



Honor Jesus

Remember Who You Are #1 • October 11, 2026



Be The Church

There is a type of Christianity that just “plays” church.

There is another type of Christianity that IS the church.

Which are you?

I’m going to skip over the niceties and the preamble I normally give. This morning I just wanna jump right in and put it out there in no uncertain terms:

Tonganoxie Christian Church WILL NOT BE a place where we are content to gather nicely and have a “**nice**” service one time a week. It will not be primarily for **socializing** (although relationships are important), nor will it be primarily for **learning** (although Biblical wisdom is important), nor for **community relations**, nor for **family-friendly activities** for your kids. It WILL NOT be “**fire insurance**” to do the bare minimum to find your escape from hell. Those are the actions and attitude of a people who just want to “play church.”

No. We need to BE the church!!!!

We need to be a group of men and women and kids whose existence is **so focused on the glory of God** that we put that above everything else! That should be the reality and the vision that captivates us. His glory should inspire awe in us; His glory should illuminate our world so that **by it** we see everything else in a new light.¹

- Other organizations in town might do good works.
 - “**Team Tongie**” can and does meet needs for people who are hurting in the community.
 - **The Good Shepherd** can and does provide assistance and food to the broken and hungry.

¹ CS Lewis, you get credit for this idea...even if I’m not directly quoting you.

- **The Police Department** can and does try to root out destructive and illegal behaviors
- But **NO OTHER ORGANIZATION** besides the Church (whichever denomination...) opens the eyes of people to the Source of All Goodness and Beauty. No other group of people points upward and praises the God of Our Salvation.
That is *our* job.
 - If we *play* church, we peek out a window and occasionally enjoy a little glimpse of God's glory.
 - If we *ARE* the church, we throw the curtains open and allow His glory to change us and everyone around us!

We need to be a group of men and women and kids whose view of God is so captivating that we have no choice but to count everything else as worthless in comparison. Like Paul, we should be able to say...

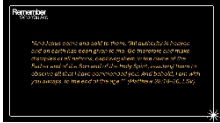


“Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.” (Philippians 3:8-11, ESV)

And in our recognition of His worth, we **join Him in His mission** – in this community, in this world. We begin to see Him and recognize that His goals and priorities are what matter. Whatever else we might do, we choose to do it in a way that brings about His purpose.

- Other organizations might associate with God and His purpose through their name or their affiliation:
 - **Children’s Mercy Hospital** affiliates with a quality of God (Mercy)
 - **Texas Christian University** uses the label of the people of God (Christian)
 - **The American Red Cross** adopts the symbol of our faith (the cross)

- But **NO OTHER ORGANIZATION** has been chosen to live out God's mission and associate with God in His purpose. It is to His follower alone that Jesus delegated this duty:



“And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”” (Matthew 28:18–20, ESV)

In last week's sermon, Derek quoted Charles Spurgeon, the great Christian preacher from the 1800s, who said, *“Every Christian is either a missionary or an imposter.”* You're either living to put the mission of the church in practice – showing the world the glory of our God – or you're just playing church.

I don't want to play. I hope you don't either.



We need to BE the church!!!!

Pray with me...

God,

We confess sometimes we are guilty of the sin of playing church. All of us, myself included, have at times been focused on the wrong things. We have settled for lesser pursuits; we have lingered in (at best) irrelevant tasks or (at worst) rebellious acts. Forgive us for losing sight of You. Correct our focus. Empower our obedience. Cleanse our hearts and help us to glorify you and to embrace your glory and your mission.



It is our prayer that you will help us to know and understand and practice the things that will cause us to BE the church. May our church declare your glory and join in your mission.

In Jesus' Name...Amen.



Environments for Growth

I assume you have at least some desire to grow closer to Jesus. Amen?! Why else would you be here?!

Maybe your faith is strong and well-established. Maybe it is new and just putting down roots. That's okay. People who want to follow Jesus are at all different levels!

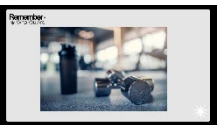
I'm reminded of a story in the Gospel of Mark where a father asked Jesus to heal his child who had been suffering from seizures.



*“And Jesus asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood. And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But **if you can** do anything, have compassion on us and help us.” And Jesus said to him, “ ‘If you can’! All things are possible for one who believes.” Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, “**I believe; help my unbelief!**”” (Mark 9:21–24, ESV)*

“Help my unbelief!” Can you relate?!

Church, we want to help your belief and faith in Jesus grow. Jesus has given the church this responsibility! So, whether you are new or established, there are certain **environments** (and actions within each environment) that are going to help your belief to grow.



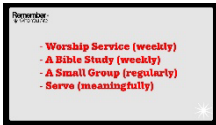
You can think of church like a gym. If you went to the gym wanting to get stronger and more fit, you wouldn't expect results from just signing a membership agreement and showing up 1-2 times a month. Especially if only activity when you did show up was simply sitting and watching others work out!

