The Church: Our Membership

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Preacher: Dr. Michael Staton

[0:00] Let me invite you this morning, if you might want to take out the sermon note insert from! your bulletin to be able to have a place to write some things down to follow along with! us. I'm going to ask you to turn to a couple of places this morning. Let me have you start in 1! Corinthians 12.

If you would, we'll be there in just a few moments. When my sons, who are now grown men with their own kids, but when they were children, Marcy and I would go to a restaurant, and most of the time that went really well. But if you've had little kids, you know that every once in a while it doesn't go so well. And I remember a couple of times being at restaurants and the kids were loud, or maybe when they were babies they were crying, or they were just a little bit older, maybe fussy, or those kinds of things. And sometimes we would have to correct them at a restaurant, or we would try to eat as quickly as we could because of the sound and the damage happening at the table. You would sometimes leave that restaurant and just look at the floor and just say, I'm just sorry, I'm sorry.

And today, Marcy and I would go to a restaurant, and just the two of us, and sometimes right beside us will be a family with small children, and the same things happening there that I remember happening when our kids were little. The only difference is, I don't go across to the next table to correct their kids. I don't go across the table to clean up after their kids. I don't apologize to their waiter for the mess that their kids made.

And the obvious reason why is because it's not my family. It doesn't mean I can't care about them. It doesn't mean that if I got to know them, I couldn't be friends with them. It doesn't mean if there was a need that presented itself, I couldn't joyfully try to meet it. But there's a very different level of responsibility you feel if it's your family or if it's not.

[2:31] A similar thing is true in the church. In one sense, sure, we want to love people, and you don't have to be a member of our church to care for you. And there are plenty of people that our church strives to minister to that aren't members of our church. And we have a food pantry that you generously donate to throughout the year that we are happy to be able to help people who need food. And you want to be a member of our church for that. We give lots of money, thousands of dollars through the year to mission causes who are helping people both locally and all around the world, many of whom, most of whom are not part of our church. We're happy to partner with ministries and missionaries wherever we can to be able to minister to people. But there is something that's uniquely significant about the responsibility and the weight of ministry we feel for those who are members of our members of our church. There is something that in the Bible that we are held to of how we should love and care for each other. To be sure, Mars and I love a lot more children than just our own sons that we raised. But we had a special, a heightened responsibility to care for them. As a church, we want to take the gospel, as we say it here, to the neighborhoods and the nations. We want to love people who live down the street from us that don't go to our church. We want to care for people around the world from us that we'll never meet, but try to minister to them in any way that we can by supporting mission partnerships around the world. But there is a weightiness to what we should expect from each other as members of this local assembly. We do a membership class for those who want to be a part of our church.

That membership process has several elements in it. We have a three-week class, about an hour and a half long, and we go through the doctrine of our church, the philosophy of ministry of our church, the leadership and the structure of our church, ways for people to be involved as members of our church.

And then after that process, for those who want to continue on in membership, each household then meets one-on-one that household with one of our pastors. And in the process of that, we're going over the salvation testimony they've written, the baptism testimony they've written as we try to

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minister to them one-on-one to try to make sure they do know Christ, that they are clear in the gospel, that they do understand biblical believers' baptism. And then we present our members to our congregation for you to affirm. And publicly, they commit to three specific commitments as a way of saying they want to be a part of what we do as a church. Well, this semester, while we're walking through this study in the church, we thought it would be helpful for us to spend a week. We're… I try to share with you a lot, can't do all of it, but a lot of what we cover in that membership class because what we ask our new members to do, to believe, and how to live, certainly for all of us who are members here, we ought to live the same way and be a faithful example of that. So what I want to do this morning is try to take all that we cover in membership class now, that class is always changing as we try to make it better and more precise for those who are joining our church. I want to try to take as much of that as I can and remind all of us as a congregation of why membership in the local church matters and what we are to do with membership, why we have it, and what our responsibility is.

Again, I think as a parent, when our kids were at home, if we had seen another child in the neighborhood that maybe had a, you know, fell over on a bicycle and hurt their leg or cut their face, they were hurt. Obviously, Mars and I would want to help that child. If we saw a child in the neighborhood by themselves and we didn't know who they were, but they were lost and crying and clearly scared, we would want to go and help that child. They don't have to be a part of our family for us to care about. They don't have to be a part of our family for us to help them when a need arises.

