

LOST CHURCH MEMBERS!

TEXT: Titus 1:16

THESIS: To wake up & shake up those who have professed faith, w/out truly being saved.

INTRO.: A. Our text is shocking! It speaks of those who "*profess to know God, but in works deny Him...*" Does this describe YOU? It surely describes (Your Church Name here) **LOST CHURCH MEMBERS!**"

B. B.R. Lakin used to say that 75% of those attending Bible-believing churches were lost. Dr. A.W. Tozer said: "Among evangelical churches probably no more than one out of ten know anything experientially about the new birth." Dr. A.W. Criswell said that he would be surprised to meet 25% of his members in heaven. Dr. Bob Gray estimated that 75% of those he baptized were not saved! One evangelist, Carl Woodbury, declared that 40 – 50% of professing Christians are lost. Dr. Monroe Parker stated: "If we could get half the church members saved, we would see a great revival." Pastor Carl LoTurco says that one major problem is that as pastors we are attempting to disciple unsaved church members – an impossibility! Another author wrote: "The greatest field for evangelism today, and in the days ahead, is among church members." Someone declared the Church is like the Titanic: "large, elegant & sinking fast."

TRANS.: The question is: What's wrong? The answer is that we have emphasized "decisions" over the new birth, numbers over salvation, & filled pews over changed lives. What a horrible thing to sit in a fundamental, Bible-believing church for years & die & wake up in hell! We need to reexamine what the Bible teaches about legitimate salvation. What is it? and Do we have it? Or are YOU one of the many **LOST CHURCH MEMBERS!?"**

I. SALVATION IS A DIRECTION – NOT A DECISION!

Ps.51:13 *Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.*

Acts 26:18 *(Biblical definition of conversion) To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*

A. Decisionism:

1. "The belief that a person is saved by coming forward, raising the hand, saying a prayer, believing a doctrine...or some other external, human act..."
2. Biblical "conversion is the result of the Holy Spirit (drawing) a lost sinner to Jesus Christ for justification & regeneration (which) changes the sinner's standing before God from lost to saved...producing a new direction in the life of the convert."
 - a. Much of the trouble in churches today come from unsaved, carnal people voting on the direction & ministries of the church.

ILLUS.: Before a recent vote of the church here regarding our school ministry, I reminded everyone that unless they had taken the 2 weeks to pray seriously about the matter, they had no right to vote!

- b. Many churches vote on things they have no right expressing an opinion about simply because the majority or some percentage of the members are lost people!

ILLUS.: 2 deacons led Pastor Pete V_____ church to vote against his soul-winning emphasis & to repudiate his biblical preaching & VOTED HIM OUT AS PASTOR! No believer has a right to vote against soul-winning in a Bible-believing church!!!! [Carnal (often unsaved) church members who don't get their way, vote w/their giving! or simply go to another church, if they don't agree w/the majority!!!!??]

- c. Are you saved or have you just made a "*decision*"?! Has there been a change in your *direction*?! *Where does the Bible speak of "making a decision"?*

II. SALVATION IS SUPERNATURAL – NOT NATURAL!

A. Salvation is of the Lord:

1. Salvation originates in the Divine Mind, not in the human heart.

Jer.17:9 *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*

2. True salvation is entirely of God & supernatural in origin; man must see himself as totally & irrevocably lost & hopeless & helpless.

3. He must trust completely in the Lord & repudiate all human effort to obtain salvation – including religion, ritual, ceremony, sacraments, prayers, et.al.
4. A mere human decision doesn't convert the heart or the life; that's why so many church members are spiritually & morally bankrupt.
 - a. Those w/head-salvation instead of heart conversion have no real change in lifestyle.
 - b. They think & act & live like the lost, because they *are* lost, even though they attend a fundamental, Bible-believing church.
 - c. This is why they rebel at biblical preaching, teaching, convictions & standards!
 - d. This is why they continue to feast on Egyptian delicacies & find the things of God distasteful.

Num.11:4-6 *And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes.*

- e. This is why they don't go soul-winning, read their Bible, pray, etc.

Mt.16:23 *But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.*

ILLUS.: In 1900 there were 27 churches for every 10,000 Americans, & most preached the Gospel. In 1985 there were only 12 for every 10,000 – less than half the former number, & most of them don't preach the Gospel! (It continues to deteriorate) Why? America has lost its appetite for spiritual things. Even among the so-called fundamental churches, many professing Christians don't come back for the Sun. P.M. or Wed. P.M. services! Could it be that many church members are not really saved, but are only religious?!

III. SALVATION IS REGENERATION – NOT REFORMATION!

A. The New Birth – Not A New Leaf!

2 Cor.5:17 *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

1. Many think that getting saved is simply quitting smoking, drinking, etc. & going to church on Sun. A.M. – that's morality, not Christianity!
2. We don't need a new suit for the man, we need a new man in the suit!
3. Could this be the reason that many "professors" refuse to get baptized, refuse to come back for services, don't join the church & refuse to tithe?!
 - a. Many w/Catholic background think of salvation in terms of works.
 - b. Many w/reformed, evangelical or even Baptist background trust in baptism, "the sinner's prayer," or being able to recite the plan of salvation & consider themselves backslidden, instead of unsaved! (Many w/charismatic or Pentecostal background think in terms of feelings & experiences (peace, joy, answered prayer, etc. No wonder they think they can lose their salvation...they never had it!)
 - c. Many religious people have totally erroneous concepts about the Bible, salvation & the Christian life.

IV. SALVATION IS INSTANTANEOUS – NOT PROGRESSIONAL!

A. Faith-At- First-Sight?

QUOTE: Spurgeon: *"There may be such a thing as faith at first sight; but usually we reach faith by stages: we become interested, we consider, we hear evidence, listen to God's Word and words & so are led to believe."* But the moment of belief itself is instantaneous!

1. In true salvation, conviction precedes conversion.
2. There is no repentance w/out conviction & no conversion w/out conviction.
3. But conversion itself is instantaneous, not progressive!

ILLUS.: Salvation is called a "new birth" not a "new idea." It brings new life, not just a new doctrine. Dr. J. Vernon McGee made this observation: "Many folks have made salvation a simple mathematical equation: If you say yes to this, yes to that, & yes to a half dozen questions then you are a Christian...it just means a nodding assent, a passing acquaintance w/Jesus. It does not mean that you are born again." Billy Graham says "I believe I know the day I was born again, but my wife doesn't know the day. *She has always loved Christ.* She cannot remember the day when she didn't love Him..." How come the Bible says the only way to come to Christ is

to confess you are a sinner, repent of your sins, call on Him to save you by His vicarious death & precious blood & receive Him? Are there some special people who get to heaven by "always loving Christ?"

CONCL.: Could YOU be one of **(YOUR CHURCH NAME) LOST CHURCH MEMBERS?"** Salvation is more than a decision, more than something natural, more than reformation & not some progressive growth experience. It is a new direction, something supernatural, regeneration & it is instantaneous. How do YOU measure up?