

VALID FAITH 4: Can I Trust Jesus After Church Hurt?

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Key Scriptures: Matthew 23:23; Matthew 18:15; Mark 5:25-34; Galatians 5:22-23

HAUNTED HOUSE THIS OCTOBER BUMPER

Welcome handouts

Valid Faith Series - Week 4

THE CLOSEST I CAME TO QUITTING CHURCH

I've been involved in church ministry since I was 13 years old. Helped plant a church. Brought friends. Helped people FIND Jesus. Church wasn't just somewhere I went. It was a huge part of my life.

Then when I was about 20, I got pulled into a back room. The pastor, youth pastor - AND THEIR WIVES - sat me down and unloaded on me.

They had a list of things they did not like about me. NONE OF IT WAS SIN. Personal dislikes.

The message was clear: We don't want you involved in ministry here anymore.

That hurt.

I went from leading worship and ministry moments... to just attending.

I still came to church. But suddenly church felt different.

I felt awkward. I felt like I didn't belong anymore.

That was the closest I ever came to quitting church.

Honestly - my story is mild compared to some.

We have all seen the headlines. Church scandal. Pastor removed. Leader arrested. Abuse.

A victim says: "I tried to tell somebody." Organizations protect reputation instead of protecting people.

The sin is terrible. Then the COVER-UP makes it worse.

In trying to protect the reputation of the church... we can completely misrepresent Jesus.

CHURCH HURT IS REAL.

Maybe somebody handled something badly. A leader disappointed you. People talked ABOUT you.

Maybe somebody who was supposed to show you Jesus hurt you instead.

Maybe it made you question church... even question Jesus.

Jesus is aware of this. He has addressed it. So let's look at three things from Jesus.

1. CHURCH HURT IS REAL - AND JESUS CONFRONTS IT

Matthew 23:23 NIV

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!... you have neglected the more important matters of the law - justice, mercy and faithfulness."

Jesus calls them HYPOCRITES.

HYPOKRITĒS - "ACTOR" / ONE WHO PLAYS A PART

Someone presenting one thing while something different is underneath.

Hypocrisy is not simply failing. We ALL fail.

The problem is learning to PLAY CHRISTIAN while refusing to let Jesus change how I actually live.

I know the lines. Songs. Bible words. But what happens when somebody crosses me? Disagrees with me?

DOES MY LIFE MATCH THE GOD I CLAIM TO KNOW?

Jesus says they neglected JUSTICE. MERCY. FAITHFULNESS.

Religious details - while missing the HEART OF GOD.

JOHN CALVIN & MICHAEL SERVETUS - GENEVA, 1553

This is a complex theological argument, but one major difference can be illustrated with two words:

PERSONS vs. MANIFESTATIONS

Calvin - Father, Son, Holy Spirit as distinct PERSONS in the one God.

Servetus - language much closer to MANIFESTATIONS of the one God.

The disagreement became a death sentence. Servetus was burned at the stake.

Guillaume Farel, a close colleague of Calvin, went with Servetus to the execution and continued pressing him about his theology.

"JESUS CHRIST, SON OF THE ETERNAL GOD, HAVE MERCY ON MY SOUL."

vs.

"JESUS CHRIST, ETERNAL SON OF GOD, HAVE MERCY ON MY SOUL."

A man is dying an excruciating death - crying out to Jesus for mercy - and the theological correction is still happening.

They are essentially saying: "You don't understand God" while showing him no mercy.

Their actions are misrepresenting the God they claim to understand.

You can win the argument and lose the character of Christ.

We may not burn people at the stake... but we burn bridges. We label. Divide. Turn brothers and sisters into "those people."

WE CAN DISAGREE WITHOUT DISHONORING.

2. JESUS SHOWS US A BETTER WAY

Matthew 18:15 NIV

“If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you.”

Look how complicated Jesus makes it. He doesn't.

GO TO THEM.

Not everybody else. Not Facebook. Not the prayer chain that mysteriously needs every detail.

