

The Church is a Body of Peace

Well hey, if you were here last week you'll recall that we had a child speak up right at the exact time someone needed to in the sermon.

Remember that? That was so cool. As the Scripture says, out of the mouth of babes. But it got me to thinking this week about kids and how they can not only speak up when no adult will, sometimes for better or for worse, how many of you have learned that one? But sometimes, they can actually share some **good practical advice** that most adults don't even think of, like these kids did. Let's take a look.

1. **What would you do on a first date that was turning sour?**
(Craig, age 9) I'd run home and play dead. The next day I would call all the newspapers and make sure they wrote about me in all the dead columns.
2. **What is the proper age to get married?**
(Tom, age 10) Once I'm done with kindergarten, I'm going to find me a wife.
3. **How do you decide whom to marry?**
(Alan, age 10) You got to find somebody who likes the same stuff. Like, if you like sports, she should like it that you like sports, and she should keep the chips and dip coming.
4. **How can a stranger tell if two people are married?**
(Derrick, age 8) You might have to guess, based on whether they seem to be yelling at the same kids.
5. **When is it okay to kiss someone?**
(Jim, age 10) You should never kiss a girl unless you have enough bucks

to buy her a big ring and her own VCR, cause she'll want to have videos of the wedding.

6. **Why does love happen between two particular people?**
(Jan, age 9) No one is sure why it happens, but I heard it has something to do with how you smell. That's why perfume and deodorant are so popular.
7. **Why do lovers often hold hands?**
(Dave, age 8) They want to make sure their rings don't fall off because they paid good money for them.
8. **What are most people thinking when they say I love you?**
(Michelle, age 9) The person is thinking, "Yah I really do love him, but I hope he showers at least once a day."
9. **How do you make love endure?**
(Randy, age 8) Be a good kisser. It might make your wife forget that you never take out the trash.
10. **How would you make a marriage work?**
(Ricky, age 10) Tell your wife that she looks pretty even if she looks like a truck.

Yes, kids are chocked full of practical advice, aren't they? But that's right folks, being a kid at heart myself, I'd like to also share some good practical advice. It goes like this. Stop acting like you got **practical amnesia!**

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**. And last time we saw the **sixth thing** we need to know is that the Church is a **Body of Love**. And there we saw, believe it or not, how the American Church is actually behaving loveless when the Bible says we should be loving. **Why?** Because we **refuse to love the needy**, we **refuse to love our enemies**, and we **refuse to love God's family**. And because of that, we're not only ceasing to be a Body of Love, we're actually turning into a Body of **greedy, vengeful, hate-filled people**. 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 **seventh thing** we need to know is **The Church is a Body of Peace**. But hey, don't take my word for it. Let's listen to God's.

John 14:23-27 "Jesus replied, If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. All this I have spoken while still with you.

But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

Now folks, according to our text, the Bible is clear. Jesus not only promised to send us **His Spirit after He left**, but He what? He promised to give us **His peace before He left**, right? And notice He didn't say He might give us His peace. And neither did He say if we grunt and groan He'd think about giving us some peace. No! What did He say? He said I give you my peace right now, right?

And here's my point. Surely, we all know that, right? I mean, surely every Christian who's ever lived knows that the Church is to be a **Body of Peace**, where people look at us and say, "Wow! Now there's a group of people who are always calm, cool, collected and they never seem to get frazzled no matter what happens to them," 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 full of peace. Are you kidding! It looks like we're falling to pieces!

So why in the world would Christians **look so peaceless** when the Bible says we should **be so peaceful**? Hey, great question. I'm glad you asked. It's pretty simple. The **first reason** we look so peaceless is because **We've Forgotten How to Be Confident in God.**

Philippians 4:6-7 "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Now folks, according to our text, the Bible is clear. Talk about some good news! You and I have divine permission from God to what? To never ever be anxious about what? About anything, right? **Why?** Because we pray in confidence that God's going to provide for us and when we do that, what happens? We're filled with what the peace of God, right?

And people, **the point is this.** Surely the American Church knows this, right? I mean, surely we know that the peace of God is maintained not in having perfect surroundings but in being confident that God is in control of our surroundings, right? People are you kidding? Let's be honest! We don't present our requests to God and walk away in peace. No! We skip that part and go straight to anxiety, right? And people, this is not only a slap in the face of God but if we're honest with ourselves, we place our confidence

in all kinds of things without even thinking about it. Tell me the following statement isn't true.

“We go to doctors whose names we can't pronounce and whose degrees we've never verified, who give us prescriptions we cannot read. And then without question, we take it to a pharmacist we've never seen who gives us containers of chemicals we've never heard of and we go home and take them with instructions we don't understand, all in faith!”

