

**The Screwtape Letters ~ Letter 16 ~ Connoisseur of Churches**  
**February 21st, 2021**

Before reading the following overview of this Letter, we suggest that you click on the link above to read the short **Letter 16** for today's Illustrated Message, which will help you understand the following message.

Screwtape says to Wormwood; *“You mentioned casually in your last letter that the patient has continued to attend one church, and one only, since he was converted, and that he is not wholly pleased with it. May I ask what you are about? Why have I no report on the causes of his fidelity to the parish church? Do you realise that unless it is due to indifference it is a very bad thing? Surely you know that if a man can't be cured of churchgoing, the next best thing is to send him all over the neighbourhood looking for the church that "suits" him until he becomes a taster or connoisseur of churches.”*

As Christians, we are to follow what **Hebrews 10:23-25** says. If a Christian isn't following this clear direction that is laid out, I question if they are really a true Christian today. It says; *“23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. 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.”*

Many are not in church today because of the pandemic. Could it be that the pandemic was a good excuse to not go to church? Reality is, it shows truly where their heart is at and the pandemic gave them a way out. If you're on that route today, you need to repent and get back into fellowship with the local church.

The Christian, named the Patient in this Letter 16, is not totally pleased with the Church he is in, which is the only one he's ever attended, so Screwtape's advice to Wormwood in essence, is to get him to attend other Churches and not limit himself to being firmly grounded in one fellowship only.

Most times when Christians are not pleased with the Church they are in, is because they are having to deal with those old fashioned words, like sin and repentance.

When a new Christian is searching for a Church to attend and be a part of, it should never be about choosing a Church based on where you fit in the best and feel most comfortable. Church is never about fitting in and comfort, but rather it is about Christians coming together and conforming to what Church is to be and being a part of the Body of Christ, where a Christian can operate in the Gifts of the Holy Spirit that God has given him or her to contribute to church fellowship for the building up and edifying those attending.

This is why so many Christians are not in a Church today, and it's because of their unrealistic expectations of Church fellowship to be a place of comfort that is to accommodate sinful lifestyles that require little or no repentance.

It's easy to attend seeker sensitive Churches, simply because the term repentance has been removed from Church sermons, and the Churches are built to accommodate the sinner's lifestyle so that they are comfortable and can fit in, and come and go as they please with no requirements to repent of sin.

In the [Christianese Dictionary](#), there's an article that defines what the term Christian lite is. This is what a portion of it says; *“All the salvation with half the guilt! It's what some people call “Christianity lite.” Sometimes you want all the benefits of Christianity, such as forgiveness of sins and getting into heaven, but you don't want some of the weighty obligations, such as having to change your lifestyle and love your neighbor. The solution is to get a “diet” version of Christianity that has all the great benefits you desire, but without all the unwanted responsibilities to go along with them. Christians refer to this kind of theological attitude as Christian lite, Christianity lite, diet Christianity, and other similar combinations.”*

Screwtape says; *“In the first place the parochial organisation should always be attacked, because, being a unity of place and not of likings, it brings people of different classes and psychology together in the kind of unity the Enemy desires. The congregational principle, on the other hand, makes each church into a kind of club, and finally, if all goes well, into a coterie or faction. In the second place, the search for a "suitable" church makes the man a critic where the Enemy wants him to be a pupil.”*

The devil can't handle the unity of Christian fellowship. Again, it's not about 'liking' Church, it's never been about your comfort, rather it's about the unity in the body of Christ.

The Apostle Paul talks about the unity and diversity in the body of Christ in **1 Corinthians 12:12-25**;  
*“12 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink [a] into one Spirit. 14 For in fact the body is not one member but many. 15 If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? 18 But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. 19 And if they were all one member, where would the body be? 20 But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. 21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you”; nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” 22 No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. 23 And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty, 24 but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, 25 that there should be no [b]schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.”*

This is the Church fellowship that the devil would rather a Christian not attend so that they don't grow in their gifts and callings on their lives, but would rather have them attend seeker sensitive Churches. The devil wants Christians to attend Churches that teach Christian lite sermons, to appease their critical attitude towards sound Biblical Church doctrine that does not conform itself to their unrepentant lifestyle of sin.

Screwtape goes on to say; *“The two churches nearest to him, I have looked up in the office. Both have certain claims. At the first of these the Vicar is a man who has been so long engaged in watering down the faith to make it easier for supposedly incredulous and hard-headed congregation that it is now he who shocks his parishioners with his unbelief, not vice versa. He has undermined many a soul's Christianity. His conduct of the services is also admirable. In order to spare the laity all "difficulties" he has deserted both the lectionary and the appointed psalms and now, without noticing it, revolves endlessly round the little treadmill of his fifteen favourite psalms and twenty favourite lessons. We are thus safe from the danger that any truth not already familiar to him and to his flock should over reach them through Scripture.”*

One can see clearly that the schemes of the devil is to remove the reading and study of the whole Bible and only default to a handful of verses to be rehearsed repetitively. There is life in the whole council of God's Word.

