They Went Out From Us

Tony Mauck · 1 John 2:18–19

INTRODUCTION

- They went out from us. But they were not really of us. For if they had been of us, they would have remained with us.
- We do learn something very important about local church and fellowship in this verse, and that it is based on a commonality of belief and practice.
- It doesn't necessarily mean that we're the right ones because we stayed and they're the wrong ones because they left.

1 Factors Affecting Local Church Membership

Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5; Romans 16:5

- And so a lot of it is determined by geography. And in the first century, there were some real limitations just by geography alone.
- Economic conditions play a part in membership in a local church.
- Erroneous practices that would implicate our conscience can affect local church membership.
- And then there's this matter that affects local church participation, and that is spiritual growth and wellness.
- Am I simply a malcontent? Or do I possess legitimate concerns about the direction this congregation is headed?

2 When the Local Church Is Less Than Ideal

Ephesians 5:25–27; Ephesians 4:13; Ephesians 4:16

- What do you do when the local church is less than ideal? And let me start with this. In some ways, it always is.
- Because in local churches there are people, you're going to have some issues. We're all recovering sinners, remember that?
- That he might present to himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and blameless. No, that's not talking about a local church.
- In the local church, we are to grow up in the fullness of the stature of Christ.
- But some kind of upset is inevitable in the local churches.

3 When Things Are Peaceful, Rejoice and Be Thankful

- When things are not upset, when things are peaceful, may I recommend rejoice and be thankful.
- There's not any upset that I know about right now in this congregation. Be happy for such times.
- Rejoice always. In everything, give thanks, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

4 When There Is Conflict, Monitor Yourself

2 Timothy 2:24–26; Colossians 3:12–17; Galatians 2:11

- When conflict happens, the most important thing for you to do is to monitor your own attitudes and conduct.
- Even if you're right, the way you respond in conflict can be not right.
- The Lord's bondservant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged.
- It's not to win an argument. It's not a beat them over the head. It is ultimately to win their soul.

5 Am I Going to Stay or Go?

Ephesians 4:1–3

- What impact am I having or can I have on this group by staying or leaving?
- The presence of disagreement is not necessarily a reason to pull up stakes and go.
- The brotherly bond can be strengthened by solving problems.
- Walk worthy of the calling with which you have been called with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.
- Do my concerns reflect a real problem? Or are they just a pride thing?
- Perhaps I'm the only one with the problem. Then maybe I need to look inward at myself.

THE CHALLENGE

When there is upset, when there is conflict, let us be determined to work through it lovingly, gently, and patiently with one another.

MY NOTES