

# A Godly Man's Love For the Gathering of His Church

## Introduction

### a. objectives

1. subject – The godly man's love for the gathering of his church, for drawing near to God and others
2. aim – To cause us to desire to draw near to others as the outflow of drawing near to God
3. passage – Hebrews 10:19-25

### b. outline

1. The Godly Man's Nature for Gathering
2. The Godly Man's Reason for Gathering (Hebrews 10:19-24)
3. The Godly Man's Love of Gathering (Hebrews 10:25)

### c. opening

1. welcome to "A Godly Man's Love for the Church" – as considered in his love of the gathering, going, giving, and gifts of his church – **i.e.** thank you for *gathering* here tonight!!

## I. The Godly Man's Nature for Gathering

### Content

#### a. the underlying nature of gathering for the godly man

1. human beings are *relational* creatures – we are made in the image of God, who is *himself* (as a personal God) in an eternal, perfect, harmonious, love relationship, Father, Son and Spirit
2. the *communicable attribute* of relationship was placed into us by **(IMO)** the Son when he formed the man from the dust of the ground – putting Adam into a right relationship with God (vertically)
3. yet, it was "*not good for the man to be alone*" (**Genesis 2:18**) because the man *also* yearned (within himself) for a *horizontal* relationship *to another of his own "kind"* (as human)
4. so, God formed *from the man* (**i.e.** from *his* image) another human being, from whom would flow a personal relationship (**i.e.** marriage, children, family, human civilization)
5. **unfortunately:** sin *corrupted* man's ability to relate to others – his relationship with God was "banished" and corruptions of every kind came into his relationship with others (**e.g.** adultery, polygamy, fornication, homosexuality, etc.) – perversions of the *original* intention of relationship
6. **however:** it was the *purpose* of God to *redeem* all such corruptions through the work of Christ – to *reconcile* men back to God and to restore the fallen nature of relationships between men
  - a. the Son of God came into the world *as a man* (**i.e.** in Adam's flesh, yet without his sin) to *relate* to his own (**i.e.** God coming to *us*); to *restore* what had been broken through *obedience*
  - b. **and:** not to just "redeem" us back to Adam's pre-Fall state, but to *glorify* all things such that they are *infinitely better* than the original (**e.g.** as in Christ's *glorified* body vs. Adam's)
  - c. thus, it is the *intention* of God, through Christ, **to glorify human relationship** as lost in the Fall – to establish a *greater* relationship between men and God, *and* men and men
7. **assertion:** the church is a *means* by which redeemed humans (the elect), *in Christ*, do (in fact!) draw near to God – **the church** is *the* organism by which Christ **draws his own near to God**
  - a. not as an institution of "religion" (although we will *certainly* practice certain aspects of the Christian faith within it; **see below**), but as a *living organism* through which we relate *personally* to God
  - b. **i.e.** a *family of sons and daughters* who come together before their heavenly *Father* to worship and honor him in a relationship far greater (even!) than Adam had with God in the Garden
8. **thesis: the godly man loves the gathering of the church because it is a means by which he draws near to God as a part of the glorified family of his heavenly Father**
  1. **i.e.** he gathers with the body because he loves to draw near to his heavenly Father, alongside his brothers in Christ – his *primordial desire* for relationship to his Creator is **satisfied** in the company of the *glorified* family that Christ has drawn together *in the presence of God*