Therefore, if we automatically have confidence in a doctor we don't even know, then how much more should we be confident in the One Who created the doctor from head to toe? People, stop and think about it! Isn't God worthy of our confidence? Don't you think He knows how to provide for us? I mean, He's just God after all! And because we don't immediately put our confidence in God, we not only miss out on the peace of God, but half the time we don't even acknowledge His provision until after the fact, like these ladies did.

“Corrie Ten Boom and her sister Betsy had just been transferred to the worst German prison camp they'd been to yet called Ravensbruck. And they, along with hundreds of other women were stripped of their few belongings and forced into a very small barrack. And the problem was, it was not only cold and overcrowded, but it was infested with fleas.

But by a miracle of God, they managed to smuggle in a bible and so Corrie and Betsy would read it as often as they could for encouragement. And one morning they read the passage in the Bible that said to give God thanks in all things. So Betsy told Corrie they needed to stop and thank the Lord for everything, including the fleas.

Well, being frustrated and flea bitten, Corrie refused to give God thanks for those fleas. But her sister persisted until finally Corrie gave in begrudgingly.

But the good news was that during the months they spent in that flea infested barrack, these sisters were able to hold regular Bible studies to encourage many of the other hurting women there. And this of course was a huge risk because if the guards had caught them, they would have either tortured or killed them.

But for some strange reason, the guards never seemed to notice. And that's when several months later, they finally learned the reason why. You see, the guards would not enter their barracks because of all the fleas."

Now folks, I don't know about you, but I'd say when all was said and done, those ladies were just a little bit grateful for those fleas, how about you? I'd say they were at peace after that, how about you? And people, this is the great news! We don't have to wait for an attack of the Killer Fleas before we receive the peace of God. No! Right now, today, if you place your confidence back in God guess what's going to happen? You're going to experience the peace of God no matter what happens! **Why?** Because that's what God said!

And people, **the point is this**. If you don't want to **place your confidence in God** and be filled with anxiety, I guess that's your prerogative. I feel sorry for you. But what you need to know is it doesn't stop there! When you and I as Christians live like that we're not just harming our walk with Christ. We're keeping other people from believing in Christ! **Why?** Because stop and think about it! We're not just ceasing to be a Body of Peace. We're acting like a **Body of Worry**. And if that's all the

better a Christian's God could do, I wouldn't want to worship that God, how about you?

Oh, but that's not all. The **2nd reason** we look so peaceless is because **We've Forgotten How to Be Content in God.**

Philippians 4:11-13 "I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength."

Now folks, according to our text, the Bible is clear. Talk about some good news! You and I can be what? We can be content in any and every situation if life, right? **Why?** Because just like Paul learned, God not only gives us strength no matter what happens to us, but He certainly knows what's best for us, right? Therefore, we can be content, right?

And people, **the point is this.** Surely the American Church knows this, right? I mean, surely we know that the peace of God is maintained not in getting all we want for us but in being content that God will give us what's best for us, right? People, are you kidding? Let's be honest! We're not satisfied with what God gives us in life. No! We whine and complain over every detail in life!

And people, **the point is this.** Stop and think about it! Shouldn't we be content with what God brings into our lives? I mean, don't you think He

knows what's best for us? I mean, after all, He's just God you know?

Therefore, to help us see that God **really does** know what's best for us, even down to the most trivial of things, I'm going to share with you the seemingly trivial events that happened to some of the survivors of 911. And you tell me if they weren't just a little bit grateful for what God provided on that day.

1. One person in late that day because his son started kindergarten.
2. Another fellow was alive because it was his turn to bring donuts.
3. One woman was late because her alarm clock didn't go off in time.
4. One person's car wouldn't start.
5. One person was late because of they got stuck on the New Jersey turnpike because of an auto accident.
6. One guy missed his bus.
7. One lady spilled food on her clothes and had to take time to change.
8. One person had to go back in the house to answer the telephone.
9. One person had a child that dawdled and didn't get ready as soon as they should have.
10. One person couldn't get a taxi.
11. One man who put on a new pair of shoes that morning, but since they were new, he developed a blister on his foot. And so he had to stop at a drugstore to buy a Band-Aid. And that's the only reason why he's alive today.

Now folks, I don't know about you, but I'd say when all was said and done, those people were just a little bit grateful for those trivial things that

morning, how about you? I'd say they were at peace after that, how about you? And people, this is the great news! We don't have to wait for an attack from Muslim terrorists before we receive the peace of God. No! Right now, today, if you determine to be content in God guess what's going to happen? You're going to experience the peace of God no matter what happens!

Why? Because that's what God said!

