

# Don't Go to Church ...?



Church plants. The underground church. Online church. Live streaming. Virtual church. Church in the 21st century is very different from the church of the 1st century. What exactly is the church? People or steeple? Covenant or concrete? Mission or mortar? What does it mean to be a part of a church? What is the church and do Christians *have to go to church?*

*29 Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, 30 by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus."*

*31 And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.*

*32 Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.*

*33 And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. Acts 4:29-33*

First, let's start with what the church isn't.

## **It isn't a building.**

First century churches did not have a specific building. They

usually met in a house. Even today many churches do not have buildings. According to the [Global Church](#) typical rural churches in Uganda meet under a shade tree. [Focus on the Family](#) states, "Church structures facilitate the role of God's people, but they do not fulfill it."

## **It isn't a sermon or a song.**

Songs help us worship and glorify God. Sermons enable us to gain wisdom and understanding which leads to transformation. While these things are beneficial and beautiful, they are not *the church*.

## **It isn't potlucks and programs.**

Wholesome alternatives to the lure of the world, these activities are fun and entertaining, but they are not the church. Fellowship is fun, but events don't transform the culture.

## **What it is.**

**The church:** in the original Greek, *ekklesia*, which means *to call, to call out, to invite*. The church is the invited, the called, the summoned. Sinners saved to be the body of Christ. Not bricks but bodies.

The Body.

Hands working. Hearts loving. Feet walking. Souls giving.

*"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that WHOEVER believes in Him shall have eternal life."*

All are invited. All are called, chosen, needed.

So don't go to church, go **BE the church**, go **be** the invitation.

Go **be** the call. Live your life, and use your gifts in such a way you make it easy for others to want to be a part of Gods family, the body of Christ. The church.

Go be the church.

**How do you “go be the church”?  
Leave me a comment below. I’d love  
to chat with you!**

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**Short & Sweet: Go and Show**



*12 Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. 13 And they lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" 14 So when He saw them, He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. 15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, 16 and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan.*

Luke 17: 12-16

***"And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed."***

Often when we think of healing, we think of resting. I sometimes actually enjoy being a *little sick*, you know, sick enough to stay home from work, but not sick enough to be truly miserable. Lolling on the couch while catching up on Downton Abbey or a favorite book are great ways to rest and recuperate.

## **Jesus has other ideas about healing.**

Unconventional ideas. He had been known to heal people with mud and spit. He healed by a word or a touch. One woman was healed by grasping the hem of His garment. In today's Scripture, Jesus healed ten men by telling them to *take a hike*. "Go and show yourself to the priests." Go and show. A real walk of faith.

## **As they went, they were cleansed.**

Not as Jesus spoke, not as Jesus touched, but as they went the men were healed of the deadly disease of leprosy. Most likely the lepers had walked that road many times before. Why weren't they healed then? What made this time different?

## **This time they walked *by faith*.**

There are two parts to every biblical healing: Jesus and faith. And faith always requires work. What if the lepers never went, what if they stayed stuck, dead in their sickness? If the lepers never *went*, they never would have been healed. Same with us. We can sit in the dust, focused on the horror of our condition OR we can walk with Jesus and be healed as we go.

I have also been healed of a deadly crippling disease—leprosy of the soul. My sin covered me like scales on a leper. Like the lepers my sin was more than skin deep—it was sin deep. And Jesus said, *walk with Me*. So I went. Some things healed instantly, other things have been *cleansed as I went* with Jesus.

# We are either in one of two places—on the roadside or on the road.

**If you are on the roadside**, do what the lepers did, lift your voice and call out to Him. Remember, in those days leprosy was a death sentence. Very few people survived the disease, yet still the lepers had the faith to call. The lepers were healed. I was healed. You can be healed too, but only if you call to Him.

**If you are on the road** to healing and wholeness, keep walking. God always heals us spiritually and sometimes He heals us physically. Other times He uses us disabilities and all. Perhaps we consider ourselves sick or disabled, but can it be we are useful in our present sickness? Are disabilities really *tools* God uses to great effect for His kingdom?

**Keep walking.** Whether you need healing from sickness or sin, keep walking.

## Action Points:

1. **Ask for healing.** No matter how deep the need, severe the sickness, or wretched the sin, lift up your voice and ask for healing. Nothing is beyond God's ability to heal. As always, pray for God's will to be done.
2. **Go!** Keep walking with Jesus. Walking with Jesus includes: going to church, serving others, using your gifts, praying, worshiping, fellowshiping. As long as you are able, keep serving others, because emotional healing often comes through serving.
3. **Give thanks.** Give thanks to God for the healing He has worked in your life. While you are thanking God for His healing, thank Him for the many other gifts He has given you. Cultivate gratitude in your life and pay it

forward.

