

Let Us

by Anton Bosch

The sermon emphasizes the importance of drawing near to God with a true heart and full assurance of faith, and holding fast to the confession of our hope in the resurrection.

Duration: 47:15

Scripture: Hebrews 4:16, Hebrews 6:18, Hebrews 10:19, Hebrews 10:22-25

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of holding fast to our hope in God. He uses the analogy of a person caught in a storm, clinging to a piece of wood for dear life. The speaker encourages listeners to draw near to God with a true heart and full assurance of faith. He reminds them that God is faithful and will ultimately bring victory and transformation. The sermon also highlights the need to fix our eyes on Jesus and not put our hope in worldly things.

Transcript

Go to the book of Hebrews. I have been looking at Jesus as our great high priest in the book of Hebrews and I'm going to go to verse, to chapter 10, Hebrews chapter 10, and we laid some background on Friday night and last night concerning the high priesthood of Jesus, the fact that he has touched with the feelings of our infirmities, that he sympathizes with our weaknesses, that he was in every point tempted like we are, that he was pushed to the very limit just like you and I sometimes are, and yet without sin, and so because he is a high priest I'm going to now look at the application of that this morning and also this evening. And so in Hebrews chapter 10, and I'm going to just read a passage from Hebrews 10 19 through 25.

Hebrews 10 19 therefore brethren having boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus by a new and a living way which he consecrated for us through the veil that is his flesh and having a high priest over the house of God 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 let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering for he who promised is faithful and let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as is the manner of some but exalting one another and so much the more as you see the day approaching.

So there's that little word therefore in verse 19 and he's reminding us now of the things that he has now established in the previous nine chapters and the first thing that we have is boldness to enter into the

holiest by the blood of Jesus.

We have boldness remember we spoke up from chapter 4 that we need to come boldly to the throne of grace we do not come with arrogance we do not come with our self-sufficiency but we come boldly on the basis of the blood of Jesus on the basis of the blood of Jesus and you'll see that here he speaks about the blood and the body and that gives us access into the holiest remember he's referring us back to the tabernacle where you had the altar court and then you had the holy place with a priest alone could go in and then you had the holiest of all with a high priest alone could go in once a year and that with the shedding of blood and so he is saying that we now have access and that's a wonderful thing because as Gentiles and I don't know if there are any Jewish people here but I I hear some

Brooklyn accents and some Spanish folk and probably not many Jewish people but as Gentiles then we don't even have access to the altar court but we are able to be brought into the altar court where the altar is where the cross is represented we are brought to the labor where there is the washing of the water of the word but more than that we're brought into the holy place where the priests alone are able with a common Jew could not even entering were able to enter into there where you have the lampstand and the altar of incense on the table of show bread but more than that we're able to enter in we're not even the priests could go but only the high priest could go once a year into the very presence of God what a privilege and so we're able to come boldly that priest would go in with fear

and trepidation and Jewish tradition tells us that he would go in with a rope around his legs so that if he got struck down in the presence of God they would be able to pull him out because no one would dare go into the presence of God to be able to bring out the body of a man who was killed in the presence of God but we're able to come boldly into his presence by a new and a living way not the way of the dead sacrifices that were constantly being made but because of the life of Jesus his death and his life and so I'm just going very quickly so because I want to get down to the application this 20 by a new living way which he consecrated for us through the veil that is his flesh so reminding us of the fact that remember when he was crucified the veil of that temple was was was torn and

was torn from the top to the bottom and other words it was not a work of man it was a work of God and it was torn down the center so that we're able not as the high priest would go in through the side because the veil would cover the whole width of the tabernacle and so he would have to draw the curtain aside around the side and we go in through the side we don't have we don't go in through the side entrance were able to come boldly down the middle right down in the center into the presence of God they remember what was in the center the altar of incense the altar of incense represented prayer and worship and so we're able through prayer and worship to enter into the very presence of God now he says then because we have also this 21 a high priest over the house of God a high priest and

you know he's comparing Jesus with these other high priest these high priests were often times and caring because they didn't understand the issues of the people they lived in these wonderfully isolated villages cities of sanctuary they they really didn't have to work they were just full time in the presence of God and doing the things of God they didn't deal with the day-to-day issues of people and in fact many of them were abusive many of them would rob the people would take bribes from the people some of them would even abuse the woman all sorts of terrible things you remember that went on in the history of Israel as a result of priests and high priests that were corrupt before God but we have a wonderful faithful high priest he is touched with the feelings of our infirmities he

