

GM // (out for deployment or illness ... you are missed)

We are continuing through Hebrew series ...

If you have a Bible we will be in Chapter 10.

Highly recommend bringing the real deal, even over the phone ...

Great habit to wean yourself off screen-time as much as possible.

If you don't have a Bible we'll have the verses up on the screen...

**Good news!! We got a Goldilocks passage today ... “Not too short ... Not too long ... Just right.”**

### Hebrews 10:19-25

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, 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 **[let us] not neglecting to meet together**, as is the habit of some, but **[let us]**

**encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.**

So far our journey through the book of Hebrews has been heavily focused on who Jesus is, what He's done, and what that accomplished for us.

And that's important ... B/C what we believe about God shapes how we live.

And that's what these verses give us ...

It's very practical & simple in its approach ...

**A life lived for Jesus is characterized with Him being the center.**

**Meaning every other aspect of life revolves around Him.**

Let's get even more practical...

If you have Jesus at the center of your life ... it means He's first in your calendar, your finances ...

He's first in your big life decisions like: where to live, jobs, career, how you raise your kids ... etc.

All things are filtered through the lens of Jesus' call to follow him.

Think about what God did with Israel when he delivered them out of Egypt...

**He gave them the law which disciplined them into a rhythm of life that revolved around worship.**

There were daily prayers ...

There was weekly Sabbath worship ...

There were quarterly festivals of national worship ...

**All these times were a call to do one thing ...**

**Make Room In Your Life To Draw Near To God  
Frequently**

Every Israelite was called by God to observe these times of worship and draw near to God “religiously”.

**Which means they were put in the calendar first ... and if there was a scheduling conflict these always won.**

**You might be surprised by what I’m going to say next ... but it’s true:**

**There is no different expectation in the Covenant of Grace.**

**Grace doesn’t mean we draw near less often ...**

**In every way the Covenant of Grace gives us more incentive to draw near even more...**

Hebrews 10:22 gives us the exhortation “let us draw near ...”

But look at what motivates us!!

### Hebrews 10:19-22

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Since Adam & Eve were kicked out the garden for sin we've been living “East of Eden.”

That's why entrances to the tabernacle and temple faced east...

It was God's reminder that we live outside His presence and can't draw near b/c of sin.

That is why our souls are restless and prone to wander ...

**They are always searching and never finding ...**

**like Bono sang “I still haven't found what I'm looking for.”**

**Our souls are restless b/c they are looking for that way back into the Good Garden of God's blessing.**

These verses are telling us that Jesus is the new and living way back in ...

That's the place your soul wants to remain.

And until you rest in this truth you won't find rest.

**For the Christians in the room ...**

**How can we know such things and believe them and yet neglect the privileged access we have to draw near to God?**

Well, if you're anything like me ... it's really easy to neglect.

It's not one major thing that keeps me from drawing near...

It's more like "death by a thousand cuts" ...

It's the many small little decisions of putting this thing and that thing before God ...

Suddenly, I don't have anytime to read His word and pray.

And here's the kicker ... I really believe it's out of my control.

**Sorry God ... I had to stay up and watch those two additional episodes of Brooklyn 99 ... I'm just too tired to wake up earlier.**

**Sorry Lord ... with my kids extracurriculars, work, and house chores ... I just can't find any time for you ... I'm sure you understand.**

**See how easy it is to fill our calendar with good things that supplant the greater thing.**

Little "g" gods are often cleverly disguised ...

B/C many of them are good things ...

The problem is that we make them ultimate things.

And so they push God from the center of our lives to the margins.

And if we are going to make it a priority to draw near to God we have to start learning to say "No" to good things...

**Here's an example from my own life...**

**When Asher was 11 there were tryouts for a more competitive soccer league than the rec-soccer he'd been in.**

Asher had a great tryout ...

So much so that the head coach quickly grabbed us to say he'd have a spot.

But when we found out the time cost it was an easy "No."

**B/C we'd committed as parents that our family life would be built around Jesus at the center...**

In that moment I had the option to make Asher's soccer dreams come true ...

### **But at what cost to him and us?**

We'd have to miss a lot of community groups and Sunday gatherings ...

Not to mention we'd just be more tired and stretched thin ...

Which would mean our personal time of drawing near to God through prayer and Bible reading would take a back seat.

So, I had to weigh all this up.

And as Asher's dad, I'm his primary discipler.

### **What would I be discipling him toward?**

God first ... soccer second or third ...

OR Soccer first ... God second or third ...

### **I know I say this a lot, but its true ...**

**"Everything you and I do is doing something to us."**

Instead of filling Asher's time with secondary things ... even if they are good things ...

I'm called to lead him into a life where he has time to draw near to God by himself and together with us and the church.

**I'm also called to show him that in my life ...**

**He will learn most from how I live.**

Here's the thing ...

**When we fill our life with so much busyness that we don't draw near to God we devalue and minimize the significance of what Jesus did for us...**

Let's stop and think about what he did for us...

**You and I get to draw near to a Holy God anywhere anytime b/c Jesus died for us and is our Great High Priest in heaven right now.**

**We get to go back into Eden whenever we want!!!**

**Why would we not center our lives around that???**

**Well, the reason we don't is B/C it's not the most important truth we believe in.**

**Which is why ...**

**We Have To Be Grounded And Growing In The Gospel**

The very next thing after the command to draw near is to hold fast our confession ...

**Hebrews 10:23**

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



The essence of holding fast the confession is learning and growing...

Christians are students ... and our textbook is the Bible.

Which is why making Bible-time is so important.

That's where we see and learn about our hope.

This word HOLD FAST means to possess.

We have to be getting the Gospel inside us ... possessing it ...

Being filled with it.

**The call to follow Jesus is a call to hold fast to the Gospel.**

Despite what is going on around us.

