

Let Us Draw Near, Hold Fast, and Consider One Another: The Threefold Call of the New Covenant (Hebrews 10:19-25) (Lesson #19)

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10:19-20 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, 20 by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,

Once again, the author draws his **argument** to a **conclusion** with another **"therefore"** (***oun***). This **"therefore"** is not merely a **transition word**. It connects directly to everything the author has taught concerning Christ's superior high priesthood from **Hebrews 5:1 through 10:18**.

Because Jesus is the **perfect High Priest**, because He offered the perfect sacrifice, because He has fully accomplished redemption, the believer now possesses privileges that were **unimaginable** under the Old Covenant.

Notice that the author addresses his audience as **"brothers"** (and by extension, sisters in Christ). He reminds them that they belong to the **family of God**.

They are not merely worshippers **approaching a distant deity**; they are **members of God's household** (cf. Eph. 2:19). This reminder is significant because the exhortations that follow are addressed to those who share in this **covenant relationship with God.**

Here the pastor-teacher describes one of the greatest privileges granted to God's people: the **ability**, the **right**, and the **astonishing blessing** of **entering directly** into the **presence of God**.

Under the Old Covenant this privilege was severely restricted. Only **the high priest** could enter the Most Holy Place, and he could do so only once a year on the **Day of Atonement** (Lev. 16) and only after special preparation.

The sacrificial system **temporarily covered Israel's sins** and allowed *covenant fellowship* with Yahweh, but access to His **immediate presence remained carefully regulated**. Every aspect of the tabernacle and temple **communicated distance**. God was holy, and sinful humanity could not freely approach Him.

The author now reminds his audience that believers possess **"confidence"** to enter the holy places. The Greek word is **(*parrēsia*)**, meaning ***boldness***, ***confidence***, or ***fearless access***. The term conveys more than mere **permission**. It speaks of **unhindered access and confident assurance.**

Because of the blood of Jesus, believers may enter God's presence with both **great boldness** and **great confidence**. The author has already emphasized this truth earlier in the letter:

> *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. (Heb 4:16, ESV)*

This reality was graphically demonstrated at Christ's crucifixion:

> *50 And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. 51 And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. (Matt 27:50–51, ESV)*

If you have placed faith in Jesus Christ, you can enter into the **very presence of God** with **boldness** and **confidence**. This access is not based on **personal merit**, **religious performance**, or even **spiritual maturity**. It is grounded solely in **the blood of Jesus Christ**.

The Veil - The imagery of the veil would have been particularly powerful for the original audience. The veil (***parokhet*** in Hebrew) was an enormous curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place.

According to the descriptions found in Exodus 26:31-33, it was woven from blue, purple, and scarlet yarn along with fine-twined linen and was embroidered with cherubim. The cherubim recalled the guardians stationed east of Eden after Adam and Eve's expulsion (Gen. 3:24), reminding worshippers that sinful humanity remained barred from God's immediate presence.

Jewish traditions preserved in later rabbinic writings describe the veil in Herod's Temple as being approximately sixty feet high and thirty feet wide. **Some traditions even claim it was a handbreadth thick!**

While such measurements cannot be independently verified archaeologically, they reflect how massive and imposing the veil was understood to be. The **message** communicated by the veil was **unmistakable: You cannot come in.** Sinful humanity was separated from a holy God.

But now, because of the sacrifice of Jesus, everything has changed. Because of Christ, believers can come boldly and confidently into God's presence at any moment. This is one of the great blessings of the New Covenant.

Verse 20 describes this access as: ***the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,***

As Gareth Cockerill observes: ***"This privilege is fully compatible with the climactic declaration in v. 14 that Christ 'has perfected' those 'being made holy.' As noted on that verse, Christ's 'perfecting' is his making capable of entrance into God's presence through cleansing by his sacrificial death."***

The word translated **"opened"** is rare and appears in only one other place in the entire New Testament:

> *20 by a new and living way which He <u>inaugurated</u> for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, (Heb 10:20, NASB95)*

Just as Moses **inaugurated** the Old Covenant system through sacrificial blood (Ex. 24:3-8), Christ has **inaugurated** a new covenant and a new **way of access** into **God's presence** through **His own blood.**
The contrast is profound:

- Moses inaugurated a system whereby one man entered God's presence once a year.
- Jesus inaugurated a way whereby all believers may enter God's presence anytime.