## II. The Godly Man's Reason for Gathering (Hebrews 10:19-24)

### Content

#### a. the biblical reason for gathering for the godly man

1. the idea above is inspired from a passage very familiar re: church attendance
  - a. specifically, **Hebrews 10:25 KJV**: “not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together”
    1. “assembling” (*episyntagōgē*) = lit. to *synagogue*; a gathering, a meeting, an assembling together
  - b. **i.e.** the verse is used *generally* to assert that Christians “ought to go to church”
  - c. however, the *context* of the verse strongly suggests a **greater reality** around the idea of gathering
2. **Hebrews 1-9 (and 10:1-18)** is a *massive* set of indicatives: an examination of the **supremacy of Christ Jesus** over the entirety of the OT sacrificial system (**for a Hebrew audience**):
  - a. **i.e.** asserting that Jesus is the *supreme* high priest, who mediates a *better* covenant, by offering a *perfect* sacrifice, in a *divine* temple, producing a *permanent* redemption, and a *complete* reconciliation, under an *everlasting* intercession, for a *perfected* people, for all time
  - b. **i.e.** asserting that faith in Jesus is far *superior* to the OT sacrificial system, with its man-made buildings, blemished offerings, limited and sinful priests, and unfinished atonements (**repetition**)
3. **Hebrews 10:19** is the *change* in the book from the *indicatives* to the *imperatives*:
  - a. it introduces a “*therefore ...*” – as a result of the above, here is what we are to do ...
  - b. **i.e.** moving from the *foundational truths* that the writer put forth to the *commands* (responses) that he expects *ought to come* as a result of believing these truths
  - c. **ITC**: a **contrast** to the **confidence** of his *Hebrew* audience (**Hebrews 4:16**)  
*“Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need”*
    1. instead of drawing away from Christ to a **self-confidence** in the sacrificial system
    2. we need to do *something else* with a *new* and *continuing* confidence in Christ ...
4. **Hebrews 10:19-21** is a *recap* (summary) of the truths above to get to the *command* of **v. 22**:
  - a. **v. 19**: because of the *supremacy* of Christ, we have *confidence* to enter the “*holy places*” (**i.e.** the very presence of God himself) by the blood of Jesus
  - b. **v. 20**: through the “*curtain*” (**i.e.** which separated us from God; as in the Temple), which Christ opened for us “*through his flesh*” (**i.e.** by breaking down separation from God)
  - c. **v. 21**: and, because we now have a “*great priest*” (**i.e.** a *permanent* mediator between us and God), one who will *continually* mediate this reconciliation *he* has produced ... therefore ...
5. **Hebrews 10:22** becomes *the* imperative: “*let us draw near with a true heart ...*”
  - a. “*draw near*” (*proserchometha*) = to approach or visit or come near; to assent to; to consent
  - b. **question**: *to what* exactly is it that we are to “*draw near*”? (**note**: no *object* behind this verb)
  - c. **answer**: the writer is implying the possibility of more than one object to which we draw near
    1. **obviously**: the implication from the context is to draw near “*to God*”
      - a. into the “*holy places*” (**v. 19**), through the “*curtain*” (**v. 20**), into the “*house of God*” (**v. 21**)
      - b. the implication of the *context* is that we draw near to the *presence* of God; his holy habitation
    2. **however, the writer may be implying our need to “draw near” to a plethora of things representative of an intimate fellowship with God, things now possible through Christ**
      - a. **i.e.** to the very *presence* of God, to a true *assurance* of faith (**v. 23**), to a *productive* and *useful* life of faith (**v. 24**), **and ...** to the *encouragement* of true Christian *fellowship* (**v. 25**)
    3. **LOW**: to “*draw near*” is the **complete concept of coming into the very presence of God**, with all of the attendant *assurances* purchased for us in Christ, **and those things required of us**
    4. **LOW**: the supreme high priest has made a *perfect way* for us to *enter* the *divine temple*, to *go* into the very *Holy of Holies*, to *present ourselves* before a holy God, **and to know him**
    5. **for the Hebrews**: all things that would have been, *under the Old Covenant*, **unthinkable**
6. thus, for the godly man, the “*assembling*” of **v. 25** is *far more* than just “going to church”
  - a. it is a part of what it means to “*draw near*” to God – it is an *element* of what Christ has purchased for the godly man as the supreme high priest: an **imperative** (in real life!) to come into the presence of God *alongside* others who have been invited by Christ “behind the curtain”
  - b. **the godly man knows that the assembly is far more than just a “religious activity” – he recognizes it as a central aspect of “drawing near” to God, a privilege purchased for him by his supreme high priest**