has he has one desire and that is to bring us into the presence of God he has no desire the priests in the Old Testament were very conscious of their power and their position and they would keep people out of God's presence because that would keep people in a relationship with them instead of in a relationship with God but Jesus has one desire for us and that is to usher us into the presence of God and to and to and to intercede for us he ever lives to make intercession for us and so he's pleading our cause before the father on the basis of his shed blood and his broken body and so we have these wonderful privileges and because we have them there are a few things that we need to do and those are the things I want to concentrate on this morning and so the first thing that we need to do is

to draw near with a true heart and full assurance of faith having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience in our bodies washed with pure water three times you'll see let us the next three verses begin with those words those words let us and so the first thing we need to do because we have all of these things that we've been speaking about that what we need to do is we need to draw near I said on Friday night that unfortunately we have that throne of grace but many times we just don't come into God's presence and the first thing we do when we have a problem that is we we call somebody we call somebody who can help us or somebody who can give us advice in fact what we should be doing is we should be fleeing to that throne of grace let us draw near to God and you know he has done so

much to prepare the way for us we have such a tremendous privilege to enter into his presence and yet somehow for some reason so many Christians do not avail themselves of the wonderful privilege that is theirs of drawing near to God this is not a new problem it's an old problem and you remember that the first time when God brought Israel out of Egypt and he brought them to Mount Sinai three months out of Egypt and they came to Mount Sinai and God begins to speak to the people and he says I want to establish a relationship he says I brought you on eagles wings and I brought you to myself and God began to speak he speaks 10 words or the 10 commandments and what was Israel's response let not God speak to us Moses you go and speak to God and you come and tell us what God has to say and we'll

we'll listen and you know it then says those very sad words that that Moses went near drew near to God where he was on the mountain but Israel remained in their camps God had done everything to bring them to this point where he could speak to them personally and yet Israel rejected God and they said Moses you go and it says Moses drew near but Israel stayed far from God and then you remember that later on the Lord provides for them a a tabernacle of meeting now this is not the tabernacle I've just spoken about with the with the various furnishings it was in fact Moses's tent that they pitched outside of the camp and it wasn't a temporary thing until the tabernacle proper could be built and the purpose of that was that if anyone wanted to meet with God they could go out there and they

could meet with God and the book of Exodus paints this graphic picture of this tent that had been set there a way by which anyone could enter into that tab with that tent and and and communicate with God and it says that Moses went in there and he spoke with God as a man speaks to his friend and we say well that was Moses's privilege no it was everyone's privilege but you know it said the sad thing is it says about the people that when Moses would do that every man would stand at his tent door and he would watch and so again God says draw near and the people said no Moses you can you can go and speak to God we'll we'll just stay where we are but you know then it speaks about another young man Joshua and you know it says that he went in there and he never left he remained I don't know for

how long but he was perpetually in the presence of God only two men out of all of the 600,000 men and women and the other in addition to the 600,000 men women and children only two chose to make use of

this privilege of being able to speak to God and I wonder whether it's any different today when Jesus has done everything and he has paid the price and he shed his blood and broken his body in order to make a access for us into his presence that we may come to that throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and that we may find grace to help in a time of need and yet somehow we just don't do it.

We'll send a message to the pastor please pray for us when God is saying come and enter into a relationship with me come and communicate with me come and bring your burdens and your and your and your load and your and your problems and your frustrations and your heartaches and your hurts just come and bring them to me come to me all you labor and are heavy-laden and yet somehow we choose to try to carry the load ourselves or hope that somebody else will carry it for us and yet the very one who's there and he is saying come, draw near, draw near, draw near. You know I look at the Lord Jesus as he comes to Jerusalem and you know this is a picture which just just catches my heart as Jesus comes over the hill and Jerusalem lies in front of him and it says that Jesus wept over Jerusalem and he says Jerusalem Jerusalem how often would I have gathered you as a hen gathers her chickens and you would not you would not and I wonder today that if Jesus came to the church, church in general, would he say those same words? How often did I want to gather you? How often did I want to draw near to you? How often did I not want to just just shelter you under my wings and just warm you and protect you and bring you into that position and that situation of love and of fellowship and of intimacy? But you would not. You would not.

Let us draw near with a true heart. In other words not with a heart that is false, a heart that is hypocritical, a heart that is sinful but with a true heart. And then there are two other things we need to to have in this process that's all we need to do.

