

Please turn in your Bibles to Hebrews chapter 10. We will be considering verses 19 through 25 this morning. Last week we began this new series on worship by looking at what Scripture tells us worship is. The definition that we landed on by using Psalm 100 as our guide is that worship is service rendered unto the Lord in humble submission to Him as the Sovereign over all things in which we express our deep and sincere satisfaction in Him. I said that this is the foundation upon which we will build this series. Today we continue to build upon this foundation by considering why must we worship. Hear now the Word of the Lord from Hebrews chapter 10 beginning at verse 19.

Read Hebrews 10:19-25

Pray

If you will recall our communion sermon from a couple of weeks ago you will be reminded of the context to this passage. Paul is writing this letter to the Hebrew Christians, those who have converted to Christianity out of Judaism, and is encouraging and exhorting them to continue in the faith and go back to the Old Covenant ceremonial system. In the first 18 verses he makes the case that Christ is the perfect sacrifice, that the shedding of His blood did what the blood of bulls and goats could never do, and that in willingly laying down His life as an atonement for the sins of His people, He has done away with the ceremonial system of old and has ushered in a new system of worship for the New Testament people of God. Our text this morning continues this teaching, now moving to the necessity of the people of God to render worship unto Him, and specifically to do so in the public gathering. The Church, since the very beginning, has always been a people who gather together to praise Jehovah. This is clear from both the Old and New Testaments, as well as 2000 years of church history since the closing of the apostolic age. Yet we see in our culture today that many who profess to be Christians neglect this fundamental part of the Christian life. I know people who profess to be believers and yet they say that they can't stand the institutional church and that is

why they are not members of a local body nor gather together with others for public worship. There is this idea that has infected numerous people which feeds them the lie that they don't need to attend public worship because they can worship privately in their own homes. They cruelly twist John 4:21-23 where Christ says, "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him." This terrible twisting of Scripture was further strengthened over the last three years during the pandemic in which people began to just "attend worship" in front of their televisions or computer screens instead of actually gathering together. I'll tell you now, watching or listening on Sermon Audio is not worship. This attitude of whether or not we gather together as the body of Christ for public worship is inconsequential must be destroyed. I thank the Lord that this congregation has not fallen prey to this wickedness, but if we are honest each of us could likely admit to times of neglecting the public worship of God. In order to keep us from falling prey to this and to warn those who already have, we must consider the necessity of public worship. So the theme we will consider today is that public worship is necessary for the life of a believer. We will consider this by looking at three reasons why it is necessary: first, it is where you meet with God; next, it is where you build up one another; and finally, it is where you are encouraged unto perseverance.

First, let us consider that public worship is where you meet with God. Look with me at verses 19-22, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an 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." He says first, that we

have boldness to enter into the holiest. This privilege was never granted to the fathers under the Law, for the people were forbidden to enter the visible sanctuary, though the high priest bore the names of the tribes on his shoulders, and twelve stones as a memorial of them on his breast. But now the case is very different, for not only symbolically, but in reality an entrance into heaven is made open to us through the favor of Christ, for he has made us a royal priesthood. Friends, this is a monumental shift from the Old to the New, one which ought to be a great encouragement for you. No longer do we have to bring our sacrifices to a temple and have a priest intercede on our behalf, going before the presence of God and offering our sacrifice to Him. Instead we are permitted through the intercession of our Great High Priest, Jesus Christ Himself, to enter into the throne room of grace, the holy of holies where Jehovah sits enthroned, and to offer our sacrifice of praise unto Him. We are able to stand in the presence of Jehovah because we have been consecrated just as the high priest of old was. We have had “our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.” Yes, the Lord is present in all places. Yes, you can commune with Him in any setting, even in private. But it is in the public worship gathering in which He is specially present among His people. What an incredible thing this is that we are permitted entrance into his presence when we gather together.

Because of this great thing, because of what Christ Jesus has done in tearing the veil which separated the people from God, we can now approach Him in boldness. Matthew Henry writes, “This blood, being sprinkled on the conscience, chases away slavish fear, and gives the believer assurance both of his safety and his welcome into the divine presence.” And so the duty on your part is to draw near to Him. Because of the Father’s love for you in sending His Son, because of what Christ has done in redeeming you, because of the Holy Spirit’s work in washing you clean and consecrating you to a holy purpose, you must respond in faith by drawing near to Him. That is what you do each and every time you enter into those doors and gather together for public worship. This is the appointed day

and means the Lord has determined for His people to draw near to Him. Yes, the Lord provides provision for those who are providentially hindered to be able to enjoy the special communion with Him, but this is an extraordinary thing, not the ordinary. The ordinary means in which we are called to draw near unto Him is in the corporate gathering of the saints on the Lord's Day.

