We Must Draw Near to God

**Hebrews 10:19-25**

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**Introduction: S**olomon wrote two very insightful proverbs concerning the subject we are considering this morning.

**Proverbs 16:28**  28 A perverse man spreads strife, And a slanderer separates intimate friends.

**Proverbs 17:9**  9 He who conceals a transgression seeks love, But he who repeats a matter intimate friends.

In these verses the King warns of the grief of alienation. Men or women who were once friends with tender affection and loyalty toward one another are now separated and hostile. Webster says that alienation describes the abandonment of a once cherished relationship.

Why do husbands and wives, who have pledged their faithfulness, left father and mother and agreed before God to love, cherish, and obey one another, end up such bitter enemies that they need lawyers to fight for them or else there would surely be bloodshed…and there is no fight quite like a church fight. Men who once came as brothers and sisters before the throne of their common father now hate with an unspeakable kind of hatred. What is going on here. People at the elks club don’t seem to hate each other this way. Why are men so prone to alienation?

Because it is the work of Satan, the ultimate slanderer and hater of men. Now we are in no way excusing ourselves, but we should be aware that Satan works continually to alienate men from God and from one another

**Genesis 2:23-24**  23 The man said, "This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man." 24 For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

Satan worked almost immediately to alienate Eve from God by accusing God of evil. Eve in turn entices Adam who willfully went against God Adam and Eve had two sons and one killed the other. Ultimately everyone is alienated from God and from one another.

Now what would the world be like without alienation? We would actually trust one another again. We would not suspect the motives of family, friends and neighbors. We would desire only the best for one another and would never think of doing or saying anything that might alienate people from one another. In short. there would be a blessed unity and peace among men.

Reconciliation is the opposite of alienation. Because of the Cross, you are first reconciled to God and then by necessity to one another. While Satan seeks to vandalize the image of God in man, Christ restores it by washing us and sanctifying us for God’s presence. Once reconciled to God the marvelous transformation of our lives begins.

God is calling you this morning into His presence to serve Him in worship and you do not feel fit to go. There are people in your life you are alienated from. There will be opportunities in your family and in our church for you to hate and hurt one another. Will you take them? Will you consider the source of such temptations and resist Satan as he seeks to alienate you from loved ones, children, parents and brothers and sisters in Christ? If you wish to resist alienation then WHAT MUST you do instead? Suspiciously our purpose this morning sounds a lot like The Greatest Commandment!

* We must draw near Christ
* We must draw near to one another.

**Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus [19]:** Now imagine for a moment the person you most trust and who most loves you! Imagine going to them and telling them your fears and asking for help. This is called “confidence” or “boldness” in Scripture. It is exactly what you have with God your (Abba) heavenly father. Worship only happens when you draw near to God. It takes place in His presence. We have standing in His presence, but how is that possible since we are still broken sinners. It was obtained for us by Jesus when you came to faith. You belong in God’s presence and you have permission to speak freely. All fear is banished because of the Cross work of Christ.

**By a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh and since *we have* a great priest over the house of God [20-21]:** The way is “new” and “living” This is a fascinating combination in Greek. “New” means “newly slaughtered, but it is still a “living” way. He was the pure lamb of God sacrificed for your sins, but raised by God from the dead. Jesus’ death and resurrection is the only way back to God (we could say the only way to get to heaven). No religion, doctrine or moral practice can accomplish that.

A “way” is a road leading somewhere. It is NOT true that there are many roads. There is exactly one road.

**John 14:6** Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

This way back to God was initiated or **inaugurated** by Jesus. He brought God down to mankind and took man back to God. How did He do such a spectacular thing? He did it by becoming fully human, but without sin and then dying for your sin because He had none of His own.

**“Through the veil”** is intended to remind us of the veil in the temple that separated man from the presence of the Father. The Body of Jesus was the reality behind that veil. On one side is sinful and hopeless men…on the other is a holy and righteous God. Christ was both man and God and therefore bridged the gap into the presence of the Father. Those who come to Christ are His brothers and therefore able to enter the house freely. Humanity is not in and of itself evil. It is sin that makes us so. Christ, a human man without sin, become our one and only path into heaven.

