

# WHY IS THE CHURCH MESSY?

## *A Response To Why The Church Is Hypocritical And Preachy*

### THE PASSAGE

Matthew 7:21-25

#### 1) Why do people not want to have anything to do with the church?

- The church is hypocritical (85%); the church is preachy (85%); the church is anti-homosexual (91%); the church is sheltered and out of touch (72%);

#### 2) Five responses we can give. The first is that we are sorry.

- The church has done some wonderful things (pushed education, built hospitals, drafted civil rights), but people feel they have enough reasons to dislike, or push aside, Christianity. What are some of the stories you have heard that push people away from Christianity? What is Mark's suggested response?

#### 3) The facts around the church are often misunderstood or overblown.

- The church has done some terrible things (crusades, witch trials, inquisitions). People have misunderstood or have overblown these facts. The crusade was not a religious war, but a geopolitical war. In the name of Christ, thousands have been killed, not millions. Some were killed and thus we need to have a position of understanding that Christianity has been in the wrong.

#### 4) The facts around individual Christians have not been overblown.

- People reject Jesus Christ because of Christians who have a disconnect between what they believe and the lives they lead. Barna research showed that in the last 30 days, 35% of both Christians and non-Christians did the same activities.  
- What is a biblical world-view? Why is there a disconnect for 35% of Christians?

#### 5) A large percentage of Christians aren't Christians.

- Matthew 7:21-25. There are people who are self-deceived. Some people believe they are Christians but do not have a personal relationship with Jesus. They say they believe in Jesus but they live differently.

#### 6) The church is a place for sinners, not perfect people.

- You don't know where people started. We are all in process and transformation takes place when our sin is brought into the light and is destroyed. The church must be authentic; we're imperfect people who are saved by a perfect Saviour.

## QUESTIONS AND SCRIPTURE FOR FURTHER STUDY THIS WEEK

This insert was taken from Sam Rainer's blog from samrainer.com

*There are as many definitions of a healthy church as there are people who have attempted to define one. The emphasis of church health often falls on numerical growth, but weekly attendance averages are inadequate metrics of health on their own. Doctrine is key, but denominations exist for a reason. Even non-denominational churches cannot (or should not) be atheological. So a wide theological consensus on what is healthy is unlikely. Throw in small groups, mission work, and diversity, among many other things, and it becomes difficult to create a universal set of definitive metrics.*

*But I believe most—hopefully all—of us can agree on one vital indicator of health: People in our churches should be telling others about Jesus and inviting them to worship services. And ironically, successful churches in this area will often be viewed as unhealthy. Why do some healthy churches look unhealthy from the outside?*

*Allow me to present a hypothetical case. Assume a church has a 1:1 conversion ratio for three years. A 1:1 conversion ratio means that in this church everyone is reaching one person for Christ every year. On average, each member successfully reaches one person every year. Therefore, the church doubles in size each of the three years. If the church started with 100 people, after three years 800 people will attend. Assuming the 100 members at the beginning were mature believers, this church now has 700 relatively new believers. After these three amazing years, just 12.5% of the church would be considered mature in the faith. Mr. Consultant can now make quite a case for a dysfunctional church. Or so it might seem on the surface.*

*Here's my point: The healthiest churches are inevitably messy. The church that is bearing fruit will have many new believers, which means an ongoing struggle to disciple them. This discipleship, however, cannot happen in a vacuum, and it certainly doesn't happen instantaneously.*

*A healthy church with a passionate outward focus can expect as much as 50% of the congregation to be loosely connected at any given point. Why? It means spiritually mature people are inviting their friends. Of course, the goal is for people to move from loosely connected to faithful. But once the loosely connected become faithful, the healthy culture of the church should compel them to invite their unchurched friends.*

*If you're a church leader and you're constantly dealing with how to disciple messy, new believers, then it probably means you're doing something right. Conversely, if everyone in your church is spiritually mature, then something is terribly wrong. In fact, a church full of "mature" believers is quite immature because it means no one is reaching outward.*

*Healthy churches are messy. It's easy to look in from the outside and claim, "Half that church is immature!" But such disdain could be misguided. While a state of perpetual immaturity is a recipe for disaster, a constant movement of many immature people being disciplined is exactly what Jesus commanded us to do.*

Questions:

1. How does this article push you in your thoughts on a messy Church?
2. What comes to your mind when you think of a healthy Church and a messy Church?