

The Assembling Church

Hebrews 10:22-25

Pastor Eddie Ildefonso

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The Way to Secure the New and Living Faith, 10:22-25

1 Let us draw near God (v.22)

- a. With true hearts (v.22a)
- b. With assurance (v.22b)
- c. With a cleansed conscience and a clean body (v.22c)

2 Let us hold fast our profession of faith (v.23)

3 Let us stir up one another: To love and to do good works (v.24)

4 Let us not forsake worshipping together (v.25)

- a. A warning: Some have (v.25a)
- b. A charge: Do not forsake worship (v.25b)
- c. A motive: Will result in judgment (v.25c)

"A Christian Without Church?"

An old question: "Can I be a Christian without joining the church or attending worship?"

Answer: "Yes, it is possible. But it is something like being:

- A student who will not go to school;
- A soldier who will not join the army;
- A citizen who does not pay taxes or vote;
- A salesman with no customers;
- An explorer with no base camp;
- A seaman in a ship without a crew;
- A businessman on a deserted island;
- An author without readers;
- A football player without a team;
- A politician who is a hermit;
- A scientist who does not share his findings;
- A bee without a hive."

—*Flaming Torch*

Blazing Coal—By Itself—Quickly Dies

A Sunday School teacher noticed that one of his students had been absent for a long time. He visited the absentee at home and found him sitting by the fireplace.

The startled member invited him in and waited for the expected rebuke. It never came. Taking a seat before the fire, the teacher silently used the tongs to place a piece of glowing coal by itself on the hearthstone. In painful silence, both watched the blazing coal flicker out and die.

The truant murmured: "You need not say a word. I'll be there next Sunday!"

—*Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations*

The Way to Secure the New and Living Faith, 10:22-25

(10:22-25) Introduction: this great passage tells us the most wonderful thing. We can now know God, really know Him. We can commune and fellowship with Him and have His presence and power operating in our lives. God's presence and power can conquer all the problems and trials and temptations of life that attack us. The living God can be a living reality in our lives. His presence and power can conquer all the enemies of life, including the last great enemy, death. How? How can we lay hold of such a new and living faith—lay hold of the living God in our lives? This great passage tells us.

1. **Let us draw near God (v.22).**
2. **Let us hold fast our profession of faith (v.23).**
3. **Let us stir up one another: to love and to do good works (v.24).**
4. **Let us not forsake worshipping together (v.25).**

No Perfect Church

It is related that a man once came to Charles H. Spurgeon, and asked that great preacher if his church was a pure church. He said he was looking for a pure church that he might belong to it.

Mr. Spurgeon said that he did not know about his own church; but he did know that there were many good people in it—saintly people and truly Christian people.

But there might possibly be a Judas among them, as there was in the company of Jesus' first apostles. And there might be some deceivers and idolaters and those who walk unruly, as there seemed to have been in the churches of Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Colossae, Philippi, Thessalonica, and all the others to which the New Testament epistles were written.

On the whole, he thought that his church was not the one his brother was looking for. Instead, he did not know that there had been such a church in all history.

"But," said Mr. Spurgeon, "if you should happen to find such a church, I beg of you not to join it, for you would spoil the whole thing."

—Bernard Bain—Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations

1. (10:22) Access—Heart—Conscience: the first duty is to draw near God. Jesus Christ has opened up the way into God's presence for us. He has taken our sins upon Himself and bore the guilt and judgment of them for us. He has freed us from sin, removed all sin *off of us*. He is now ready to present us to God as being sinless and righteous. Jesus Christ has made us acceptable to God. He has provided a *new and living way into the holiest place of all*, into the very presence of God Himself. We can now know God, know Him personally and intimately; we can now commune and fellowship with God, have His presence and power in our lives as we walk day by day. Therefore, *let us draw near God*. But note: how we approach God is important. He has to be approached in a particular way; some preparation is necessary in order to approach Him.

