



Satan's Three Questions about the Assembly

Brownsburg Church of Christ

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AM Assembly



Introduction:

Satan doesn't want us to assemble today. In fact, he does not want us to worship God anytime. Even though he might fail today, he will attack us every opportunity he has. Satan has three lines of attack—three questions he wants us to ask. If he can get us to ask them, he already has us halfway devoured. Get ready to find out the questions so you can resist the devil and be established, strengthened, and settled by God's grace (**I Peter 5:8-10**).

Discussion:

- I. How can I get out of the assembly?
 - A. Satan wants us to ask this question before we get up Sunday morning. He wants us to ask this question on Sunday afternoon, when we are resting from a week of work, or perhaps while we are spending a few extra hours at work. He wants us to ask this question all day on Wednesday or the days of a Gospel Meeting.
 - B. Worse than getting us to ask this question, Satan will help us answer it. Satan will help us play a little game. We begin with, "Man, I just don't feel like going." When thinking about our reason for not going, it becomes, "I don't feel good enough to go." When brethren call to check up on us, it becomes, "I was sick." It is amazing the number of people who can go to work with pounding headaches or upset stomachs. But come worship time, "Surely God understands." Of course, "The kids are cranky and tired." "Junior has a lot of homework." "I had to work late and I'm just beat." "Brother ____ ignored me last time I was there." "The sermons are boring." "There is not a single Bible verse that specifically says I have to assemble on Sunday night."
 - C. But we need to remember God's answer to this question. **Hebrews 10:25** is clear, saying, "not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some..." (ESV). The main thrust of this statement is that churches must assemble. However, God did not say when or how often the churches must assemble. He left that up to the individual congregations themselves. The necessary implication of the statement is that when the church is to assemble the members of the church must be there.
 - D. Even in Bible times, people undoubtedly missed assembling with the saints sometimes. Illness might strike. Perhaps working to provide for the family (not just for extras) would cause a saint to miss. Being thrown in prison for preaching the Word hindered saints from assembling. While there might be some reasons for missing that are not forsaking the assembly, we need to be very careful what we allow to keep us from meeting with the saints to worship God.
 - E. Tonight, Satan is going to try everything in his power to keep you from meeting with us. He will get you to ask this question and will give you an answer. Of course, Satan has already pushed some past the point of even asking the question; forsaking is already a habit for them. We must recognize Satan's hand in trying to keep us from assembling. God hasn't told us to assemble because He wanted to establish some arbitrary rule, but because assembling with the saints helps us. When Satan convinces us to forsake, the problem is not that we are violating a rule; it is that we are missing out on the help God is offering us.
- II. What will I get out of the assembly?
 - A. If Satan's first attack does not conquer us, he will pull out this second question. It may sound proper, but, in reality, is not. It is almost cliché to hear people leave one church for another saying, "I didn't get anything out of that church," or to hear forsakers claim, "I only come when I know I can get something out of it." The problem with this question is not the answer that Satan might give us. The problem is the question itself.
 - B. Merely asking this question demonstrates a misunderstanding of our assemblies. This question has the focus of our assemblies on us. That is not where the focus should be. There are three objectives in worship and not one of them has to do with what we get out of it.
 1. We are to honor God, humbling ourselves before Him (**Malachi 1:6**).
 2. We are to edify the saints around us (**I Corinthians 14:26**).
 3. We are to convict the unbeliever (**I Corinthians 14:23-25**).
 - C. Far too many people come to the assemblies wondering what they will get out of them. They want the sermons to be on their favorite topics and the songs to be their favorite songs. They want to be entertained and emotionally touched by the message. They want to get social relationships out of the members.

- D. These same people will go home complaining. “The sermon was too long.” Or “It was too short.” “I don’t like it when they have people give talks during the singings.” Or “I don’t like it when we just sing for an hour straight; I wish they would have some people give talks.” “I don’t know why they keep letting brother _____ lead singing? I don’t like the way he leads.” “I wish they would quit using slides.” Or, “I hate it when they don’t use slides.” “Nobody talked to me today.” Or, “I got cornered by sister _____ and she just wouldn’t leave me alone.” On and on and on the complaining goes. Did you notice the common thread between all those complaints? “I, I, I, me, me, me, I don’t like ..., I don’t want ... I wish ...” These complaints all focus on self, as if this assembly was called for my personal benefit and convenience. Satan has already latched on to these people and is trying to drain the spiritual life out of them. After a while, he will be able to beat them with the first question. That is, once they believe they do not get anything out of the assemblies, they will have a ready-made excuse for getting out of the assemblies.
- E. We have to get away from this selfish mindset. Worship is not about me. It is not about what I like. It is about serving God, His way. The worship service does not take place to entertain me. It does not take place to lift my emotions. It does not take place in order to move me. It takes place so I can serve God. It takes place so I can cast down my own selfish pride before the Ruler of all creation and demonstrate my obedience toward Him.
- F. Instead of asking ourselves the question, “What can I get out of the assembly?” We need to ask, “What can I put into the assembly?” We must focus on singing to praise God and edify others, on the words of the prayer and offer them up to God ourselves, on the death of the Savior and why we need that sacrifice, and on listening and understanding the Scriptures and the message. We must focus on these things despite who is leading the worship or what songs they are singing or what the sermon is. Only when we are focused on what we can put into worship will we get anything out of it. If we are focused on self, we will always be bored and disappointed. We must focus on serving God instead.

III. When will I get out of the assembly?

- A. Satan has yet a third attack. This one goes along with the second and is sometimes used simultaneously with it. Satan likes to use this question to get our minds to wander from what we are actually supposed to be doing here in the assembly.
- B. This question, like the second, is dangerously subtle. We can ask and answer these questions while still attending the assemblies. Because we are attending the assemblies, we believe everything is alright. But that is not true. Jesus said, “God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth” (**John 4:24**, ESV). When we are distracted, we may be going through the right motions, but our spirit is not involved. Then, even though we are here, it is in vain.
- C. We should not be like the Israelites of **Amos 8:5-6**. They could not wait for the worship time to be over. Granted, they wanted it to be over so they could go back to corruption. Hopefully, none here want worship to be over so they can go back to wickedness. Be that as it may, we should not be constantly looking at our watches wondering when we are going to get to go to lunch or get back to that race, golf tournament, or football game. We need to be worshipping God. When the service is over, it is over. If we have to stand behind people in a line at the restaurant, so be it. After all, we are doing something more important than eating. We are worshipping God.
- D. Yes, I recognize the need in our culture to have specific assembly times and timely services. I also recognize the physical limitations some have sitting on these pews. When determining our general length of worship time we keep all of these factors in mind. However, once we are here, let’s not allow Satan to focus our attention elsewhere. We must focus our attention on glorifying God.

Conclusion:

Satan does not want us to worship God. We must not let him control our lives. Instead, we must resist him. Allow me to encourage you to join us in every assembly, focus on what you can give God, and do not worry about when it will be over. Serve God to the best of your ability and Satan will lose.