

The Church is a Body of Witnesses

Hey, how many of you guys have stopped long enough in life to realize this truth. Did you know that each one of us is somebody else's weirdo? Have you ever thought about that? Hey, it's weird but it's probably true, you know? But that's right, for those of you who don't think of these kind of weird things in life like me, I'm here to help you out. Let's take a look at several weird but true things I've thought about in life and let's see if you can agree.

1. Is it true that marriage is a relationship in which one person is always right and the other is a husband?
2. Is it true that on the sixth day, God created the platypus and God said, "Let's see the evolutionists try and figure this one out."
3. Is it true that if Cher were to get cloned she would be Cher and Cher alike?
4. Why is it that people keep running over a string a dozen times with their vacuum cleaner, then reach down, pick it up, examine it, then put it down to give their vacuum one more chance?
5. Why is there Braille lettering on the Drive Thru ATM machines?
6. If vegetarians love animals so much, why do they eat all their food?
7. If at first you don't succeed, shouldn't you try doing it like your wife told you in the first place?
8. If a man is standing in the middle of the forest speaking and there is no woman around, is he still wrong?

9. Is it true that the number of people watching you is directly proportionate to the stupidity of your action?
10. Why is it when you apply deodorant, you have to use the exact same number of swipes under each arm?
11. Why is it that no one will answer the phone on the first ring? Why do you have to wait until the second ring?
12. Why did our country remove the Ten Commandments from our courthouses yet we still make people swear to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth on the Bible?

Yes, there's a lot of weird but true things in life, aren't there? But folks, believe it or not, did you know I've discovered what's got to be the all time weirdest but true thing in life that puts all those other ones to shame. And can anybody guess what that might be? Hey, that's right! It's Christians walking around acting like they've got **practical amnesia**! Talk about weird but unfortunately true, right?

Oh, we say we know who we are as the Church, but half the time, with our lips and with our lives, we act like we've forgotten who we are. And it's not only detrimental in our walk with Christ. It keeps others from believing in Christ. Therefore, to avoid this **atrocious** of Christian's living like they got practical amnesia by not knowing who they are, we're going to continue our study from the Word of God on the people of God entitled, **"Will the REAL Church Please Stand Up?"**

And we've already seen the **first thing** we need to know about the Church if we're going to stop acting like we've got practical amnesia is that the Church is the **Body of Christ**. The **second thing** we need to know is that the Church is a **Body of Brides**. The **third thing** we need to know is that the Church is a **Body of One**. The **fourth thing** we need to know is that the Church is a **Body of Hope**. The **fifth thing** we need to know is that the Church is a **Body of Joy**. The **sixth thing** we need to know is that the Church is a **Body of Love**. The **seventh thing** we need to know is that the Church is a **Body of Peace**. The **eighth thing** we need to know is that the Church is a **Body of Strangers**. The **ninth thing** we need to know is that the Church is a **Body of Disciples**. The **tenth thing** we need to know is that the Church is a **Body of Servants**. The **eleventh thing** we need to know is that the Church is a **Body of Rebels**. The **twelfth thing** we need to know is that the Church is a **Body of Worshippers**. And last time we saw the **thirteenth thing** we need to know is that the Church is a **Body of Warriors**. And there we saw that even though the Bible says we were supposed to be warriors of God fighting the great cosmic battle, what are we doing? We've actually stopped fighting the great cosmic battle! **Why?** Because we've started **denying the battle**, we've started **sabotaging the battle**, and we've even started **running from the battle**. And because of that, we're not only ceasing to be a Body of

Warriors, we're actually turning into a Body of **namby-pamby-chicken-livered-Harvey-milquetoast wimps**. And I don't think that's the kind of Church Jesus came to die for, how about you?

But people, believe it or not, did you know that's not the only thing we need to know about the Church if we're going to stop acting like we got practical amnesia? The **fourteenth thing** we need to know is **The Church is a Body of Witnesses**. But hey, don't take my word for it. Let's listen to God's.

Acts 1:1-8 "In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. So when they met together, they asked him, Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?

He said to them: It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Now folks, according to our text, the Bible is clear. One of the reasons why God gives us His Spirit at salvation is for the power to what? Was it the power to get wild and crazy or the power to wow people with our spiritual

abilities or maybe the power to lift heavy weights for Jesus? No people! What did it say? God gives us His powerful spirit so we can be what? Powerful witnesses, right? But that's not all. Notice what else Jesus said. He didn't say we **might** be His powerful witnesses. He didn't say we need to **think** about being powerful witnesses, what did He say? He said you **will be** my witnesses, right?

