

The Azusa Street Papers Overview – Distractions that Lead to Lawlessness
Message 21, August 14th, 2022

Luke 10:38-42 says the following about two sisters, one was distracted and the other not; “38 Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at [a]Jesus’ feet and heard His word. 40 But Martha was **distracted** with much serving, and she approached Him and said, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore, tell her to help me.” 41 And [b]Jesus answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. 42 But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.”

Mary chose what was right and righteous. When you examine your personal devotion to Christ and Church attendance, would you consider yourself a Mary or a Martha? Jesus said that the devotion to Him that Mary chose would not be taken away from her and would not allow her to become like Martha who was worried and troubled about many things. Demonic distractions come in many ways to hinder Christians from a personal closer walk with Christ and fulfilling the call on their lives as ministers of the Gospel and attending Church on a regular basis. Distractions!

1 Peter 5:8-9 says; “8 Be [a]sober, be [b]vigilant; [c]because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 9 Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.”

When a Christian wakes up on a Sunday morning, they are often met with opposition in the spirit realm that try to get them to forsake the assembling of themselves in Church and exchange it for online church, and as a result, are subject to being devoured by the devil in one way or another. We’re not saying that online church doesn’t have its place, it could be a good supplement by listening to good teachers and preachers, but it’s not to be your church service. You’re not physically together with them, you’re not in the same room, you can’t take communion together with them, they can’t lay hands on you if you’re sick. It’s not to say the power of God can’t move, but it’s not God’s perfect will for you. His perfect will for you is to be physically in church, fellowshiping with other believers. It doesn’t have to be a large assembly either, it can be a small home church, but you need to prioritize church on Sunday’s. Probably only those who wouldn’t be able to go to church would be those in hospitals, nursing homes or who live in persecuted countries. Most towns and cities in the western world have churches and Christian fellowships to be able to attend.

The Saints at Azusa Mission and other missions worldwide that have spawned from this revival, received their Pentecost and remained in fellowship with the Church on a regular basis. They did not have ‘on-line church’ as is available today, but they had their own distractions in the era in which they lived that they had to overcome. They served the Lord without adhering to demonic distractions that were designed to hinder them from receiving a personal and corporate Pentecost experience, like the apostles and disciples did in the Book of Acts. They were focused in their hearts desire.

Azusa Papers says the following;

“The work at Azusa Mission is growing deeper and more powerful than ever. Praise God. Meetings continue every day with seekers at every service, and the three meetings run very near together. All day meetings on Sunday. Three other Apostolic Faith Missions continue in the city and God's blessing is upon them. The workers from these missions and from suburban towns meet together for conference on Mondays to study the Scriptures and get deeper into the things of God and for conference in the work of the Lord. The spirit of unity, love and power is manifest. Other like missions are being established in a number of towns.”

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You can't experience this kind of Church fellowship attending an on-line church, which is not fellowship at all, if it's your only church gathering, but rather can be coined, 'The Church of Me, Myself and I'; because any fellowship is only with yourself or other family members or friends that have become distracted with the things of this world to keep them out of attending a church fellowship in person as members of the body of Christ. If you are a Christian that does not attend a Church fellowship in person, you are by choice subject to satan, and have in essence set up a shrine to worship self, instead of obeying what is written in the Bible about church attendance. You can walk into non-Christian's homes or Christian homes who do not attend church, and see shrines like pictures, murals, crosses, Bible verses, Christian slogans etc. It makes them look very spiritual having Christian radio and TV on, but are they? What's more spiritual; to obey the Lord and go to church or to build shrines and worship self on Sundays?

Hebrews 10:24-25 in the Amplified Bible, Classic Edition, it says; *"24 And let us consider and give [a]ttentive, continuous care to watching over one another, studying how we may stir up (stimulate and incite) to love and helpful deeds and noble activities, 25 **Not forsaking or neglecting to assemble together [as believers], as is the habit of some people, but admonishing (warning, urging, and encouraging) one another, and all the more faithfully as you see the day approaching."***

This scripture is the key and it makes very clear that you're to be in physical fellowship with the body of Christ. They were meeting house to house, meeting in the temple with the Apostles on a regular basis.

What's keeping you out of fellowship with the Body of Christ? Is it family and friends, recreation of one sort or another, education, careers, relationships, indifference, pride etc., whatever it is needs to be nailed to the cross of Christ, and repented of today so that you may be able to function as a member of the church body of Christ and be not only hearers of the word but doers also. You can be a hearer all day separated from the body of Christ and not be a doer of the Word and physically attend a Church fellowship. You gain lots of knowledge but you're not being obedient to the Bible and Jesus' commands.