The Apostle Paul reveals what type of people these are in **2 Corinthians 11:13-15** where it says; *“13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.”*

**2 Timothy 4:3-4** also says; *“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.”*

Let's look at some Scripture examples of true Church Fellowship for a Christian.

**Ephesians 2:19-22** says; *"19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit."*

**Ephesians 4:11-16** says; *"11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the <sup>[a]</sup>edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, 15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love."*

**Acts 2:42-47** says; *"42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' <sup>[a]</sup>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 <sup>[b]</sup>sold their possessions and goods, and divided<sup>[c]</sup> 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 <sup>[d]</sup>to the church daily those who were being saved."*

It's interesting to observe that that's why there are so few Holy Spirit filled Churches in our province and throughout Canada. The devil has worked hard at diminishing the book of Acts churches because they're the ones that walk in power to bind him and cast him out.

The Book of Acts Church is the fellowship that the devil wants to keep you from growing in as a Christian. He wants to replace it with religion, that is void of God's power that can be found in the Biblical examples of the early Church which are a demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit. Religion (religious Christianity), prepares a feast but serves the scraps, and withholds what is needed for a Christian to grow in the gifts that the Holy Spirit has given to them.

Screwtape says; *"At the other church we have Fr. Spike. The humans are often puzzled to understand the range of his opinions--why he is one day almost a Communist and the next not far from some kind of theocratic Fascism—one day a scholastic, and the next prepared to deny human reason altogether--one day immersed in politics, and, the day after, declaring that all states of this world are equally "under judgment". We, of course, see the connecting link, which is Hatred. The man cannot bring himself to teach anything which is not calculated to shock, grieve, puzzle, or humiliate his parents and their friends."*

This Fr. Spike sounds like a very confused preacher and false teacher. It would seem that he is "Father Spike" from a Catholic church, and we sure see a lot of this confusion and false teaching in the present papal teachings and leadership, don't we?

The Apostle Paul says to Timothy in **1 Timothy 6:3-5** the following; *"3 If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the <sup>[a]</sup>doctrine which accords with godliness, 4 he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from*

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*which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, 5 [b]useless wrangling's of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. [c]From such withdraw yourself."*

You're to withdraw yourself from Churches that teach false doctrines such as these. You're to find a Church like the Book of Acts Church, whether it is two or three gathered together or a larger congregation, you need to find a place where you not only receive the full council of the full Bible, but where you can grow in the gifts and call on your life.

**Romans 12:3-8** talks about serving God with your Spiritual gifts in Church; *"3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. 4 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; 7 or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; 8 he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness."*

This is why it's so important to remain in a Church body that teaches the doctrines of the Apostles of the Church found in the Book of Acts, so that you may utilise the gifts that God has given you to operate in the Body of Christ, the Church, and that you are not deceived by seeker sensitive false teachers that teach eternal security that is based on cheap grace.

As a reminder, eternal security teaching means once saved, always saved. There are these seeker sensitive Churches that have been built only to accommodate the sinners desires and are not built on Bible doctrine. Again, church is not about 'feeling good' or being 'comfortable', but about obeying God to come together in His name, and not forsake it, plus to operate in the gifts of the Holy Spirit that have been given to you.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer describes cheap grace as the following; *"Cheap grace means grace sold on the market like cheapjacks' wares. The sacraments, the forgiveness of sin, and the consolations of religion are thrown away at cut prices. Grace is represented as the Church's inexhaustible treasury, from which she showers blessings with generous hands, without asking questions or fixing limits. Grace without price; grace without cost! The essence of grace, we suppose, is that the account has been paid in advance; and, because it has been paid, everything can be had for nothing. Since the cost was infinite, the possibilities of using and spending it are infinite. What would grace be if it were not cheap?"*

What a lie that the devil has sown into the seeker friendly or seeker sensitive Churches, that everything is covered by grace and nothing more needs to be done. So hip, so cool, so entertaining, but teach cheap grace and taken the words 'repentance' and 'sin' out of their sermons. They only want the sinner to 'feel good' and 'fit in'.

Bonhoeffer's statement continues; *"Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate."*

For teaching on the Holy Spirit, His gifts and manifestations, please go to [The Holy Spirit Power Series](#) on our website.