

No more Excuses

Last week we heard about being stubborn about some good things like being loyal to God, being tenacious for the Lord, being stubborn about praying about reading the word of God and fellowship with one another. [previously - not giving up]

Today I want to talk about the subject of no excuses when it comes to God and serving Him. We live in a society that has developed a culture of giving excuses. Often when asked to do something or be somewhere the immediate response sadly in most cases is "I don't have time or I'm too busy". This has invaded the church too and many of us including myself have got used to giving an excuse when we are needed.

I found this great strap line which said this, as long as you waste your energy making excuses, you can't make progress.

Here's something to think about. How many times have we given excuses about something that has been important or beneficial and how many times have we made excuses for the things we perceive are not important but in the grand scheme of things are necessary to go through? When you are a leader or a Pastor you hear all kinds of excuses when you try to include the people and help move them to the next level.

How many times have we heard people giving excuses for coming to Jesus? They've been, heard the word, convicted but give an excuse.

Giving excuses to come to church to be with God's people and have fellowship? Excuses like, I'm too busy (for church) not for wanting to do my own thing or having time for partying and other things. *Matt 6:21 - where your treasure is there your heart will be also.* Excuses like, my kids need to sleep early so I can't come or they have some activity on a Sunday. I have seen parents taking their kids on a Sunday morning to other activities and the amazing thing is that the kids wake up early for those things.

Excuses like, we need to rest on Sunday because of a busy week. Some are too busy to bother Some are too proud to come, some are too self satisfied to come - I have everything so I don't need God or the church. Excuse after excuse.

Jesus had this in his day too and He tells a beautiful story in Luke 14: 16-24 Jesus tells the people a story about how the specially invited guests began giving excuses when it was time for the wedding feast.

There are 3 types excuses: [Read the script]

1 The Business Man's excuse - I have bought a piece of land and must go and examine it. There's nothing wrong in what he did but what he failed to do was prioritise the special invitation given to him by the King and he used it as an excuse not to attend.

I wonder what our priorities are in life? The bible tells us that out of our heart flow the issues of life or the well springs of life and therefore we got to guard it (Prov4:23). Out of our inner most being flow those things that are vital to life.

When our heart is full on for God we will choose wisely and not make any excuses to be at the Kings feast.

Church the place where people gather is the place of the King's feast. We come to feast at the table of our King of Kings and Lord of Lords. This is the meeting place, the tabernacle, the congregation of people who come with one accord to worship their God. When we position ourselves at the Kings table we get the benefits and experience the hospitality of the King.

King David said in *Ps 84:10* *A single day spent in your Temple is better than a thousand anywhere else! I would rather be a doorman of the Temple of my God than live in palaces of wickedness.* Wednesday Connect Group is a meeting place for the King and when we position ourselves in environments of praise and worship unto our God we get the benefits of wellness and wholeness and our needs being met because of Gods dwelling presence.

2 The working man's excuse - my work is more important than my Kings invitation to the feast. He gave excuses saying I have to plough the field with these new oxen I have bought. I have to test these animals.

Having a job is absolutely important, going to work etc. however when your work takes priority over God then it becomes a problem and a stumbling block. In some cases work takes over peoples lives where their world revolves around their work where work becomes god like sometimes money can become a god in peoples lives.

Often we pray for people to get jobs and then when they get it they neglect God's house and the job takes priority. Work is important but should never replace faithful obedience to God. (example: we never encouraged Sean Shane or Chloe to attend any events during church time. We wanted them to know that prioritising church the gathering of God's people and worship was important. They knew how important church was that they would decline invitations to attend birthday parties etc. on a Sunday morning.

When I was made redundant from my previous job I remember praying for a job that paid me well for fewer hours so that I could serve the house of God. Never let work become an excuse for not attending church or meeting with God's people. You need that fellowship, that prayer support, that encouragement and when you stick around positive faith filled people your faith gets stronger too.

3 The Family man's excuse - was his wife! getting married is great and it is what we are passionate about but don't let that stop you from being in God's presence or coming together with God's people to worship the Lord. When God has blessed you with a wife or spouse encourage one another to be in God's presence, to pray together, to meet together with God's family.

When you isolate yourself you become an easy target for the enemy to get you. You will notice that people who are involved in church and active in God's house are rarely buffeted by the enemy. Why? because they are positioning themselves in the atmosphere of God's presence and his people. When we get together and praise and worship and share testimony God is glorified and we receive strength and encouragement through the word and through prayer for one another.

Whatsapp prayer is great but can never replace that face to face encounter with fellow saints. It's like a text message can never replace a face to face conversation. How many of us get fed up listening to automated messages when we ring a service provider!

So the question is this. What's your excuse? Is it a business excuse, a job excuse or a family excuse? *Somebody said this, "lame excuses come from lame Christians".*

I work for a very large organisation and even there they realise the importance of balancing our time and energy and we have something called energy audit which asks questions on how one balances their work life and their home life and they look at it in 4 categories namely Physical (how many hours of sleep one gets?, what exercise? does one take regular breaks during the day?, does one take time to disconnect from work?)

Emotional (level of enthusiasm for work, for meeting loved ones, for doing things outside of work like hobby's). Mental (our priorities for the day, do we have a to do list, do we intentionally take time to quiet our mind) and finally the Spiritual.

So you can see why the company are so keen to ensure you manage your day well because it is only then that you can give your best.

Setting aside time for God and his house is absolutely important! In *Matthew 6:31-33* *What I'm trying to do here is to get you to relax, to not be so preoccupied with getting, so you can respond to God's giving. People who don't know God and the way he works fuss over these things, but you know both God and how he works. Steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. Don't worry about missing out. You'll find all your everyday human concerns will be met.*

Let me encourage today that when you prioritise God's kingdom God is obliged to see to all your needs.

Jesus loves you and has a beautiful plan for your life. Only Jesus can satisfy you completely and fill that void because He died on the cross for you and rose again for you and is showing you off before His Father in heaven. His love never gives up or runs out on you. You can trust Jesus to bring you through.

Jesus is inviting you now to come and enjoy at His table of eternal life and blessing. Will you receive this Jesus without making excuses?