*Those at the gym would say, “You're going to get the best results if you engage in some behaviors that develop different things. You'll want to go to the treadmills and exercise bikes to do some **cardio** work (walking, running) and build up your aerobic systems and endurance. You'll want to go to the weight benches and lift some **weights** (bench press, squats) to build muscle and power. You'll want to go onto the mats to **stretch** (legs, back) and gain flexibility and movement. And you'll want to go to the **dietician's office** to talk through what foods (veggies, protein) will enable you to function best.”*

No matter whether you are a first-timer or an instructor, those environments and actions would be important for you!

The same is true of being the church. If you want to glorify God and join in His mission, you should put yourself into certain environments consistently to engage in valuable spiritual practices.

If you are part of the church, you're going to get better results when you prioritize the following four types of church environments. Here's what you should be in:



- **Worship Service** (in the **Worship Center weekly**). Worship is where we engage our spirit and God's truth. It is where we declare God's praises, together encouraging others to do the same. Worship puts God first. So, be here each week, whenever you can!
- **A Bible Study** (in a **classroom weekly**). Study is where we learn what God says. You need to know the Bible! You can't follow and love someone you don't listen to. So, in addition to reading on your own, whether you attend a class on Sunday or Wednesday, or learn in an online group...learning with and from others...you need to make Bible study an important part of your week!
- **A Small Group** (in a **living room regularly – a couple times a month or more**). Groups are the community we need. We must surround ourselves with others who are chasing Jesus. Is He what your friends or coworkers are discussing? Are they praying for you? If so, great. But if not, who is going to do that with and for you? You need to get in a group where the others are walking the Way with you and talking about deeper things.
- **Serve** as a Volunteer (in **the trenches, regularly and meaningfully**). The church has lots of places to serve – short-term opportunities, long-term responsibilities. Some are tasks; some oversee tasks and/or people. But each one contributes to building the Vine (the life) of the church or creating a stronger Trellis to support the Vine.

Are you in all four environments? That's the baseline. That's the start. Because when you do those things, you are putting yourself in an environment to grow!!!

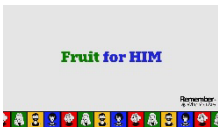
Get in that routine... worship, study, share, serve. That's the challenge. I'll steal Paul's encouragement to Timothy and say...



“Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress.” (1 Timothy 4:15, ESV)

Those actions will show that you aren't just *playing* church. You're doing the work.

But the work is only part of it. We must see results, too. You've got to bear fruit!



Fruit for HIM

If we are *playing* church, the verses we read and the slogans we use will just be words. They will be empty statements we make...things we see on a sign or that are printed on your bulletin. The environments will be a feature of the gym we see on the brochure but never use.

But if we *ARE* the church, those things become *the way we live*. They show up in our lives. And they bear fruit.

You might have seen the following phrase on the wall by the main entrance; you might have read it on the church letterhead or bulletin.



“TCC Exists for HIM.”

The leaders of our church adopted that phrase several years ago as our vision statement, and it still serves us well.

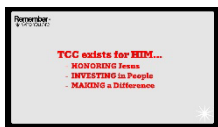
It proclaims the most important fact of our church: WE ARE HERE FOR GOD'S GLORY. Not yours, not mine. HIS.

That alone makes it a good statement.

But included in the “HIM” is an acronym for what that existence looks like. To “exist for Him” looks like...what the acronym stands for! The things that should be produced in the environments we inhabit.

It's a reflection of the Great Commission from Matthew 28 that we read earlier. Most churches have some version that they've adopted.

- *“Loving, Following, and Sharing Jesus.”*
- *“Loving Jesus, Becoming Like Jesus, Sharing Jesus.”*



- “Loving people one at a time.”

Ours at TCC is “**Honoring Jesus, Investing in People, Making a Difference.**”

We don’t want you to just know the words...we want you to embody them! Don’t just *play* church; **BE** the church. And bear fruit.

Last week, we voted to update the governing documents of the church. You voted to **approve them (woot woot!)**, which is wonderful. Those documents emphasize the **spiritual responsibilities** that matter in our church...not just the **structural** and **legal** aspects. We worded them in such a way that they help us “remember who we are.”



And one portion of those documents shares what it means to be a “member” in the church. We want to elevate what it means to be part of this church!

- Anyone who decides to follow Jesus – who accepts his free gift of salvation, who repents of sins and has those sins covered by the blood of Jesus, who confesses Jesus as Lord (the Boss) and Savior, who is baptized into the Father, Son and Spirit – is a part (a MEMBER) of the **church universal**.
- But that membership in the church at large needs to be grounded in the **church local**. You need to be rooted here, in a community of believers living out that transformation together.

We want that local church membership to matter. So, as part of the bylaws we included a piece of paper – an agreement...saying “here’s what you can expect from our leaders”...and also saying “here’s what we expect from members.”

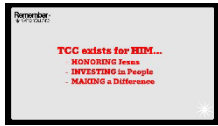
Signing such an agreement might make you hesitant.

Good.

We want it to matter. We want it to mean something. We don’t want you to sign just for the sake of signing.

We want it to be your declaration that you will BE the church.

