

# At What Point Should You Leave a Church?

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*Jeremy:* When you have a friend who is in a church that doesn't preach repentance, is not teaching on sin, is not calling people to Christ, is not preaching a Biblical Gospel, how do you counsel that person to leave the church? And I guess I would add, at what point does a Christian leave a church where they don't align on different issues?

*Phil:* Yes, and I am always reluctant to encourage people to leave churches where the Gospel is preached. There are churches that aren't really that good, but at least they adhere to and proclaim the Gospel. You can read the letters of Christ to the churches in Revelation 2 and 3, and you discover that most of those churches had really bad features in one way or another. Most of them got as much scolding as praise from Jesus. But never did He say to anyone, you should get out of that church and go to the church at Philadelphia. He didn't say that.

So, I think if you're a person who knows the truth and knows the Gospel, and you have an opportunity to teach and have your voice heard and all that in a church, then you need to use your influence as much as possible to move that church in a good direction. Sadly, that doesn't always happen and people sort of cave in and go along with the flow because it's easier. But the time to leave a church is when you realize this church and her leadership has no commitment whatsoever to Christ or the Gospel. It's not a true church.

I grew up in a church like that as I said. It was a mainstream liberal church. And I had lots of friends who were genuine believers - not the soundest thinkers. But my best friend, his father was a Pentecostal, faith-healing evangelist. And I think he really understood the Gospel and he had the Gospel, but he spent all the years that we were best friends he spent trying to get me to speak in tongues. He never gave me the Gospel. And when I discovered the Gospel and realized I need to repent and be saved I was pretty irritated with him. I said you've known me for all these years and you're talking to me about speaking in tongues, but you've never given me the Gospel. Why? And it just never occurred to him to give me the Gospel.

So that's my answer to the other part of the question: how do you counsel a person who's in a church like that? Give them the Gospel because they might not be hearing it at church. And though they profess to be a believer, they might not really understand what faith in Christ entails. So teach them the Gospel, and then you'll be in a better position to tell them what to do about where they go to church. And in fact, if they're going to a church where the Gospel isn't taught, and they hear the Gospel and believe, I think it's going to be their instinct to want to leave that church and go where Christ is proclaimed.

