

# No Bones About It

The church is the bones of the community. And Christ is the bones of the church. It is imperative to keep that reality in mind as we go out to do other things. We must return for refreshment, inspiration, and reminders that the things of God are most important. Then, and only then, can we function as a growing, giving, and complete person.

First, God reminds us that life is precious. From the creation of the first people to God's walk with them on a daily basis, our hope is that we discover the precious nature of each moment. Each second of time has the potential to be a miracle. We can miss it, or find it. The choice is up to us.

The key forces which shape our world are spiritual. Material issues consume most of our time, unless we happen to live in a monastery, and even then things like clothing, food, and daily routine can keep us away from God.

“Somehow,” Maya Angelou rightly says, “we have come to the erroneous belief that we are all but flesh, blood, and bones, and that's all. So we direct our values to material things.”

This is what is wrong with the world today. Make no bones about it; society was much better when most people were in church on a Sunday morning. Today, there are more people not in church on a Sunday morning, and neither they nor the church are the better for it.

How can we change this? By taking the step to be an active, growing, seeking member of congregations which lead us to higher, better ways. We must rediscover that the church is the foundation of all that is good, and dedicate our lives to God in Christ.

We need strong people who have a backbone to stand up against evil and for the principles which God has set in place since before the foundation of the world. We need people who are held up by the bones of Christ, the only true and eternal foundation. Running far away from being the jawbones which criticizes and looks down on others, we must be the backbone which is held together by God's grace and the power of his spirit.

An old story, passed down from generation to generation, gives a telling picture of how the church, or any group, could be broken down. Of course the percentages can be different with any gathering.

“There are four main bones in every organization,” the so the story goes. “The wish-bones: Wishing somebody would do something about the problem. The jaw-bones: Doing all the talking but very little else. The knuckle-bones: Those who knock everything. The back-bones: Those who carry the brunt of the load and do most of the work.”

The Pareto Principle states “for many events, roughly 80 percent of the effects come from 20 percent of the causes. This principle has been applied to the fields of business, science, software and even criminology. In church life, it is usually said that 20 percent of the people do 80 percent of the work.”

Financially, physically, and organizationally, the bones of the church are much stronger when there are more supporting bones. Imagine trying to hold up the human head with one vertebra, or to support the organs and structure of the body with one bone. It just doesn't work!

We must aim to be congregations where 80 percent of the people carry the load and live in a mission minded world. We must aim as individuals to do more than be a spectator or consumer, and become a giver and integral force in the work of God. In plain terms, we must become the bones rather than the one the bones hold up.

Ezekiel, the prophet, saw this happen with an entire country. The Jewish nation was totally destroyed. Either dead or in bondage to another country, God was ready to make a new beginning.

He writes, “The hand of the LORD was upon me, and He brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; and it was full of bones. He caused me to pass among them round about, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley; and lo, they were very dry. He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" And I answered, "O Lord GOD, You know.

God in that vision put flesh on all those bones, and they rose a living, powerful army! What a picture of the things God can do with us today!

We must not hesitate to become energized in that same way today. On the plains of hesitation, says Sam Ewing, “Bleach the bones of countless millions who, at the dawn of decision, sat down to wait, and waiting died.”

Our foundation is God in Jesus Christ. He will always hold us up and inspire us when we look to him. He will never fail. No bones about it!