So I ask you brothers and sisters, what is your understanding of coming to public worship? Do you view it as simply fulfilling and obligation that is placed upon you? Do you see it as an opportunity to enhance your social status or to develop relationships with people you would not normally see? Or do you recognize that coming into the public worship of God is entering into His very presence within the throne room of grace and communing with your God and King? Friends, if this is true then it ought to shape your very mindset, your very demeanor, in which you enter into public worship. John Calvin says that in this text "we learn what must be the frame of our minds in order that we may enjoy the benefits conferred by Christ; for there is no coming to him without an upright or a true heart, and a sure faith, and a pure conscience." This is how you must come into worship. What height of mockery it is to enter into the presence of the Lord in an irreverent manner. If you were going to have a meeting with the king of a foreign country, how would you enter into that meeting? Would you show up looking like you just rolled out of bed? Would you be joking and goofing off in his throne room as the meeting begins? Would you be late to the meeting? Of course not. Then why would we not show the King of kings a far greater respect as you enter into His presence? Friends, preparation for the Lord's Day service must be done. Make yourself presentable. Come to worship on time. Forego all jesting and spend time before the service begins to ready yourself to enter into His presence. And do not neglect coming to worship, because public worship is where you meet with God.

That addresses the vertical aspect of public worship, but there is also a horizontal aspect to it. Not only are you communing with

God during the worship service, but you are communing with one another in the presence of God. And this is for a particular purpose. Worship is where you build up one another. Look with me at verses 23-24, “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.” First we see that in the public worship we strengthen one another in our faith. In the public worship of God we receive from His Word the truths which He has laid out for us. It is here that oftentimes conviction of sin or lack of faithfulness is made known. Your duty in this is to pray for those around you that the Lord would work in their hearts, even as He works in yours. It is in the public worship and the things flowing from public worship that we can encourage and build up one another to hold fast to the profession of our faith without wavering. If you see a brother or sister wrestling with the preaching during the service, or if you see that they are not participating in the various parts of the service, lift them up to your Father in prayer that the Spirit would strengthen their faith and cause them to rejoice in the Lord as they are called to do. Even your very participation in the worship service will aid in strengthening the faith of those around you. We see this clearly in Colossians 3:16, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

Our text goes on to say that we are to provoke one another unto love and to good works. This is done primarily through the preaching of the Word, but it is also done through the teaching and admonishing one another that is seen in Colossians. Verse 25 makes this clear when Paul says that we are to exhort one another. Charles Simeon writes, “We should ‘consider one another:’ we should notice each other's wants and weaknesses, defects and failings, in order to guard each other against the very beginnings of declension in the divine life, and to stimulate one another to exertion in the cause of truth and love.” Henry adds to this by saying, “Christians ought to have a tender consideration and concern for one another; they

should affectionately consider what their several wants, weaknesses, and temptations are; and they should do this, not to reproach one another, to provoke one another not to anger, but to love and good works, calling upon themselves and one another to love God and Christ more, to love duty and holiness more, to love their brethren in Christ more, and to do all the good offices of Christian affection both to the bodies and the souls of each other.” It is so easy to sit in the worship service and think that all that is going on is between you and God. What an individualistic way of looking at the public worship of God. And what an unscriptural way of looking at it as well. The corporate gathering of the saints brings about corporate edification and the Lord promises to pour His blessings out upon His people corporately.

So friends, how are you strengthening one another in the faith during the public worship of God? Are you praying for your brothers and sisters as they wrestle with the text, as they are brought to conviction of sin, as they see areas in which the Lord is calling them to reformation? Are you trusting that they are praying for you as well as you are being strengthened in your faith? How are you provoking one another, not to anger or malice, but unto love and to good works? Dear saints, this is one of the key aspects of corporate worship that cannot be done in any sort of private setting. Build one another up, edify one another, teach and admonish one another as the Scriptures command you to. Do not come to the worship service seeking out some sort of personal benefit by which you may be blessed. Seek out ways in which you may bless others even as you bless the Lord with your whole heart. There may be a time in which the mutual edification of the saints which is found in the public worship is stripped away from you due to providential hinderance. If that time comes will you be content with it because you never really saw the corporate benefit in being there, or will you weep with the psalmist as he was providentially hindered from the corporate gathering in Psalm 42:4, “When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with

a multitude that kept holyday.” Do not be individualistic in your understanding of worship, because the Lord has instituted His worship not be so. Come unto the worship gathering and seek to provoke one another, because worship is where you build up one another.