But there were only two children on the planet that Mars and I were responsible to make sure that every day they were fed and clothed and safe. There were only two children that we made sure their homework was done, that we disciplined when they disobeyed, that we felt the obligation and responsibility to train them in a specific way.

[7:54] It's not a question of can you love people outside your family. Of course you can. But those who are part of your family, there is a different expectation that comes with that.

In our church here, I love all of our kids. One of the great joys of my life is to get to be around our little kids down in the preschool or to be around our Awana kids, to get to go upstairs on Wednesday night to teach with them and do Bible Q&A with them and get high fives from our kids at VBS and be able to spend time with our children at church at kids camp. I love being around the children of our church. I love them with all of my heart.

But there were only two that every night I had to make sure they were home and safe. There were only two children in our church years ago that I felt the responsibility of making sure their grades were good and the way they were interacting with their teachers was respectful and honorable because they were the two sons the Lord had given to Marcy and to me for a season.

What we're talking about is that there is something about being in the family that has a heightened expectation and responsibility.

Let me say again, I want our church to always care about people beyond our walls. I want our church to always care about loving and serving and ministering to people who have never even been in our church.

[9:26] If it's someone that you can share the gospel with, if it's someone you can serve, if it's someone you can be a blessing to, by all means, let's do that. But there is a heightened expectation for those who are members of our church for how we live, how we think, how we treat each other.

There are lots of people our church can be a blessing to, but we don't have expectations of those who aren't a part of the family. You hear me say every Sunday or one of our pastors says every Sunday, if you're a guest of ours, we don't ask you to give.

And we mean that. If you're visiting our church, we don't want your money today. We don't want your money next week. That's not what it's about. But if this is your church home, then it only makes sense that you would bear the joy and responsibility of worshiping the Lord through giving to help us do what God's called us to do.

If you're not a member of our church, we're glad you're here and you're welcome to worship with us anytime. But non-members don't get to go be with our children to teach them because there's a heightened expectation there.

We run background checks in our teachers. We want to make sure that we know them. We want to make sure that we're comfortable with them being around our children. We want to make sure that they are trustworthy and faithful and proven because there's a different expectation for those who

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are a part of our family.
[11:01] If you're a guest and you're not a member of our church, while we would love for you to get plugged into our local church or another Bible-believing church and be there each Sunday and use your spiritual gifts, if you're not a part of our family, I'm not going to correct you on that.

If you're a part of our church family and you're living in disobedience, part of how the church shows its love for each other is by not letting each other disobey the Lord without correction.
to gently and graciously call our members to a place of obedience. So 1 Corinthians 12, verse 27, just a simple statement here.
Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. As Christians, you're part of the body of Christ.
In the New Testament, we have local churches, local assemblies where Christians gather. And what this verse reminds us of is the church is made up both of individuals, yes, but those individuals are a part of each other.
[12:13] In one sense, our church is made up exclusively of individuals. individuals, those who are born again, saved by grace through faith, individually, you are a part of the body of Christ, and yet all the individuals of our church form a family.

That the church is not supposed to be a place where we just have a lot of strangers who show up in the same address every week.
That as a church, we don't want to just have hundreds of people here on Sunday and Wednesday and throughout the week, but you walk around and you don't know anybody. You don't have any relationships.
That's not what a church is. We're a family. We are a body. And just like your physical body has different strengths, so the body of Christ is made up of individual members who have different gifts that the Lord entrusts to us.
The New Testament says it this way, that you have eyes and you have hands, and if all of the body were just all eyes, then we would be deficient because we need the hands.
[13:30] If all the parts of the body were the hands, where would the seeing be? And the Bible speaks in that kind of a metaphor to remind us that just like all the parts of your physical body are important and have a function, so in the church, in the local assembly, all the members have specific roles to play.

And you may be a hand, and you may be an eye, and you may be a foot, and you may be an arm. And by yourself, there may be something lacking, but when the church is together as a family, as a body, we experience the beauty of what God has put together and what the Lord has built.
We are individual members, yes, but we are a part of the body. We are connected to each other. So I want you just to think with me this morning about the role of members in the church.
Why we have membership and why it matters how we think and view membership in the local church. Number one, let's make note of how members think.
How members think. Acts 20, verse 28 says, Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to care for the church of God which He obtained with His own blood.
[15:05] There are leaders given to the church. We looked at that several weeks ago. You've got men who are described as pastors and shepherds, overseers, elders of the local assembly, and they are responsible for that flock that God has put them as overseers.

