

## Reimagining Church

### Part 3: Why you should stop going to church.

1 Peter 2:9-10 ; Ephesians 4:11-16 - [watch online](#)

#### Summary:

The majority of Americans don't see the point of being part of a church. A big reason is church leaders and church people have forgotten the point of the Church. It's time to stop going to church and reimagine what the Church can be.

#### Main Ideas:

[00:52] Church seems pointless because the Church has forgotten its point.

[01:59] We were created to live stories of meaning and purpose.

[02:15] The Church was designed to help us discover our own story within the story of God.

[05:06] The Church is a group of people on a mission to show that God is FOR all people.

[08:27] The local church has become simply a dispenser of religious teachings and services.

[10:07] It's time to stop "going to church" and start being the Church.

[11:31] The role of the local church is to equip the Ekklesia to discover and carry out their own stories... together.

[13:04] We want to purposely help you discover your God-given purpose.

[21:56] When we follow Jesus we discover our role in the story of humanity.

#### Invitation:

- [20:11] Read 1 Peter 2:9-10
- [20:21] Ask, "How does my story fit within God's overall story?"
- [20:31] Start getting equipped.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What resonated with, stood out to, confused, or bothered you in this message?
2. In your own words, what would you say the point of the local church is? Has that description changed after listening to this message?
3. Jon said, "It's time to stop 'going to church' and start being the Church." Read 1 Peter 2:9-10 and Ephesians 4:11-16. What are some ways we could reimagine Church? What changes or additions would you make?
4. How could your view of "being the Church" be reimaged?
5. How can your group pray with you this week?

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#### Transcript:

**IN:** Every year fewer and fewer Americans attend church services... I don't blame them.

Church can seem pretty pointless. Often it doesn't just seem pointless... it is pointless.

B/c many of us church leaders and church people have forgotten the whole point of the Church and made it into something it was never meant to be.

So it's time to reimagine Church and stop just going to church.

Let's create something that not only makes sense for our lives but is a force for good in the lives of others.

And in doing so we'll discover not only what the Church was meant to be but who we were created to be.

So let's talk about it... together

**WE:** Be honest... What would you rather do... read a good book/watch a good movie... go to a church service?

I don't blame you... I'm the same way... Church seems pointless b/c the Church has forgotten its point.

I'll explain... but first... My favorite story...

A common person... living a mundane life... discovers they have a different identity and destiny than they first thought. W/ the help of a wise mentor they get wrapped up in something bigger than themselves, face adversity, become the hero they never thought possible, and end up saving others.

- You know the story?
- Luke Skywalker? Bilbo/Frodo? King Arthur? Harry Potter? Katniss Hunger Games? Dorothy Wizard of Oz?

All of them. Something in us loves this story line...

- Luke/Obi-wan... discovers can use the force... saves the galaxy

The Hero's Journey... even 4000 yrs ago, the Epic of Gilgamesh followed the same storyline.

We love it b/c, I believe... We were created to live stories of meaning and purpose.

God is writing a story w/ humanity... and we can be more, discover our true and higher purpose, be the hero, and make a real difference

And The Church was designed to help us discover our own story within the story of God.

But if that's the case why would most of us rather read or watch someone else's story than be part of a church community or even go to a church service?

B/c we've forgotten who we can be and what the church was created for...

Let me show you what I mean and how we can discover our own stories while we reimagine Church... together.

**GOD:** Apostle Peter. Wrote a letter explaining what it means to follow Jesus

After explaining that some people get tripped up and stumble over the whole Jesus is king/God thing...

- He explains what we were all created to be

He says... **1 Peter 2:9-10** You = Plural: all JF's ARE = current reality

Every JF IS this...A chosen people/royal priests/a holy nation/God's very own possession.

- Priesthood of all believers

It's like Hagrid saying... "You're a wizard, Harry." Or Obi-Wan telling Luke he's going to become a Jedi.

Peter, 1st century Jew, is using the best language he has to describe this new identity/destiny

Royal priests: Huge meaning for Jewish readers

From specific tribe- Levites: set aside to be the go between for God and the people.

- Gave them special access to the temple/God

Role wasn't just for THEM to experience God... but to make God known to the rest of the people.

