

A Word to the Church

Introduction

2 Corinthians 11:23–28 (NKJV)

²³ Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I *am* more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. ²⁴ From the Jews five times I received forty *stripes* minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; ²⁶ in journeys often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils of *my own* countrymen, *in* perils of the Gentiles, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren; ²⁷ in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—²⁸ besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my **deep concern** for all the churches.

merimna: care, anxiety

Original Word: μέριμνα, ης, ἡ

Part of Speech: Noun, Feminine

Transliteration: merimna

Phonetic Spelling: (mer'-im-nah)

Definition: care, anxiety

Usage: care, worry, anxiety.

Cognate: 3308 mérimna (see 3307 /merízō, "divide") – properly, a part, separated from the whole; (figuratively) worry (anxiety), dividing and fracturing a person's being into parts. See 3309 (merimnaō).

Lesson

1 The Reality of the Church

1. The Deceivers

Acts 20:27–31 (NKJV)

²⁷ For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. ²⁸ Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. ²⁹ For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. ³⁰ Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. ³¹ Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

Matthew 7:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

2 Peter 2:1–3 (NKJV)

2 But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, *and* bring on themselves swift destruction. ² And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. ³ By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.

2. The Deceived

Matthew 24:4–5 (NKJV)

⁴ And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.

Titus 1:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:5 (NKJV)

⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

Romans 2:18–24 (NKJV)

¹⁸ and know *His* will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, ¹⁹ and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, ²⁰ an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law.²³ You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law? ²⁴ For “*the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,*” as it is written.

Matthew 13:18–23 (NKJV)

¹⁸ “Therefore hear the parable of the sower:
¹⁹ When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand *it*, then the wicked *one* comes

and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. ²⁰ But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹ yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. ²² Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. ²³ But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands *it*, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”

Matthew 13:24–30 (NKJV)

²⁴ Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; ²⁵ but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. ²⁶ But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. ²⁷ So the servants of the owner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’ ²⁸ He said to them, ‘An

enemy has done this.’ The servants said to him, ‘Do you want us then to go and gather them up?’²⁹ But he said, ‘No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them.’³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.” ’ ’ ”

James 2:14–20 (NKJV)

¹⁴ What *does it* profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what *does it* profit? ¹⁷ Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

¹⁸ But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. ¹⁹ You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! ²⁰ But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

3. The Departures

Joshua Harris, the author of the best-selling book *Kissed Dating Goodbye*, announced in an Instagram post Friday that he is no longer a Christian.

The shocking admission comes a week after Harris publicly announced that he and his wife, Shannon, [were separating](#) after 20 years of marriage, but would remain “friends” as they continue to raise their three children together.

In the [Instagram post](#), Harris commented on the responses he received about his pending divorce and dropped another shocking announcement by revealing that he is “falling away” from the faith and no longer identifies as a Christian.

Harris also apologized to the “LGBTQ+ community” for not supporting same-sex marriage and affirming their place in the church.

Marty Sampson, a prolific worship music writer known for his work with Hillsong Worship, Hillsong United, Delirious and Young & Free, revealed he is losing his faith and believes Christianity is “just another religion.”

“Time for some real talk,” the Australian writer wrote in a since-deleted post on [Instagram](#). “I’m genuinely losing my faith, and it doesn’t bother me. Like, what bothers me now is nothing. I am so happy now, so at peace with the world. It’s crazy.”

“This is a soapbox moment so here I go ... How many preachers fall? Many,” he continued. “No one talks about it. How many miracles happen. Not many. No one talks about it. Why is the Bible full of contradictions? No one talks about it. How can God be love yet send four billion people to a place, all ‘coz they don’t believe? No one talks about it. Christians can be the most judgmental people on the planet—they can also be some of the most beautiful and loving people. But it’s not for me.”

This is not new and want be the last time a very well know popular leader associated with the church falls away.

These are well known because of social media and the media in general and the propensity of the church to highlight the talented and successful. But there are many leaving the faith every day. Churches are full of young people, just waiting be free of the the parental restraints to leave the faith and experience the world.

2 Thessalonians 2:3 (NKJV)

³ Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,

Demas had at one time been one of Paul's "fellow workers" in the gospel ministry along with [Mark](#), [Luke](#), and others ([Philemon 1:24](#)).

Philemon 24 (NKJV)

²⁴ as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow laborers.

During Paul's first imprisonment in Rome, Demas was also in Rome ([Colossians 4:14](#)).

Colossians 4:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you.

There is also biblical evidence that Demas was with Paul during Paul's second imprisonment in Rome, at least for a while. Then something happened. Demas forsook Paul, abandoned the ministry, and left town. Paul wrote about the sad situation: "Demas,

because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica” ([2 Timothy 4:10](#)).

2 Timothy 4:9–10 (NKJV)

⁹ Be diligent to come to me quickly; ¹⁰ for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia.

2 Timothy 1:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.

2 Timothy 4:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them.

1 John 2:18–19 (NKJV)

¹⁸ Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. ¹⁹ They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but *they went out* that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

1 The Reality of the Church

2. The Reassurance of the Church

Matthew 16:18–19 (NKJV)

¹⁸ And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹ And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

Acts 2:47 (NKJV)

⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

1. The Reality of the Church
2. The Reassurance of the Church.

3. The Requirements of the Church

1. Sound Doctrine
2. Prayer
3. Fellowship
4. Breaking of Bread
5. Evangelism

Acts 2:41–47 (NKJV)

⁴¹ Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them*. ⁴² And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. ⁴³ Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, ⁴⁵ and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

⁴⁶ So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

Please notice that this description of the early church is missing 2 of the most common words associated the Contemporary church.