James 1:21-25 says; *"21 Therefore lay aside all filthiness and [a]overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is **able to save your souls**. 22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; 24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. 25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be **blessed in what he does**."*

Is your soul saved? Jesus is calling you to a straight and narrow road, to get off the broad and wide road. In not physically going to a church fellowship, reveals you're on a wide road where it's easy, no commitments to anyone. Come out of deception today, be a doer of the word. Since the Word says, *"**Not forsaking or neglecting to assemble together [as believers],**"* then you're not to forsake the assembling of yourself with other Christians. You're not going to get anything personal on-line or watching or listening to sermons, you'll get knowledge and have the appearance of being religious only. If you want to be blessed in what you do, be a doer of what God says and go to church, obey, obey, obey the Word of the Lord!

1 Corinthians 12:27-31 says; *"27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. 28 And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? 31 But earnestly desire the [a]best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way."*

Church is not coming together for a weekly Bible study in someone's home with no leadership. Church is coming to a setting where you have pastors, prophets, evangelists, teachers etc. You must be in the body of

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Christ and contributing to it, not just monetarily, but with the gifts that He has given to you. Jesus set up order for church and it must be obeyed. Without it, you are disobeying Jesus and what He commanded. You've left the local church and replaced it with Bible studies where there are no pastors, teachers, prophets, etc. There has to be leadership in a church setting. Even at Azusa Street, William J. Seymore was recognized as the leader even though they knew the Holy Spirit was the ultimate leader and teacher, yet they still acknowledged Seymore and others as the leaders of the movement. They knew what the order of church was.

This will probably rock a lot of Christians worlds today and will cause the shrines of self worship to tumble, regardless of the number of Bibles and teaching books like a theologian, that are stacked up in their home. Always learning but never coming to the knowledge of the truth of obeying God's word. Obedience, obedience, obedience, so many Christians don't like that word. That's how they end up at The Church of Me, Myself and I, with no accountability to anyone except themselves.

Acts 2:42-47 says; "42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' [a]doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. 44 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, 45 and [b]sold their possessions and goods, and divided[c] them among all, as anyone had need. 46 So continuing daily with **one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house**, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added [d]to the church daily those who were being saved."

The Saints at Azusa Missions located in Los Angeles or anywhere worldwide, made church fellowship a priority and this is why revival broke out all over the world for they were obeying what the Bible said about Church fellowship, be it in a house church or large missions.

AZUSA PAPERS says the following:

"The meetings go on every day from 2 p.m. until 12 and 1 a.m. Last night the new hall 22 by 70 was well filled. We began with testimonies, when the power came upon us so that there was no opportunity to speak or even read a verse of Scripture. They began coming to the altar, largely young men, and filled two 16 foot altars, then all the front seats. The power was so irresistible that people fell from their seats until the floor was literally covered with prostrate people. One man got the baptism in his home and speaks in a tongue. This makes eight or ten at this date, and scores are seeking at every service. -J.E. Sawders."

"HUNDREDS BAPTIZED IN THE SOUTH. High Point, N.C., Jan. 24. To the Saints at Los Angeles and all over the world, Greetings in Jesus name! The work at Dunn, N.C., still continues in His name. In the three weeks I was here, about fifty received the baptism with the Holy Ghost and spoke in tongues, which is the witness of the baptism as on the Day of Pentecost; and about fifteen of the fifty were ministers of the Gospel. Some are from Georgia, some from South Carolina, and some from North Carolina. Some are called to China to preach this blessed truth. God has blest me in casting out devils, healing the sick and in discerning of spirits."

It's very understandable why the devil would want to isolate Christians from Church fellowship, be it weekly or daily, for it's easier to fill their lives with more excuses not to be in church fellowship and keep their minds on things below and not above in heavenly places. I guess it all comes back to what a Christians priorities are in life, and whether Jesus is truly Lord of their lives or not, for many call themselves Christians but do not obey His word regarding Church fellowship.

In **Matthew 7:21-23**, Jesus says the following to those who claimed to be saints, yet turn out to be 'aints'. He undoubtedly knows who they are, but doesn't know them personally. It says; "21 *"Not everyone who says to*

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*Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who **does** the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who **practice lawlessness!**'"*

Isn't that interesting, you can be a Christian, do miracles in His name, but if you're practicing lawlessness, Jesus doesn't know you. If the judgement is so severe to those who practice all the things we read about in this verse, because they were practicing some type of lawlessness, could the answer from Jesus be the same to those who can't even obey Him in fellowshiping with His body in church? Whether you like to accept it or not, forsaking the assembling of yourself by not attending church, is lawlessness because it goes against what the Word of God requires of Christians. It's not that Jesus didn't know them, but their lawlessness brought them under judgment to the point that Jesus says; "I never knew you." Does Jesus know you Christian or will he say to you I never knew you.