### III. The Godly Man's Love of Gathering (Hebrews 10:25)

#### Content

##### a. the value of gathering for the godly man

1. the value of meeting together **for true worship** – the classic definition
  - a. **i.e.** the importance of worship – to “*hold fast the confession*” (v. 22) in singing, praying, reading Scripture, giving, and (centrally!) preaching – **i.e.** for the *purpose of honoring our Father*
2. the value of meeting together **for Christian community**
  - a. **assertion:** the Christian faith has a strong *communal* nature
    1. **note:** not ignoring the *individual* response of faith and following of Christ
    2. however, for many Christians, this is where their “faith” *ends* (**i.e.** in their *personal* faith)
      - a. **e.g.** the diminishing importance of preaching, leading to doctrinal error and apostasy
  - b. **evidences:** the proofs that the Christian faith is *communal* in nature:
    1. the “communal” aspect to the public ministry, death, and resurrection of Christ
    2. the use of the term *ecclesia* = a calling out into an assembling; a congregation of people
    3. the “communal” nature of the early church (**Acts 2**)
    4. the overwhelming focus of the N.T. epistle writers on the church *as a whole*
    5. specific references to the church “gathered” (**Matt 18, 1 Cor. 5, 2 Cor. 2, 1 Peter 2**)
    6. the “body” imagery of the church employed by Paul (**1 Corinthians 12**)
    7. the ordinances of the church *always* being public in nature (and never private)
    8. the “history” of the church as a group of assembled people  
“Communion is strength; solitude is weakness. Alone, the fine old beech yields to the blast and lies prone on the meadow. In the forest, supporting each other, the trees laugh at the hurricane. The sheep of Jesus flock together. The social element is the genius of Christianity.” (Charles Spurgeon)  
“In the execution of this power wherewith he is so entrusted, the Lord Jesus calleth out of the world unto Himself, through the ministry of His Word, by His Spirit, those that are given unto Him by His Father, that they may walk before Him in all the ways of obedience, which he prescribeth to them in his Word. Those thus called, He commandeth to walk together in particular societies, or churches, for their mutual edification and the due performance of that public worship, which He requireth of them in the world.” (1689 Confession, 26.5; emphasis mine)
    9. the use of “*one another*” in **vv. 24-25** – implies a gathering of people
  - c. **value:** the value of the *communal* nature of the Christian faith (**as asserted in Acts 2:42ff**)
    1. for Scriptural teaching and admonition – the importance of *knowledge* in faith
    2. for true Christian fellowship (*koinonia*) – gathering with a spiritual purpose
    3. for “*the breaking of bread*” – the practice of ordinances as a *continuing* testimony of faith
    4. for prayer – the common bond of entering *together* into the presence of God, and enjoying our relationship with him, won by Christ as he *continually intercedes for us*
3. the value of meeting together **for “stirring one another up”** (v. 24)
  - a. the assembly stirs up one another to “*love and good works*”
    1. **note:** the contrast between the old and new covenants (**Heb. 8:10 cf. Jer. 31:31-34**)
      - a. in the Old Covenant, no spiritual transformation was present, thus no obedience – in the New Covenant, the Holy Spirit regenerates the believer and gives faith – thus, the elect *are known by their works* (i.e. their regeneration “shows” through their good works)
    2. the *supreme high priest* has come to inaugurate a new covenant, one that is *fully inward by a new nature*, flowing *out of them* in tangible and real ways - thus, faith as a *belief system* is supplemented by a demonstration of its reality through “*love and good works*” (**James 2:17**)
    3. **LOW:** for the godly man, the value of coming together is to be *stirred up in his godliness*
  - b. the assembly awaits for the “*Day*” to draw near
    1. **irony:** of the use of “*drawing near*” = we “*draw near*” as we wait for what “*draws near*”
    2. the *balance* in the concept of “*the Day*” – working in the present with a hope built on the future
      - a. e.g. **Matthew 24:44-46** cf. the two parables in **Matthew 25**
        1. the Parable of the Ten Virgins (**25:1-13**) = the need to be watchful and ready
        2. the Parable of the Talents (**25:14-30**) = the need to be using our “talents”
      3. **LOW:** for the godly man, the value of coming together is to be *stirred up in the use of his gifts*
3. **thesis: the godly man loves the gathering of the church because it is a means by which he draws near to God as a part of the glorified family of his heavenly Father**
  - a. **i.e.** he doesn’t just “go to church” – he gathers with the company of the elect because he loves to draw near to his heavenly Father, alongside his brothers in Christ – his *primordial desire* for relationship to his Creator is *satisfied* in the company of the *glorified* family of Christ **through all of the means that Christ has given to the church for his edification**