Our pastors of our church have a God-given responsibility to serve as overseers of this flock. But, we're not overseers of every local assembly.
I'm not going to go to another church tomorrow and ask them what they taught and tell them my frustration if they taught something that I disagreed with that we think is a church the Bible doesn't teach.
Why? Because God hasn't made me an overseer of that flock. God has made me one of the overseers of this flock. And so, we care greatly about everything that's taught in our church, about the way ministry is done in every part of our congregation.
But we have to think biblically, and that biblical thinking is for each local assembly, there are to be men who serve as pastors, elders, overseers, who have a God-given responsibility to shepherd that specific flock of God.

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[16:26] Now, here's the question. Who are we responsible to God to oversee? The issue of church membership isn't about just how many people in the role can we get.

That's a worldly mindset that's foreign to the Scripture. The idea in the Scripture is that you have in each local assembly, pastor, elders, overseers, who have a responsibility to God to shepherd the flock of God among them, a specific flock that they are accountable to God for.
So, in any local church, how would those pastors know who they're accountable to God for? Well, that's part of the biblical role of membership. You say, well, shouldn't you just love everybody? Sure, we want to love everybody the best we can, but in the same way that you can love all kids, but you have a heightened responsibility to God for the kids that are part of your family, so in the Scripture, the elders and pastors of the church have a heightened responsibility to God for the ones who are assigned to them to oversee.
So, church membership isn't simply a cultural thing. It's a biblical way to think. Who is it that we're responsible for?
[17:40] I think most of you know this, that our ministry staff, all throughout the year, we take our church membership directory, we update that every couple of months as we have new members classes.

We add those who are new members, take away anyone who has moved out of town or joined another church or passed away and about four times out of the year, three times out of the year, depends on how all the dates fall, we are walking through that church directory and your ministry staff is contacting you.
If you're a member, you should be familiar with this. You should be getting these calls or these emails and asking you how you're doing, how we can pray for you if you have any needs and there's ten of us typically that do that.
We each do five families a week. That's 50 families every week that we are initiating to contact for the purpose of prayer and for ministry. We turn all of those in to my assistant Mandy who gets them all together in one document and then at the beginning of every week she sends that out to all of our ministry staff and so we get every week the list of all of our ministry staff, their five families they were praying for, any ministry updates they have and so on most weeks there's 50 families that we're contacting that we are trying to find out how are you doing?
What needs do you have? How can we pray for you? And you say, well, shouldn't you love everybody? Well, love everybody the best we can but we're not calling members of other churches to pray for them.
[19:08] We're not calling members or people who are part of our city that don't go to our church. Why? Because there's a certain expectation for those who are part of the assembly God has given to you. So the question is who are we supposed to pray for?

Who are we supposed to oversee? Who are we supposed to minister to? Who are we accountable to God to shepherd their souls? That's why membership matters.
If you have this old mindset that was kind of part of Southern Baptist churches in the 80s of just get as many people on roll as you possibly can make them members really fast, really quickly because if you get a whole bunch of members maybe some of them will come.
that's a completely foreign concept to the Bible. Those who are part of the local assembly are those that that local church, those pastors, those elders are responsible for shepherding their souls.
And if your mindset is let's just get 500 members maybe 100 will come and the other 400 we don't worry about, that's not a biblical approach.
[20:13] So membership has nothing to do biblically with let's just get as many people in the books as we can. Everyone who's a member of our church, we can't make you attend, we can't make you read your Bible, we can't make you obey the Lord, we can't make you walk with God, but we are absolutely accountable to God to shepherd your soul and to teach you and to pray for you and as Ephesians 4 we read, try to train and equip you to walk with the Lord.

And while we can't make you obey, we are absolutely accountable to God with giving oversight to the flock God has entrusted to our care. And that's a big deal.
That's a weight that the leaders of your church feel every single day. An accountability to you and even greater than that, an accountability to God for how we would serve you.
As we think about how to think about membership though, we also understand that church membership really is a dual responsibility. There's some things you should expect from the church

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and some things the church should expect from you.
That if you're a member of a church, you ought to expect your church to pray for you and to teach you and to serve you and to care for you and to try to meet your needs. But as 1 Corinthians reminded us of, we are individually parts of a body.
[21:38] And so the only way a church can care for each other is if its individual members care for each other. And it's amazing to me how many times just in casual conversations I'll have with people wherever I go, and at times they'll talk about their frustration with the church they go to.

