

# *This Is Not a Ball Game*

Sunday AM, June 2, 2024

Mike Miller

Straight Paths Bible Church

John 9:13-16 They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see. Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

- I. And that is the devil's goal, always; to cause division and divert all the attention and wonder away from God and turn it to fighting and resisting one another.
  - A. We are not talking about world-wide ecumenicalism, but a local church.
  - B. Christ unites, Satan divides.
  - C. Christ does not unite anyone or anything outside of the truth of the Word of God and righteousness.
  - D. The devil divides by questioning the truth and unites evil with their opposition to truth.
  - E. The devil unites with the power of numbers and the fact that people feel empowered when they are in a big crowd.
  
- II. Christianity has become like joining a bowling league, or a sports team, but mostly like joining a gang.
  - A. Church has become just an organization that does certain things.
  - B. People join in order to participate in whatever the organization does.
    1. Motorcycle clubs, bird-watching clubs, Airstream clubs, Corvette clubs, and clubs for just about anything you can imagine.
    2. People join these organizations to do things they enjoy, and to find a community of people who enjoy the same thing they enjoy.
  - C. Church has come to mean the same thing as any other worldly organization, and people join churches for the same reasons that they join the other organizations.
  - D. Church is no longer THE one organization and community that sets us apart from the world and separates us from all other worldly organizations whose purpose is entertainment and community.
    1. Church has simply become another organization for entertainment and community.
  - E. The churches are now in competition with the world to entertain and draw crowds to their shows with their music and comedy acts and motivations talks they substitute for preaching.
  - F. And instead of doing what Christians are supposed to do Christianity has become nothing but a continual argument or brawl over the rules about how and what we are supposed to do and how to do it.
    1. Just like ball games and wrestling matches.
    2. It has become like the horse races where everyone bets on their favorite and all kinds of dirty rotten stuff is done to make sure our favorite wins.
    3. Or there is always someone there who insists on punishing others with the rules as they understand them. (church discipline; voting on everything; committees, etc.)

- III. God did not create man to be on a team, or to “play ball” or anything else.
- A. He did not create man to form clubs where they do religious rites and ceremonies and fascinate one another with their talents, abilities, theories, superstitions, and mysticism.
  - B. God did not create man so he could form organizations to cancel out other people.
  - C. God created man a lot for the same reason that a man marries a woman.
  - D. That is, to live together and enjoy one another’s company, and have a family.
  - E. To have a companion for life, to share life with, and to make a life with.
  - F. God created man for himself; He did not create man to form his own affinities with one another and exclude God.
  - G. That is the business of a church, and that is the community and fellowship that should be found in a church.
  - H. The first business of the church is to reach the lost and be a place different from the world to which they can escape the world and its evil ways.
  - I. The business of the church is to bring people to a clearer and more true understanding of God the Father and Jesus Christ his Son.
    - 1. Also, to have a better understanding of people and why they do what they do.
    - 2. To teach people, mainly through example, to love one another, even as Christ has loved us.
  - J. And the main business of the church is to make sure we do not lose sight of the fact that earth is temporary and eternity is permanent.
    - 1. That we should live our lives in view of the reward in heaven and not seek for the approval of men and the pleasures of this world here in this earthly life.
    - 2. And to do all it can to keep people from being caught up and swallowed up in this world’s powerful draw right now.
  - K. America’s Got Talent is a good example of what I am talking about right here.
    - 1. It uses the fact that talent (particularly to sing) is found everywhere in people of the lowest classes of society.
    - 2. It sets up worldly, ungodly people to “judge” them and reward them or shame them, according to whatever their mood is at the time.
    - 3. It uses the thunderous, throbbing music to ignite the crowds and they worship just exactly the same as those in the contemporary churches do.
    - 4. All this lights an emotional fire in the hearts of all that watch it and they feel like they have participated in something Divine, and as one together.
    - 5. No one is ever there contesting or contending, or bringing up the rules, so it is earthly worship at its best.
  - L. And the churches are modeling their services, their purpose, and their whole format after all these worldly examples of “success” instead of the epistles of the Bible.
  - M. Do not be deceived by the world’s vain imitations and substitutes for eternal glory.
  - N. Stick with the truth of God’s Word and the tried and proven ways of righteousness, which have outlasted cycle after cycle of the rise and fall of evil in this world.
  - O. Our reward is waiting in heaven and nothing on earth has ever had more splendor or glory or wonder than what we are going to feel when God gathers his jewels.

Romans 8:18-20 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope,

- 1. And we will not go back to our earthly home after this ceremony to the drudgery and vanity of earthly life, but it will be an eternal reward full of joy and rejoicing forever.