

Leaving Right

The Lord Scatters

“On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.” (Acts 8:1)

“Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to the Jews. Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to the Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. The Lord’s hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.” (Acts 11:19-21)

The Lord uses circumstances outside the church to scatter people to different places.

The Lord Sends

“While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. The two of them, sent by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus. When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues.” (Acts 13:2-5)

The Lord sends people from within the church to minister in other places.

The Lord accomplishes his purposes when he scatters and sends – the gospel is proclaimed in new territory and fruit is produced. Unfortunately, far too many people are not scattered by things **outside** the church or sent by the Lord, they choose to run away because of non-doctrinal issues **within** the church. If left unchecked, these people soon find themselves hopping from one ministry to the next, searching for the perfect church, all the time carrying an ever-growing sack of hurt, disappointments and frustrations. When they enter a new ministry, they are skeptical and untrusting, just waiting for the moment the pastor or church leader will let them down. When these leaders do fall short, they load up their burdens once again and move on to the next congregation. Expectations are never quite met, so disillusionment clouds sound judgment and bitterness hardens the heart.

If the Lord is indeed scattering you or sending you away, there are healthy ways to leave a church

Leave resolved

1. Is your leaving the church a call from God? Share the call.
2. Have you finished the work God has called you to do in that church?

Leave reconciled

1. Is any part of your leaving the result of frustration, hurt or disappointment?
2. Are there any severed relationships you are leaving behind?
3. Are you willing to seek reconciliation before you go?

Leave rejoicing

1. What have you appreciated about this church?
2. What are you excited about with the new ministry God is calling you to?

The Lord Separates

“For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.” (2 Timothy 4:3-4)

Unfortunately in our day and age, there are times when false teaching and heresy creeps into a ministry. After attempts to restore the person or people to sound Biblical doctrine fails, it is appropriate to leave that ministry for your spiritual well-being and/or that of your family.