

Asking for A Friend

Yesterday we addressed Faith and how to believe in a God that can't be seen heard out loud or touched physically.

The Tool of Belonging — "If I Walk Into a Church, It Might Burn Down"

Scripture Focus: *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus."* — Romans 3:23–24 (NIV)

"Asking for a friend... I've done so much wrong. If I walk into a church, it might burn down." or **"If I walked into a church, it would probably burn down."** Other variations people often say include:

- **"The roof would cave in if I walked into a church."**
- **"Lightning would strike if I ever set foot in a church."**
- **"God might strike me down if I walked through those doors."**
- **"Church isn't ready for someone like me."**

You've probably heard someone say that—and maybe deep down, **you've felt that way, too.** Like you've messed up too bad. Like church is for "cleaned-up" people and you'd never belong. Here's the truth: **no one walks through the church doors perfect.** If perfection were the requirement, every building would've burned down long ago.

Jesus didn't come for the perfect. He came for the broken, the ashamed, the guilty, the weary, the outcasts. You don't have to clean yourself up before coming to Him—you come *as you are*, and He does the cleansing. Grace isn't just offered—it's poured out.

But here's the other side of this: **we need people**. And people need us. That shame you carry—that lie that you're too far gone—is exactly what the enemy uses to isolate you. And isolation keeps us from healing.

God created us for community. For a family of real people who don't just share a building—but share stories of how God met them in the middle of the mess. When you walk into a healthy church, you're walking into a room full of people who have *also* fallen short—but have been lifted by grace.

You don't need to burn down a church to be seen—you just need to walk in. Someone on the inside is likely waiting to say, "I've been there too."

Prayer:

Jesus, thank You for loving us even at our worst. We confess the shame and fear we've carried, and we lay it at Your feet. Help us see church not as a place of judgment but of healing. Surround us with people who reflect Your love and make us brave enough to walk through the door. In Jesus Name we Pray, Amen.

Discussion Questions:

- Have you ever felt "too far gone" to be accepted by God or His people?
- Why do you think shame makes us want to hide instead of seek help?
- Who is someone you could invite into community or back to church—with compassion, not condemnation?