A true heart and a heart sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. So you need to have a shower before you come to church. No that's not what he's saying.

When he says that we need to have a heart sprinkled is he meaning that I must have my pump sprinkled? No he's meaning the heart in a spiritual sense. So if the heart is spiritual then the body also has to be spiritual in this verse. It's just one of those rules of interpretation.

And so what is he saying? He's really saying we need to come before him pure with pure hearts and with pure bodies. With pure hearts in other words with pure motives and with pure love and devotion and with pure bodies with pure actions. Now how do I get that? By the blood of Jesus.

That's all. By the blood of Jesus. And so we all know that we sin daily.

And John says if we say we are without sin we make God a liar. So we all sin. But we have the privilege of being able to come and to just cleanse the same way as the priests came into the holy place every day to serve at the altar of incense and the table of showbread.

But they would stop at the altar. They would make the sacrifice. Then they would stop at the laver and they would see the reflection of their faces in that laver and there would be the water and they would wash and they would be cleansed and they would be ready to go into the presence of God.

This is something they had to do every day. And this is something we have to do every day as we come into God's presence. It doesn't have to be a long drawn out thing.

But simply coming and saying Lord I don't come in my own ability. I don't come because I have done well this week or because I have been particularly spiritual this week. But I come because Jesus' blood cleanses me and washed me.

And I come into your presence boldly. And folk, I just desire that as Christians we would draw near to God. That we would just make use of that privilege which none of the people in the Old Testament ever had except for the high priest.

And even he did not really enter into the presence of God. It was just the glory of God shone in that place. But we have a privilege to enter into not an earthly tabernacle but into heaven itself.

And so let's draw near with a true heart and full assurance of faith. And then verse 23. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering for he who promised is faithful.

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope. The confession of our hope. What is our hope? What is our hope? They have a great Thanksgiving.

Retirement. Christmas. Our hope is the resurrection.

That is our hope. And whenever we read about the hope of the Christian in the New Testament it is the resurrection. And that is a wonderful thing because at that day we will no longer sin.

We will have bodies that don't get sick and that don't get tired and that don't get old. And above all we will be in every way like Jesus because we will see him as he is. That is our hope.

That is what we are looking forward to. Now he says we need to hold on to that hope. Now if you go back to chapter 6 he deals with this question of the hope.

And I want to stop on that for a few moments. And again it is hard to jump into the middle of a section here because it all flows together. But verse 18, that is Hebrews 6 verse 18, that by two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie we might have strong consolation.

Strong consolation. Strong comfort. Who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.

Now remember chapter 10 is saying we need to hold fast to that hope. But here he is speaking about the fact that we have consolation, we have comfort for those who have fled for refuge to lay hold of that hope. When do you flee for refuge? When you are being pursued.

You don't flee for refuge when you are not under threat. You may flee for refuge if there is thunder and lightning and a rain storm or a hail storm. You would flee for refuge.

Or if the enemy is pursuing you, you would flee for refuge. We only need refuge when we find ourselves under attack. And so when we find ourselves under attack, whether it be from the devil or whether it be physically or whether it be from the world or whether it be emotionally or whether it be in whatever area, what I need to do is I need to flee for refuge.

And where do I flee? I flee to Jesus. And in fleeing to him, what I need to lay hold of is the hope. That word lay hold of, just grab it with all that you have.

I need to grab hold of that hope. And this is the thing that should be encouraging every Christian. This is what should keep us going, is the hope that we have.

When we get up in the morning and we don't feel so good and our bodies are breaking down, we have hope of a new body. When relationships turn sour and we find ourselves unloved and we find ourselves rejected, we can lay hold of the hope on that day that we will be gathered into the beloved and we will see him face to face. When we struggle with sin, we can lay hold of that hope because on that day we will no longer sin.

When we struggle with bereavement and with sorrow of death and of loneliness, we can lay hold of that hope because on that day there will be no more sorrow and no more tears and no more crying. And whatever it is that besets us in this life, the hope is the answer to that issue that you are dealing with, that issue that you are facing. But the problem is here that we find that so many Christians and modern Christianity is all about this life.

And we have to somehow fix things here. We have to find our solutions here. And yet the scriptures point to the solutions as not being in this life.

But the solution is in the resurrection. That is when everything is going to come right. That is when the plan is going to come together.