You know, they'll say things like our church isn't, you know, prayerful enough or our church isn't evangelistic enough or they'll say that their church doesn't care for people's needs enough. And I always respond the same way when I meet someone who says that.
I'll ask them, can you share with me how you've done that? And I don't do that to be difficult. I do that to try to help them to understand that the only way for a church to be a praying church is if the individual members are praying people.
The only way to be a church that meets needs is if the individual people of the church seek to meet needs. It's amazing to me how many times members of a church, any church, will think to themselves, well, we ought to have money to be able to provide this ministry.
We ought to be able to have money to be able to help with this mission organization. But if the individual families don't give, where does that money come from? The only way a church has money to minister is if the individual members freely, joyfully give.
[22:58] The only way a church has Sunday school teachers are if individually members of the church choose to carry that weight and that joy of being teachers to children and all the other age groups.

It's a two-way street. It's a dual responsibility. There are things you should expect from your church, but as a member of the church, there are things that the church should expect from you. Now, I understand we live in a culture where it's become very, very trendy and in vogue to just go to a church, this church this Sunday, and that church that Sunday and maybe stay home and watch online that week and send your kids to that church this week and your kids go to that church on Wednesday night and that church on Sunday and it's just kind of a buffet.
Just do what you want. Leave me alone. I'll do what I want. That may be trendy, but that's not biblical. It's not biblical. And our goal here at First Baptist Mustang is not to be trendy.
It's to be biblical. biblical. It matters. There's a certain way we should think about membership. Where are you expected to be?
Who are you accountable to and who are you serving and who is serving to meet your needs? We also think this way that church membership should strengthen the church and bless the individual member.
[24:23] Church membership should strengthen the church and ought to be a blessing to you as an individual member. And again, I know it's tempting to say, well, why can't we just love people and why can't we just go to church when we want and where we want and why do we have to be committed to a local church or committed to each other?

But we go to the Scripture as always. Hebrews 13, let me give you two verses I want you to make note of. One, Hebrews 13, verse 7, says, remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the Word of God, consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.
Verse 17 of Hebrews 13, obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will have to give an account.
Let them do this with joy and not with groaning. So let me ask you a very practical question. If you go to this church for a couple of weeks and that church for a couple of weeks and online for a couple of weeks and a different church for a few weeks and if you send your kids to this church on Wednesday and that church on Sunday and you send your kids to camp with that church in the summer and you go here for three months in a row and then you disappear for several months because you're just kind of shopping around, how would you live out in the local church, Hebrews 13, 17, to obey your leaders and submit to them?
How would you do that? Who is it that you're submitting to? And you say, well, I don't want to submit to church leadership.
[26:30] Can I just say graciously and gently, that's not a church issue, that's a Bible issue. That's just straight from the text. Now, there are all kinds of church leaders who have taken verses like that and have used it to abuse their church members and try to take a power or authority that is not

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theirs.

When it says, obey your leaders and submit to them, this doesn't mean you do what we say whatever we say. This doesn't mean that we're the Holy Spirit and can tell you everything you can and can't do.
It doesn't mean we give you a list if you can go to these restaurants or these movies or watch these TV shows and you have to obey us in all these areas of personal conviction. Not at all. The Bible makes that very clear.
They are those who will have to give an account. We're not the authority in ourselves. The leaders in church are under authority. They give an account to Christ who's the head of the church, not the pastors.
But just practically speaking, if you're not committed to a local church, what leaders are you submitting to? And if you're not committed to a local church, how do those leaders know who they are to give an account to God for?
[27:55] So church membership becomes not something that is simply cultural or a case of some kind of like church scorekeeping. How many members do we have? How many members does that church have?

Not at all. It's a matter of understanding that within the local church, the members are to submit to their leaders. Their leaders are to give oversight of the souls of the people, not according to their own whims or wishes, but according to Christ who is the head of the church.
And where you have pastors who have taken texts like this and used it to abuse the people or be heavy-handed with the people, Jesus had a lot to say about religious leaders who are abusive in what they do for the people.
And it will not be good for those who are given leadership in the church who abused and misused what they were supposed to be for the people as servants when they stand before the Lord.
But neither would it be good for individual people who said, we ignored what the Bible taught about the church and created a vision and a view of church according to our own making.
[29:15] So let's be very clear. This is Christ's church. He's the head of the church. There is no man, there is no group of men who are the head of the church. 1 Peter 5, shepherd the flock of God among you as God would have you.

