

Unshakable
Our Greater Family
Hebrews 12:23

This morning an article in the New York Times entitled, “Is Taiwan Next?” began with this statement, “A fragile peace”...

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has amplified fears that the world is teetering back to a Cold War-like era in which the most powerful countries compete for dominance.

That could mean not only Russia exerting control over Eastern Europe but also China imposing itself over East and Southeast Asia — particularly Taiwan.

On Wednesday, March 16, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky addressed a joint session of the US House and Senate...

“Russia has attacked not just us, not just our land, not just our cities. It went on a brutal offensive against our values, basic human values. It threw tanks and planes against our freedom, against our right to live freely in our own country, choosing our own future, against our desire for happiness, against our national dreams, just like the same dreams you have, you Americans.”

These times heighten anxiety...

In times like these people are searching for peace...

The things that have brought us a sense of peace in this nation are crumbling all around us...

In this search for a firm foundation upon which to stand, we realize there is only one that can withstand any and every onslaught... and that is God’s Unshakeable Kingdom!

Two weeks ago we began a series I’ve titled, “UNSHAKEABLE”...

As believers, we have become entitled to several UNSHAKEABLE benefits that will keep our feet on a firm, unshakeable foundation no matter how many tremors are shaking around us...

Hebrews 12:22–24 (ESV) — But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

We are given in these verses the SEVEN privileges of being citizens of heaven...

→ Pic - Unshakable



Our focus today is on this **THIRD** part of our Unshakable Kingdom that we have come to in Jesus...

Hebrews 12:22–23 (ESV) — But you have come to Mount Zion and ... to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven ...

1. You have a FAMILY greater than YOURSELF.

Hebrews 12:22–23 (ESV) — But you have come to Mount Zion and ... to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven ...

The word used here is the word that is translated most often as "CHURCH" in the NT

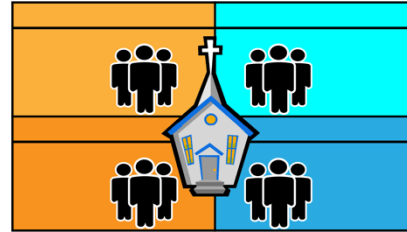
It means "gathered/gathering" ... "assembled/assembly"

What does this mean for us?

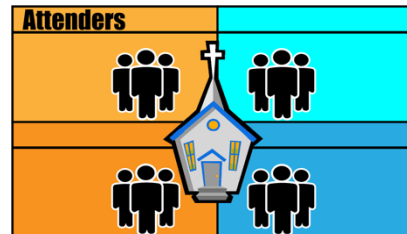
First, it means the gathering of the **TRUE FOLLOWERS JESUS...**

Hebrews 12:22–23 (ESV) — But you have come to Mount Zion and ... to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven ...

Know that in every "gathering" of a church there are **FOUR GROUPS** divided into **TWO CATEGORIES** of people...



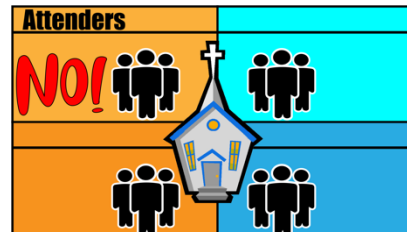
→ **Pic 2 - Attenders**



Attenders may come to church, but have never embraced the Gospel...

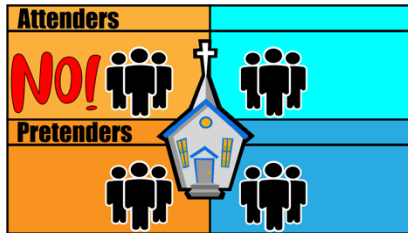
So their actions regarding the Gospel is...

→ **Pic 3 - NO**



The “Attenders” are followed by a second group that I’m calling the “Pretenders”

→ **Pic 4 - Pretenders**



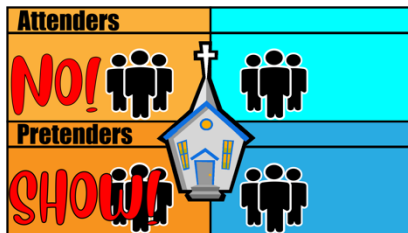
They are actually on the opposite end of the spectrum from the “Attenders”

They are active church members who are hungry for religious activity

They have a “form of godliness”, but deny the power!

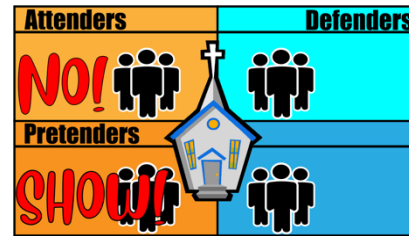
But their actions regarding the Gospel are...

→ **Pic 5 - SHOW**



A third group that make up the “church on earth” are the “Defenders”

→ **Pic 6 - Defenders**

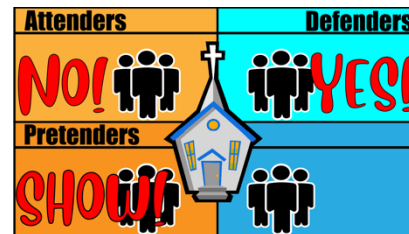


These are the faithful followers of Jesus!

