

Doin Church

I. Announce:

- A. Slide#1 Baby Dedication 3rd - Anthony & Kristeena Peterson, Graham Peterson.
- B. Slide#2 Ordination - Andrew Paulson. 1 Pet.5:2-4 NLT
- C. Slide#3 JM4 - time to register for the Conference Sat Feb.7th. \$25 includes lunch (students \$10)
 1. Slide#4 Today in info booth. During week in office. Or, online justice-matters.com
 2. Kenneth Morris Jr. & Ernie Allen. Get signed up & help us to spread the word.
- D. Slide#5 Prayer: Jacques & Claire sent Kel & I a card this Christmas, with this quote, *"I want to deposit more love in this world in 2015 than I withdrawal."*

II. Slide#6 Intro:

- A. Do you know what makes a stew tasty? Hours of **simmering**, so you get **all the juices** out of **all the ingredients**. And when you taste it, you're getting **the best** of what's in each ingredient.
 1. Sunday morning is (should be) a culmination of a people who've been **simmering** all week **in the presence of God**.
 2. When we simmer every day in the presence of God **and then** come on Sunday morning & **mix all of it together**, there's an **aroma** and a **smell** of the grace & the goodness of God that lifts up to heaven. And God pulls off the lid and goes, *"Mmm, that's my people in their corporate gatherings this morning."* **And that's worship.**
- B. Slide#7 Title: *Doin Church*
- C. Outline: *Having Access. Having Advocacy. Let us Draw Near. Let us Hold Fast. Let us Consider. Let us not forsake one another. Let us encourage one another.*

III. Slide#8 **HAVING ACCESS (19,20) having boldness**

- A. **Boldness**/confidence to enter - By itself human effort is doomed to **ultimate failure**.
- B. **Confidence training** seems to be the cry of the day: We have seminars to **build our confidence** in our **business ventures**. **Sports camps** to build **confidence** in our kids.
 1. David makes it clear, **Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the LORD guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain.** Ps127:1
 - a) He doesn't ask whether you **feel** confident. He says a believer **has it**. **Not, have I measured up? Not, have I lived up to certain standards? He says a believer has it, period!**
 - (1) Confidence of **that** conviction will always prevail...**Christ in you the hope of glory.**
 - (2) It's only **by the blood of Jesus**. (19b)
- C. (20) **Veil** – once a **barrier** **now** a **portal** (gate/entrance).
- D. Charles Wesley stated it best, *Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see, Hail the incarnate Deity - Pleased as man with man to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.*

1. There is only one thing **between** you saint & God the Father...and **that's** the **torn flesh** (veil) of Jesus.

IV. Slide#9 **HAVING ADVOCACY (21)** *our High Priest*

- A. Believers not only have a **confident spirit**, **but** also a **competent advocate**.
- B. **Our Advocate/Jesus** is **continually available**; **completely aware** (of our present situations); **& constantly involved** with us, *working all things together for good*.
- C. This verse helps us to confidently **point our ship into the high seas** w/strength & power.
 1. We are not only to **exist** in a hostile culture **but** to **buck its waves**.
- D. **Slide#10** In A.D. 404 **John Chrysostom** (golden mouth), the early church father, was brought in before the Roman emperor. The emperor threatened him with banishment if he remained a Christian. Chrysostom responded, **You cannot banish me, for this world is my Father's house. But I will kill you,**' said the emperor.
No, you cannot, for my life is hid with Christ in God,' said Chrysostom.
I will take away your treasures.
No, you cannot, for my treasure is in heaven and my heart is there.
But I will drive you away from your friends and you will have no one left.
No, you cannot, for I have a friend in heaven from whom you cannot separate me. I defy you, for there is nothing you can do to harm me.
- E. **Arrogance** should never be the Christian's way, **but Confidence** must mark our life.
 1. **So, not presumptuously, not flippantly, not haphazardly...but Confidently.**

V. Slide#11 **LET US DRAW NEAR (22)**

- A. Since Jesus provided **access** to the God of heaven, the readers can **draw near** to him.
 1. Here we find the **motive** for all subsequent action.
 2. **It means more than drawing near** by praying, **for** it is in the **present tense**...inferring a **continual drawing near**.
 - a) This is like what the **wick** is to a **lamp**. It **continually draws oil** for the light. So we ought to **continually draw** from God the **strength & grace** we need to function.
- B. **How do we do this?**
 1. **Draw near w/sincerity (true heart)** – w/o religious pretense.
 2. **Draw near w/belief (full assurance of faith)** – believe in simple faith...*God means what He says*.
 3. **Draw near without guilt (hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience)** – We become guilt free, only when our conscience is clear (9:14) **& that**, only via **the sprinkled blood of Jesus**. [this happens at salv] [It's that **inner cleansing** that is **far superior** to the outside]

4. Draw near w/**Integrity** (bodies washed w/pure water) – baptism is our time to publicly profess our commitment to Christ, *which symbolizes our being made clean.*

VI. Slide#12 LET US HOLD FAST (23)

- A. Hold fast what?...the confession of our hope – i.e. the *sharing/confession* of our **faith & hope** w/others, which is the next logical step after *believing*.