1. Worship.
2. Music.

Although the Bible does talk about both. It has been so often misunderstood that Worship is music and music is worship and the rest of the service are add on and things we do that are not necessarily worship.

I agree that music can be worship and worshipful. But worship by and of it self is not worship.

It can lead a heart to worship, and can lift the mind and the heart to exalt God. But Worship does not end when the music stops. All parts of church service are worship. At least they should be.

The Reading of Scripture.
 The Giving of monies
 The Sings of songs
 The preaching and Teaching of the Word
 The Prayers of the Saints
 The Discipline of a Sinning member
 The Evangelization of the Sinner.
 The ordination of a Leader.
 The Fellowship around Dinner.
 The presentation of the media.
 etc.

1. Sound Doctrine

Acts 2:42 (NKJV)

⁴² And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine

proskartereó: to attend constantly

Original Word: προσκαρτερέω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: proskartereó

Phonetic Spelling: (pros-kar-ter-eh'-o)

Definition: to attend constantly

Usage: I persist, persevere in, continue steadfast in; I wait upon.

4342 proskarteréō (from 4314 /prós, "towards, interactively with" and 2594 /karteréō, "show steadfast strength," derived from 2904 /krátos, "prevailing strength") – properly, to consistently showing strength which prevails (in spite of difficulties); to endure (remain firm), staying in a fixed direction.

[4342 /proskarteréō means "to continue to do something with intense effort, with the possible implication of despite difficulty – 'to devote oneself to, to keep on, to persist in'" (L & N, 1, 68.68).]

John 8:31–32 (NKJV)

³¹ Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, **"If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. ³² And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."**

Ephesians 2:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*,

Ephesians 4:11–15 (NKJV)

¹¹ And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ¹³ till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; ¹⁴ that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, ¹⁵ but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—

Colossians 1:22–23 (NKJV)

²² in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—²³ if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

2 Timothy 3:14–4:5 (NKJV)

¹⁴ But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from

whom you have learned *them*, ¹⁵ and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

¹⁶ All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

4 I charge *you* therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: ² Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season.

Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. ³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; ⁴ and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. ⁵ But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

2 Peter 3:1–3 (NKJV)

3 Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in *both of* which I stir up your pure minds by way of

reminder), ² that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, ³ knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts,

2. Fellowship

participation fellowship n. — the act of sharing in the activities or privileges of an intimate association or group; especially used of marriage and churches.

Acts 2:44–45 (NKJV)

⁴⁴ Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, ⁴⁵ and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

Acts 4:32 (NKJV)

³² Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that

any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.

Acts 4:34–35 (NKJV)

³⁴ Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, ³⁵ and laid *them* at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.

1 John 1:3 (NKJV)

³ that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

1 John 1:6–7 (NKJV)

⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

3. Prayer

Acts 4:31 (NKJV)

³¹ And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

Acts 6:4 (NKJV)

⁴ but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”

Romans 12:12 (NKJV)

¹² rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer;

Ephesians 6:17–18 (NKJV)

¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; ¹⁸ praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—

Colossians 4:2 (NKJV)

² Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving;

Jude 20 (NKJV)

²⁰ But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,

Common prayer and Corporate prayer

Acts 1:12–14 (NKJV)

¹² Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey. ¹³ And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James *the son* of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas *the son* of James.

¹⁴ These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

Corporate prayer

1 Timothy 3:14–15 (NKJV)

¹⁴ These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; ¹⁵ but if I am delayed, *I write* so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

1 Timothy 2:1–9 (NKJV)

2 Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks be made for all **men (antropos)**, ² for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. ³ For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all **men(antropos)** to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵ For *there is* one God and one Mediator between God and **men,(antropos) the Man(antropos)** Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, ⁷ for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle—I am speaking the truth in Christ *and* not lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

⁸ I desire therefore that **the men (aner)** pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; ⁹ in like manner also, that **the women** adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing,

1 Timothy 2:12 (NKJV)

¹² And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, men (aner) but to be in silence.

4. Breaking of Bread

Acts 2:46 (NKJV)

⁴⁶ So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,

Acts 20:7–11 (NKJV)

⁷ Now on the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight. ⁸ There were many lamps in the upper room where they were gathered together. ⁹ And in a window sat a certain young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep

sleep. He was overcome by sleep; and as Paul continued speaking, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. ¹⁰ But Paul went down, fell on him, and embracing *him* said, “Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him.” ¹¹ Now when he had come up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till daybreak, he departed.

5. Godly leadership

Acts 6:1–7 (NKJV)

6 Now in those days, when *the number of* the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution.

² Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. ³ Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of *good* reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; ⁴ but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”

⁵ And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch,
⁶ whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.

⁷ Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

6. Evangelism

Acts 2:40–41 (NKJV)

⁴⁰ And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.” ⁴¹ Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them*.

Acts 2:47 (NKJV)

⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

Acts 4:4 (NKJV)

⁴ However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

Acts 5:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women,

Acts 6:7 (NKJV)

⁷ Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

Acts 9:31 (NKJV)

³¹ Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.

Acts 9:35 (NKJV)

³⁵ So all who dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

Acts 9:42 (NKJV)

⁴² And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord.

Matthew 28:19–20 (NKJV)

¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.”
Amen.