



How (Not) to Save the World, Week 6: Despise the Bride

The Lie: You don't need the church because there are too many _____ and too much _____.

The Truth: The church is better with you in it. Don't _____ the very community you're called to _____.

"...Holy Father, you have given me your name; now protect them by the power of your name so that they will be united just as we are."

John 17:11 (NLT)

Three ways we can join Jesus in building his church:

• **To attract people to Jesus we must live like Jesus in _____.**

"I'm not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one. They do not belong to this world any more than I do. Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth. Just as you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world. And I give myself as a holy sacrifice for them so they can be made holy by your truth."

John 17:15-19 (NLT)

• **To attract people to Jesus we must live like Jesus in _____.**

"I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me."

I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me."

John 17:20-23 (NLT)

• **To attract people to Jesus we must live like Jesus in _____.**

"Father, I want these whom you have given me to be with me where I am. Then they can see all the glory you gave me because you loved me even before the world began!

O righteous Father, the world doesn't know you, but I do; and these disciples know you sent me. I have revealed you to them, and I will continue to do so. Then your love for me will be in them, and I will be in them."

John 17:24-26 (NLT)

"...On this rock I will build my church, and the power of death will not be able to defeat it."

Matthew 16:18 (NCV)

Discussion Questions

1. Read John 17. What part of Jesus' prayer resonates with you?
2. When the Church is divided, what message does that send to the world? What do you think is the number one reason that most people give for not attending church?
3. What happens to the Church when unity between Christians is neglected?
4. Are there non-negotiable points of truth that all Christians must agree on? Is it possible to be united in truth as followers of Jesus?
5. What would happen if the world saw Christians united together, standing on the truth of God's Word?

Recommended Resources

- *How (Not) to Save the World*, by Hosanna Wong
- *Why We Love the Church*, by Kevin DeYoung and Ted Kluck
- *One Blood*, by John M. Perkins
- *Forgiving What You Can't Forget*, by Lysa TerKeurst
- *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, by Peter Scazzero



Session 5 | Despise the Bride (Reject Religion)

Connect: In your small group, take 5 to 7 mins to connect. Below are a few questions to guide your discussion.

- Share how you came to Jesus, or how you came to our church (who invited you, how long you've been attending), and what you appreciate about it.

Read: In your small group, read and reflect on the following passages. See reflection questions below.

Ephesians 4:3-6; 11-13

3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. **4** There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; **5** one Lord, one faith, one baptism; **6** one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, **12** to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up **13** until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Hebrews 10:19-25

19 Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, **20** by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, **21** and since we have a great priest over the house of God, **22** let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. **23** Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. **24** And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, **25** not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Reflect:

- What do these passages teach us about the importance of the Body of Christ? What characteristics does a healthy, Jesus-centered church produce?
- What are some areas you see the church (or Christians) not showing the love of Jesus well? What are things you have seen divide Christ-followers in the past, or things you see that divide us today?
- How can we overcome hurts we have experienced in the church?
- How can we be a part of building the church we've been praying for?
- What is at risk if we don't each individually play our part in creating and cultivating the kind of community God has called us to be?

Pray: Pray for unity in the church. Pray for healing from past wounds. Pray for a new sense of ownership in being the church we have longed for. Pray for a fresh wind from God for us to be the church our communities need.