The Greek word translated **"new"** is **(*prosphatos*)**. It is a **hapax legomenon**, meaning it is only once in the New Testament. Significantly, the author does not use the more common Greek words for "new," such as: **(*kainos*)** - new in quality or kind or **(*neos*)** - new in time or age.
Instead, he chooses ***prosphatos***, a term that in extra-biblical Greek was used of something **freshly slain** or **newly slaughtered**. Given the **sacrificial context**, this choice is likely **intentional**.

The way into God's presence is ***"new"*** because it was opened through **Christ's sacrificial death**. Yet it is **simultaneously living** because the One who died now lives forever. Jesus is **the Lamb who was slain and yet lives** (Rev. 5:6).

The author **then** makes a **striking comparison**. The **veil** that once separated humanity from God corresponds to the **flesh of Christ**. At first glance this might seem surprising, but the connection becomes clearer upon reflection.

As G.L. Cockerill notes: ***"The pastor brings the barrier that separated humanity from God and the means by which that barrier was removed into closest proximity. It is almost as if he had said that Christ's incarnate obedience ('his flesh') has transformed the once-horrible barrier into a 'way new and living.'"***

Through His incarnation, obedient life, suffering, and death, Jesus **removed the barrier** that stood between God and humanity. The tearing of Christ's flesh on the cross corresponds to the **tearing of the temple veil.**

Matthew records that the veil was torn **from top to bottom** (Matt. 27:51). The direction of the tearing is **significant**. Humanity did not open the way to God. **God Himself opened the way.**

The writer's point appears to be that when Christ's body was broken and His blood was shed, the **barrier** that had **stood since Eden** was finally removed.

C. H. Spurgeon beautifully captures the significance of this event: ***"In the East, men express their sorrow by rending their garments. The temple, when it beheld its Master die, seemed struck with horror and rent its veil. Shocked at the sin of man, indignant at the murder of its Lord, in its sympathy with Him who is the true temple of God the outward symbol tore its holy vestment from the top to the bottom. Did not the miracle also mean that from that hour the whole system of types and shadows and ceremonies had come to an end? The ordinances of an earthly priesthood were rent with that veil."***

The **tearing of the veil** announced that the **age of shadows** had come to its **fulfillment**. The sacrificial system had accomplished its **purpose** by pointing forward to Christ. **The substance had arrived.**

This was not God's backup plan. This was the plan from the very beginning. From the moment cherubim with the flaming sword guarded the entrance to Eden (Gen. 3:24), Scripture has been telling the story of how God would one day open the way back into His presence. Through the obedience, sacrifice, resurrection, and ongoing priesthood of Jesus Christ, that way has now been opened.

APPLICATION:
Many Christians still approach God as though they were standing outside the veil, hoping they might somehow be accepted. Hebrews reminds us that Christ has already opened the way. Because of His finished work, believers do not need to live in a state of uncertainty. We can come boldly before God in prayer, confession, worship, and fellowship, knowing that our access rests not upon our performance but upon the blood of Jesus Christ.

Vs 21-22 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Following the author's argument, we have been given a **new and living way** that takes us **through the veil** and into the very **presence of God**, and we have a **Great Priest** who **continually ministers** on our behalf.

At this point the author brings his **theological argument** to a **clear**, **logical**, and **inescapable conclusion**. More importantly, this **conclusion** becomes the launching point for the first of **three exhortations** that follow in this section. **The first exhortation is simple yet profound:**

Vs 22 - ***"Let us draw near."*** Notice the pattern. **Theology** becomes the **foundation of practice**. **Doctrine gives rise to duty**. The author does not merely explain what Christ has accomplished; he explains how we should **respond** to **what Christ** has **accomplished**.

Because we have a Great Priest, there is a **practical reality** that ought to characterize the life of every believer. The author intentionally chooses not merely to call Jesus a High Priest. Instead, he refers to Him as a **"great priest over the house of God."**

There are at least three **important truths** worth noting:

1. Jesus Is Not Merely a High Priest, but the Great High Priest. The word translated **"great"** is the Greek word **(*megas*)**, meaning **great**, **mighty**, **grand**, or **supreme**.
Earlier in Hebrews the author wrote:

> *14 Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. (Heb 4:14, ESV)*

Jesus is not simply another priest in a long succession of priests. **He is the greater High Priest. He is the greatest High Priest.** Everything about His **priesthood** surpasses the Aaronic priesthood. His **sacrifice is better**, His **covenant is better**, His **sanctuary is better**, and His **ministry is better**.

