

# EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

“...FOR THE EQUIPPING OF THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF SERVICE...” ~ EPHESIANS 4:12



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## JUST GO!

By Andrew Dow

We all have things that we will do matter what. For instance, many of us will go to work no matter what is going on around us. Similarly, we will make sure we get to doctor's appointments, sports activities, school functions, and social gatherings. For many of us, we do these things automatically without every questioning whether we should “call in sick” or “change our plans.” We do this because we have made these things a priority in our lives. We have determined that whatever discomfort, stress, or hardship they may cause does not outweigh the benefit of doing those things.

Jesus told His disciples to “**seek first His kingdom and His righteousness**” (Matt 6:33). This means that if we desire to follow Jesus and gain His blessings we must radically rearrange our priorities. Jesus also said, “**Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness**” (Matt 5:6). Think of how basic the need to eat and drink is—something few people skip intentionally. But Jesus says we need to want to be right with Him as much (if not more) than we want to eat and drink!

Is assembling with the church optional to you? Do you let other things stop you from being with God's people? We can always find something that will keep us from the church. The kids had a rough day or were sleeping; school

functions or work took up too much of our time; we're feeling tired and don't want to put ourselves together. Understand this: YOU ARE NOT ALONE. We all have things we could be doing or reasons we could have stayed home.

We need to stop viewing "church" as a rote obligation to fill a quota and start viewing it as the place where we grow closer to the Great Physician (Mark 2:7). We need to stop viewing "church" as a mere option and start viewing it as the place where growth begins (Eph 4:11-16). We need to stop viewing "church" as a place we "have to go" and start viewing it as a place "long to be"!

When it comes to certain things in our lives we just go. It doesn't matter what is going on around us, we just go. May God grant us all this same mindset when it comes to our spiritual growth. No more excuses, no other options; just go!

## **PROCLAIMING THE LORD'S DEATH**

By Al Diestelkamp

Shortly before His death on the cross, Jesus instituted the only ritual to be observed in worship by His followers. The apostle Paul indicated that by partaking of this memorial we would be proclaiming the Lord's death till He comes (1 Cor. 11:26).

Before we do this today, let's notice some ways His death was "proclaimed" during His crucifixion and immediately after His death:

- Pilate, after declaring Jesus "Not guilty," turned him over to the mob but unwittingly lent his testimony by

- posting a sign saying, “**Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews**” (noted by all four gospel writers).
- Luke is the only one who tells of a thief who, dying along with Jesus on an adjacent cross, testified by asking to be remembered when Jesus came into His kingdom.
- Mark and Luke relate that, as Jesus’ life was slipping away on the cross, the sun which Jesus created refused to shine for three hours.
- Matthew, Mark, and John tell how the veil of the temple was torn in two. One account indicated the tear was “**from top to bottom.**” The barrier that separated man from God was no more. By His death, man has access to God through Jesus.
- An earthquake announced the Lord’s death, causing rocks to split and graves to be opened. Lo and behold, bodies of dead saints were raised to life. They went into Jerusalem where they appeared to many.
- Three of the gospel writers record the words of the centurion who declared, “**Truly, this was the Son of God.**”

As we partake of this memorial, we proclaim His death to the world: “Truly, this **IS** the Son of God!”

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“**BUY TRUTH, AND DO NOT SELL IT, GET WISDOM AND INSTRUCTION AND UNDERSTANDING.**”

**PROVERBS 23:23**

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**AM LESSON:**

Why Do We Eat  
The Lord's Supper?

**PM LESSON:**

An Unknown Exorcist  
(Mark 9:38-50)

**"GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES..."**  
**(MATTHEW 28:19-20)**