1. We must have a "true heart." This means genuine, sincere, honest, meaningful, and without hypocrisy. A true heart involves an attitude of gladness, freedom, and enthusiasm (Marvin Vincent. *Word Studies In The New Testament*, Vol. 4, p.501). The true believer knows that Jesus Christ has opened the door into God's presence; therefore...

he is thankful and appreciative

he is glad and joyful

he feels free and at liberty to enter God's presence

he is enthusiastic and excited about entering God's presence

There is no hypocrisy or insincerity, no dishonesty whatsoever in a true heart. A true heart knows what Jesus Christ has done—the great impact and meaning of what He has done. A true heart knows that it can really draw near God—that it can know God and commune and

fellowship with Him. It knows that it can walk in praise and thanksgiving to God all day—that it can have the presence and power of God looking after and caring for it all day—that God will deliver from all trials and temptations and give victory and triumph over all. The true heart knows what it is to draw near God—what it is to live in an unbroken communion and fellowship with Him.

Thought 1. Too many of us are so wrapped up in the world that we forget to “draw near God.” We forget the wonderful thing Jesus Christ has done for us—that He has actually opened up a new and living way into the very presence of God Himself.

Too few of us have true, sincere hearts—hearts that continually draw near God. We must awaken and heed this charge. It is our duty, a duty that is *absolutely necessary*: “Let us draw near with a true [sincere, genuine, honest] heart.”

2. We must have “*full assurance of faith*.” Full assurance means unqualified assurance in Christ, that He is the One Person who can and does give us access into God’s presence—that Christ and Christ alone makes us acceptable to God. It means to be absolutely convinced that the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ is the only perfect sacrifice—that His sacrificial death is the only sacrifice that God accepts.

Thought 1. Too many people have divided loyalties. They do not have the *full assurance* of faith—full assurance that Jesus Christ is absolutely sufficient to present them perfect before God. Too many think that they are acceptable to God...

because they are good persons and do a great deal of good works.

because they belong to and attend church.

because they have been baptized and confirmed.

because they have never done anything considered really bad.

All of these are good things, and everyone of us should live good and decent, moral and just lives. But these are not what make us acceptable to God. Jesus Christ alone can bring us into the presence of God and present us to God. When we approach God, we *must have full assurance* of faith in Jesus Christ—absolute assurance that Jesus Christ is the sacrifice for our sins, the perfect High Priest who can present us to God.

3. We must have hearts and bodies perfectly cleansed and washed. This is a picture of the High Priest cleansing and washing himself before he entered God’s presence in the Holy of Holies, the inner sanctuary of the Jewish tabernacle. He sprinkled himself with the blood of the sacrificial animal and washed himself. This symbolized that his own sins were being forgiven. His own evil conscience was being cleansed and the sins of his body were being washed away.

The point is this: before we approach God, we must be cleansed of sin and its guilt—cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. *We have to* approach God through Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ alone is the perfect sacrifice for sins; He alone has made the perfect sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, the only way we can be cleansed of sin is to trust Jesus Christ. If we really trust His sacrifice, then God accepts His sacrifice for us. God cleanses us of sin. He gives us a clean conscience and washed body—a conscience cleansed of evil and guilt and a body washed from sin.

“I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture” (John 10:9).

“That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us” (Acts 17:27).

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Romans 5:1-2).

“For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father” (Ephes. 2:18).

“In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him” (Ephes. 3:12).

“For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God” (Hebrews 7:19).

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus....Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water” (Hebrews 10:19, 22).

“Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded” (James 4:8).

“The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit” (Psalm 34:18).

“But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy works” (Psalm 73:28).

“The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth” (Psalm 145:18).

2. (10:23) Profession—Confession: the second duty is to hold fast our profession without wavering.

A person who makes a true profession in Christ believes two things:
that Jesus Christ is his Savior from sin and death—that Jesus Christ is the perfect sacrifice for his sins—that Jesus Christ and His sacrifice covers his sins and makes it possible for God to forgive his sins.

that Jesus Christ is the risen Lord—that Jesus Christ is his High Priest who is seated at the right hand of God—that Jesus Christ is the perfect Mediator and Intercessor who makes him acceptable to God and presents him as perfect and sinless before God.

When a person professes Christ to be his Savior and Lord, he is to hold his profession fast and he is to do it without wavering.