VII. Slide#13 LET US CONSIDER (24,25)

- A. Consider what?...**One another**. Each other. The body of Christ.
1. **Consider** - To **direct one's whole** mind to an object. To **immerse** oneself in it. To **apprehend it** in its **whole** compass. [TDNT]
 - a) **Not shake your finger at** a brother or sister in the Lord. **Not lecture** a brother or sister in the Lord. **Instead**, using encouraging words & being a good example.
 - B. Slide#14 John Wesley's Rule of Conduct: *Do all the good you can, By all the means you can, In all the ways you can, In all the places you can, To all the people you can, As long as ever you can.*
 - C. **Stir up** - Spur on. Urge. Sharpen. *To incite, or stimulate*. Provoke. **Be a positive irritant**.
 1. **That's how oysters are made, right?** It grows a pearl, from an **irritant**.
 - a) A piece of sand usually. The oyster supplies a **nacre** & surrounds it. **Making something beautiful** out of the very object that **irritated** it. **The writer says we need to do the same.**
 - b) **Be that piece of sand in their life**...allowing *the Holy Spirit* to provide the **nacre** of love, by the **accretion** of **gradual beautiful layers** to their lives.
 - c) *If your struggling in sin, I'm here to help you. - If your defending your sin, I'm here to challenge you. - If your setting up camp in your sin, I'm here to discipline you.* LarryOsborne
 2. **So be a positive irritant toward corporate worship & encouragement.**

VIII. Slide#15 LET US NOT FORSAKE ONE ANOTHER (25a) in corporate worship

- A. News Flash: *Jesus is not giving up on the church, His church, His wife* [gates of Hell shall not prevail against it]
- B. **The church**, an intentional community of disciples living out life together. *David Putnam*
- C. Corporate worship is **not** an **option** for a Christian; **it is** a **necessity**.
1. If church services grow dull or boring they need **renewal**, not **abandonment**.
- D. **We are not** independent, **but interdependent or mutually dependent**.
- E. **We are not** to live a life of *isolated individualism*.
- F. **We are seen as** both **individuals & collective**.
1. As John Donne said, "No man is an island...every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main."

- G. The Catholic church declared missing Sunday Mass...*a mortal sin*. The Protestant church never went that far, **but** don't assume that we are cavalier about it. [Church an **option**, **obligation**, or **opportunity**?]
1. One asked, If you don't go to **God's** house, why should He come to **yours**?
 2. Another asked, If you don't like being around Christians down here, what makes you think you're going to like **a place** full of em?
- H. **Slide#16 De-churched Christians? As oxymoronic as jumbo-shrimp, liquid gas, steel wool, or selfish lover.** A De-churched Christian should be as fictitious a character as a unicorn, zombie, tooth-ferry, troll, mermaid or martian. **Yet**, People have a 1000 reasons to stay away from church.
1. This is not a new problem. **In the early church there was a fall-off attendance due to: persecution, ostracism, apostasy & arrogance.**
- I. **Why do people stay away from church today?**
1. **Some out of fear of people asking:** What will people say...I've been gone awhile? Will they discern what I've done?
 2. **Some out of fear of catching a church disease called hypocrisy:** I guess the thought is...if I get near a hypocrite, it might be catchy, so I better stay away.
 3. **Some out of laziness.**
 4. **Some because, no one at church is like me - they're not as smart as me, not as wealthy as me, not as spiritual as me.** Interesting, people join **clubs** for this reason, to be in a **similar** group....God's family isn't set up that way. **It was for all men that Christ died.**
 - a) **So there is actually 2 different groups at church:** people you'd **choose** to hang out with & people you **wouldn't**. **We don't get to choose family right?**
 5. **Some out of conceit** - This person doesn't need church. He's intellectually beyond the standard of preaching there. **Or** an accomplished musician, where his focus is musical perfection & not Worship.
- J. Kent Hughes said, **It is true that person person does not have to go to church to be a Christian. He does not have to go to home to be married either. But in both cases if he does not, he will have a very poor relationship.**
- K. **Slide#17 Why should a Christian go to church?**
1. **Because Jesus' presence is in the gathered church.** In Rev.2:1 one of the 1st things Jesus reveals to John is where He is i.e. **walking in the midst of the 7 golden lampstands** (churches).
 2. **Because God has placed us in community for a reason.** (in the neg) **A mob tends to descend to a much deeper level of cruelty than individuals.** The appreciation and enjoyment of **music lovers**, either a symphony **or** rock concert is more intense than that of a single listener at home with his iPod. **This is true for worship as well.**

3. Because Great theological truths are best learned corporately **with all the saints**. Paul, in Eph.3:18 prays that the church in Ephesus **may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge**.
4. Because **love** is a communal activity. You might be able to develop your **faith & hope while alone** (but very questionable)...**but not love!** Developing **love** is a communal activity of the church.
5. **Lastly**, as was told here, we must be around each other to **stir one another up to Agape & good works**.

IX. Slide#18 **LET US ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER (25b)** *in encouragement*

- A. Give someone encouragement today.
 1. The world is full of **discouragers**; we have a Christian duty to encourage 1 another.
 2. Many times **a word of praise or thanks or appreciation or cheer** has kept someone on their feet. **Blessed is the one who speaks such a word**.
 - a) Eliphaz gave Job a backhanded compliment, Job 4:4 **Your words have upheld him who was stumbling, And you have strengthened the feeble knees**. [goes on to suggest Job was unable to take his own medicine]
- B. As you see **the Day** approaching – *Imminence* is God’s device to keep believers expectant & full of hope. [*draw near...because His coming is near!*]
- C. Slide#19 Msg - So, friends, we can now - without hesitation - walk right up to God, into “the Holy Place.” Jesus has cleared the way by the blood of his sacrifice, acting as our priest before God. The “curtain” into God’s presence is his body.
So let’s do it - full of belief, confident that we’re presentable inside and out. Let’s keep a firm grip on the promises that keep us going. He always keeps his word. Let’s see how **inventive** we can be in **encouraging love** and **helping out**, not avoiding worshiping together as some do but **spurring each other on**, especially as we see **the big Day** approaching. Slide#20