Life is sweet! Go and show others about Jesus.

*Mary Kane*

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# Short & Sweet: 5 Reasons Why Jesus Had to Die



*Even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

Mathew 20:28

# Why did Jesus have to come to earth, to be born as a man and die?

For as long as I can remember, I've known about the crucifixion of Jesus. The church we attended prominently displayed a large crucifix. Jesus on the cross—front and center. The matter of His death was a bedrock issue, but I had never stopped to ask *why*.

## *Why did Jesus have to die?*

This question had been blowing around the corners of my mind since I became a Christian many years ago, but I never gave it serious consideration until recently. It came to the forefront when one of my students, a new Christian, asked me, “*why did Jesus have to die?*”. Good question. Couldn't God save people without Jesus dying on the cross? Salvation would so much easier to accept if we could skip the whole crucifixion process.

**I do not claim** to have deep theological or exhaustive information, but my answer comes straight from Scripture. Please, like the Bereans, search the Bible for further insight.

## **5 Reasons Jesus had to die:**

**Reason 1: Jesus had to die because the wages of sin is death.** “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 6:23. Since the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, God covered man's sin with a sacrifice of an innocent life. Jesus came to be our sacrifice—the Lamb of God.

**Reason 2: Jesus had to die because God cannot die.** “Behold, God is exalted, and we do not know Him; The number of His

years is unsearchable.” Job 36:26. God is not flesh and blood; He is Spirit and therefore eternal. Since He cannot die, God had to send Jesus to the cross.

**Reason 3: Jesus had to die because redemption requires blood.**

“Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.” Hebrews 9:22. Since God is not flesh but spirit, He has no blood. Therefore, God took on flesh, tabernacled among us, walked the road to the cross and shed His blood.

**Reason 4: Jesus had to die because prophecy must be fulfilled.**

“Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death.” Isaiah 53:12. In total, 28 prophecies were fulfilled on the day of Jesus’ crucifixion. For more information on prophecies fulfilled by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, please see the following link: [Prophecies](#)

**Reason 5: Jesus had to die because God needed a perfect sacrifice.**

“For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified” ... “Now where there is remission of these, *there is no longer an offering for sin.*” Hebrews 10:14, 18.

Jesus had to come. He is the only One who could live a perfect life, pay the wages of sin by shedding His blood upon the cross and thereby fulfill the Old Testament prophecies. One question remains then ...

## **Why did Jesus *want* to die?**

Because God so loves us that He would rather die than live without us. Sometimes I have days when I wonder if anyone truly cares. Does anyone see my hurts and my wounds? Then I remember, there is no greater love than this, that a Man

should lay down His life for a friend. Jesus died for me. He died for you. He loves us.

He. Loves. You.

## **Action Points:**

1. **Knowing that Jesus has given His life for you**, how can you give your life back to Him? Where can you plug-in?
2. **Who in your life needs to hear about the life**, death, resurrection, and love of Jesus? How can you begin to witness to this person?
3. **Look for three different people to bless today.** (How about the busy clerk at the store ... the person who is going to cut you off in traffic today ... the elderly neighbor who is aching for someone to visit.)

Life is sweet because Jesus died for you.

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# Short & Sweet: Filled



*He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all  
the heavens,*

*that He might fill all things.*

*Ephesians 4:10*

## **Empty. I had looked forward to it all day.**

My favorite treat—organic dark-chocolate peanut butter cups. Rich and creamy, I love the way they melt on my tongue. Salty and chocolate in one delectable bite (I am sure God made organic dark-chocolate peanut butter cups on the last day of creation because they are VERY GOOD). Peanut butter cups are why I jog. They're why I eat dinner.

All afternoon at school, I had anticipated my after dinner treat with gusto. A few minutes for myself with delicious treat and a good book is like a mini retreat. Bliss. I reached my hand into the bag and ... what? EMPTY. Who did it? Who ate the last treat and left an empty bag? Son #1? Son #2? Husband? I didn't even want to know.