- To help people discover the one true God that loved them.
- To join God in his rescue mission of all of humanity

A holy nation- Like Israel before... the Ekklesia is now God's unified group... designed to make his goodness (other trans... excellencies) known to the rest of the world

What's so good/excellent about God?

- LOVE- JESUS- God is for us before we are for him.

**The Church is a group of people on a mission to show that God is FOR all people.**

They share their story...

- Life once had a darkness to it... but after experiencing God's true love there's been a transformation of light... both inside and out.

The church/ekklesia exists FOR everyone.

- "We see you and you love you... b/c God sees you and loves you"
- "We are FOR you b/c God is FOR you... even if you don't choose to believe the same thing we do."

**This isn't what we are SUPPOSED to do... this is who we were created to BE. Who you already are if you accept the identity.**

"Ok but hold on one second Pastor Boy... I thought that was YOUR job to declare the goodness of God"

- "I'm no royal priest. I'm just Harry. Just Harry"

**And that is the problem...** So many amazing people don't know their potential and who they were created to be and what created to do.

B/c for over 1500 years church leaders and church people have allowed the Ekklesia of Jesus to slowly adopt what Andy Stanley calls, the Temple Model.

See it in almost all religions...

- **Sacred Places:** Go this special place to be close to the deity
  - Call the main meeting room the “sanctuary?”
- **Sacred Texts:** Follow these rules that are written here to the letter or you are out
  - “This verse says right here and this one says right here... Obey and don't question”
- **Sacred Men:** Almost always men. They are the ones with access to the deity/Man of God
  - Get to decide what the sacred text means. Which Rules to focus on. What is literal and what is more allegory. Who is in and who is out.
- **Sincere (scared/superstitious) Followers:** Just trying to do their best to make the deity happy and do what the sacred man tells them too.

See it from village witch doctors to priests/pastors

But Jesus changed all of it...

No more sacred places... the most sacred thing is the person next to you

He fulfilled the sacred text of the OT and instead of giving more rules gave an overarching ethic/and example... Love as he loved.

No more sacred men and scared/sincere followers... Everyone has equal access to our loving Heavenly Father

But unfortunately... the Temple Model keeps trying to sneak into the Church... and as a result...

The local church has become simply a dispenser of religious teachings and services.

And the more religious and sacred we try to be.... The further away from the real, life-giving Jesus we get.

Instead of discovering our own story we are told our role is to keep the operation of dispensing religious teachings and services going.

- Go to a church service at the sacred place... every week.
  - Watch the sacred man do his thing. Without his wise words you'll fall away from God
- Join a small group and a bible study and a men's/women's group...
  - Stay busy w/ church/sacred place things so pretty soon your entire social network is other people supporting the operation.
- Contribute your time and money to make sure the whole thing keeps running
- And invite others so there are more people at the service and then hopefully more volunteers and dollars so it can dispense more and better religious teachings and services and keep the machine going.

Instead of helping you find your story w/in the story of God... the American Church has made itself the hero and all the “normal” people... supporting characters that help the organization grow.

So Jon, are you saying it's time to just scrap the whole thing?... in a sense, yes.

It's time to stop going through the temple model motions.

It's time to stop "going to church" and start being the Church.

B/c when done the way it was designed... The local organized church/Ekklesia/Community of JF's, is what Jesus uses to help us discover our true identities and stories... together.

Paul explains in **Eph 4:11-16**

We could take the time to talk about each of those roles and whether they still exist, what they mean etc...

But the point of what Paul said is that those roles exist not to be served but to serve...

The role of the local church is to equip the Ekklesia to discover and carry out their own stories... together.

**Crosscreek:** We started CCC to create a church for people who don't normally go to church... create a community welcoming to everyone no matter where they are on their faith journey...

We/I believed if people simply Discovered our service, Connected in a small group, Contributed their time/money, and Shared their experience...

- Bim bam boom people would become fully transformed, mature, JF's discovering their story and playing it out.

Not necessarily bad things... And it worked(ish)... we grew... lives were changed for sure

- But in the back of many of the leaders' minds there was something was missing.... Something was off

It took a pandemic for us to take a 2nd look at what we were doing...

