

April 28, 2019 AM  
Pastor Ken Hepner

## ***THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS***

### ***24. "Persevering in our Faith in Jesus: Growing our Relationships"***

Hebrews 10:19 – 25

#### **Introduction:**

This morning as we turn our attention to the Word of God, we are returning to the book of Hebrews and the truths the Lord has for us in this wonderful letter. It was written to exhort the Hebrew Christians to continue in their faith, to walk through life with the Holy Spirit of God living in them and leading them. He calls them to walk in love with one another in deepening community!

The Biblical truth the Brethren in Christ people have prized for 245 years in this country and our forefathers in Europe were martyred for centuries ago. Our value is: The kingdom of God is expressed in the **Community of God's people** and the community of God's people is expressed in growing deeper in our **Relationships of holy, self-emptying, other-oriented love with one another.**

First, let's remind ourselves of the background we have understood as foundational to what the Hebrew author wrote:

He is urging his readers to continue to love one another deeply, because when we love one another we are actually showing our love for God. He is honored and glorified in a community of people who love each other deeply!

The author of this book was writing to well-educated Greek speaking Hebrew Christians who had come to know Jesus Christ as the long-awaited Savior and Messiah. He is deeply concerned that these believers are going to forsake their relationship with Jesus and go back to trying to earn their way to heaven by their works.

He laid down foundation stones for the faith. He discusses who Jesus is and what He came to do to purchase our salvation. He discusses the gift of salvation by faith in Christ and that those whom He has justified must live by faith. The Holy Spirit came to live in their lives, **Poured Out** in them the **Love** of God. They expressed His holy love to one another in their fellowship!

He gave the readers seven increasingly clear and stern warnings against apostasy as he wrote the seven warning passages in this letter to the Hebrew people. **Each of the warnings builds on the truth he is sharing, and is a progressive word to their hearts to Remain Steadfast in Faith.**

The author urges his readers to press on and hold fast to the personal relationship they had received with the Father by faith in Christ Jesus.

At this point in our journey we are studying the application and exhortation sections of the book of Hebrews. He has established foundation stones for the faith and has given warnings to hold

fast to the faith and not forfeit their salvation. In the context of those teachings he gave them exhortations regarding how to live the Christian life. Each of the sixteen exhortations in this letter begins with the words “let us.”

## **I. Coming to God’s Presence in Sincere Prayer:**

This message today comes from the passage immediately preceding these words written in Hebrews 10:19 – 25. Let’s look together at the first two application and exhortation words found earlier in the text. He writes the words “let us” and then exhorts his readers.

First, “**Let us draw near to God,**” and he pointed out to us exactly how we are responsible to draw near to God. There are four Scriptural admonitions we are to follow telling us we are to seek after God, to hunger and thirst after His righteousness:

1. With **Sincere Hearts** – the words here are so descriptive. The word sincere is alethines, meaning literally, “without stones.” The author uses a word that tells us we aren’t to permit hardness of heart to live in us if we long wholly to embrace God. If we are to draw near to God in prayer it must be with a soft and teachable heart!

2. With **Full Assurance** of **Faith** – Full persuasion of faith means that we really believe and are absolutely convinced Christ Jesus is the answer, that He is “*the way, the truth, and the life.*” Knowing Jesus is the truth is important for meeting the adversary of our souls head-on. The enemy’s tools are lies and deception, and we can see them more readily if we have filled our hearts with the truth!

3. With **Cleansed Consciences** – the sins we have committed in the past and the guilt we feel for them aren’t simply covered over by God’s mercy. He acted in Christ on our behalf to wash us with the precious blood of Jesus, to cleanse our consciences of acts that lead to death. We are no longer at the mercy of the enemy’s condemning words. We are called to walk in the truth that we have been cleansed by the precious blood of Jesus.

4. With **Pure Bodies** – When we truly respond to the mercy of God and receive the gift of salvation by faith in Christ Jesus, we are made pure, “just as if I’d never sinned!” If you are a Christian your body is pure! What matters is not so much what you did before as what Jesus has done for you.

Second, “**Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess.**” We are told, in this incredible letter to the Hebrews, that we have a hope that takes us into the very presence of God in Christ Jesus. Hebrews 6:19, 20a “*We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf.*” We are urged and exhorted to cling to this hope!

There is a companion truth we all need to see and take to heart. If we are relating well to God, we will be longing for deeper, more meaningful relationships with people as an expression of true kingdom community. What that means is to that **we genuinely Care for One Another and**

**we work with one another to Mature as followers of Jesus.** The Brethren in Christ Church has always believed that the truth of God is spoken into our lives in a number of ways:

- The primary way the Lord speaks is through the Scriptures as the living and active Word of God understood and applied to our lives.
- God speaks through the general revelation of creation.
- He speaks through the conviction and leadership of the Holy Spirit, the voice of the Lord in our hearts in conviction and direction.
- God speaks in and through the community of faith, as we correctly handle the Word of life together.
- God speaks by the gifts of the Holy Spirit as He releases them in the community of faith.
- God speaks through gifts of preaching and teaching, encouragement, exhortation, prophecy, words of wisdom and words of knowledge, tongues or languages and their interpretation.