If we continue in our passage we see that the assembling of ourselves together in public worship is expressly commanded, but what is interesting is the reasoning attached to it. Let us now consider that worship is where you are encouraged unto perseverance. Look at verse 25, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” It is the day approaching which is the reason that is given to not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together. There is a day that is approaching, a great day of judgement, in which all the saints of Christ will be gathered together and brought into the New Jerusalem. But also on that great day of judgement those who are found outside of Christ will be cast off and thrown into the lake of fire along with satan and the demons. I know that verse 26 is not part our text this morning, but it is important to note that the Apostle connects the forsaking of assembling together with apostasy. Oftentimes neglect to attend public worship is the first sign that someone is falling away from the faith. This is why it is important that we as elders check up on people who have missed worship, to ensure that there is not a greater problem that is going on spiritually. I’m sure some of you here can attest to the fact that we will reach out to you if we haven’t seen you in a couple of weeks. This is out of love and care for your soul. In chapter 6 we see the warning against apostasy, “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.” Friends, those things listed are evidences of being part of the

corporate people of God, and forsaking those things are evidences of apostasy.

This is why so often the first thing that satan goes after in the life of a Christian to deceive him and lead him down the path to perdition is the necessity of public worship. If public worship is the most spiritually significant, momentous thing we can do on earth, is it any wonder that the Devil attacks it more than anything else. Is it any wonder then that when we experienced a virus that was unknown and the government was limited what could be done, that many churches across the country closed their doors and moved to solely online? I have heard so many accounts of people leaving the faith during that time, and we can only wonder how much the forsaking of gathering together contributed to that. Friends, perseverance is ultimately something which God does. It is He who preserves you unto the end, but He does so by working through means. It is the Holy Spirit working through the ordinary means of grace which is effectual in converting, strengthening, sanctifying, and preserving men. Who are the stewards of the mysteries of God? The elders ordained by Christ unto service in the Church. Who is it that is the pillar and ground of the truth? The house of God, the church of the living God. We confess that outside of the church there is no ordinary possibility of salvation. If you want to be strengthened and encouraged and equipped to persevere unto the end, to make it to that day which is approaching, and to be welcomed in by the Lord Jesus Christ, you must be in public worship for it is the means by which strengthening, encouragement, and equipping takes place. So you must gather together. You must call others to gather together. Christ said He will build His Church. Calvin writes, “For to what end did Christ come except to collect us all into one body from that dispersion in which we are now wandering? Therefore, the nearer his coming is, the more we ought to labor that the scattered may be assembled and united together, that there may be one fold and one shepherd (John 10:16).”

So the question before you now is will you persevere unto the end? Will you hold fast to the faith and take part in those holy ordinances which the Lord has ordained? Will you commit yourself whenever possible, when not providentially hindered, to be in attendance at the corporate gathering of the saints in public worship, or will you forsake the assembling together of yourselves as is the manner of some? The habit of attending upon the house of God should be so firmly established by every Christian that he would be sorely uncomfortable if compelled to be absent. God has spoken on this matter, and we must hear: “And let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another.” To not desire to be in the house of God is a grave sign of a great spiritual problem. Long to be with Him and with His people in public worship. “Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee.” Can you sing that psalm and sing it sincerely? Can you sing, “For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness”? Friends this must be your desire, your mindset, your attitude concerning the public worship of God if you are to be received in that last great day. The communion of saints is a great help and privilege, and a good means of steadiness and perseverance. This is why being here is so necessary, because worship is where you are encouraged unto perseverance.

Brothers and sisters, may we never forget the incredible value that we should place upon the corporate gathering of the saints. We have fellow believers around the world who do not have the privileges you do here in America. They gather together in secret, knowing that if they are found by the authorities they will be imprisoned or even killed. Yet they still meet together, oftentimes more frequently than we do, because they see that day approaching and know how important public worship is. Will you do the same? Will you commit to never forsaking the assembling of yourselves

together in public worship? Friends, never forget that public worship is necessary for the life of a believer.