Therefore, Let Us...
Scripture Text: Hebrews 10:19–25

Introduction

Last week we learned about sowing spiritual rewards, not giving up on doing good, and seizing the opportunities God gives us. I suggested some ways that we can do good, such as helping others in need, bearing one another’s burdens, and sharing the hope we have in Jesus with those who do not know Him. I also suggested that being faithful in fellowshipping with the whole church is a good thing to do. In fact, it is not only a good thing to do, it is a required thing to do. Church is a community and we cannot be a community by living separate lives or having little to do with one another. That is something that has concerned me lately about the church, and specifically about this church. What kind of community are we? Do we want to be a part of each other’s lives? Do we see the need to regularly gather together as a church family? Those are some things that I think this passage addresses. But first, we must go back to the reason we are a community, to the Person who has called us to be a household of faith.

Jesus is the Basis for Our Community

Who we are and what we do as a church is based on who Jesus is and what He has done for us. The first part of Hebrews chapter ten describes how much Jesus has saved us. After spending much of the book exalting Christ, the writer of Hebrews compared the old Jewish sacrificial system and the old covenant with the new and better covenant that is in Christ. The writer mentioned that the old sacrificial system could never save us, but a perfect sacrifice had now been offered on our behalf, by which we can be saved. The Law and its sacrificial system was a shadow of the things that came later (Hebrews 10:1). Our Savior became the perfect sacrifice Who saved us perfectly from our dreadful fate. We now have access to God.

Hebrews 10:19–21 19 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,

When Jesus died on the cross, the curtain of the tabernacle was torn open, just as Jesus’ own flesh was torn by His death. As the old covenant priest had to pass through a veil to enter the Holy of Holies, the new covenant people of God, that is the church, enter God’s presence via the sacrificial death of Christ. Jesus is now the High Priest of the people of God, and He has made a way, the only Way, for us to come before God. Those who trust in the saving work of Jesus’ death on the cross have the privilege of accessing God. They can now have confidence to enter heaven, a confidence that is not based on anything they have done, but solely on Jesus’ death on the cross. Since Jesus has made it possible for us to access God, we are exhorted to do the following.

Let Us...Draw Near to God

Scripture quoted from the English Standard Version (ESV) unless otherwise noted.
God created us to have fellowship with Him. God desires for us to be near to Him. However, our sin prevents us from enjoying fellowship with God. The old way was for His people to make sacrifices in order to atone for their sin, but that did not resolve the problem, as they had to continue making sacrifices. Therefore, God sent His only Son as the perfect Savior in order to pay for our sins and to save us completely. Thus, if you follow Jesus, you can know that you can draw near to God. Look at the first exhortation.

**Hebrews 10:22** 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.

Those who trust in Christ, and not in themselves, can draw near to God. A true heart is one that is “sprinkled clean”, one that has been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. It is a heart that trusts in Jesus for acceptance. It is a heart that has surrendered to God. Bodies washed with pure water is likely a reference to baptism, which shows our obedience to Jesus after accepting Him and trusting Him to be our Savior. Therefore, if we are in Christ, we ought to draw near to God with boldness. Since Jesus has made a way for us to fully access God, and because He has perfectly cleansed us through His sacrificial death, we ought to draw near to God with confidence.

**Let Us...Persevere in Faith**

What Jesus did for us by paying our debt of sin through His shed blood on the cross, should not only give us confidence to come to God, it should also give us hope and strength to live faithfully for Him. The early Church faced persecution and it was tempting for many of them to turn away from the faith. It may have been easier to just give up and not face the persecution that came with following Christ. The same is true for the Church today. There are places in the world today where it is dangerous to follow Jesus. There will come a day, and maybe soon, where it will be dangerous to faithfully follow Christ in America. The second exhortation is for us to remain faithful regardless of the situation, because of what Christ did for us. Look at the following verse.

**Hebrews 10:23** Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.

We ought to hold on firmly to our faith. We ought to not let go of what we believe. Of course, what exactly is it that we are supposed to believe and not let go? Our beliefs are not based on some man-made doctrine. They are not some fanciful or wishful thinking. Our faith is based on the sure Word of God. It is the confession of our hope. It is our belief in Jesus Christ and what He has done to give us life and be with God. It is Jesus who gives us hope, and because of Him and His sacrifice, we ought to hold on to Him and what He has done for us. The writer of Hebrews said almost the same thing earlier in the letter about persevering in our faith. Look at the following verse.

**Hebrews 4:14** Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.
We can have confidence in what God has promised us because God is faithful. He is trustworthy. God has never failed us and He will never fail us; therefore, hold on to your faith. The reason we can be confident in our hope is due to the object of that hope — Jesus Christ. Our hope is like an anchor for our souls in the midst of turbulent seas. When we face difficult times, when the future seems uncertain, when the enemy persecutes us, we can remain faithful because we know God is faithful. Now, is this drawing near to God and remaining faithful to Him solely an individual activity? Is God telling us in this passage that our faith is lived out alone? There is one more thing this passage exhorts us to do that may shed light on that issue.

