

PILGRIM PEOPLE

Hebrews 11:1-12

Introduction: What if all the churches of today suddenly ceased to exist? How much difference would it make in the world? What if all the churches suddenly began to do what God intends for them to do? What difference would be made in our world? What purpose is the church here for anyhow? What kind of people make up the churches?

I. THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE CHURCH

1. No church is what it should be.
2. The church is not a rest-home for saints, it is a hospital for sinners.
3. No active for the Lord Christian should ever be satisfied with the condition of his/her church.
4. Churches of today are too organized and formal"
- "Mary had a little lamb,
it would have been a sheep,
but it joined the local Baptist church,
and died for lack of sleep..."
5. Many don't want any part of today's kind of church for it is different than when it got started.
6. Church members refuse to associate with those like Jesus spent His life with, for they don't want to be the "talk of the town."
7. Churches of today have refused to lead out in breaking barriers and partitions separating God's children.

II. THE DIVINE SIDE OF THE CHURCH

1. The Church has short-comings, but it still remains the body of Christ.
2. No other "institution," organization, group could withstand the centuries of abuse and bombardment from the world - why?
3. If a visitor from outer space came to you and wanted to see your church, where would you take him?
4. The Church is all who have trusted and know Jesus Christ personally.
5. Peter was right when he said: *"...you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's chosen people..."*

III. GOD'S PEOPLE ARE PILGRIM PEOPLE

1. YOU (point around the congregation) are God's Church!
2. As there are campers camping out all over our beautiful country, so there are Christians meeting together all over the world.
3. The scripture reveals that Christians live two lives - one here, but significantly, the other is eternal.
4. Two men were sent by their government into a foreign land to study the people. One started building a house, the other rented an apartment. Both went out among the people but both were called back suddenly, unexpectedly and were asked to give a report. The one still building his house said he didn't have time to visit very much, while the other one gave a full report.

5. Too often the church is like the first man, spending all its time and finances on itself, forgetting what its purpose is and that it will one day be taken from out of this world.
6. Is the Church too blind, too much in love with perishable things?
7. The early New Testament church was most effective when it had NO formal buildings, staff, etc.
8. Many churches have lost their identity to the world as being God's Pilgrim People and no one can tell the difference between church members and the rest of the world. The churches have lost the Gospel message.
9. Christ rejected the Ephesian church, for it had left its first love. Jesus will reject any church when it ceases to function as it should.

IV. BE THE CHURCH!

1. To GO to church is one thing! To BE the Church is something else.
2. What is the Church? IT IS GOD'S PEOPLE!
 - What is the purpose of the Church? It is to witness for Jesus Christ, to be His hands, His feet, His voice.
3. Our Christian forefathers had no printed Sunday School books, no "how to be saved" pamphlets, no "how to witness" booklets, some didn't even have their own Bible. All they had was their lives, their unswerving loyalty to Jesus Christ and their testimony of a changed life.

CONCLUSION:

1. Is YOUR church making a difference in its surroundings?
2. Are you fulfilling your duties to the Lord Jesus Christ as you should be doing?
3. If every Christian was exactly like YOU, what condition would Jesus' Church be in?
4. We can do no less than our forefathers. Just what more do we need?
5. They had God's Word, the Holy Spirit and their determination to share their testimony.
 - That's all that is needed to do what God wants His Church to be doing.