And we are teaching on the book of Revelation in our Sunday school at the moment in Burbank. And I love the book of Revelation because what is the book of Revelation about? I want to get sidetracked. But what is the message of the book of Revelation? I have asked this question in Burbank.

Everyone will know the answer because I have drummed it in. The book of Revelation is about this one thing. Jesus wins.

Jesus wins. The purpose we have the book is to know that the plan is going to come together. That the victory is assured.

And we are able to go to the last page of the book and we are able to say it is all going to work out. This is our hope. This is what we have our eyes fixed on.

And folks the problem is that so many people are putting their hope in this world. In the financial institutions, in their jobs, in their physical ability, in the doctors, in the church, in so many places. But let's look back at Hebrews chapter 6. He says this hope we have is an anchor for the soul, both sure and steadfast, which enters the presence behind the veil.

Sorry, verse 19. This hope we have is an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, which enters the presence behind the veil. What is the purpose of the anchor? I don't know if you sing that hymn.

We used to sing that hymn. We have an anchor for the soul, steadfast and sure, while the billows roll. The purpose of the anchor is to hold the ship in the time of storm.

You don't really need an anchor when everything is going well. But you need an anchor when the waves are tossing or blowing and the waves are tossing the ship up and down. And the anchor needs to hold the ship so that it doesn't drift and be smashed on the seashore.

And he's saying that this hope is our anchor. It brings stability. It brings security to our lives.

Now we know that Paul writes and he says that there are many Christians who are tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. There are many Christians who are tossed to and fro by circumstances, by the problems and the difficulties of life. But we have an anchor and that anchor grips and it holds us so that we don't drift, so that the circumstances don't blow us to our ruin.

But the problem is that the anchor needs to be anchored into something that is secure. And we know that the anchor can break loose if the anchor is stuck into the wrong material or if it didn't bite into the sand or into whatever it is it's supposed to hold on to. And so you need the anchor.

But the anchor needs to be gripped or gripping something which is able to hold it. It's no good having an anchor which holds in the water. I mean it's just going to not hold.

So the anchor needs to be somewhere where it is not going to move. In fact this is the problem. So many of us have our anchors in this world.

You know when you look at the book of Revelation for instance it speaks about this world and the things of this world as the seas. They move, they change, the stock market changes, the interest rates change, governments change, people change, churches change, everything is changing, everything is in flux. But notice where he says this anchor is.

Verse 19 of chapter 6. This hope we have is an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, which enters the presence behind the veil. In other words he says that the true Christian should have an anchor which is not anchored to this world but which is anchored into heaven itself. Beyond the veil speaks about heaven, the presence of God.

And folk when we're anchored to heaven it doesn't matter what happens in this world. Nothing is going to move us. Now there's a shaking and in chapter 12 of the same book it speaks about that shaking which is coming upon the whole world that those things that can be shaken will be shaken loose.

And folk many Christians are being shaken today and many are being shaken loose because their anchors are in the wrong place. Their anchor is not in the presence of God. They're not anchored to heaven but they're anchored to their health, they're anchored to their bank account, they're anchored to their job, they're anchored to their family, they're anchored to their friends.

You may even be anchored to your church and many times the church fails. But if you have your anchor in the presence of God itself it doesn't matter what happens to this world. Heaven and earth can pass away but that anchor will hold and you will remain stable and unmoved and unchanged as you have that grab hold of that hope.

And so he is reminding us back in chapter 10 then, let us hold fast. Verse 23, the confession of our hope without wavering. Remember Paul was shipwrecked on several occasions but the one occasion is recorded for us in the book of Acts and it says that the storm, at the height of the storm Paul said, God spoke to me and nobody is going to be lost.

And so what did they do? People jumped overboard and they grabbed hold of pieces of the ship, pieces of wood. Can you imagine how someone is going to hold on to that piece of wood? The storm is blowing, they haven't seen the sun for what was it, three days, I don't remember. The waves are tossing and the wind is blowing and it's raining and the guy finds himself a piece of wood to hold on to.

Well, you know, he is going to play with it with his finger and see if he can let it go a little bit and catch up with it. Now he is going to grab hold of that piece of wood with all of his might and he is going to cling to it for dear life because that is his only hope. Now folk, when we cling and when we draw near to him and when we enter into his presence we need to hold fast the confession of our hope.

We need to cling to it with all of our might because that is our salvation, that is our only hope, that is the thing that is going to see us through. So let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering. Why? Because he who promised is faithful.

