

**Hebrews 10:25**  
**May 22, 2016**

**Open with Prayer**

**HOOK:**

As a refresher from last week, you will recall that the writer of Hebrews spent a lot of energy on giving the Hebrew Christians a road map on how to overcome their discouragement. Last week I asked you, “When you are experiencing a dark time in your life or tough circumstances, do you draw closer to the church or do you tend to distance yourself from the church?” The majority of you said, “We’d draw TO the church.” But let me up the ante a bit:

Q: Assuming you’re in the midst of difficult circumstances and you draw to the church, how easy is it for you to focus on others who need encouragement *when you need it yourself?!* [It’s very hard to be other-centered when we are wrapped up in our own personal dramas.]

Doesn’t this sound like a tall order?! But this is what the author of Hebrews is giving as his “treatment plan” or “road map” or “prescription.” Let’s review briefly v.19-24 and enumerate them. **With confidence come before our great high priest and....**

- “Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith.” [Go to God first]
- “Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess for God is faithful. [Our internal work. Practice what we preach because people are watching us]
- “Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.” [Be other-centered. Figure out how to lift someone else up. He’s asking his readership to completely change their focus.]

**Transition:** That’s easier said than done. This may sound counterintuitive, but when life hits us hard, the prescription to overcome discouragement seems hard to execute. If we think God is more distant than near, then approaching God first may be a tall order. If you’re a Hebrew Christian who has faced much persecution and suffering, then holding onto your hope in Jesus may not be easy. The last thing you desire to think about when life feels dark is “How can spur my brothers and sisters in Christ toward love and good deeds?!” [Go around the room “I’m hurting right now, but how can I help you?”]

The writer never said it was going to be easy, but he is selling these Hebrew Christians on two key premises. First, the road map hinges on **WHO God is** when we are in a period of discouragement. God IS faithful. The hope we profess in Christ Jesus IS real, IS valid, IS eternally legitimate. Second, the premise in this road map is built in the phrase “Let US...” He didn’t preach at his listeners. He positioned himself as a sojourner who feels their pain. His road map presupposes that these Hebrew Christians will come together and support one another.

That’s why support groups are so helpful. If you lose a loved one, you would strongly benefit attending a grief support group because these are people who completely understand what you’re experiencing. There is comfort in knowing you’re not alone. I want us to leave class today

understanding that all of us CAN overcome discouragement BY coming together regularly to encourage one another – as long as it is called day.

Since we didn't get through the author's complete roadmap, we're going to pick up where we with one more admonition the writer gives his listeners in v.25 before we read the remainder of the chapter. I want us to unpack v.25 to finish his road map. Then we'll tackle the rest of the chapter for the remaining time.

**BOOK (NIV 1984):**

V.25:

- Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

**Process Questions:**

Q: In what context do you typically hear this verse quoted? [When a person who professes to be a Christian suggests that they don't have to go to church to be a Christian; or discussion of millennials who don't see organized religion as relevant]

Q: What bothers you when someone says they don't have to go to church to be a Christian? [they're rationalizing; they don't want to be inconvenienced]

Q: How do you respond to someone who is a “professing Christian” and says, “I don't believe you have to go to church to be a Christian?” [Let people wrestle with this.]

Read blog post “The Selfishness of Skipping Church” by Pastor Art Heinz and then get reactions (<https://artheinzministries.wordpress.com/2015/10/17/the-selfishness-of-skipping-church/>)

Q: What did you hear in this post that resonated with you? [He correctly tagged that the absence of Christians in the church is due to selfishness; cold, lifeless, church-skipping Christians won't be the catalyst for fanning the flames of spiritual renewal and fire in the U.S. (and Lord knows we need one); how will we raise a younger generation of godly, committed Christians if parents allow a hit and miss approach to church?]

In today's culture, I think Pastor nailed it. Selfishness is at the core of those who rationalize that they don't need to go to church. In the context of Hebrews Chp 10, these new Christians were already establishing a habit of not meeting with other believers. Why? They were truly discouraged, tired of being persecuted, and tired of suffering. It's hard for me to believe that the majority of Christians in today's culture are skipping church because they are being persecuted for serving Christ and suffering in His name!

So if we approached these believers and said, “We really miss you in our gatherings, please come back,” we'd probably learn why they had stopped coming in the first place. We would discover their hurt, their suffering, their disillusionment, and we would encourage them and let them know that we will come along beside you to see you through this difficult chapter in life. Maybe they are in the group of the “bruised, battered, bored and broken.”

Q: So how do we reach the person who doesn't feel a need to gather with us? How do we become change agents in this culture? What does our messaging need to be? [an organization who provides spiritual services vs a family where you invest time to help each other spiritually mature]

**LOOK:**

How can we be change agents in a nation that needs a spiritual revival? Who can we reach out to this week that has gotten into the habit of not coming to church? Let's help them reconnect with the church as their family.

**Close in Prayer**

**Commentaries for Today's Lesson:**

**Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Vol. 2, pg. 315). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.**

*Let us consider one another* (vv. 24–25). Fellowship with God must never become selfish. We must also fellowship with other Christians in the local assembly. Apparently, some of the wavering believers had been absenting themselves from the church fellowship. It is interesting to note that the emphasis here is not on what a believer *gets from* the assembly, but rather on what he can *contribute to* the assembly. Faithfulness in church attendance encourages others and provokes them to love and good works. One of the strong motives for faithfulness is the soon coming of Jesus Christ. In fact, the only other place the word translated “assembling” (Heb. 10:25) is used in the New Testament is in 2 Thessalonians 2:1, where it's translated “gathering” and deals with the coming of Christ.

The three great Christian virtues are evidenced here: *faith* (Heb. 10:22), *hope* (Heb. 10:23), and *love* (Heb. 10:24). They are the fruit of our fellowship with God in His heavenly sanctuary.

**Pentecost, J. D. (1985). *Daniel*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pg. 805). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.**

10:23–25. This kind of confident access to God necessarily entails that believers **hold unswervingly to the hope we profess** with full confidence in the reliability of God's promises. The writer revealed in these verses that his concern for fidelity to the faith is not an abstraction, but a confrontation with real danger. There was an urgent need for mutual concern and exhortation (**toward love and good deeds**) within the church he wrote to. His readers were not to abandon **meeting together, as some were doing**. Already there seemed to have been defections from their ranks, though his words might have applied to other churches where such desertions had occurred. In any case their mutual efforts to spur one another on should increase **as they see the Day approaching** (cf. v. 37; a well-known NT trilogy is included in these vv.: faith, v. 22; hope, v. 23; love, v. 24).