The agreement really focuses on the fruit of should be developed in each of the four environments (worship, study, share, serve). And the fruit is connected to each part of our acronym.



- H - Honoring Jesus.
- I - Investing in people.
- M - Making a difference.

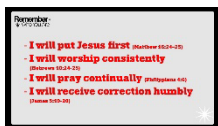
We will look at the next two letters over the next two weeks. This morning let me quickly share the “H” – *honoring Jesus*.



“Honoring Jesus”

“As a member of Tonganoxie Christian Church, to the best of my ability and with grace from the Lord and extended by my church family...I will grow in the way I Honor Jesus.”

There are four pieces of fruit I hope we see in you as you participate. Let me just read them and then say a few words.



- **I will put Jesus first.** I will love, honor, and obey Jesus Christ above all else in my life in response to his life-giving grace.

“Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it.”
(Matthew 16:24–25, NLT)

- **I will worship consistently.** I will regularly participate in public worship services with the corporate body of believers at Tonganoxie Christian Church.

“Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.” (Hebrews 10:24–25, NLT)

- **I will pray continually.** I will bring praise, thanksgiving, confession and requests to Him in prayer throughout each day.

*“Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.”
(Philippians 4:6, NLT)*

- **I will receive correction humbly.** I will be accountable to my church, allowing TCC’s elders to speak into my life with loving correction and church discipline when it is necessary for my own spiritual growth and the benefit of my church family.

“My dear brothers and sisters, if someone among you wanders away from the truth and is brought back, you can be sure that whoever brings the sinner back from wandering will save that person from death and bring about the forgiveness of many sins.” (James 5:19–20, NLT)

Putting Jesus first is the key to the rest. You do this once – giving your life to Christ, being baptized in His name. But then you **continually adjust and orient your life** to Him, daily. Not under your own power...but allowing the Holy Spirit to change you!

Weekly worship is your regular reminder and remembrance. Don’t miss it! Be here every week. Be on time. Don’t duck out for coffee in the middle. Prepare in advance so you can be active and alert. You might not like the music or the greeting time or the sermon(!) but God uses each of those pieces to build us up together. You can’t do it alone...and that goes for online only. You need in-person. (If you are homebound, call the church and let’s figure out a way for you to have some connection!). Be here.

Continual prayer is your ongoing power. You pray for each other...in the church, in the community, for the lost, for the saved, for your enemies and your government (sometimes the same!), and for everything you need. Ask God for what you need. Thank Him for what He gives. That’s your power!

And correction is your compass. We talked about accountability a few weeks ago. If we’re trying to honor Jesus, we need to know if we are doing anything to dishonor Him! We need loving correction from those around us, pointing out stuff we never knew to avoid and pushing us to give up the stuff we already know we should quit. Loving accountability that is received with humility will steer us to better please our Lord.

That’s the kind of fruit we need to see in action.



Conclusion

And Church, I do see it in you!

- I see it in people who are **making decisions** to follow Jesus (Baptism today! Charley Grammar...plus others who are considering it)
- I see it in people who are **here in worship faithfully** (I know where most of you sit, so you're here a lot)
- I see it in people who **pray for others** (our leaders are lifting you up at their meetings – you might get a postcard occasionally, but we pray for more than we mail!)
- I see it in people who **receive correction** humbly (group members who are doing life together and challenging each other to grow).



I see many of you BEING the church, not just playing.

And that's what we all need. We need to BE the church!!!!

We need to glorify God and join Him on mission.

We need to spend time in environments that help us bear fruit.

We need to bear fruit that Honors Jesus.

Remember who you are. Let's live it out!



Prayer

Invitation

Sermon Notes

Be The Church

(Philippians 3:8–11; Matthew 28:18–20)

Environments for Growth

(1 Timothy 4:15)

- Worship Service (weekly)
- A Bible Study (weekly).
- A Small Group (regularly)
- Serve (meaningfully)

Fruit for HIM

(Hebrews 10:24–25)

“TCC Exists for HIM: Honoring Jesus, Investing in People, Making a Difference.”

“Honoring Jesus”

- I will put Jesus first *(Matthew 16:24–25)*
- I will worship consistently *(Hebrews 10:24-25)*
- I will pray continually *(Philippians 4:6)*
- I will receive correction humbly *(James 5:19-20)*

Sermon Discussion Questions

- How long have you been part of the church? Are you a member or just an attender? Share your story.
- What makes the church different from other organizations?
- Describe your current participation in the following environments of church: weekly worship services, Bible studies, small groups, serving as a volunteer. Are you satisfied with your level of engagement? Why or why not?
- How should each of those environments contribute to your spiritual growth?
- Complete the following: TCC exists for _____. (Hint: The answer is in your bulletin). Do you know what the first letter stands for?
- Why must we put Jesus first? What does that look like as an initial decision? What does that look like as a daily decision?
- Read Hebrews 10:24-25. How does weekly worship help you remember who you are in Christ?
- How does prayer equip you to honor Jesus?
- Do you receive correction humbly? If not humbly, what word best describes your response to correction? How does correction help steer the church and its people in the right direction?