***We have* a great priest:** Like the OT Priest went through the veil to sacrifice for men’s sins, Jesus has gone into the presence of God with the one offering and sacrifice God can and does accept. All sin is washed away. The elect are set apart for God’s purpose and are fully complete in His sight. Our standing as sons and priests is established forever.

**The house of God:** This is Christ’s church. He owns it because He paid for it. As the owner He also builds it as He sees fit. It has almost nothing to do with what men typically think of as the church today. The church consists of human beings for whom Jesus died. It is a household or family that Christ is nurturing and protecting today. There has never been a time in our lifetimes in which Christians needed to reconsider the importance of being in and being a part of God’s family in this world.

**Ephesians 2:19** So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household.

**Hebrews 3:6** but Christ *was faithful* as a Son over His house—whose house we are…

**Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water [22]:** Here is a quick summary of what we have just been told by God. We have been fitted and made ready to enter the presence of God. We are welcome and wanted there because our Great High Priest has secured our passage into the throne room of God.

This is not merely a drawing near to pray as some have imagined. This is a passage bristling with priestly imagery. The priest’s life was one of daily worship of God. God wants you in His presence. He has therefore reconciled you and fit you for worship.

**In full assurance of faith:** Someone must tell you this! Preachers must tell believers these truths, because frankly most Christians simply do not know or believe what God is saying to them. Let me state it again: Christ Jesus has secured your unconditional release from the slave market of sin. He has reconciled you to God at the Cross and has made you a son and thus a member of the household. He has placed the righteousness of Jesus on you so that you can serve in His presence as a priest.

**Galatians 3:26-27**  26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

**Having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience:** The ashes of the heifer were used to prepare water to be sprinkled upon the priests for purification. God the Only Son has prepared you for His presence. Our hearts are hearts are fully known to God and yet He has clothed us in Christ’s pure holiness and called us to worship in His presence. There is nothing left for you to do, but enter to serve Him in worship.

**Hebrews 9:13-14**  13 For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, 14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

And God makes still another allusion to the work of the priest by saying, “**Our bodies washed with pure water.”**

**Leviticus 16:4** "He shall put on the holy linen tunic, and the linen undergarments shall be next to his body, and he shall be girded with the linen sash and attired with the linen turban (these are holy garments). Then he shall bathe his body in water and put them on.

**Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful [23]:** Come with me to a courtroom for a moment. The indictment has been read and the defendant is asked to plead. But listen to the indictment; It states that you have been given free and total access to the presence of God by Jesus your Savior and Lord. Your heart and body have been washed clean and you are summoned to enter into God’s very presence to worship Him. And the question is asked….”will you confess that this is true?”

Our confession in verse 23 is our agreement with God that everything He says is true. You are being asked to agree with God that Christ Jesus secured your redemption, your regeneration (new birth and life) and your reconciliation to God. And that you are ready and willing to come boldly into His presence to worship Him. If you have given your life to Christ please…

* Do not say, “I hope God will be pleased with me” because He already is.
* Do not say, “I wish I was able to serve God in some way” because you can’t.

**Acts 17:24-25**  24 "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; 25 nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all *people* life and breath and all things;

* Do Say, “Dear God, I love you and my heart is full of gratitude for you and your Son Jesus. I am in awe that you wanted me, loved me and found me in the world. I am so anxious to come into your presence again and again. Here I come Lord!”

Promises are only as good as the one who makes them! We hold fast our confession because “**He who promised is faithful**.” Let us confess that we believe God. That what He says about Christ Jesus and us, is totally true. “Holding fast” is a constant thing. As soon as you let go you are not “holding fast” any longer. Now I will be the first to admit that this is not easy. So….

**Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, [24]:** **“Consider”** means to “notice or take note!” **“Stimulate”** means to provoke. Not to anger, but to love and good deeds. To love God more and to “hold fast to our confession.”

**One another:** For us to do something for one another, we need to be with one another. Let me frame this in a more personal way. For people to demonstrate love and affection toward you they need to see you. The “one another” verses in the New Testament abound. one another

**1 Thessalonians 4:9** Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for *anyone* to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another

**1 Thessalonians 4:18** Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Thessalonians 5:11** Therefore encourage one another and build up one another just as you also are doing.