Matthew 7:13-14 says; "*13 Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 [a]Because narrow is the gate and [b]difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are **few** who find it.*"

Christians that are on the straight and narrow road are those who obey Jesus and attend Church, where as Christians that disobey Jesus and are not attending Church, are on a broad and wide road and their claim to being born again is questionable, for they practice lawlessness. When you are truly born-again, your desire is to obey what the Bible says about Church fellowship, and no matter what the devil distracts you with to hinder you from attending church, it does not work in his favor simply because you have chosen to walk a straight and narrow road that leads to eternal life. The more the devil can isolate a Christian from Church fellowship, the more subject they are to the wolves in sheep's clothing and backsliding is inevitable, and this is why Jesus is able to say to those who claimed His Lordship with the gifts of the Spirit, casting out devils and signs and wonders being done in His name by them, "*I never knew you, you who practice lawlessness.*"

Jesus says in **John 10:10-14**; "*10 The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. 11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. 12 But a [a]hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. 13 The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.*"

The saints at Azusa Street were focused on obeying Jesus in everything His word had to say about living the life of a Christian, and they were not distracted from church fellowship. They heard the voice of the Lord and no other voice would they listen to and no one was stopping them from obeying the last command of Christ and receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit and Fire that He promised.

AZUSA PAPERS SAYS:

"In a meeting in a place where there was a rough element recently, a cowboy declared that he would break up the meeting that night, and brought his six shooter with him for that purpose. The workers left the matter with God, and kept holding on to Him in prayer. He went out and they heard noises as if he were trying to barricade the door. Soon he came in, sat down, and drew his six shooter, but immediately let it drop on the floor. This he repeated three times. When the altar call was made, he went outside, but one of the workers who was burdened for his soul followed him and knelt on the ground in the darkness not far from him and got hold of God, then came in again and knelt in prayer. The next he knew the boy was at the altar. He had thrown his six shooter to some of his companions. He broke down and cried for mercy and God came to his help and saved him. He got

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up from his knees and shook hands with nearly everyone in the room. The last we heard of him was that he rode four miles to get to a cottage prayer meeting.”

The saints in this Church never packed guns for self defence, their defence was prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit, and as we read it prevailed and instead of the cowboy getting shot and killed, he got born-again and was last seen riding off to a prayer meeting. I question ministers who surround themselves with bodyguards packing guns, for even Jesus told Peter that those who live by the sword will die by the sword.

Matthew 26:50-53 says; *“50 But Jesus said to him, “Friend, why have you come?” Then they came and laid hands-on Jesus and took Him. 51 And suddenly, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. 52 But Jesus said to him, “Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will [a]perish by the sword. 53 Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?”*

Churches can't rely on the arm of the flesh to defend themselves regardless how pro-gun they are. If you're baptized with the Holy Spirit and power, speaking in tongues, you don't need anything else. In rejecting the baptism in the Holy Spirit, Christian leaders have resorted to the natural means to defend themselves instead of seeing the power of the Holy Spirit and angelic ministers coming to their defense. The fear of man brings a snare, Proverbs 29:25.

When a Christian is genuinely born-again, they are hungry for more of the Holy Spirit and fire in their lives and will not settle for less, and even when they are baptised with the Holy Spirit and fire there is an ongoing hunger to be continually filled again and again on a regular basis. Nothing will stop you from Church fellowship except your own will, so no matter the temptation, God will always provide the way of escape.

1 Corinthians 10:13 says this; *“13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to [a]bear it.”*

James 1:12-15 says; *“12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. 13 Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.”*

Even that desire to not attend church, that disobedience you're planning and conceiving to not be in fellowship, it gives birth to sin and when sin is full-grown, it brings death. That is the outcome of disobedience. Chose life today and obey.

So as we just read, Christians are without any excuse to keep them out of church fellowship except their own will to no be in fellowship, and if that's the case, then could it be that they are not genuinely born-again, but rather just religious believers who are content to settle for the on-line Church of Me Myself and I instead of obeying what is written in **Hebrews 10:24-25**; *“24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 **not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together**, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”*

In closing we read in **2 Timothy 4:3-4** where the Apostle Paul says to Timothy the following; *“3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.”*

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