



A Talk With Tomlinson Run

The Church of Christ in Penemene,
Zimbabwe, Africa







A Talk With Tomlinson Run

- Why this lesson is being preached
- Heb. 13:7, 17 - “Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct... 17 Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.”

A Talk With Tomlinson Run

- Why do I come to worship?
- What do I bring to God as I worship?
- What should I bring in fellowship to others while I worship?
- Are you aware that God knows why you are here while you are here?
- Will telling you why you need to be here or what you should be thinking or feeling make a difference in the direction of your service to God?
- Then what will make a difference? What will it take to make you care enough to overcome this dangerous trend?
- What do I want out of life? A good life here or a better life there?
- What am I doing to bring it about?
- How can I bring my manner of life in keeping with my stated goals?

Faithful Service To God

- Four possible results when one attends worship as if God has minimum standards:
 - He turns around immediately and pursues excellence before he reaches the point of compromise infectivity
 - He begins living in acceptance of marginal Christianity
 - He gradually drifts to lesser degrees of service
 - He becomes apostate

Faithful Service To God

- Symptoms of this syndrome
 - Content with infrequent attendance
 - Skipping Bible class
 - Habitually missing Sunday evening worship
 - Increase in casual attire in worship

Alarming Trends

- On an increasing basis, local churches for practical, financial and other less noble reasons are cutting back on the work of edification
 - Gospel meetings
 - Sunday night worship services
 - Token Bible classes
 - Business meeting leadership
- This weakens churches and individual Christians.

Alarming Trends

- Collectively and individually
 - It is critical that you attend Gospel meetings faithfully
 - That you attend as much as is within your power all of the regular services of this church
 - That you attend, participate in, and develop as teachers of our Bible classes, and that you get your children here to do the same
 - And that you show respect for the leaders of this congregation.
- We must hold fast in these matters to protect you and your children from loss

Alarming Trends

- Churches that cut the number of services and continue to thrive are the exception, not the rule.
- Likewise with individual members who reduce the frequency of their own attendance and that of their families. Those who continue to thrive are the rare exception, not the rule.
- Never look to weak and drifting persons as the standard by which you measure your own faithfulness

Worship Isn't About You

- Worship isn't about you in the matter of attendance.
- A faithful Christian is one who is faithful from the heart
 - He desires to gather to worship God at every opportunity
 - He wishes for more occasions where he can be with God's people in His presence, just like he expects it will be in heaven.
 - He works to keep secular things in their place so they won't interfere with his opportunities to worship.
 - Worship is about God and our overruling desire to come together with Him and His people

Worship Isn't About You

- Matt. 18:20 - “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”
- Psalm 122:1 - “I was glad when they said to me, Let us go into the house of the LORD.”

Worship Isn't About You

- Worship isn't about you in the matter of reverence
 - You are a Christian, a representative of Jesus Christ, and a servant of God; look like it; act like it.
 - People are going to be looking at you for an example. God planned it that way; Jesus said it's so.

Worship Isn't About You

- Matt. 5:14-16 - “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Worship Isn't About You

- Americans value casualness; God looks for reverence and modesty.
 - Lev. 26:2 - “You shall keep My Sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary: I am the LORD.”
 - Psalm 89:7 - “God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, And to be held in reverence by all those around Him”

Worship Isn't About You

- Mal 1:6 - “A son honors his father, And a servant his master. If then I am the Father, Where is My honor? And if I am a Master, Where is My reverence? Says the LORD of hosts To you priests who despise My name. Yet you say, 'In what way have we despised Your name?’”
- Titus 2:7 - “In all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility”
- Heb. 12:28 - “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.”

Worship Isn't About You

- Our worship captures the attention of heaven.
 - “I am there in the midst of you”
 - Our fellowship in worship is not merely with one another, it is also with Christ worshiping God
 - Matt. 26:29 - “But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.”

Worship Isn't About You

- Worship isn't about you in the matter of addressing the needs of the weak.
 - “Preach on it”
 - “Tell them like it is”
 - Ostracize them
 - Smother them
 - Talk about them with others
 - Tell me about it or send me to address it

Worship Isn't About You

- What about sitting down and meditating on what would get to your heart if you were in the same place,
- Then make the resolve to say that to them personally,
- Before doing so, spend a long time in prayer about it,
- And then grow some courage and increase your love by going to talk to them yourself?
 - Gal 6:1 - “Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.”

Worship Isn't About You

- Will it help to remember that your sins are no more palatable to God than the erring brother's?
- Will it help to remember that without God's grace and mercy, you would be in no better state than a Pharisee?
- Will it help to remember that God loves him just as much as He loves you?
 - 1Thes. 5:14 - "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all."

Hallmarks Of Health In A Congregation

- 1Cor 12:12-18 - “For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many. If the foot should say, Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear should say, Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? 18 But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.”

Hallmarks Of Health In A Congregation

- Growth
- Harmony
- Emotion
- Movement
- Soundness

The Solution For Churches And Individual Members

- Rev. 2:1-5 - “To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, 'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place--unless you repent.’”

The Solution For Churches And Individual Members

- Re-awaken - *“From where you have fallen”*
- Remember - *“Remember therefore”*
- Restore - *“Do the first works”*
- Repent - *“Repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place--unless you repent.”*

How To Ensure A Falling Away

- Rev. 3:14-19 - “And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' --and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked-- I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.”

How To Ensure A Falling Away

- Laodicea strove for mediocrity (just enough to get by). They ended up falling short.
- They saw no need to improve
 - 1Kings 18:21 - “And Elijah came to all the people, and said, How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him. But the people answered him not a word.”

How To Ensure A Falling Away

- Serving the Lord is not about having it both ways
 - Matt. 6:24 - “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon”
- It is appealing to avoid change and growth; it gives the appearance of stability and peace. But it inevitably leads to stagnation
 - Psalm 123:4 - “Our soul is exceedingly filled With the scorn of those who are at ease, With the contempt of the proud.”

How To Ensure A Falling Away

- We are to be fervent in spirit
 - Rom. 12:11 - “Not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord”
 - Matt. 12:30 - “He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.”

How To Ensure A Falling Away

- Christ found mediocrity disgusting. Cold is better than doing just the minimum
 - 2Peter 2:21 - “For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.”

A Talk With Tomlinson Run

- Will this church survive long into the future?
- A few can't prop up a dying church or carry drifting Christians for very long.
- Don't believe the teenage fairy tale ("It's not going to happen to me.")
- Let's work together as a family to ensure the future.