

## Taking Our Place

Written by Bob Johnson

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Excerpts from the preaching of Bob Johnson

How important it is for people are in the body of Christ, not to give up in our service to God. The things we are serving God with-our time, our monies, our talents, or whatever He has blessed us with- He is expecting this of us!

I think it will help us today to know the importance of our Lord's church; to help us realize how great it is-the glory of this wonderful institution. I want to appeal to you young people especially in this lesson. You have to do the things that you can do, realizing your place, realizing your responsibility. Understand that you have these things before you, and if the Lord's church is to survive in this area it will be because you have done that very thing. If you don't do it, the church won't be here. That's just how plain that it is.

You young people here can make a choice as to how you are going to serve God. You are wonderfully wealthy, aren't you? Well, you might not think so, but you are. In fact, most of you are very wealthy. You may not have much money, but you are extremely wealthy and you have so many things that can be used. You have your talents, you have your health, you have life before you, you have the things God has blessed you with, such as your strength, your soundness of mind so you can learn and understand things. God has given you all these things, and you have them in an abundance. They are your wealth in causing the church to survive.

The church is struggling. It's in a world of sin and indifference. We desperately need you to realize your place and take your place in the church and help. Do you understand the position you are in? Do you understand how important it is that you listen, that you understand these things and that you apply them to your life? We who are older realize that we don't have much more to give. Our bodies are growing weaker day by day. Our minds are going to grow dimmer and dimmer. We know that. Does it trouble you that we continuously beg you-that we seek your help, that we talk to you and reason with you about the responsibility which is yours? Do you get tired of it? Are you saying, "I've come as far as I'm going to, I'm just going to quit!"? Boys and girls are doing that-they're turning away from the Lord and we realize that. So many of them have left the faith.

Think with me now, my dear young friends, would you like to have the church in this place cease to exist? Can you imagine such a thought? Can you understand that this is something

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that can actually happen, that this place of worship-now I'm not talking about the building; I'm talking about a place designated to the worship of God, where people gather together to worship him-do you realize that it can cease to be? Do you understand that the doors can be nailed shut, the windows be boarded up? Well, I want you to know this evening, if you don't accept your responsibilities, if you don't do that which is yours to accomplish, it can happen. It will happen! That's how serious it is.

Why, this place where goodly Christians have come to worship, where they have sung these beautiful songs and hymns such as we have sung tonight in praise and adoration; where God's Word has been taught in its purity and good brethren have stood before you and tried to help you to the salvation of your souls. They have tried to bring you to a place where you can follow and serve God in a rightful way. This very place-here where brethren have talked to God in prayer, and He has heard their pleas, their prayers and their thanksgiving... this very place where people have solemnly gathered around the table to remember the death of our blessed Lord, even as we did here this morning...where they give of that which God has prospered them. How horrible a day when this house of worship stands dark and dismal, when it is forsaken by those who have decided they love this present world more than they love God.

"Ah," you say, "It cannot happen. It cannot be." My friends, I want to tell you tonight. It CAN be! And it may be.

Listen, I travel a lot of places, or have in the past, and I see congregations that are just dying out. I have preached where there weren't but 4 or 5 members there. Now when I think about, especially one of those congregations, two of them have died and another one is sickly. What do you think of that? You look back to where the apostles preached. You think of the various places where they did such great works in spreading God's Word. If you would go to the very same areas today, you wouldn't find a faithful congregation. What happened? They died out, just like I'm talking about tonight. Don't tell me it can't happen! Don't tell me it can't happen right here in Mullin, Texas, or in my home congregation in Bloomington, or anywhere else!

Do you understand that this world has millions of people in it who don't even believe in God? They are far more abundant than they who do believe in Him. Do you understand that there are teeming millions who claim to believe in God and don't believe in Christ as His Son? Do you understand that in this so called "Christian" nation of ours that atheists are becoming so prominent in our schools, universities, our colleges, that they have just about taken over?

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Well, friends, I'll go with you a little farther than that. What do you think about these teeming millions of people who are opposed to our God, to serving Him? Then you stop and think about the ways of professed Christians. What about the situation you see here, those who are trying to serve two masters in this life. Isn't that what a lot of them are doing, trying to hold the hand of God and the hand of this world. It won't work! How many of those do we have?

Then you think about those who are lacking in zeal, who are lacking in convictions, who just don't have anything that is strong at all in their Christian living-just drifting along. When you boil it down, there's just a precious few left. Don't tell me it can't end. I don't mean completely, but I mean in places just like right here-the church can DIE.

Well, I thank God for the promise that the devil will not prevail, but that doesn't mean that your congregation will always be here. It certainly doesn't. The songs of praise that waft their way up from this edifice, that which has been taught from God's Word presented unto you people, the truths that are given there, the gathering together to commune as we do-it can end friends.

The answer to this lies in what? It lies in our young people. There's where it all boils down to-in our young people, and our future generations that are coming along. And if you think I'm not pleading for you, not seeking with all my might that you should take your place and keep the church strong-you must realize it. Oh, how important it is. Our young people are the ones that we will have to look to. Will they tire of giving? Will they decide that this world has the best deal for them-too much effort to be faithful-and the world pulls them away? Well, if this is so, if this happens, this place of worship that you appreciate so much now, will be gone.

You young people must carry a load. You have to pay the price. You have to determine, "I'll keep on paying." You must bring your children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. You must beg them, even as I am begging you, to continue in the faith and to serve God and to keep a strong congregation here where it won't be forsaken and die.

I just want to extol the greatness of the church and try to cause you to understand how glorious it is-how important it is! And that it must exist my friends, right here in Mullin and that precious souls be continuously brought into it. And you boys and girls, keep it that way through your generation-for your children and your grandchildren and right on down the line. That's the only way it can work.