

**Hebrews 10:20-25 ESV (Pg. 584)** Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, **20** by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, **21** and since we have a great priest over the house of God, **22** let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. **23** Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. **24** And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, **25** not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

I. We are going to pause our Prophet, Priest and King series so that we can begin thinking about the Advent (Christmas) season, beginning next week. Before we do though, I wanted to share a few final thoughts from the book of Hebrews.

A. Last week I shared a phrase applied to Christ's work 4 times in Hebrews, "**once for all**"; meaning everything Christ has done to save us is effective for all time, and has no need to be repeated. Past, present, or future sins can't diminish what was accomplished on the cross. It applies to everyone who believes.

B. Today, I want to look at another phrase repeated throughout Hebrews. "**Let us...**" is repeated 14 times in Hebrews (ESV). When the writer says "let us", he's encouraging us to respond intentionally to the gospel we've heard. "In the light of what God's Word, **let us** demonstrate our faith by responding properly."

1. The writer uses "let us" 3 times in the passage we read this morning. These 3 instances are unique. They are kind of an "applicational summation" of every major theme of Hebrews. We'll examine that more closely momentarily.

a) He uses "let us" 5 times before chapter 10. In chapter 4 he says "let us" fear, lest we fail to enter God's saving rest, and "let us" strive to enter that rest. He says since we have such a great high priest, "let us" hold fast our confession of faith, and "let us" draw near to the Throne of Grace to find help. In chapter 6, he says "let us" leave elementary things of the gospel, and strive for greater maturity in Christ.

b) He uses "let us" 6 more times in chapters 12-13, saying "let us" lay aside sin, and "let us" run our race with endurance. He says "let us" be grateful for the kingdom and "let us" offer acceptable worship; "let us" bear the reproach of Christ, and "let us" continually offer up a sacrifice of praise.

2. It's important to understand that these "let us" statements are not just rules, or a new 10 Commandments; they are logical responses from a heart that has embraced truth. We always respond to the gospel one way or the other.

a) I will either reject God's Word, or I will embrace it and obey it. The only thing I can't do is **nothing**. If anyone seems indifferent to the truth, what you're actually seeing is rejection of it. God's truth demands response.

b) **Matthew 21:28 ESV** "What do you think? A man had two sons. And he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' **29** And he answered, 'I will not,' but afterward he changed his mind and went. **30** And he went to the other son and said the same. And he answered, 'I go, sir,' but did not go. **31** Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you.

**32** For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not afterward change your minds and believe him.

- C. When people hear what God requires, and are moved to repentance, it doesn't matter if they began as tax collectors and prostitutes. Repentance changes the ending! If your heart is hardened to what God's Word demands of you today (repent and believe), being morally perfect won't help you at all.
- D. The "let us" encouragements in Hebrews are there to show us what a proper, faith-filled response to the truth of God's Word actually looks like.
- II. So "let us" begin to examine the 3 "let us" statements we found in Hebrews 10.

"Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, **let us** draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."
- A. He has pictured Christ as our High Priest, entering the Most Holy Place for us, offering not the blood of bulls and goats, but his own precious blood as a ransom for you and I. We can now enter boldly into God's presence, a privilege withheld from Old Testament saints, except once a year by the High Priest.
  - 1. Everything that the High Priests did on every Day of Atonement since the beginning never gave the people access to God. Not so with Jesus' priestly ministry! Now, we can not only enter in, but do so with confidence!
    - a) As Jesus' body was torn apart on the cross, the curtain that separated God's people from the most holy place was torn, now we are welcomed!
    - b) It wasn't only the structure and access in the temple that was altered. Our High Priest is greater in every way than the priests who served the Jews. He reigns over the dwelling place of God, which is you and I!
  - 2. Because of this, we must not stand back, trembling with fear at the possibility that God will judge, ignore, or reject us. Instead we must "draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith". What is a "true heart"?
    - a) It is a sincere heart that trusts, fully dependent on what God said about us - loved, forgiven, accepted, redeemed, treasured, secure, It ignores or confronts condemning internal voices or feelings that say otherwise.
    - b) **1 John 3:19 ESV** By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him; **20** for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything. **21** Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God...
- B. So we come in "full assurance of faith". Again, we take our stand on what God has said, not on our "track record", or our contradictory feelings.
  - 1. Our hearts can be true and sincere because of what Jesus has done.
    - a) When the tabernacle and the temple were consecrated, the High Priest would sprinkle everything inside of it with blood to cleanse it of human corruption. Hebrews says that our "evil conscience" has been sprinkled clean from all the pollution of sin by the blood of Jesus Christ.
    - b) We trust God to make it evident in our lives practically and daily.