## **II. Let Us Spur One Another On:**

Hebrews 10:24 *“And let us spur one another on toward love and good deeds.”*

In kingdom community, as God’s people get together, we become instruments for the Lord to speak into one another’s lives. In this text we are called to “spur one another on.” You know what happens when a horse rider wears spurs and uses them? As the rider digs that sharp metal instrument into the flesh around the rib cage of the horse, he wants the horse to feel warm fuzziness and to feel content to walk through life at his own easy gait! Of course not!

The author uses a word that is really a pinpoint communication piece as he attempts to show us what we are supposed to be doing for one another as we work on expressing kingdom community. He says we are called to, in the Greek “paraxusmon,” meaning, “to incite, spur on, or provoke.” It is from a compound word para – “alongside” and oxus – “to sharpen.” So, in true kingdom community we come alongside each other to care about our Christian lives, to sharpen each other’s faith walk with Jesus!

I’m not talking being like about those who walk around talking sharply to others to put them in their place. Experience has taught me people who speak sharply to others get very offended when they are spoken sharply to. Dr John Maxwell has an adage he uses that is really appropriate for us to look at here in this context. “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”

Relationships that are growing are not ones in which everyone only says the nice and flowery things to each other. Relationships that are growing deeper are based on truth in the inward parts. To risk being truthful with one another requires two important components: **Love** and **Trust**. Love and trust take time to develop and run the risk of being hurt.

**Spur one another on toward Love:** This word is calling us to get into each other’s lives and really love each other deeply from the heart, so much so that we can speak into one another’s

lives with integrity because we care deeply about each other's spiritual life. One of my prayers as Sr. Pastor of this flock is that we will incite each other, provoke each other to love one another deeply from the heart!

The Lord Jesus told us what He considered to be the greatest commandments, Matthew 22:37 -- 40: *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."*

I Peter 4:8 *"Above all love one another deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins."*

**Spur one another on toward Good Deeds:** This word of encouragement is calling us to help one another to grow in desire to do what is good, to serve the Lord with humble acts of love and compassion.

Jesus said, *"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets."*

Paul, in expanding on the law of sowing and reaping, tells us in Galatians 6:7 – 10: *"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."*

### **III. Let Us Not Give Up Meeting Together:**

Hebrews 10:25a *"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing,"*

What often passes itself off as fellowship, in the typical North American church, is pretty shallow and flimsy stuff. We get together to see everybody. We get together to catch up on all the news. We have ice cream and play Rook. **People today, especially in this "I don't need anybody" cultural value of autonomy and self-sufficiency, need the real thing, to know and to be known, to care and to be cared about.**

Honestly, because we are so prone to accept the church's cultural norm of shallow and flimsy fellowship we simply follow after the cultural ways: If it isn't going the way I want it to go I leave and as the consummate consumer, I find something I like better in another church. Church family, it is just too easy to feel alone, ostracized, and lonely, and then to act on those feelings and to separate over issues, divide, and disengage from one another in terms of friendships, churches, marriages, and as families.

What true fellowship is in the Biblical sense of the word, is gathering together in the Name of Jesus Christ to genuinely know each other, to risk vulnerability with each other, and to carry each other's burdens in love! The author uses the compound Greek word – episunagoge, meaning "to gather upon, to unite at a place, to come together." The connotation is that when we

get together **there is purpose: To Build Each Other Up in our mutual faith and to bear concern for one another's walk with God!**

We are responsible before God to choose **to Gather Together in Jesus' Name regardless.** One of the things that simply must be said is that making a commitment to take this admonition seriously means that we will not allow the enemy's works to drive us apart from one another. Jesus told us, "*The thief comes to steal, to kill, and destroy. I have come that they might have life and have it to the full.*" **The enemy's kingdom sows works of division, strife, conflict, or hurt feelings nursed into grudges or bitterness of heart.**

**Each of these things is aimed at one goal: To tear God's people apart and get them to separate permanently from each other.** In a sense it seems like the spirit of the age is "separate and divorce," and in using those terms I am not referring just to marriage. I'm talking about relationships in general. If something happens, we don't like and it can't be fixed quickly and to our way of thinking we simply get out!

The fact is there are good reasons to leave a church. If it has descended into error and false doctrine, we best get out! But the truth is we often separate over nonessentials. The fact is all of us do things we wish we could hit the rewind button and undo! Honestly, as your pastor, I see things done and actions taken that cause me to feel deep hurt, anguish heart, and anger at sinful decisions that are made.