He will win in the end, he will change us in the end, he will be victorious in the end and he will be faithful. Now the next thing, verse 24, and let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works. So remember the things that we have because of our great high priest, we need to draw near to his presence, we need to hold fast that confession of our faith and we need of our hope and we need to consider one another.

Consider one another. Now that is interesting because we will see in chapter 12 and we may go there this evening, he says consider Jesus, consider the apostle and high priest of our faith. But we also need to be considering one another.

And that word consider does not really mean that we need to be considerate of, obviously we must be considerate of one another. But the way he is using this word, when you use the word consider, you mean carefully think about, carefully examine. When I was growing up in South Africa we did not have television, the government had banned television until very recently and sometimes I think that was a good thing.

But we used to have radio and there used to be a radio program called consider your verdict. And so it was a law thing, it was a court case and so you listen to the whole story and all the evidence and then you would have to consider your verdict. And they would go away and they would have all the commercials and then they would come back and I would say well the guy is guilty or not guilty and you compare what you do.

But consider and when a jury considers the matter, what do they do? They go into the back room and they say well I think he is guilty. No they would carefully deliberate, they will look at it from every angle, they will look at all of the evidence and sometimes it takes hours, sometimes weeks before they come up with a decision. So we need to be considering one another.

Now let me ask you, and I'm not going to ask you to raise your hand because I don't want to embarrass anyone, but how many people did you think about during this last week that are in this church, if you are a member of this church? Did you take time this week to think about the other people in the church or do we only think about me? Now for me as a shepherd it's not hard, that's what I do and I'm sure Pastor Gary does the same thing. We are always thinking about the people, we are always thinking about how they are doing, where are they spiritually, how are they dealing, how are they coping with their challenges. But that's not just the job of the pastor, he's not writing to pastors, he's writing to every believer and he says we need to be considering one another.

We need to be carefully thinking about one another. Now the sad thing is that many times, and I'm sure it doesn't happen in this church, but it happens in many churches. Believers consider one another only to think about the things that irritate them.

The only time we think about somebody is when we think about those things that are bad. Now that's not what he's saying, he's not saying let's think about all of the bad points of everybody else. But let's consider one another to provoke to love and to good works.

I believe that's an important part of our function and our place and our responsibility as a member of the body of Christ. To spend time thinking about everybody else. And to think about everybody else for what purpose? To provoke to love and to good works.

Now I'm just blown away by the way that the scriptures, you know, I just love the word of God. I just love the way that it is written. And he uses this word provoke.

Where do we use that word provoke? In fact 100% of the time in common English. We speak about provoking to anger. Fathers, he says don't provoke your children to wrath.

I couldn't help it, I had to hit him because he provoked me. That's the way we use that word. It's a strong word.

It means that that person has pushed the buttons that brought that person to a point of anger. But now notice what he is saying. We need to provoke one another not to anger but to love and to good works.

So what's he saying? Let me put it in plain English. We should be pushing one another's buttons. To bring one another to the point of love.

Not to the point of anger but to the point of love. And to good works. And so what I should be doing and what each one of us should be doing.

Is we should be thinking about Job Log. What can I do to encourage him to love? To love the Lord, to love his word, to love his people. What can I do to encourage him? What buttons can I press? This is what pastors do all the time.

What buttons can I press that will bring this person or these people to a point of love? And what buttons can I press to bring them to good works? I want to bet you that very few of us this past week thought about this church and about everybody else in the church and thought what can I do to provoke that person and that one and that one and that one to love and to good works. That's quite a challenge. Now maybe you've never heard this preached before but it's right there, it's in the word.

And so we have a great high priest who's doing what? He's considering me. He's thinking all the time about what can he do to help me, to encourage me, to stir me up, to provoke me to love and to good works. And so because he's doing that for me, I should be doing that for you.

And you should be doing that for me. What can we do to encourage the pastor that he fulfills his ministry even more than he is? So we need to be considering one another so that we provoke one another. How do you provoke? Not just by doing something once.

Children are very good at provoking. They provoke their teachers, they provoke their parents. How do they do it? By continually badgering away until eventually something gives.

Now I'm not suggesting that we should be irritating one another. But folk we should be working away at one another. To encourage one another, to exhort one another, to provoke one another, to love and to good works.

And so these are the things that we should be doing. Let us draw near. Let us hold fast.

Verse 24. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works. Verse 25.