And people, **the point is this**. If you don't want to **be content in God** and be wiggled out all your life, I guess that's your prerogative. I feel sorry for you. But what you need to know is it doesn't stop there! When you and I as Christians live like that we're not just harming our walk with Christ. We're keeping other people from believing in Christ! **Why?** Because stop and think about it! We're not just ceasing to be a Body of Peace. We're acting like a **Body of Stress**. And if that's all the better a Christian's God could do, I wouldn't want to worship that God, how about you?

Oh, but that's not all. The **3rd reason** we look so peaceless is because

We've Forgotten How to Be Courageous in God.

John 16:28,33 "I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father. I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

Now folks, according to our text, the Bible is clear. Talk about some good news! No matter what trouble we may face in the world, we can what?

We can still have peace in this world, right? **Why?** Because Jesus is in control of this troublesome world, right? Therefore, He must also be in control of our troublesome lives, right? Of course! That's why He said to take heart! That's why we can always be **courageous no mater what**, right?

And people, **the point is this**. Surely the American Church knows this, right? I mean, surely we know that the peace of God is maintained not in having a trouble-free life but in being courageous over God's control of our troubles in life, right? People are you kidding? Let's be honest! We're not strong and courageous through thick and thin. No! We get all freaked out and scared over the slightest whim!

Therefore, in order to help us see that God **really is** in control of our lives, **even our troubles**, I'm going to share with some serious troubles people had and you tell me if God didn't know what He was doing.

“One day, Abraham Lincoln had a problem. He and his partner's store was going bankrupt and even though he really wanted to study law, he was too poor to even buy one of the books he needed called Blackstone's Commentary on English Law.

But just then, a strange-looking wagon came up the road and when it got to Lincoln the driver said, ‘I'm trying to move my family out west, and I'm out of money. I've got a good barrel here that I could sell for fifty cents.’

And even though Lincoln didn't have the money to spare, he looked at the man's wife whose face was thin and emaciated, and he took his last fifty cents and said, ‘I reckon I could use a good barrel.’

And all day long the barrel sat on the porch of that store and his partner kept telling him how foolish he was. But later that evening, Lincoln saw something in the bottom of the barrel under a pile of papers and when he reached in to pull it out it, he discovered it was a book. And standing there petrified, he read the title. Blackstone's Commentary on English Law."

Oh, but that's not all. "One day, in 1875 Ira Sankey, the song leader for Dwight Moody was traveling on a steamboat when someone just happened to ask him to sing a hymn. So he picked one out and sang it and when he did, a man stepped out of the shadows and asked him if he served in the Union Army doing guard duty in 1862?

And when Ira said yes the man continued. He said, 'So did I, but I was serving in the Confederate army. And when I saw you standing at your post I raised my gun to kill you but at that instant you raised your eyes to heaven and began to sing the song you sang just now.

And as you did, I began to think of my childhood and my God-fearing mother because that was the same song she sang to me. And because of that, I couldn't kill you.'"

Oh but that's still not all. "One day during WWII, an American B-17 bomber was making a bomb raid over Germany when their gas tanks were hit by the German flack fire but for some reason there managed to make it back home.

So the next day, the pilot, reflecting on the miracle of a twenty-millimeter shell piercing the fuel tank without exploding the plane, went to go get that shell as a souvenir of unbelievable luck.

But that's when the crew chief told him that not just one shell but eleven shells had been found in the gas tanks and not a single one of them exploded.

So when they sent the shells to the armory to be defused, but that's when they discovered all eleven shells were missing their explosive charges. For some strange reason they were as clean as a whistle and completely empty, except for one of them.

And believe it or not, inside that one shell was a carefully rolled up piece of paper. And on it written a message in the Czechoslovakian language that said this, ‘This is all we can do for you now.’”

Now folks, I don’t know about you, but I’d say when all was said and done, those people had **no doubt whatsoever** that God was in control of their troubles, how about you? I’d say they were at peace after that, how about you? And people, this is the great news! We don’t have to wait for an attack from German artillery before we receive the peace of God. No! Right now, today, if you determine to be courageous in God guess what’s going to happen? You’re going to experience the peace of God no matter what happens! **Why?** Because that’s what God said!

And people, **the point is this**. If you don’t want to **place your courage in God** and be scared all your life, I guess that’s your prerogative. I feel sorry for you. But what you need to know is it doesn’t stop there! When you and I as Christians live like that we’re not just harming our walk with Christ. We’re keeping other people from believing in Christ! **Why?** Because stop and think about it! We’re not just ceasing to be a Body of Peace. We’re acting like a **Body of Fear**. And if that’s all the better a Christian’s God could do, I wouldn’t want to worship that God, how about you?

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 worried, stressed-out fearful people. Are you kidding! We are the Church of Jesus Christ. We are a **Body of Peace!**

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.”