But none of these feelings I have in my heart could ever make me turn away from you and stay away from the body. I know that it is by swallowing the lump in my throat and wading into conflicts and hurts, attempting to help that I grow in my walk with God. It is when I suffer that God is using "people pain" as an abrasive agent to rub down my rough or touchy spots in my heart!

Are you struggling with something someone has done, an expectation of behaviors that hasn't been met? **The enemy wants you to be angry, separate, and divide over it. The Lord wants to use it to change us and the people who hurt us!**

#### **IV. Let Us Encourage One Another:**

Hebrews 10:25b "*let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*"

This exhortation invites us to speak sincere words of encouragement to one another. We are exhorted to look for things in each other's lives that are good, excellent and praiseworthy and then to actually speak blessing to that area of a person's life. If what Jesus said is true, and I believe it is, that we speak out of the abundance of what is stored up in our hearts, then I want to be a person who speaks life-giving and encouraging words to people every chance I get!

The Greek word is parakalountes – "ones who come alongside and call out, ones who admonish, incite to action, comfort, or cheer on," thus it is rendered loosely, "encourage."

We are to speak these encouraging words from sincere hearts of love, caring deeply about the spiritual welfare of our brothers and sisters. Speaking positive words can be flattery, which is to speak in such a way as to gain an advantage or manipulate desired responses. But this is a word to friends about being friends that make a difference in the life of a loved one, relationship that really matters because they are deepening.

Working toward the four big Biblical R's:

Acts 3:19 – 21, is taken from the context of Peter addressing the crowd after the healing of the lame man: *“Repent, then and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Christ who has been appointed for you – even Jesus. He must remain in heaven until the time comes for him to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.”*

a.) **Renewing our hearts** has to do with the issue of our desires. Every person who was ever born on this planet has a heart-longing to know God. Some people try to fill that need with money, things, career or status, sexual expression, or in a relationship with one they love. Every person who responds to the Lord Jesus' gracious offer of salvation has entered into the only relationship that can satisfy the deepest longings of the heart: A living and vital relationship with God in Christ Jesus by the Holy Spirit! Paul told the Corinthians our hearts need renewing: II Corinthians 4:16 *“Therefore, we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.”*

b.) **Restoring our joy** has to do with walking in full understanding and expression of the gift of salvation, eternal life, to know the deep and abiding joy of sins forgiven and fellowship with God. Honestly, life is tough sometimes and it takes its toll on “the joy of the Lord” reservoir! King David, writing in a time of deep remorse and sorrow wrote Psalm 51:10 – 12, that sometimes we need a creative act of God in our hearts: *“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant a willing spirit to sustain me.”*

c.) **Refreshing our souls** has to do with the mind, will, and emotions, which can be and often are affected by difficulties in life. One source of wear and tear on our soul is the issue of battling temptation and the pull of the world on the sinful nature. Our soul is the repository of all of our life's experiences and some of them have been hard on us! Another source of wear and tear on our soul is the painful choices others make, which have an affect on us. Oftentimes, because we care so deeply for people, we take something of their heartache into our soul. King David well understood the need of our souls when he wrote the classic words of Psalm 23:1 – 3. *“The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul.”*

d.) **Reviving our spiritual desires** has to do with those longings of the heart we all feel at times to want to know God more intimately than we do. Reviving our spiritual desires has to do with surrendering myself to God's Holy Spirit. It has to do with inviting the transforming power of God to work in my heart, mind, will, and body. To revive something means that it first had to live – live! Psalm 80:17 – 19 *“Let your hand rest on the man at your right hand, the son of man*

*you have raised up for yourself. Then we will not turn away from you; revive us, and we will call on your name. Restore us, O Lord God Almighty; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved.”*

April 28, 2019 AM

**THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS:**

**24. “Persevering in Faith in Jesus: Growing our Relationships”**

Hebrews 10:19 – 25

**Introduction:**

We are in a study of the Book of Hebrews, which was written to refocus the readers on Jesus’ redeeming work for them. He appeals to the reader to follow the lead of the Holy Spirit, who will pour His love out in our hearts!

The Biblical truth the Brethren in Christ Church has cherished for 245 years is: The kingdom of God on earth is expressed in the C \_\_\_\_\_ of God’s people.

The author urges the readers to continue to love one another ... to not forsake their relationship with Jesus and return to trying to earn salvation!

He laid down foundations for their faith: The Holy Spirit came to live in their lives and P \_\_\_\_\_ O \_\_\_\_\_ the love of God in their hearts.

There are seven clear W \_\_\_\_\_ P \_\_\_\_\_ in his letter, pleading with the reader to heed the warnings to not fall away from or abandon their faith in Jesus Christ!