**1 Thessalonians 5:13** and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another

**1 Thessalonians 5:15** See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people.

**James 4:11** Do not speak against one another brethren.

**1 Peter 4:9** Be hospitable to one another without complaint.

**1 Peter 4:10** As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

**What are the love and good deeds to which we are to stimulate one another?**

**Love for God because He:**

Set us apart (sanctified) for His worship

**Hebrews 10:14**  14 For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

Wrote His law on our hearts and minds

**Hebrews 10:16**  16 "THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS UPON THEIR HEART, AND ON THEIR MIND I WILL WRITE THEM," *He then says*,

Chose to forget our sins

**Hebrews 10:17**  17 "AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE."

**Good deeds include:**

Drawing near to God

**Hebrews 10:22**  22 let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Remaining steadfast in hope

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

**Not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another* [25a]:** The true church meets in various places. Sometimes in “churchy” buildings, but neither the organization nor the building are “the church.” God’s church is His redeemed children. The call of Scripture is to love God and also one another.

You can never provoke a man to trust and love Christ if you do not do it yourself. On the other hand the best way to love and trust Christ is to be close to someone who does. This is the circle of fellowship. What we need, we receive from others. What they need, they receive from us. God has willed this to be so. This is God’s reason why we should be together.

**Not forsaking our assembling together:** This is not a call for more church attendance. D.L. Moody famously said that “spending a Sunday in church will not make you a Christian anymore than spending a night in a garage will make you a car.” But God is calling His children to come and worship Him with the other children. And to build one another up in love and Christ Glorifying good works.

Withdrawal from the rest of the believers is fraught with danger. God, as we have already seen intends to reveal Himself in the world through the family of believers. It is precisely for this reason that no one has everything they need. We imagine falsely that other Christians are self-contained. They are NOT! You cannot fulfill God’s purpose in your life if you keep to yourself and avoid intimate fellowship with the other believers. The fellowship of believers is the way God has ordained to complete you. So what does this verse say? Instead of being alone…be encouraged. Can you see the reasoning here. Alone = discouraged and struggling to love Christ and trust Him. Together = encouraged and strengthened to love Christ and trust Him.

Encourage means to “be alongside” Friends that never visit and never invite actually discourage us…do they not? You never hear them say, “I miss you. Come and eat with me. Let’s go out to dinner. Let’s take a walk. Let’s pray together or go visit another brother or sister who is discouraged.” These are the actual things that the Scripture has in mind here. Church attendance is a very poor substitute for “life in the family.” But Church is Christ’s family. It would be a strange thing indeed if I only saw my children individually or my wife when she is alone. Church is where Christ is preached. God still uses preaching to save and transform us.

**And all the more as you see the day drawing near [25b]:** I can confidently say that history is drawing to a close. It is 2000 years closer than when this was written. But recent events make it appear to be careening to an end. Our world is obsessed with destroying all peace, hope and joy. Just listen to the lock step narrative: “The planet is going to burn up and nothing can be done to stop it accept to trust the wisdom of man.” “We are all going to die of disease and nothing can be done to stop it except to trust the understanding of men.” “Man’s only hope to survive is globalism (no borders) with those who know best in charge! “Trust the science” is how they say it today. What they really mean however is “Trust the scientist.” Globalism is anti-God and anti-Christ. Every global kingdom has steadfastly opposed God. And, not surprisingly, God is opposed to globalism and went so far as to confound the language of men to make it as hard as possible to achieve. [Gen. 11:1-9] Satan works tirelessly however to achieve a global community of mankind. He will be successful for a short time according to Revelation.

Now even if all this mad rush to the apocalypse should slow to a crawl there will still be our own struggles with sin, weakness and brokenness. So God created this family we are discussing. It is a refuge and a blessed balm in an evil world. I like how John MacArthur sums up these verses.

“The writer is saying very simply, “The door is open, the way is made available to enter into God’s presence. Come in and stay and fellowship with His people, and enjoy God’s company forever.” ***John MacArthur Jr.***