They are not perfect, but have an ongoing active relationship with Jesus...

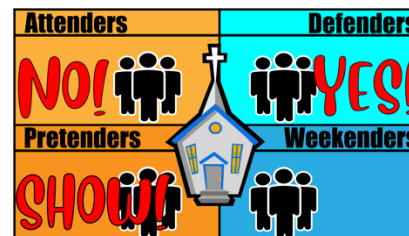
Their action regarding the Gospel is...

→ **Pic 7 - YES**



The final group that make up the “church on earth” is what I’m calling the “Weekenders”

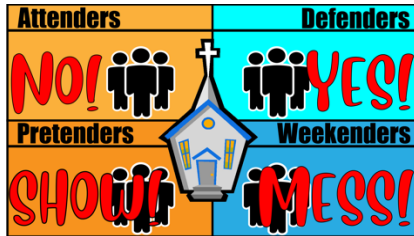
→ **Pic 8 - Weekenders**



These are actually believers, but are living like the world...

So their active regarding the Gospel is ...

→ **Pic 9 - MESS**



The problem with this final group is that they create such a mess...

They cause the “Attenders” to say, “Well, these ‘Christians’ are no different than me.”

They cause the “Pretenders” to justify their religious “show”

The primary difference between the “Attenders” and the “Weekenders” is that the “Weekenders” know they need to fully surrender to Jesus, but the world is too alluring...

The reality is that the TWO GROUPS on the left have never actually given their lives to Jesus!

What is the characteristic distinction that separates the “Defenders” from all the other groups?

➤ **Our RELATIONSHIP**

Your Salvation is NOT just about YOU!

We have turned our personal salvation into something so individual that we fail to see the necessity of community.

Zelensky had been speaking through an interpreter...

But when he came to his closing remarks he spoke them in English...

Peace in your country doesn't depend anymore only on you and your people. It depends on those next to you and those who are strong. Strong doesn't mean big. Strong is brave and ready to fight for the life of his citizens and citizens of the world.

What must we do to step out of our self-centered approach to Christianity and step in to an other-centered way of living?

➤ **LOVE one another!**

On the night Jesus was betrayed and before the dawn of His crucifixion, He gave a new commandment...

John 13:34–35 (ESV) — A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Later that evening when Jesus prayed to the Father, He said...

John 17:20–23 (ESV) — I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in

you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

1. You have a FAMILY greater than YOURSELF.

2. You have an INHERITANCE greater than YOUR NEEDS.

Hebrews 12:22–23 (ESV) — But you have come to Mount Zion and ... to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven ...

Firstborn is a strange term to most of us and in fact we see it in only one of its **THREE** possible meanings...

→ Birth-order – The one born first...

→ Birth-rite – The Authority over the family...

→ Blessing – The Inheritance for the future...

I'm not going to spend too much time on this but know that when we are called the "...assembly of the firstborn" this is referring to **TWO** things...

First it refers to our **POSITION** in Christ...

We are positioned within Christ's Authority!

Ephesians 2:4–6 (ESV) — But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive

together with Christ — by grace you have been saved — and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

Second it refers to our **POSSESSION** in Christ...

Romans 8:16–17 (ESV) — The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

This refers primarily to ...

➤ Our RICHES

So, what have we inherited?...

Many things, but primarily two ...

We have inherited the character of Jesus

Galatians 5:22–23 (ESV) — But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

We have inherited the power of Jesus

John 14:12–14 (ESV) — “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.

These “works” that we do are the gifts of the Spirit flowing through us ...

1 Corinthians 12:7 (ESV) — To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

So, our inheritance is primarily used to...

➤ **SERVE one another!**

1 Peter 4:10 (ESV) — As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace

1. You have a FAMILY greater than YOURSELF.

2. You have an INHERITANCE greater than YOUR NEEDS.

3. You have a FUTURE guaranteed for ETERNITY.

Hebrews 12:22–23 (ESV) — But you have come to Mount Zion and ... to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven ...

When a person gives their life to Jesus their name is enrolled in the BOOK OF LIFE...

Revelation 20:12 (ESV) — And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.

Revelation 20:15 (ESV) — And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

In the New Heaven and the New Earth there will be a capitol called the New Jerusalem...

Revelation 21:27 (ESV) — But nothing unclean will ever enter it [New Jerusalem], nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

For those whose names are written in the Book of Life this speaks to...

➤ **Our RESPONSIBILITY**

We must see the reality of eternity and know that everyone who hasn’t given their life to Jesus is headed to an eternity separated from God in a place called Hell...

As a result, we must...

➤ **SHARE with others!**

Unshakable
Our Greater Family
Hebrews 12:23

1. You have a _____ greater than _____

➤ Our _____

➤ _____ *one another!*

2. You have an _____ greater than

➤ Our _____

➤ _____ *one another!*

3. You have a _____ guaranteed for _____

➤ Our _____

➤ _____ *with others!*