What God has NOT Joined Together:

THE CHURCH (OR WORSHIP) AND ENTERTAINMENT



Introduction



- Today we resume our 2026 theme. We have been addressing things God has and has NOT joined together.
- Today we want to address how God has NOT joined together His church (& worship) and entertainment.

Preliminary observations



- In our lives there is a place for entertainment. Recreation is a good and needed thing.
- The word means to "re-create" [illegible] mind
- B[illegible]tainment for us[illegible] outside of worship?
- Yet that is the primary focus of many of the largest "churches" in our land today.

Has God joined His church and entertainment together?

Preliminary observations



- Entertainment as a focus of the church is a product of the **social gospel**.
- A movement that dates to the late 1800s to early 1900s before WWI. Born out of liberal theology that viewed "social sins" (poverty, abusive wealth, inequity) as equally immoral to our individual sins. As such it was believed the focus of the church ought to be the curing of social ills (some believing this was needed in preparation for the coming millennial reign of Christ Jesus [another false doctrine])

Preliminary observations



- NOTE: The attitude about the gospel being man centered (human needs over spiritual needs) is one of the motivations behind churches emphasizing entertainment in w
their programs (aka, minist
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- Thus, many churches incorporate into their works – general benevolence, social activism, “wholesome alternatives” to entertainment, etc.

BUT, what does the Bible say about this?

The Church and Entertainment



The work of the church:

- What is the church? The body of the saved

  Universal – all who are saved of all time

  Local – a group of the saved who join together in a location to do work God has given us to do collectively.

- The goal of the church is to strengthen the body SPIRITUALLY.

The Church and Entertainment



The work of the church:

- Evangelism – seeking to reach the lost.
- Edification – building up the body of Christ spiritually (**Ephesians 4:11-16**)
- Benevolence – relieving the needs of saints (**1 Timothy 5:3-16**)
- Worshipping God – (**John 4:24, 1 Corinthians 14**)
- Each of these works is governed by a pattern & examples.

The Church and Entertainment



We must respect God's pattern

- God has ALWAYS given direction for worshipping Him and the work we are to do.
  Colossians 3:17
  Matthew 7:21-23
  1 Corinthians 4:6 – do not go beyond what is written (**cf. 2 John 9-11**).
  When God sets boundaries…

The nature of worship in the Bible



From the beginning worship has been about glorifying God.

- **John 4:24**
- **Genesis 4:1-5** – He accepted Abel's sacrifice and rejected Cain's
- **Exodus 20:1-10** – The 10 commandments. NOTE **Exodus 32:4-5** – the golden calf. They THOUGHT they were worshipping YHWH.

The nature of worship in the Bible



From the beginning worship has been about glorifying God.

- Instructions concerning the tabernacle – **Exodus 25:9-10, 40:26:30** – "according to the pattern"; Moses did "as the LORD commanded" – some 15x in Exodus. 12x in Leviticus.
- **Hebrews 8:5** – elaborates on the tabernacle.

The nature of worship in the Bible



From the beginning worship has been about glorifying God.

- In the NT, we have clear instructions – command, example and conclusion – about every act of worship.
- Worship is FIRST about glorifying God.
  – Singing & praying – **1 Corinthians 14:15**
  – Lord's supper – **1 Corinthians 11:23-26ff, Ac. 20:7**
  – Giving – **2 Corinthians 9:6-8**
  - Preaching and teaching – **Acts 20:7**

In every passage you will NOT find entertainment.

Biblical principles



The silence of scripture

- The NT says NOTHING about the social gospel or entertainment in scripture.
- The church in Acts was about proclaiming Christ with the convicting message of the gospel
- Letters to churches and leaders were focused on spiritual growth in Christ.
- Silence is NOT consent!

1 Corinthians 4:6, cf. Hebrews 7:14

Biblical principles



Jesus cleansed the temple

- Recorded twice – **John 2:13-25, Matt. 21:12-13**
- They had turned God's house of worship into a place of merchandise, something for THEIR benefit rather that God's!
- Would Jesus today act differently in some of these churches focused on entertainment and social reform?

Biblical principles



What is edification (Biblically)?

- The word means to build us up.
- Many today justify entertainment as a way of building up the saints and as a way to build up the numbers of the body
- Brethren build “fellowship halls”, gymnasiums, etc. using this argument.
- BUT, in scripture edification is about spiritual growth – **Ephesians 4:11-16, 1 Corinthians 14:12.**
- **1 Corinthians 11:22, 34** – do you not have houses to eat in?

Biblical principles



What is fellowship (Biblically)?

- The word means “joint participation”
- The AHD defines it as: 1) The companionship of individuals in a congenial atmosphere and on equal terms; 2) Friendship, comradeship; 3) A close association of friends or equals sharing similar interests.
- Many today will use this secular definition to justify doing many things in the “name of fellowship”
- When used in the Bible it is ALWAYS spiritual – **1 John 1:3-7, Acts 2:42, Galatians 2:9, 1 Corinthians 10:16.**

Biblical principles



Is there a distinction between what the church and individuals can do?

- Many justify social activities by saying, anything the individual Christian can do we can also do collectively as the church.
- But the Bible makes a clear distinction –

  cf. 1 Timothy 5:16, Matthew 18:15-17

- There many things an individual can do that the church cannot do. We can seek wholesome entertainment and have meals with friends, etc.

Problems with entertainment in the church



It is superficial

- It appeals to emotions and feelings over substance.
- The performance on stage is what “moves” someone rather than the convicting power of the gospel - **Romans 1:16, Acts 2:37**

Problems with entertainment in the church



It is man centered

- It makes worship and the work of the church about what I want OVER what God wants.
  Some argue that “the end justifies the means”.
- Many mega churches cater to the whims of individuals in society.
- **Acts 17:24-25 –** God is not worshipped with man’s hands. **Matthew 15:6-9**
- How many today choose the “church of your choice” based on personal wants? How many ask, “What’s in this church for me?”

Problems with entertainment in the church



It cheapens the real purpose of worship

- Remember: Worship is FIRST about glorifying God
- **Leviticus 10:3 –** He must be regarded as holy.

  Cf. Romans 1:25 speaks of those who exchanged the truth for the life, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator.

Problems with entertainment in the church



It changes the way God says to worship

- The pattern God gives us with EVERY act of worship accomplishes His underlying goal. Remembering who He is. In the process, we ARE edified!
- Entrainment driven worship and actions change the very nature of the church and worship.

Problems with entertainment in the church



Rarely will it lead someone to Christ.

- Assuming entertainment was pleasing to God (we have seen it is NOT), if it takes such to bring them in, what will it take to keep them there?
- Is it possible that a “draw” will lead to a true conversion? Of course, BUT is it what typically happens? No!
- Furthermore, I believe (TT), that such had a good heart before they were entertained. A good heart would have found the truth and responded, REGARDLESS of how entertaining the worship service and message are.
- Superficial gimmicks will NOT change one’s heart!

Concluding thoughts



God has NOT joined together His church and worship with the concept of entertainment.

When we worship and do the work of the church properly we ARE edified. God intended it to be that way.

BUT that does NOT give us the right to change His pattern to appeal to the masses.

WHY ARE YOU HERE?