And here's my point. Surely, we all know this, right? I mean, surely every Christian who's ever lived knows that the Church is to be a **Body of Witnesses**, who not only witness to others because Jesus commanded it but we even do so across the face of our planet, to the ends of the earth, right? Well, you'd think so, but we've got some problems. **Why?** Because if you look at most Churches it doesn't look like we're **willing witnesses declaring the gospel of God.** Are you kidding! It looks like we're **disobedient Christians ashamed of God!**

So why in the world do we do this? Why do we Christians **who are supposed to be** witnesses for Christ declaring the gospel to the lost, actually look like we've **stopped** witnessing to the lost? Hey, great question. I'm glad you asked. It's pretty simple. The **first reason** why we've stopped witnessing to the lost is because **We've Stopped Praying for the Lost.**

Romans 10:1-4 "Dear brothers and sisters, the longing of my heart and my prayer to God is that the Jewish people might be saved. I know what

enthusiasm they have for God, but it is misdirected zeal. For they don't understand God's way of making people right with himself.

Instead, they are clinging to their own way of getting right with God by trying to keep the law. They won't go along with God's way. For Christ has accomplished the whole purpose of the law. All who believe in him are made right with God.”

Now folks, according to our text, the Bible is clear. One of the Apostle Paul's greatest longings in life was what? He longed that the Jewish people might be saved, right? **Why?** Because they we're going the wrong way instead of God's way to get to heaven, right? They we're trying to get to heaven some other way than through Jesus, right? People don't do that today, do they? Yeah, right! But not only that. Notice what else Paul said. He didn't just long for their salvation, he what? He earnestly **prayed for their salvation**, right? He went to God on their behalf.

And people, **the point is this**. Surely the American Church knows this, right? I mean, surely we know as **witnesses of Christ** that if we really love somebody we'll not only long for them to be saved, but we'll be sucking carpet day in and day out praying to God they do get saved, right? People are you kidding? We're not praying to God on behalf of the lost. We're praying for anything and everything but the lost. We pray for healing, we pray for health. We pray for jobs and we pray for wealth. But for some goofy reason, we hardly spend any time praying for the lost. And people,

please don't misunderstand me. It's not that we can't pray for those other things as well. Hello! It's just for some goofy reason, the most important thing to pray for in life has become the least thing we pray for in life.

Therefore, to remind us what's really important in life, let's see what we need to be praying for.

1. If we pray for someone to be healed of cancer but they still don't know Christ, what good is that?
2. If we pray that our kids do well in school but they don't know the Savior, what good is that?
3. If we pray that our loved ones find a good job but they still don't have a relationship with God, what good is that?
4. If we pray for someone's practical needs, yet getting saved, their greatest spiritual need isn't met, what good is that?
5. If we pray for someone to get a house yet they're not going to a mansion in heaven, what good is that?
6. If we pray for God to fix a person's car but not to fix their soul, what good is that?
7. If we pray for a loved one's financial need but they still don't have eternal riches in Christ, what good is that?
8. If we pray for somebody having heart surgery yet they haven't been given a new heart from Jesus, what good is that?
9. If we pray for someone in a depressing situation yet they still don't know the joy of salvation, what good is that?
10. If we pray for someone to have traveling mercies but they're still traveling to hell, what good is that?

Now folks, I don't know about you, but I'd say the most important thing in life to pray for, really is the least thing we pray for, isn't it? In fact, I'd say we've plum forgotten what life's all about, like this story reveals.

“Years ago when the first Church Buildings were built in America, the graveyard was not only built within the Churchyard, but the Church buildings themselves had clear windows instead of stained glass. Why?

Because they wanted the Pastor to see the graveyard while he preached so he'd be reminded of the urgency of his message! Every time he looked out a window he was constantly reminded that everybody who sat in the pews right before him, as he spoke, would eventually fill a place in that cemetery outside that window and ultimately have to stand before God to be judged.

You see, back then, the first and foremost priority of the Church in America, was to bring men and women into a right relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

But now our Church Sanctuary's are built with windows you can't see through and a cemetery nowhere to be found. And because of that, we've not only forgotten what life's all about, but we no longer see the real work that needs to be done!

Now folks, I don't know about you, but I'd say if we're no longer praying for the lost, then something is simply clouding our view of eternity, isn't it? We've forgotten what life's all about, haven't we? But not only that, **the point is this**. If we've actually stopped praying for the lost who still don't know Jesus Christ, how can we call ourselves true witnesses of Christ? Hello! Do you see the obvious problem there?

Oh, but that's not all. The **second reason** why we've stopped being witnesses to the lost is because **We've Stopped Sharing with the Lost**.

Romans 1:14-16 “I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome. I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.”

