

GONE

1 JOHN 2:18-19

Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

Introduction:

1. One of the real heartbreaks of being a pastor is to see people come into the church and be active for a while and then leave the church and go back into the world.
2. I've seen far too many in my 40 years of pastoring.
3. Jesus started His church so that His children would be able to meet with Him and with one another to worship, sing praises and hear His words through the preaching.

I. A DANGEROUS DECISION. **v. 18** *Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.*

- A. What causes someone to decide not to assemble with the church any longer?
- B. As a pastor I've heard all the excuses.
- C. It's dangerous for a member to walk away from the assembly.
- D. We hear a lot about sanctuary cities today, but the church has always been a sanctuary from the world for God's people.
- E. When one walks away, they are susceptible to all kinds of dangers, to themselves and their families. **Cf. Ezekiel 18:24-26** *But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and does according to all the abominations that the wicked man does, shall he live? All the righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; because of the unfaithfulness of which he is guilty and the sin which he has committed, because of them he shall die. Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not fair.' Hear now, O house of Israel, is it not My way which is fair, and your ways which are not fair? When a righteous man turns away from his righteousness, commits iniquity, and dies in it, it is because of the iniquity which he has done that he dies.*

II. A DARING DESERTION. **v. 19a** *They went out from us...*

- A. We are not told why they deserted the assembly.
- B. It could have been that the times they were living in, and the persecutions that were happening, frightened them enough to leave.
- C. It could be that they disagreed with the doctrines that were being taught.
- D. It could be that the world's allure caused them to desert. **Cf. 2 Timothy 4:10** *...for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica...*
- E. Perhaps they are not even saved. **2 Peter 1:10** *Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble...*

III. A DECISIVE DUTY. **v. 19b** *... for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us...*

- A. If they had the same faith, the same mind set, the same concerns, they would have stayed.
- B. We are encouraged throughout the Word of God to remain faithful, serving the Lord until the day He calls us home. **2 Peter 1:11** *... for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

C. As church members we have a duty to be consistent in our attendance. **Hebrews 10:25** ... *not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*

D. Why would one want to be a church member and not attend and fulfill their duty to God?

IV. A DISTINCT DESCRIPTION. **v. 19c** ...*but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.*

A. The bottom line was that none of those who left were of the same mind, heart and soul as those who were assembling themselves together and serving the Lord.

B. What a person does or doesn't do will ultimately reveal what kind of person they are.

C. This translation would imply that some look like Christians, they act like Christians, but they have never been born again.

D. **Hebrews 10:39** *But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.*

Conclusion:

1. Christianity is not a hundred yard dash, but rather, a marathon.

2. Too many give up too easily.

3. **Hebrews 10:23** *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.*