The believer is not to listen to the voices of the world and return to worldliness and materialism.

The believer is not to doubt that Jesus Christ died for him.

The believer is not to doubt that Jesus Christ arose for him.

The believer is not to listen to the voices of doubt and false teaching.

The believer is not to let circumstances, trials, or temptations shake his faith in Christ.

Note: there is one strong reason for holding our profession fast. What is it?

“God is faithful that promised.”

God keeps His Word. And He is the One who has promised to let the sacrifice of Christ count as the sacrifice for our sins. God is the One who has promised to accept us in Christ—to accept us in His perfection and righteousness. God will do exactly what He has said. He is faithful.

Therefore, “let us hold fast the profession of our hope without wavering.” We have been saved and will inherit eternal life—given the glorious privilege of living with God forever and ever in the new heavens and earth.

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the

Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage” (Galatians 5:1).

“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Galatians 6:9).

“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thes. 5:21).

“But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end” (Hebrews 3:6).

“Seeing then that we have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God; let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:14-16).

“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised)” (Hebrews 10:23).

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him” (James 1:12).

“Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:13).

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world” (1 Peter 5:8-9).

“Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness” (2 Peter 3:17).

“Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee” (Rev. 3:3).

3. (10:24) Believer’s Duty—Love—Ministering—Service: [the third duty is to stir up one another to love and to do good works.](#) Note the word “consider” (katanoomen). It means to give attention to; to fix our attention upon; to give continuous care; to watch over. What an exhortation to believers!

Hebrews 10:24 The word translated “**provoke**” (Greek paroxysmos) usually has a negative sense, as is witnessed by its only other New Testament usage. (**Acts 15:39**). The positive connotation which the word has in the present text means to stir up. It is easy to stir up hatred and godless deeds; it takes much more to stir up another to love and good works.

Give attention to one another.

Fix your attention upon one another.

Give continuous care to one another.

Watch over one another.

How different the church would be—how much stronger we would be in Christ and in life—if we heeded this exhortation! And note what it is that we are to give attention to: to make sure that we are stirred up and living for Christ—that we are loving one another and doing good works. This simply means...

that we are considerate of one another.
that we show concern for one another.
that we meet one another's needs.
that we strengthen one another's weaknesses.
that we help one another through every trial and temptation.

It means that we love—love in act and not in word—that we...

feed the poor
visit the sick and shut-ins
look after the orphans and the children of broken homes and single parents
become a friend to the lonely
give direction to the empty and those without purpose.

Note the exhortation again: we give attention to one another. Why? To make sure none of us are slacking up—to stir one another to love and to do good works. This is the duty of the new, living faith Jesus Christ has wrought for us. It is not a dead faith. It is a faith that stirs us to action—that stirs us to live, truly live, live in love and good works—for the sake of a needful and sick world.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:34-35).

“This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you” (John 15:12).

“Let love be without dissimulation [hypocrisy]. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good” (Romans 12:9).

“For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law” (Romans 13:9-10).

“And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you” (1 Thes. 3:12).

“That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate” (1 Tim. 6:18).

“In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing incorruptness, gravity, sincerity” (Titus 2:7).

“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works” (Hebrews 10:24).

“Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works” (James 2:17-18).

“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently” (1 Peter 1:22).

“Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation” (1 Peter 2:12).

4. (10:25) **Church, Attendance—Worship:** the fourth duty is to assemble together and never to forsake our assembling, not even to neglect it for a brief time. This is the meaning of this exhortation. Believers are to assemble together...

for worship

for prayer

for the study of God's Word

for ministry and witnessing

CHURCH ATTENDANCE

In an article for On Mission Magazine, Dianne Butts, gave the top ten reasons she's heard why people skip church. Here's what she wrote,

10. I've been thinking I'd like to go to church. But I don't know anyone. And I don't know what to do, where to go, what to expect when I get there.

9. I don't believe in God. Christians are dangerous fanatics, politically unpopular and always trying to shove their beliefs on others.