Now folks, according to our text, the Bible is clear. Another one of the Paul’s greatest longings in life was what? It wasn’t just to pray for the lost, it was to what? It was to **share the gospel** with the lost, right? **Why?** Because what did he say? He said the gospel has the power of God to save anyone, Jew or Gentile, who believes in it, right? **Therefore**, Paul was not what? He was not **ashamed of the gospel**, right?

And people, **the point is this**. Surely the American Church knows this, right? I mean, surely we know as **witnesses of Christ** that there’s no stinkin’ reason to be ashamed of the gospel. I mean, gee whiz, what’s there to be ashamed about showing others how to get to heaven, right? People are you kidding? We’re not only not praying for the lost but neither are we sharing the gospel with the lost. We’re actually acting like we’re ashamed of the gospel.

For instance, maybe you’ve heard comments like these, “Well what if they reject me,” or “What if they think I’m weird,” or “I don’t want them to think I’m judging them,” or “What if they get all mad at me and don’t want to be my friend anymore?” Have you heard those comments before? **But**

people, stop and think it. Isn't that implying that the gospel is bad? Isn't that assuming it's something to be ashamed of? And people, here's what's so ironic. I mean, here we have the gospel, which means good news and yet we're treating it like it's the what? The bad news! And to show you how crazy this behavior is, let's look at this same kind of behavior in a different scenario.

1. Can you imagine if a lifeguard refused to save a drowning person?
2. Can you imagine if a paramedic refusing to perform CPR?
3. Can you imagine a heart surgeon refusing to do heart surgery on a patient?
4. Can you imagine a doctor refusing to tell a cancer patient that they have cancer and unless they get treatment they will die?
5. Can you imagine a policeman refusing to protect you from a burglar?
6. Can you imagine a S.W.A.T. team member refusing to rescue a hostage?
7. Can you imagine a person taking a lifeboat from a sinking ship and not letting anyone else in?
8. Can you imagine a parent refusing to rescue their child from getting hit by a car?
9. Can you imagine a fireman refusing to rescue someone from a fire?
10. Then why is it acceptable for a Christian to not witness to the lost who are in danger of the fires of hell?

Now folks, I don't know about you, but I'd say when you put it into its context, a Christian refusing to share the gospel is one of the most unimaginable behaviors of all time, how about you? But not only that, **the point is this**. If we've actually stopped sharing the gospel to the lost who don't know Jesus Christ, how can we call ourselves true witnesses of Christ? Hello! Do you see the obvious problem there?

Oh, but that's not all. The **third reason** why we've stopped being witnesses to the lost is because **We've Stopped Caring for the Lost**.

Luke 16:22-28 "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.

But Abraham replied, Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.

He answered, Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment."

Now folks, according to our text, the Bible is clear. The reason why you and I as Christians share the gospel is not only because it's the way to go to heaven, it's what? **It's the way we get to escape from going to hell,**

right? And how many of you guys would say the ol' rich man there was having a great time where he was at? Yeah, it was pretty horrible, wasn't it?

And people, **the point is this**. Surely the American Church knows this, right? I mean, surely we know as **witnesses of Christ** that if we really love somebody we'll do whatever it takes to share the gospel and we'll certainly never give up in sharing the gospel because **we care way too much** to see them end up in a place like that, right? People are you kidding? We're not caring for the lost doing whatever it takes to save every last man, woman and child. We care only for our own lives living it up and partying wild.

Why? Because frankly folks, we don't want to deal with reality. We don't want to hear, we don't want to listen, and we certainly don't want to be confronted with the reality of hell. Are you kidding? Why, it's become the deadly "H" word in the American Church. And people, what's goofy is we can deny it all we want but hell exists whether we like it or believe it or not! Hello! I didn't say that, Jesus did!

And people this is precisely why Jesus talked more about hell than He ever did about heaven. He didn't do it out of **fear or hate!** Are you kidding! **He did it out of love!** **Why?** Because hell people is one place you don't ever want to go! But don't take my word for it, let's listen to God's. Let see what hell is like.