# Empty is not good.

Empty is so empty. Empty calories, empty nest, running on empty, empty promises, empty-handed. No one likes empty. Neither does God. God fills things. Look at the following verses:

- “Open wide your mouth and I shall **fill** it.” Psalm 81:10
- “Do I not **fill** heaven and earth?” says the LORD.”  
Jeremiah 23:24
- “Now may the God of hope **fill** you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Romans 15:13
- “Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD **filled** the tabernacle.” Exodus 40:34
- “Blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be **filled**.” Matthew 5:6
- “And they were all **filled** with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” Acts 2:4.

## My life before Jesus was *#empty*.

I was filled with a consuming emptiness I thought would destroy me. But God used the emptiness to drive me to Him so He could fill my soul with His Spirit and my life with

purpose, and meaning. No more emptiness.



In the original language, *fill* means "to cause to abound, to fill to the full, to make complete, to be liberally supplied, of hollow vessels filled, of the soul thoroughly permeated." When we are saved, we are filled to the full with the blessings and presence of the Holy Spirit. We are made complete and are liberally supplied with everything we need pertaining to life and godliness. Because we are filled, we have enough to share. Give, and you will receive ... "Your gift will return to you in **full**-pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back." NLT Luke 6:38

**This brings great comfort to people like me.**

Before Jesus, I had nothing to give, nothing to offer; my heart and soul were empty and hollow. How wonderful to know that because of the filling of the Holy Spirit, I now have purpose and resources to bring God glory and help others find, follow and be filled by Jesus.

From empty to filled.

## Action Points:

1. **What's missing from your life?** How is your life incomplete? What do you need God to fill?
2. **What is taking up too much room in your life?** What do you need to downsize so you can download more Jesus?
3. **Who can you help fill today?** Whose heart needs to be filled? Whose stomach needs to be filled? Whose mind needs to be filled with the Good News?

Life is sweet. Fill it with Jesus.

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## Short & Sweet: Bread Enough and Some to Spare



*“But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. 15 Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16 And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything.*

*17 “But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!’”*

Luke 11:15-17

## ***I am starving.***

I said these words just the other day when I came home from work. The truth is, I was not *starving*, I was only hungry. Just like every other day of the week, I had eaten breakfast and lunch and there was plenty in the Frigidaire for dinner. I’ve have always had plenty of food. Other people – not so much.

When I was little someone broke into the garage and stole not our car but our *spare food*. I remember my dad saying he would not call the police because he didn’t want anyone to go hungry while we had **bread enough and some to spare**. People are hungry.

## The prodigal in the verse above had the same problem.

He was hungry. What caused his hunger? There was a famine in the land. The lack of bread finally drove him home. But there is another kind of famine more rampant and dangerous than famine of the land – famine of the spirit. Spiritual famine is the deep down hunger a person feels when they do not know God or are running from Him. Our souls become emaciated, and our hearts become barren and fruitless like the land in Luke 11.

## What is the cause of spiritual hunger?

As a lack of bread causes physical hunger, a lack of Bread of Life causes spiritual hunger. The world cannot offer what satisfies. It takes what little we have and leaves us hungry. Famished.

Destitute.

Finally, we come to our senses and realize only Christ satisfies. Jesus has a special talent for feeding thousands. In Him, we can have ***Bread enough and some to spare***. Manna raining down from heaven. We get all we want. What is the implication then to being well fed? When we are filled, we will be able to turn and feed others. Double blessing.

## Yet so many of us try to serve others on an empty stomach.

We skip our quiet time because we are too busy doing ministry, chores or living for ourselves. It is impossible to feed others when we have nothing to give. Just as God sent manna for His people to gather every morning, we must gather also, fresh from His Word.

Ironically, while I have joked about physical starvation, I have been spiritually starving and unaware of the danger until it reached a critical point. Finally I *came to myself* and ran home to my Father, where I had ***bread enough and some to spare***.  
**Bread enough and some to spare.**

People are hungry. God gives to you so you can give to others.  
Share your Bread.

## Action Points:

1. **Consume God's Word.** How can you get more of God's Word into your heart? Are you consistently spending time with God? If not, why not? What needs to go so you can schedule more time with God?
2. **Some to spare.** Do you have enough knowledge of God's Word so you can share it with another hungry person? If not, what do you need to do ... join a Bible study group, find a good church, or ask someone to mentor you?
3. **Someone to share.** Who do you know who needs to hear the truth? Who in your daily life needs Jesus? What will you do today to share your Bread with another?

Life is sweet. Share your bread.

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