them, and persons who were living in sexual sin.

Now, don't get me wrong. These are real issues and they deserve attention. But, the three key questions for every church member are as follows:

- 1. Have you received Jesus Christ as your Savior?*
- 2. Have you submitted to Him as Lord?*
- 3. If so, is He yet directing you to be in fellowship where you are?*

These are key questions because only you can answer them. Are you submitted to Christ first, or a pastor, or a church? I've always said, submit to Christ and He will show you who your pastor is. It is easier to submit to a church or a pastor than it is to submit to Christ. Churches can be hideouts. Congregants and pastors can be taken advantage of and tricked, but God sees all and knows all. God cannot be mocked - whatever anyone sows that is what they will reap" (WALTON, 2020).

I ASK THAT YOU READ ALL OF EPHESIANS 4 TO PREPARE FOR THE SERIES. THIS WAS WHAT I ASKED YOU TO READ BEFORE YOU LISTENED. THIS WILL SET THE STAGE FOR UNDERSTANDING WHY THE

**CHURCH EXISTS. THE FIRST SERMON - ON
PENTECOST SUNDAY - IS TAKEN FROM THE FIRST
CHAPTER ENTITLED, "I WILL BE A FUNCTIONING
CHURCH MEMBER"**

I HOPE YOU ENJOY THE SERIES.

PASTOR WALTON