And here's one thing we should not be doing. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as is the manner of some. Now I know in some churches this verse is used all the time.

And so sometimes we avoid the verse because it's overused and yet it's a very important part of our relationship with the Lord and it's an important part of our relationship with one another. We should not be neglecting our coming together as saints, as is the manner of some. I'm not sure if the article is out the back there but I've just written an article last week.

And I've begun a small series on church attendance. I did a little bit of homework. I discovered that 77 million people in the United States never go to church except for funerals and weddings.

77 million people in the United States never go to church. 42% of all Christians who confess to be born again never go to church. 42% of American Christians never go to church.

And I've just begun to preach a short series on that and written a short series of articles on that subject. And I've had to re-examine it for myself and I've had to say, Can you be a Christian if you don't go to church regularly? And I drew a distinction between going to church and being part of the church. I don't want to get into that.

And folk, I just don't see how you can be a truly born again Christian and not crave the fellowship of the saints. Not crave and desire the teaching of the word of God. You know that even Jesus, the son of God, when he came to that last supper, he says with desire.

And the word that he uses is maybe a little bit unkosher. But the word that he literally used, he says with lust. I have desire to eat this Passover with you.

We understand that word because it is something which consumes you, that drives you. Whether it be a lust for money or for power or for sex or whatever it is. It is an all-consuming passion.

And Jesus says, I had this all-consuming passion to be with you tonight. Do we as Christians have this all-consuming passion to be in the fellowship of the saints? And we say, oh well, you don't know my church, brother. You know, they're carnal.

Who was Jesus lusting to have the supper with? A bunch of losers. One of them had already betrayed him, had the money in his pocket. The other one was going to deny him three times.

The rest of them were all going to run, except for John. And yet he says, I want to be with them. Because they are my friends.

You know, as I was writing these articles, one of the things that just struck my mind, struck me, was you know that the most serious thing, the most serious form of discipline that the church can exercise is excommunication. When somebody is put out of the church, when everything else has failed, the last resource, the last step, and this is a shameful thing, this is a terrible thing, when someone is put out of the church. And yet for some reason, millions of Christians choose to excommunicate themselves.

To bring upon themselves the most shameful and the most terrible form of discipline that the church can impose upon them. How can you choose that? I don't understand it. Let's not forsake the assembling of ourselves together.

And so much the more, as the manner of some is, he says, it was already a problem those days, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some, but exhorting one another. Exhorting one another. It's not just the job of the pastor to be exhorting us, encouraging us, building us up, taking us on.

It's not just his job. He says we should be exhorting one another. Now can I challenge you this week to do some of these things.

To draw near. To hold fast that confession. When you feel that everything else is falling apart around you, hold on to that hope.

Let this hope become so real to us as it was to the believers in the New Testament, that when we wake up in the morning, our first thought is maybe today Jesus is coming. Maybe today I will see him face to face. Let's consider one another.

Let's go into this week and say, let me just think about, and there are many people here today. Maybe that's too much. Maybe you need to just take five people and say I want to think about those five people.

What can I do to encourage them? To exhort them? And let me do something. Let me pick up the phone. Let me call them.

Let me write them a card. Let me go out of my way to greet them when I come to church on Sunday. Let me speak a few words of encouragement.

Let me invite them to my home. I know that's not an American thing. Yet the scriptures pull about the need for us to be hospitable.

Let me invite them over for a meal. Thanksgiving is coming up. And I'm sure that there are some people in this congregation who are going to celebrate Thanksgiving all on their own.

Why not open your table to them? Show them. Exhorting them. Encouraging them.

And we need to be doing this, he says, so much the more as you see the day approaching. What day? The day of the coming of the Lord. And folks, I believe with all my heart that we are right on the very edge of the coming of Jesus.

And if those Christians in the New Testament were meeting together in the book of Acts, every day they met together. Every day they were encouraging one another. Every day they were exhorting one another.

If they were doing it then, we should be doing it more today. But in fact, what's happening? We're doing it less. When in fact, we say, well that was when the church began.

And we're 2,000 years down the road. Of course we're going to lose a little bit of speed as we go along. No, in fact, what we should be doing is we should be building up.

We should be more intensely in fellowship with one another. But there is a shaking going on. And our security and our assurance is in our relationship with Jesus and in our fellowship with the saints.

And God has made these things available to us. Let's grab hold of them. Jesus died to buy us these things.

And yet we esteem them lightly sometimes. Amen.

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