1. Place of Thirst: (Luke 16)
2. Place of Worms: (Mark 9)
3. Place of No Return: (Luke 16)
4. Place of Remembrance: (Luke 16)

5. Place of the Wicked Dead: (Luke 10)
6. Place of the Wicked Demons: (2 Peter 2)
7. Place of a Bottomless Pit: (Luke 8)
8. Place of a Burning Waste Dump: (Matt. 23)

9. Place of Outer Darkness: (Matt. 8)
10. Place of Fire: (Rev. 20)
11. Place of the Lake of Fire: (Rev. 20)
12. Place of Eternal Fire: (Matt. 18)

13. Place of Unquenchable Fire: (Mark 9)
14. Place of Everlasting Punishment: (Matt. 25)
15. Place of Eternal Condemnation: (Mark 3)
16. Place of Eternal Judgment: (Heb. 6)

17. Place of Everlasting Destruction: (2 Thess. 1)
18. Place of Weeping & Gnashing of Teeth: (Matt. 13)
19. Place of Torment: (Luke 16)
20. Place of Eternal Torment: (Rev. 20)

Now folks, I don't know about you, but I'd say hell's not a very fun place to be, how about you? And gee whiz, no wonder Jesus talked about it so much. I mean if you really loved somebody, you'd **care enough** to warn them about a place like that, right? But you might be saying, "Well, wait a second. If I start telling people about hell, I might scare them off." Well folks, I like what one guy said. He said, "Well, hello! Where do you think you're going to scare them off too? **Hell #2?**" People, stop and think about it! If hell really exists, **and it does**, then don't you think people need to

know about it? I mean, gee whiz, even an atheist can figure that one out, right? Well, for those of you who aren't sure, I've got some proof. Let's listen to a testimony of two atheists who are confronted with the actual reality of hell and you tell me **if even they** can figure out what to do.

“Dr. Maurice Rawlings, a renown specialist in the field of internal medicine and cardiovascular disease, resuscitated many people who had been clinically dead. Some of whom experienced visions of the torments of hell. After the resuscitation of Charles McKay, both Dr. Rawlings and his patient McKay immediately turned their lives over to the Lord for salvation. Here is their testimony.

Dr Rawlings: ‘The strangest thing happened when I would stop resuscitating to put in a pacemaker.’

Mr. McKay: ‘When I came to, Dr. Rawlings said my hair was literally standing on the end and my eyes had already started to dilate. And I was just absolutely scared to death. I was horrified. I parted lots.

What had led to this was earlier they sent me on up to the clinic where Dr. Rawlings was and kept me for about three or four days and then gave me a stress test. On the stress test, I told the girl, Pam, that was giving the stress test that I was dying, let me off. And that was the last that I remember of that.

When I came to, Dr. Rawlings was giving me CPR. And he asked me what was the matter because I was looking so scared. I told him I had been to hell and I need help. He said, ‘Keep your hell to yourself. I'm a doctor and I'm trying to save your life. You need a Minister for that.’

As he was giving me CPR, he was trying to install a pacemaker with one hand and trying to continue CPR with the other. I would start to fade out and he would start CPR again and bring me back. I watched what was going on like I was floating in the air. I was up above and looked down and could see things.

I kept asking them, ‘Please help me! Please help me! I don’t want to go back to hell!’ And Pam said, ‘Well he needs help. Do something!’ And at that time Dr. Rawlings said, ‘Pray this short prayer after me. I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. If you save my soul and keep me alive, I’ll be hooked to you forever. And if I die, please keep me out of hell.’

After I prayed that, all the other experiences were real pleasant. This light surrounded me and to this day I believe it was the Holy Spirit that took care of me. I never felt so good and so safe in all my life.’

Dr. Rawlings: ‘After all this was over, I realized what had really happened. It was a double conversion. Not only had this make believe prayer converted this atheist on the floor, it had also converted this atheist doctor that was working on him. That’s the only reason I can appear to you here now. It’s to tell you that there is a life after death, and it ain’t all good!’”

Now folks, I don’t know about you, but I find it awfully strange that when the rubber meets the road and you’re staring hell right in the face, that even an atheist **cares enough to share the gospel**, how about you?

Therefore, who do we think we’re kidding. If we don’t pray for the lost, if we don’t share with the lost, and if we don’t even care enough to warn the lost about hell, then what do we think we’re acting like? We’re not acting like witnesses of Christ. We’re acting like we’re ashamed of Christ! We’re actually calling Jesus a liar!

And people, that’s why if we can’t stop **playing Church** instead of being the Church then maybe it’s time to **get out of the Church? Why?** Because being a Christian is not a game. What we say and do literally affects the eternal destiny of people around us. Therefore, it’s high time we get rid

of our **practical amnesia**. We've got to remember who we are! We're not a bunch of atheistic close-mouthed people ashamed of the gospel. Are you kidding! We're the mouthpieces of Christ lovingly proclaiming the gospel! We're His Body. A **Body of Witnesses!**

To find the way to God, to understand the *truth* of God's Word, and to received the gift of eternal *life*, begin by repentance and faith through a prayer like this:

“Dear God, I understand that I have broken Your Law and sinned against You. Please forgive my sins. Thank You that Jesus suffered on the cross in my place. I now place my trust in Him as My Savior and Lord. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.”
