

JANUARY
16 & 17

IOWA'S GOSPEL: I GO TO CHURCH.

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INTRODUCTION

In the state of Iowa, we pride ourselves on being good people who are willing to work hard. But, what if this humble notion stood in the way of reaching Iowa for God? A new year is a great opportunity to examine religious lies we as Iowans tend to believe and start fresh with new perspectives to guide our lives. Some believe being a church-goer makes you a Christ-follower. This week, Iowa's gospel says, "I go to church, so I'm all good with God." The truth is going to church won't save you, but here's going to church will do.

DISCUSSION

1. In Matthew 13, there are several parables dealing with seeds; Jesus used each one to teach a single point. In verses 3-9, what is He conveying about listening to the Word of God? How can we relate this to our faith life?
2. In Matthew 13:18-23, we are encouraged to hear the Word of God, put it into action and bear good fruit. How do we bear good fruit in our neighborhoods or workplaces?
3. In Matthew 13:37-43, Jesus tells His disciples good and evil will exist together until the end of the earth. As disciples, are we sowing good seeds or bad seeds? How will we be judged at the time of His return?

THINK ABOUT IT

Jesus told His disciples to be wheat harvesters, not weed pullers. As a church, if we are going to be wheat growers, we need to focus on what Jesus focused on – finding the lost and growing up the found. Going to church won't save you.

DO SOMETHING

1. **BIBLICAL** – We will point you to Jesus. Read 1 John 4:13-15. Jesus is the only hope. God sent His Son, Jesus, as the Savior of the world. Have you confessed Jesus is the Son of God in your life? Does He abide in you and you in Him? If not, you need a Savior. Confess and believe.
2. **INVITATIONAL** – We will welcome the lost and messy to begin a journey. Read Luke 15. We are all messy, no matter how long we've known Jesus. What parts of your life are messy and need to be cleaned? Ask God to help you learn how to clean up those messy parts of your life. He continues to make us new every day.
3. **AUTHENTIC** – Whether gathered or scattered, we are not a place but a people. Read 2 Corinthians 11-15. Our gathering should help us be more authentic when scattered. When you are scattered into your neighborhood or workplace, does sin keep you away from others? Ask God to show you ways be more authentic in those difficult moments.
4. **SIMPLE** – We teach the truth and help people to pursue it. One hour at church will not cut it. We need to not only be a disciple for Him but to make disciples. We need to tell the truth even when it hurts. If you consider yourself to be a disciple, you need to come along beside someone with SIMPLE next steps.