Despite the cost of persecution and suffering for our faith ...

We are called to stand firm ... to be a light for the present world ...

AND // to pass on the rich tradition of our faith and Gospel fidelity to the next generation.

We do that by holding fast to the Gospel.

Which means we have to know what to hold fast to!

## **What is the hope you're holding fast to?**

**And the answer to that question gets back to what's at the center of your life.**

If your hope is creating a perfect happy life ... trying to turn earth into heaven ... then ...

The center of your life is going to be:

- pleasure or politics or career or money or kids or a spouse or boyfriend or girlfriend ...

If the hope of the Gospel is at the center, then heaven is your ultimate hope and destination ...

You understand that this life will never be heaven...

And so the things of this earth are held properly...

B/C we know these things are temporary ... passing away.

**Now, there are some things we can experience here on earth that are eternal ...**

One of those things is the people of God, the church.

We gather together B/C that's what heaven looks like...

A grand gathering of God's people throughout the generations.

Whenever we come together we are getting a foretaste of heaven.

And that is reason enough to not neglect gathering as it warns us in verse 25.

But the reason for our gathering is much more than just being a sanctified country club...

### **Hebrews 10:24-25**

**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.**

**These verses are showing us what it means to be part of a church ... its not passive.**

### **Play Your Part To Strengthen And Encourage The Church**

That means you got to show up ...

If you do that you've already done a lot...

**Research tells us that church attendance is trending down ...**

**The fastest growing group are 2x4's and 1x4's.**

People that go to church once or twice a month.

**But church is an in-the-flesh reality.**

Jesus didn't die for us to watch services on TV or the internet.

**Now, I realize that COVID made that a necessity for some of us.**

But don't let that season become a lifestyle...

As soon as it's safe ... show up.

**B/C stirring and encouraging each other is better side-by-side than screen-to-screen.**

I guarantee you, on any given Sunday, there are many in the room that need to be encouraged and challenged.

Which means when you gather you come ready for God to use you.

Our Sunday gatherings aren't just about watching the band and the preacher...

Yes, we come ready for God to use us to minister to the church...

But you should come with that same expectation...

Which requires you to draw near to God during the week.

**God will pour you out when you're filled up with Him.**

**But this means we have to change what we think going to church is all about.**

**It's coming to worship ... [captain obvious]**

But we miss out on what worship is...

There are two Hebrew words in the Bible for worship:

- One means to “bow low in reverence”
- The other means “to serve”

Somewhere along the way we’ve separated service from worship.

But service is worship.

God saved us to serve Him and serve others.

**So showing up week in and week out to church and NOT serving is missing out on what worship is.**

**Romans 12 talks about our spiritual worship ... and a part of that is using our gifts in the church...**

#### **Romans 12:5-8**

**5 so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. 6 Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; 7 if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; 8 the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.**

And in another place it says

## **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.**

The idea is that we all come as active participants to serve and strengthen the church.

Think of it this way ...

Everytime we gather God wants to bless us...

But the way he blesses the church is through the people in the church...

It's like God gives you a special gift ... but that gift is not just for you, it's for His church.

**God the Holy Spirit builds the church by gifting it's members.**

**But what often happens is we hide that gift in a "bushel basket" :)**

**You gotta let it out ... let it shine ...**

So during the week as I'm drawing near to God in prayer time and Bible time ...

That's for my own edification ... But it's also for your sake.

Maturity in God's economy isn't measured by how much you know ... but by how much you live for the sake of others.

B/C as you draw nearer to God's heart you pick up his love for people.

And this love sacrifices ...

This love serves ... This love gives ...

And that's what separates the church from any other social grouping.

God cobbles together a bunch of people who seem to share very little in common.

We have different hobbies and interests...

We different in age, gender, wealth, ethnicity ...

Yet, we still love each other ...

We still show up, spend time, share our lives ...

And what brings us together is Jesus ...

Around His Gospel ... His mission ...

That is our common ground.

And that's all we need.

If we make it about anything else ... community will fall apart.

I've seen it happen over and over again ...

B/C community built on anything else is built on the self-serving interests of individuals.

**Let's be a people that builds their life with God at the center.**

**Right now we have an opportunity to respond ...**

### **NOT A CHRISTIAN:**

- Drawing near to God is a huge privilege ...
- And its only possible through Jesus' death and resurrection.
- The very end of verse 25 talks about a Day drawing near ...
- That is the Day when everyone will stand before Jesus and be judged according to their works.
- Without faith in Jesus ... you stand no chance of being found NOT GUILTY.
- And that means a sentence of eternal death ... life in darkness, sorrow, joyless existence. → life without God.
- Invite you to respond with repentance and faith!!

### **BAND COME UP**

### **CHRISTIANS:**



**Here are some questions to talk over at lunch or dinner with friends and family ... And at community group too ...**

- 1. What are some practical changes that will make time for you to draw near to God?**
- 2. What heart adjustments need to be made for why you gather on Sunday? (ex. Does your Sunday worship include serving?)**
- 3. Commit to God and one other person to come with the expectation that God can use you.**

**MEDIA TEAM: KEEP SLIDE UP**

I want to give us a brief moment of reflection to take in these questions ... pray into them right now ... maybe write them down ...

*(POST ON FACEBOOK/CCB EMAIL)*

So for the next 30 seconds lets reflect and pray and invite God to speak to our hearts...

**PRAY**

**MEDIA TEAM: AFTER MY PRAYER TAKE SLIDE DOWN**

**COMMUNION:**

- Communion reminds us of why we can draw near ...

- Jesus is the new and living way ...
- His blood is our confidence to come to God ...
- His body is the new curtain we pass through into the Holy Place of His presence.
- **Let us draw near together right now with faith as we eat and drink his body and blood.**