Same thing you see in a marriage, that husbands are to lead their homes as Christ loved the church. Husbands aren't to be dictators in their homes.
Husbands aren't to run over their families. Husbands aren't to be demanding in their own way. Leaders, yes. Protectors, yes. Shepherds, yes. But they're to do all of that as Christ loved the church.
And in the church, you have pastors, elders, overseers who are to lead the church, who are to protect and defend and feed the church, who are to be giving oversight to the church members, but not according to what they want for the sake of their reputation, for the sake of their careers.
They are to serve and to lead as those who will give an account to Christ who is the head of the church. So we've got to make sure we're thinking biblically about this.
[30:29] If you're a guest of our church, I'm glad you're here and we'd love to have you next week. We have different expectations for you than those who are the members of the church.

If you're a member of the church, there are things biblically we must do. The Bible's clear on this, that we are to love each other and serve each other, submit to one another, that we are to live as members of the local church in a way that honors Christ.
We don't sit down and come up with a plan of how should our church be. We have a book, it's called The Bible, and we open and say, how can we be like that?
Because this is the Word of Christ and Christ is the head of the church. So just ask yourself, am I thinking biblically about my involvement and responsibility in the church?
Am I thinking biblically about my involvement and responsibility in the church? That's how members think.
[31:45] second, how members behave. How members behave. Let me ask you to turn with me to Galatians chapter 5.

Galatians chapter 5. There's a certain mindset that we need to have as members of the local church. In our new members class, we look at a number of these.

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I just want to give you just a couple this morning. at the very end of chapter 5, verse 25, if we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.
Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. So let me give you a couple of words here I want you to consider. One is the word humility.
This is how members should behave. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, or envying one another. We should be humble people.
[32:47] Now this makes perfect sense just logically because in the church we're to serve each other. If you consider yourself better than somebody else, you're not going to serve them.

If you consider someone else beneath you, you're not going to serve them. And so it makes sense that the Scripture would say that we are not to become conceited because conceited, arrogant people don't serve.
Arrogant people are demanding. Arrogant people want people to serve them. Arrogant people want things their way. And yet the Scripture tells us that we are to care for each other, bear each other's burdens, We are to sacrifice for each other, submit to each other, give preference to each other.
It must be a heart and a mindset and a behavior of humility. Not provoking one another, not envying one another.
One of the great ways to test your heart with this is can you joyfully give thanks to God when you see Him blessing other people?
[34:07] This is a great test for our heart. Can you joyfully give thanks to God when you see Him blessing other people?

And it really is love and relationships that make the difference here. Because we all know what it's like for us to think that we deserve something or to think that somehow a certain blessing or benefit ought to be given to us and when you see somebody at your work that gets some blessing and you didn't, it's so easy to be envious of that.
But I've never been envious of a blessing that came to one of my kids. If my kids get something that's a blessing to them, my only thought is praise God, I'm so thankful for that.
These are people I love, these are people I'm praying for and I've never once had one of my sons say something great happened to me and my thought was, oh man, I wish your day was crummy, I wish I'd have had that.
I don't ever think that with my kids, ever. But could you and I be tempted on the wrong day to think like that with someone that you go to school with or someone that you work with or someone you live next door to and you think, I really wish that would have been my blessing.
[35:35] Well, it's relationship and love that makes the difference there. If you find it hard to rejoice for those who are being blessed, it's just almost always because our heart is not loving them as we should.

And so here's a good test for us as members of the local church. church. Do you joyfully give thanks when you see God blessing other people in our congregation?
If you don't, you'll become envious of them. And Galatians 5.26 makes it very clear we are not to be envying one another.
It's love and it's relationships that make the difference. Let me give you a second word. The word protection. chapter 6, verse 1, brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness.
This clearly tells us that if you know someone who is struggling in sin, caught in sin, that one of the marks of love and relationship is loving them so much that you would go to them and try to help them out of their sin.
[36:59] And if we're just a church where a bunch of strangers show up and we don't know each other and we don't love each other and we don't care for each other, there's no way we could live that out.

There's no way we could do that. To live out Galatians 6.1, there has to be relationships, there has to be love, there has to be friendship.
And that's why in the local church there's a certain way that we have to behave and that is that we behave out of a humble spirit and out of a desire to help protect each other.
You say, I don't know what you're talking about, I just show up, I sit, I sing, I listen, I take notes, I go home, that's where my responsibility ends. Not biblically.