8. There are so many denominations... even Christians can't agree among themselves what the Bible means.

7. There are so many churches... I don't know which one to go to. Why should I come to yours.

6. Church is for "good" people who haven't messed up. You don't know where I've been or what I've done.

5. Church is not important.

4. I don't need to go to church. I can worship God, even when I'm fishing.

3. I don't have nice clothes to wear to church.

2. I don't have time. Sunday morning is the only day I can sleep late.

1. People in churches are hypocrites.

—ON Mission, July/Aug 2001, p. 46-48

Hebrews 10:25 “Not forsaking the assembling”....This admonition involves far more than erratic attendance. It involves the entire worship of Christ and is an outward INDICATION OF AN INNER CONDITION. The assembling of God's people provides opportunity for reciprocal encouragement, strengthening, and the stirring up that can be gained from one another (**Col. 3:12—16**). It consists of participation in worship and fellowship. The church is a body interacting (**1 Cor. 12:14-27**); it is not merely a dispensary of spiritual food and medicine.

Read the verse closely and it is clearly seen that the idea is often: we are to assemble together often and never to forsake our coming together. Genuine believers need each other—the presence, fellowship, strength, encouragement, care, and love of each other.

But note: some had forsaken the church even in the day of the early church. How like some in every generation. The need is just what this verse says: exhort one another, and so much the more, as you see the day approaching. What day? The day of the Lord's return. His return is immediately upon us. Therefore, we must exhort those who have fallen away, lest they miss the salvation of His coming and have to face His judgment.

Thought 1. William Barclay has an excellent application on this point that merits our attention as we minister this verse to our people. He takes the three points from Moffatt in the International Critical Commentary. He says there are three reasons which keep a person from worshipping with other Christian believers.

- 1) *“He may not go to Church because of fear. He may be ashamed to show his loyalty by being seen going to church. He may live or work among people who laugh at those who go to Church. He may have friends who have no use for that kind of thing, and he may fear their criticism and their contempt. He may try to be a secret disciple; but it has been well said that to be a secret disciple is impossible because either ‘the discipleship kills the secrecy, or the secrecy kills the discipleship.’ It would be well if we remembered that, apart from anything else, to go to Church is to demonstrate where our loyalty lies. Even if the sermon be poor and the worship tawdry, the Church still gives us the chance to show to men what side we are on.*
- 2) *“He may not go because of fastidiousness. He may dislike the common people; he may shrink from contact with people who are ‘not like himself.’ There are churches, even in this country, which are as much clubs as they are churches. They may be in neighborhoods where the social status has come down; and the members who have remained faithful to them would be as much embarrassed as delighted if the poor people and the slum dwellers in the area came flooding in. We must never forget that there is no such thing as a ‘common’ man in the sight of God. It was for all men, not only for the respectable classes, that Christ died.*
- 3) *“He may not go because of conceit. Frankly, he may believe and state that he does not need the Church; that he is intellectually beyond the standard of preaching there. Social snobbery may be bad, spiritual and intellectual snobbery is worse. The wisest man is a fool in the sight of God; and the strongest man is weak in the moment of temptation. There is no man who can live the Christian life and neglect the fellowship of the church. If any man feels that he can do so let him remember that he comes to Church, not only to get, but to give. He ought to come not only to receive, but to make his own contribution to the life of the church. If he feels that the Church has faults, it is his duty to come in and to help to mend them” (The Letter to the Hebrews, p.136f)*

“And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; and she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day” (Luke 2:36-37).

“And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read” (Luke 4:16).

“And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God” (Luke 24:52-53).

“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24).

“And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart” (Acts 2:46).

“Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour [daily]” (Acts 3:1).

“But when they [Paul and his company] departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and sat down” (Acts 13:14).

“But unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither

thou shalt come” (Deut. 12:5).

“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the lord for ever” (Psalm 23:6).

“Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth” (Psalm 26:8).

“One thing have I desired of the lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the lord, and to enquire in his temple” (Psalm 27:4).

“Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple” (Psalm 65:4).

“My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God....Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee” (Psalm 84:2, 4).

“For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness” (Psalm 84:10).

“I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the lord” (Psalm 122:1).