**Let Us...Encourage One Another**

There is something that this passage says several times that could be overlooked. We could read the exhortations for drawing near to God and persevering in our faith as things we should do individually. Certainly, each one of us who has accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior should draw near to God and should persevere in the faith. However, the passage here actually says “let us”. Three times in this passage, we find the words “let us”. We should not overlook these words. Each one of the exhortations in this passage is a call for “us”, the church, to do something. We are to do these things together. These things are a team effort. Therefore, let us draw near to God together. Let us hold on to our confession of faith together. Now, what those two statements imply, the third one says emphatically. Look at the next verses.

**Hebrews 10:24-25** 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.

The third exhortation here calls us to seriously think about how to stir up others in the church to love one another and to serve one another. We could read this as provoking each other to these things. Typically, that is a bad thing, but here, it is used in a way to produce something good in others. We have been talking about doing good things for one another. This passage tells us to stir up one another, to rouse each other, to love and good works. We ought to be like alarm clocks to each other. When one is asleep in the faith, others need to come along and wake that person up. We do not want to be caught spiritually asleep when we should be serving Jesus. We are to carefully consider how we can help each other love like Christ and do loving acts of kindness like Christ.

We should remember that this is a community effort. As followers of Christ who are living together in a community of faith, we should take seriously our responsibility and commitment to one another. But wait (like those As Seen on TV advertisements say!), that is not all! This third statement also tells us to not do something. It tells us not to neglect meeting together. This would be like turning our backs on something important. But is this really important? If so, why? At least one major way to stir up one another to love and good works is to actually gather together, to meet as people who are following Jesus together. But, let us consider what God has said about this elsewhere in scripture. Let us look at what the early churches did. Look at the next passage.

Scripture quoted from the English Standard Version (ESV) unless otherwise noted.
Acts 2:42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

The above passage tells us that the early church was devoted to four things. They were devoted to learning God’s Word. They were devoted to prayer. They were devoted to breaking bread, which may be observing the Lord's Supper. And, they were devoted to fellowship. They participated together in learning God’s Word, praying, and obeying God. They stuck together in doing these things. One of the things the Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth was about their togetherness. Look at the following.

1 Corinthians 14:26 What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.

Notice that Paul did not write, “If you come together”, but, “When you come together”. He assumed the church was doing this. The church coming together is something mentioned throughout the New Testament. This was not just a good idea or an unimportant part of our faith. It was an integral part of following Jesus. According to the passage in Hebrews, it was apparently the habit of some to neglect gathering with their church family. Why was this? Was it because those who neglected meeting together were afraid of persecution? Was it because those who neglected this essential part of their faith found it unnecessary? Was it because someone in the church had hurt them? Was it because they did not like the preacher or teachers there? We do not know. What we do know is that they should not have neglected meeting with their church family. I do not think the writer here was talking about those who really could not come and be a part of the church gatherings. I think the writer in Hebrews was addressing those who could be there but neglected this essential part of their faith. Is it possible that some can find time to do other things during the week, but cannot find time to gather with the rest of the church when they meet? Is it possible that some make time to do the things that are important to them, but do not make time to meet with their church family?

Have you ever thought about why we are told to gather together? The obvious reason, of course, is God said so. But, consider the situation of the early church. They had a mission to reach the world for Jesus Christ. They were also being persecuted for their faith. Others sought to destroy God’s work. Many Christians were imprisoned or killed. They needed to meet together in order to encourage one another and to strengthen one another. They needed to stay together, to grow together, to do acts of love together, and to encourage one another. The same is true today. We need to meet and encourage one another. We face real challenges to our faith, and we need each other in order to hold fast together. Coming together for worship is not to mark some spiritual obligation off of your weekly to do list. It is not to come see what the preacher is going to say or not say. It is not to gossip or to have your way. Let us consider again the reason we are exhorted to draw near to God, to persevere in the faith, and to stir up one another to love and good works. It is because we have a great High Priest, Jesus Christ, who has so transformed our lives and has made us His people. He has brought us together as a community of faith to worship Him and to encourage each other to worship Him.

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For those who regularly meet with your church family, the charge to you is to reach out to you brothers and sisters and “to provoke” them to love and good works. Rouse their need to be with their church family. Do you know why some of our church family are not with us? Perhaps someone has lost interest in being with the church. Perhaps someone does not feel encouraged when they are with us. Have you try to encourage them lately to be with us? For those who do not regularly meet with the church family, and can do so, why do they neglect this essential part of our faith? If you cannot come together at the appointed times to gather with your church family, we understand, and we want them to know that you are missed. We want to still be a part of your lives. But, if you can meet with us, but choose not to come together with us, you need to know that this is an essential part of your faith. We need our church family, with all of our faults and disagreements and dislikes. We need to learn to grow together as a community.

Conclusion

In closing, since Jesus has completely saved us and has paid our debt for which we could not pay, let us come boldly to God knowing that He has forgiven us and saved us. Let us also trust God completely, knowing that He is faithful and keeps His promises, and Jesus will return to take us home with Him. And while we are here on earth, let us continue to encourage each other, to motivate one another to do good, and to meet together for fellowship. As this passage reminds us, the Day of Jesus’ return is drawing near. We need to remain committed to each other. We need to continue to encourage one another to be committed to Christ. And, we need each other. Let us be a community of God’s people by taking every opportunity we have to be with one another so that we can encourage one another to grow in faith with Jesus. This is good news. Thanks be to God. Amen!