2. He says, our bodies have been “washed with pure water”.
  - a) Before priests could enter the temple, they had to be bathed. This symbolized the putting off of the world around them and the unholiness inside them. We have been given the ordinance of baptism, which symbolizes both the cleansing from sin and our identification with Christ.
  - b) **1 Peter 3:21 ESV** Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ...
- C. Jesus made a way. We have been sprinkled clean, and washed with the purest, living water, flowing from the fountain of life. “Let us” therefore draw near, “Let us” be confident, fully assured of the love of our Great High Priest!
- III. If you’ve been a Christian for any length of time, you probably agree with everything I’ve said so far. But if I were to peer into your private thoughts, fully knowing the motivation for decisions you make daily, do we really live with full assurance in Christ’s work? On the basis of that assurance, do we come boldly and daily into the Holiest Place, behind the curtain, to commune in trusting prayer with God?
  - A. This is why the writer of Hebrews gives us another “let us” exhortation in chapter 10: **“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.”** If he had written “Let us hold fast the confession of our faith without wavering...period...I would not find that encouraging.
    1. My heart wavers all the time! Circumstances and both latent and blatant desires cause my heart to walk as if on shifting sand, so I can’t be trusted to be the source of my own unwavering hope! I need a different source.
    2. But thank God, for the awesome reminder: **“he who promised is faithful”**. I hold to my faith because he is faithful, even when I’m not! He is not a man that he can lie. He’s never broken a promise, and He will never leave me.
  - B. I’ve said before that most of you have the reasonable expectation that I will practice what I preach. But I must confess to you that often, I not only fail to practice what I preach, but some days I struggle just to believe what I preach!
    1. It’s good to know my unbelief has absolutely no bearing on the faithfulness of God. What he promised, he has done. He is not waiting for me to pull myself up by my bootstraps. James says he’s so reliable that never changes, that there is not even a shadow cast by his turning to the left or to the right!
    2. I’ve spent too much time reading things in the Bible that haven’t affected my actions. Why, when “he who promised is faithful”? God says, “he who began a good work in me will be faithful to complete it”, I should believe that!
  - C. In light of all this, I like the way the Amplified Bible puts it: **“Let us seize and hold tightly the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is reliable and trustworthy and faithful [to His word].”** Don’t loosen your grip!
- IV. One more “let us” instruction: **“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”** Often this is preached as the “go to church” scripture (I’ve done it). But if you consider the context we’ve talked about this morning, you’ll see it’s deeper than just that.
  - A. In short, we are being shown how important others are in our life with Christ. There is no such thing as solo Christianity. The Bible is clear in both its

commands and promises that we need each other. Notice that the passages we looked at this morning never said, “you need to”, but “let us”...together.

1. It's often hard to boldly draw near to the throne of God. Our sin makes us feel unworthy. Our apathy makes us lazy and indifferent. What a wonderful blessing to have brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ to encourage us to seek God's face in the best of times and the worst of times! Its even better when we have friends who will come boldly before God **with us!**
  2. It's difficult to hold fast to the profession of our faith without wavering! How great is it to have believers to remind us that “he who promised is faithful”, especially when we're so prone to forget!
    - a) This is why the 3rd “let us” exhortation centers on our fellowship with others, We can't sit idly by when our fellow soldiers grow cold and selfish! We must stir one another up to love and good works.
    - b) King James says to “provoke one another”. The NIV says to “spur one another!” I've been in many churches where there was a lot of provoking and spurring, but to jealousy and strife, not to love and good works!
- B. Success in this means “not neglecting to meet together”. The writer says some are in the habit of doing so. While this includes more than church, it certainly doesn't mean less. Stirring each other up can't happen if we're not together.
1. This has been a crazy year, and we encourage people to be as safe as they can be. But sometimes I fear that we are doing more harm to ourselves by isolating away from the Body than we would by coming together in faith (while taking reasonable precautions). It's a tough question, for sure.
  2. This is because the New Testament's picture of real Christianity is always corporate and communal, never individualistic. I've met many people who tried to live out Christianity alone, but I've never met one who succeeded.
- C. The writer tells us to ramp up our commitment to one another as we “see the Day drawing near.” The Day is capitalized because he means the Day of the Lord, when Christ comes to reign and make everything new by his orderly rule.
1. The reason we should be more committed to each other is two-fold: 1st, the Bible indicates that things will get tougher for believers. We will need each other like we have never understood before. 2nd, our commitment to one another demonstrates a love for that world, and a loosening grip on this one.
  2. By drawing closer to each other, stirring each other up to love and good works, we show we believe in the reality, the nearness and the worth of the world to come:
    - a) The reality of that world, because we live now heart-connected with the very people we will share the next world with.
    - b) The nearness of that world, because we see no need to pursue what this world pursues, knowing that this world and its riches days are numbered.
    - c) The worth of that world, because we have embraced all that Christ embraces: those he died to save. We hope many others will join us.
- V. As we wait for them to come in, “let us” draw near to God in full assurance of faith, “let us” hold fast the confession of faith without wavering, and “let us” consider how to stir one another up to love and good works. Let's do it together, encouraging each other, and all the more as that Day approaches!

- VI. **Communion: 1 Corinthians 11:23 ESV** For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, **24** and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **25** In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **26** For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.
- VII. **Benediction: 1 Corinthians 15:58 ESV** Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.