- B/c when some people didn't have a sacred man, in a specific sacred place, telling them what the sacred text said... Many people felt far from God
- Didn't know how to be the Church/Ekklesia without all those things

We/I had unintentionally led people to believe that doing those things was what it meant to Follow Jesus

And that is why after A LOT of discussions, reading, research, tweaking, more discussions, experiments... we've decided...

We want to purposely help you discover your God-given purpose.

Through what I call the **Radio Tower.**

- This is not the only way to be the Church
- It's probably not even the best.
- But it's the best *for US for NOW*...

On surface might seem similar to what seen before but the reasoning and purpose is different...

All designed to equip YOU to discover and live your story.

- Individually and together as a local expression of the Ekklesia

Not step by step process... all part of the same method.

All based on and held by relationships [Struts]... As go higher the relationships become closer...

Lowest/largest section of tower... Crosscreek Online

- Social media/Website/Reels/Shorts/Youtube episodes
- Largest Reach... Introduction

Teaching... Not to give 'feel goods' or give information... to explain who we can be and what it looks like to follow Jesus.

- To introduce the real Jesus and his unconditional love to those who haven't yet discovered him
- And to equip JF's to be royal priests... to love like Jesus. What does that look like in our lives?
- Bringing everyone together around same idea/mission
- You can be part:
  - Watch if miss week (not b/c you'll fall from God if you don't... but so we as a community can be on the same page together.
  - Like, Comment, Share... Not worth sharing? Tell us why
  - Even help film/edit??

Weekly Gatherings

- Not to fill seats. Not to punch your church card. Not to get your dose of religious teaching and services...
- See we are part of larger community/ Not alone / something about being together... figuring out what it means to follow Jesus together.
- To celebrate the life Jesus is giving us... together.
- Experience the joy/encouragement of being w/ others who are discovering, enjoying and sharing the life Jesus gives
- Teachings for the same reason as online.
- You can BE a huge part... Food/Kids/Music/Set up/Clean up... helps train us to serve outside too.

For Salem Opportunities We are for Salem b/c God is for Salem

- Show our neighbors we are FOR them before they are ever FOR us... even if they never are.
- Help inspire JF's to see how to be FOR neighbors in daily life.

Connect Groups Small embodiments of the Church/Ekklesia/Community

- Safe community... Praying for/supporting/caring for (Priesting/Pastoring one another)
- Being accepted, acknowledged, appreciated, affirmed, encouraged in life w/ Jesus
- Discussing messages/explore/question... go a little deeper.
- Seeing God use others and use you to love each other.

Alliances Groups of 2 or 3

- Learning, growing, supporting each other. Safe, Personal and personalized

- Even in Connect groups not always able to go deep, really get to know, dig deep into pressing questions...
- In depth...
- Not just about information transfer.. Life sharing/maturing/growth
- Not formal... "hey you want to go through this book w/me?"
- We provide some resources and a few questions if needed.
- No special training required... just talking about life together.

All designed to support and hold up... you... You are **the antenna**

As you live out your story as a royal priest living and sharing Jesus' love wherever God takes you

- Home, work, school, neighborhood, hobbies, sports, etc.

Thats it. Thats all we do. And our desire is to be laser focused on these few things. To be as effective as possible.

- Not a lot of extras... In n Out V. Jack in the Box

Goal... all of us radiating love of Jesus to our neighbors... together.

#### **YOU: Invitation:**

- **Read 1 Peter 2:9-10**
- **Ask, "How does my story fit within God's overall story?"**
- **Start getting equipped.**
  - Not requirement to do all the tower all the time. What are you feeling will best help equip you now?

**WE:** Despite what we've been told/shown... The church as an organization isn't the hero...

My role/organization's role isn't Luke Skywalker or Harry Potter...

- The church organization is Dumbledore/Obi-Wan
- Helping you discover who you really are and supporting you as you play out your part in the story.

God created each of us on purpose for a purpose and purposes.

God wants to reveal that purpose to us... and he's chosen us as a local expression of the Church to help point us to it.

Temple model: Doing, earning, trying harder. Performance... Spectator sport. Go to sacred place... watch sacred man do his thing... never finding your own place in the story.

Following Jesus: Discovering unconditional love, becoming, transforming, living true life w/ purpose and meaning... and bringing that to others by joining God and playing a vital role in the story of humankind.

When we follow Jesus we discover our role in the story of humanity.

So come with us as we discover what that is... together.