We are now studying the exhortation section of the letter. Each of his exhortation teachings begins with the words: “L \_\_\_\_\_ U \_\_\_\_\_.”

**I. Let Us Come into God’s Presence Sincerely:**

In Hebrews 10:19 – 25 there are wonderful words of exhortation from our author.

First, “Let us D \_\_\_\_\_ N \_\_\_\_\_ to God” in deep, passionate prayer:

1. With S \_\_\_\_\_ H \_\_\_\_\_.
2. With F \_\_\_\_\_ A \_\_\_\_\_ of F \_\_\_\_\_.
3. With C \_\_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_\_.
4. With P \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_.

Second, “Let us H \_\_\_\_\_ unswervingly to the H \_\_\_\_\_ we profess:”

If we are relating to God well, we will long to relate deeply to people. We will C \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_ one another, seeking to help each other to M \_\_\_\_\_ in our understanding of His will, His voice to us: There are five primary ways the Lord makes His voice known to us ...

**II. Let Us Spur One Another On:** Hebrews 10:24

The author writes impassioned pleas to spur one another on in the faith!

He uses a compound Greek word: paraxusmon: It means to incite, spur on, provoke. It is from “para,” alongside and “oxus,” meaning to sharpen.

Relationships that are growing and deepening have two bases: L\_\_\_\_\_ and T\_\_\_\_\_.

Notice we are to spur one another on toward L\_\_\_\_\_. There are two companion passages to this word: Matthew 22:37 - 40 and I Peter 4:8

Notice we are to spur one another on toward G\_\_\_\_\_ D\_\_\_\_\_. Jesus’ “Golden Rule” and Galatians 6:7 – 10...

### **III. Let Us Not Give Up Meeting Together: Hebrews 10:25a**

What often passes itself off as fellowship in the church today is shallow and flimsy stuff. People today need the real thing in their relationships: To K\_\_\_\_\_ and be K\_\_\_\_\_, to C\_\_\_\_\_ and be C\_\_\_\_\_ F\_\_\_\_\_.

He uses the compound Greek word episunagogue, meaning, “To come together, to gather upon, to unite in a place.” It speaks to purpose for our gatherings: to B\_\_\_\_\_ each other U\_\_\_\_\_ in our faith and to carry concern for each other’s spiritual lives!

We make a commitment to G\_\_\_\_\_ in the Name of Jesus regardless!

Our enemy wants to sow division, strife, and conflict among us. The goal is to cause hurt and nurse grudges, to tear us apart from each other. The enemy wants us to separate and divide. The Lord desires for us be changed!

### **IV. Let Us Encourage One Another: Hebrews 10:25b**

This exhortation is to E\_\_\_\_\_ on another in our F\_\_\_\_\_. He uses the Greek word parakalountes: “Ones who walk beside each other, call out to, admonish, incite to action.”

Working toward the four R’s of the kingdom, Acts 3:19 – 21:

1. R\_\_\_\_\_ our hearts.
2. R\_\_\_\_\_ our joy.
3. R\_\_\_\_\_ our souls.
4. R\_\_\_\_\_ our spiritual desires.

Reviving means surrendering to the Holy Spirit’s work in my life, that I am alive in Christ Jesus and want to be so more and more: Psalm 80:17 – 19 ...

## **Discussion Starter Questions for Home Groups**

- 1. Why does the author of the letter to the Hebrews give his readers seven clear warning passages? What is his burden on his heart as he writes the letter?**
- 2. Why is it so important for us to always be sure to do our acts of obedience to God constrained by love? Who prompts us to be motivated by love?**
- 3. What are your thoughts on the importance, the priority of coming to the Lord in sincere and passionate heart-cry, praying about everything we face in life?**
- 4. What is on the author's heart as he gives us the four phrases describing how we are to draw near to the Lord in sincere prayer?**
- 5. The author speaks about choosing to invest in deepening relationships as we seek to live out our faith. Why are love and trust so important to relating well?**
- 6. What do you think is behind his exhortation to spur one another on toward love and good deeds? Why does he link those two thoughts?**
- 7. What do you think the author wants his readers to know and understand about our fellowship in our church family? Why is it important for us to get beyond the shallow definition of fellowship, to enter into deeper relating?**
- 8. Why do you think the Scriptures exhort us to those four "R" words we studied from the text Acts 3:19 – 21? Why do we all sometimes need to be revived and renewed in our spiritual journey?**
- 9. Read together aloud Acts 3:1 - 26 and discuss insights you have from Peter's exhortation to the people gathered at the temple that day. What did the Holy Spirit speak through Peter as the people gathered together following the miracle of the lame man walking and praising God?**
- 10. What are some things the Holy Spirit spoke to you about the importance of your personal prayer life in the message today? What are some things you are challenged to do more intentionally in your life with our church members?**