WE SHOULD NOT TALK ABOUT EACH OTHER.

WE SHOULD TALK TO EACH OTHER.

Give people a chance to hear. Explain. Repent. Restore.

That is what should have happened to me at 20.

Was 20-year-old Chris perfect? No. Probably ANNOYINGLY ENERGETIC AND PASSIONATE. I still am.

But if I am doing something wrong - TALK TO ME.

One of my favorite Jesus stories: the woman with the issue of blood.

Twelve years bleeding. Suffering. Spent everything. Got worse. Then she hears about Jesus.

Mark 5:27 NIV

“When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak.”

There is a crowd pressing around Jesus. A hurting woman is trying to get to Him.

THE OBSTACLES BETWEEN HER AND JESUS ARE THE PEOPLE CLOSEST TO JESUS.

They probably are not trying to stop her. They may not even realize it. But they are in the way.

WE CAN BECOME THE OBSTACLE.

Not their sin. Not a fallen world. Not secular culture. Not the devil. Us - the people who call ourselves Christians.

Our attitude. Judgment. Gossip. Denominational pride. Hypocrisy. Need to always be right.

People should get closer to Jesus because they encountered us - not farther away.

Look at Jesus. He stops. Sees her. Calls her "Daughter." He gives dignity. He heals. He restores.

That is our calling: don't become the obstacle. Help people get to Jesus.

3. JESUS CAN HEAL WHAT CHRISTIANS HURT

If people have hurt you in the name of Jesus, healing does not mean pretending it did not happen.

It does not mean calling wrong right. It does not mean trusting unsafe people.

But the person who hurt you is not Jesus.

Do not confuse Judas with Jesus.

DO NOT CONFUSE THE FAILURE OF CHRISTIANS WITH THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST.

People will fail you. Pastors will fail you. Churches will fail you. I will fail you.

Jesus never asked you to build your faith on perfect Christians.

Take your hurt to Him. Anger. Questions. The whole mess.

The crowd made it hard to reach Jesus. Jesus did not hurt her.

Jesus healed her.

And if we are followers of Jesus, healing is not the only thing we should care about. We should care about FAITHFULNESS. Not just being right. Not winning. Not protecting an image. Faithfulness to Jesus should show up in the way we treat people.

Galatians 5:22-23 NIV

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”

Those are not decorations. THAT IS SUPPOSED TO BE US.

When someone disagrees - GENTLENESS? Frustrates you - PATIENCE? Fails - KINDNESS? Correction needed - SELF-CONTROL? We can know right doctrine with the wrong spirit. Quote the right verse with the wrong attitude. Be technically correct and still wound people.

When we hurt somebody, do not hide behind: “I’m a Christian.” Or: “I’m human.”

Being human explains why I need grace. It does not remove my responsibility to repent.

I was wrong. I’m sorry. Will you forgive me?

It is possible to go from HURT to HEALED because of Jesus.

HURT TO HEALED

They never apologized. There was never a meeting where they said: “Chris, we handled that badly.”

For a while I carried the hurt. But I prayed. And prayed.

“God, help me forgive. Help me let go. Don’t let this moment own me.”

Not because it became okay. It didn’t. Not because they apologized. They didn’t.

A few years ago I was at a funeral. Those same people were there.

I saw them. Walked over. Hugged them. Told them: "I LOVE YOU."
And I meant it.

I realized God had done something in me.

Forgiveness did not rewrite what happened. The hurt just did not own me anymore.

So what will you do with this? Three responses.

1. TALK TO THE HEALER.

If you are carrying church hurt - or you know you have hurt someone - come pray with somebody today. Let Jesus begin His work in you.

2. START A CONVERSATION.

Use the connection card. Tell us: "I need help forgiving." "I need to make something right." "I want help taking my next step with Jesus." We will walk with you.

3. GROW THIS WEEK.

This whole series has been an opportunity to grow. What will you do with it?

Grow through questions.

Live out Jesus – fruit of Spirit