

“God’s Unquestioned Answer”

By Jason W. Triplett

*“Jesus answered them, ‘This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom he has sent.’”
John 6:29 (ESV)*

I was speaking with a friend who had struggled for years with numerous sinful behavior patterns. To be brief I will say these behavior patterns were killing him, as sin invariably does. I came to love my friend very much and I desperately, with tears and prayer, wanted him to come to Church to be freed from the sin that was commanding his life. I begged God for that.

I would plead with my friend, “Come to Church, just come, that’s all I ask, I’ll come pick you up, I’ll sit next to you, just come with us.”

He would always block my plea and answer with something like, “I’ll come with you once I clean myself up, I couldn’t be amongst you good people, knowing what I know about me.” He continued to make his case, “People know me there. They all know about me and I can’t handle that. I’ll come to Church, just let me get my life right and then I’ll consider thinking about God.”

It’s been a few years since I’ve spoken to him. We moved from the area and the downward spiral of his behavior took him out of circulation and into darker ways of living. I haven’t heard an update on him in about a year. I still pray for him.

I’ve struggled with my friend’s resistance to Church. Why couldn’t he just come with me? Moreover, I’ve questioned the goodness of God in light of my friend’s personal demons and behavior. God, why didn’t you change His mind? Why didn’t you do something for him?

I think God has answered me. As I’ve studied the Bible, taught others and delivered Sunday messages, there are no passages in the Bible where God commands that sinful people be “taken to Church” as a prescription for sin.

Understand what I mean. God clearly commands His people to gather, worship Him, hear His Word and dedicate themselves to Him. But nowhere is the gathering of His people, aka “Church”, portrayed as a vehicle to break the chains of sin. The gathering of the faithful isn’t ever shown as the remedy.

I think I was trying to answer a question that God wasn’t asking. God wasn’t asking me, “Hey Jason, how can you get your friend to Church?” I forgot that as a Christian I live under a command. That command is to give the message of salvation in Jesus Christ to others. (Matthew 28:18-20)

Jesus Christ is God’s unquestioned answer. When we encounter the evil, pain and sin that consumes us and the world, the Church is never the answer, Jesus always is.