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Not biblically. You're responsible to help each other, to look out for each other, to intervene in seasons of sin and disobedience with each other.
[38:09] You may be tempted to say, hey, I don't want anybody in my business like that. Can I just with grace help you to see that is a worldly way to think, not a biblical way to behave as a church member.

Part of the way the local church should function is that we're so interconnected to each other that we would demonstrate that by actually seeking to rescue and restore the one who is straying away. Now, you can't make them return, you can't make them obey, you can't make them repent, but we are absolutely accountable to God and to each other to give every effort we can to help rescue them out of their sin.
And let me take you back to 1 Corinthians 12 where we started that we are individually members of one body. You understand that we all understand this. If you have just one part of your body that hurts, it impacts all of the body.
And there's no such thing as saying physically, well, it's just one part of my body that hurts, who cares about that? Every mom or dad who stepped on a Lego in the dark understands better than that, right?
[39:31] It's just my toe that's broken, it's fine, I've got nine other toes. Yeah, you do, but the one broken toe is going to distract you the rest of your day. You say, well, I just can't breathe, it's just my nose that stopped, I just can't breathe, the rest of my body is great.

Well, the rest of your body is going to suffer until you figure out how to get your nose to be able to not be so congested. We understand it physically with no problem. And yet, when it comes to life in the church so often, we have such a worldly mindset instead of a biblical mindset and our thought is, hey, that's their problem, that's their need, that's their issue.
Well, the Bible very purposely says you are individually members of one body. And just like if you woke up today with an appendicitis, you would not say, don't worry about it, my appendix is one small part of my body, the rest of me is fine.
No, you would say, this one part of the body that's not healthy, is a problem for the rest of me. And that's the love and the care and the mindset that we should have for each other in the body of Christ.
If one from your class is straying in sin, go to them and restore them. If one from the place of ministry where you serve is caught in sin, love them enough to go to them and seek to restore them, there's a sense of protection that ought to be a part of the body of Christ.
[41:18] But that protection happens within the confines of relationships, being connected to each other. That's why simple things like talking to each other and meeting and greeting each other, it's not just about etiquette or kindness, it's about being a biblical church member because it's in the confines of relationships and friendships that we're able to carry out these one another's that we are to give and serve each other with as a congregation.

protection. There's humility and there's protection. Church membership is a way that we think and it's a way that we behave.
We'll build on this Lord willing next Sunday as we continue to look more about what it means to be a part of a local church and why it's so important. But I want to close with this this morning.
The most important part of your spiritual life, the most important thing, is not where you go to church on Sundays. It's knowing that you belong to Jesus Christ.
And I say that because it's possible to go to church every single Sunday and not know Christ. It's conceivable you could even be a member of a church church and not truly know Christ.
[42:53] You could be baptized and not truly know Christ. As important as church membership is and as important as it is that our local church would be organized in a way that's honoring to the Lord, there is nothing more important for your soul than to ensure that you belong to Christ.

Christ. I would want you to leave this morning every member of our church, yes, asking yourself this question, am I being a faithful member of the local church?
Absolutely. But even more important than that, I'd want every one of you to ask yourself, am I certain that I belong to Jesus? Have I confessed my sin to the Lord?
Have I asked the Lord for His mercy and His grace to save me and cover my sin? Absolutely, in the Bible, there's expectations for those who belong to the Lord, but you don't do any of those things in order to get right with the Lord.

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We are saved simply by grace through faith, not of our works, not of ourselves. And my greatest hope would be that every one of us this morning would ensure in our own heart that we know we belong to the Lord.
[44:10] And if you don't, that this day you would call upon the name of the Lord and be saved. And if you are sure that you belong to Christ, and if you are a member of this local church, I would pray that you would seek the scriptures and say, I want to live how God has called us to.

Christ is the head of the church. Let's do things His way. Christ is the head of the church. Let's live for His name and His glory.
never our own. And let's love and serve and care for each other with a sense of humility and protection so that the world could see there's something different about the way that we love each other.
Not because we're perfect, but because our sin has been forgiven and it's produced within us. the desire to love, protect, and to serve that could only come from the Spirit of the living God.
Lord, we thank You this morning for Your Word as we have really just begun this morning to look at these things. I pray that it would be insightful and helpful for us.
[45:25] I pray, Lord, that we would be found faithful to live as You have called us to. For the glory of Your Son's name we pray. Amen.

Amen.

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