2. Jesus Is the One High Priest of the New Covenant. Under the Old Covenant there were **many priests and many high priests**. They served in shifts and succeeded one another through generations because death continually interrupted their ministries. The writer has already made this point:

> *23 The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, 24 but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. (Heb 7:23–24, ESV)*

The New Covenant does not have many priests offering many sacrifices. It has one **Great High Priest** who offered **one perfect sacrifice, once for all time.**

3. Jesus Is Over God's House. The author emphasizes that Christ is not merely a priest who serves in God's house; He is the Great High Priest who is over God's house. Earlier Hebrews declared:

> *6 but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And we are his house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope. (Heb 3:6, ESV)*

Moses served within God's house as **a faithful servant.** Jesus rules over **God's house as the faithful Son. The distinction is critical.** Jesus is not merely a minister of God's household. He is its Lord.

And amazingly, the author reminds us that believers themselves **constitute that household.** Because these things are true, because we have a Great High Priest over the house of God, the author now calls us to action, ***"let us draw near..."*** The significance of this exhortation should not be missed.

Under the Old Covenant, **drawing near** to God **in this manner** was **impossible**. Aaron and his descendants could not permanently secure access to God's presence. The blood of bulls and goats could not **provide unrestricted approach to God.**

In fact, throughout the Old Testament, approaching God's immediate presence is **portrayed** as **something dangerous** rather than **something encouraged.** Consider the instructions given to Aaron:

> *1 The Lord spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they drew near before the Lord and died, 2 and the Lord said to Moses, "Tell Aaron your brother not to come at any time into the Holy*

> *Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat that is on the ark, so that he may not die. For I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat. (Lev 16:1–2, ESV)*

The remainder of Leviticus 16 details the careful preparations Aaron had to make before entering God's presence. He had to wash. He had to remove his ornate garments. He had to wear the garments prescribed by God. He had to bring sacrificial blood. He had to bring incense. He could only enter on a specific day.

Everything **communicated caution.** Everything **communicated distance.** Everything **communicated the danger of approaching** a holy God while still bearing guilt.

Our approach is entirely different. You and I do not approach God wondering whether we will be accepted. **We are invited. We are welcomed. We are encouraged.** We have **already received** the King's favor in Christ.

May I ask a very practical question? When was the last time you intentionally drew near to God? I hope it was very recent. Maybe even as recent as this morning.

Next, the author tells his audience to draw near: ***"with a true heart in full assurance of faith."*** A ***"true heart"*** refers to sincerity, genuineness, and wholehearted devotion.

This stands in sharp contrast to much of Israel's worship in the Old Testament. God repeatedly rebuked His people for outward religious activity that was **disconnected from inward devotion.** Isaiah declared:

> *"this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me" (Isa. 29:13).*

God never desired mere ritual. He desired sincere faith. Likewise, believers are called to draw near with genuine hearts that truly trust and love Him.

The phrase ***"full assurance of faith"*** reminds us that our confidence rests not in ourselves but in Christ's completed work. We come believing that what Jesus accomplished is sufficient. We come believing that His sacrifice has removed our guilt. Our confidence rests entirely upon Christ.

The author continues: ***"with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."*** These two images draw heavily from Old Testament priestly language.

The first image speaks of inward cleansing. The second image speaks of outward consecration. Together they describe complete preparation for approaching God. The language of sprinkling recalls numerous Old Testament ceremonies involving sacrificial blood.

However, the focus here is not external cleansing but internal cleansing. The heart has been cleansed. The conscience has been purified. This connects directly to a major theme throughout Hebrews.

The Old Covenant sacrifices could never completely remove guilt from the conscience:

> *1 For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. 2 Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? (Heb 10:1–2, ESV)*

Animal sacrifices could cleanse ceremonially and temporarily, only Christ can cleanse the conscience.

"Bodies Washed With Pure Water" This phrase has generated considerable discussion. At minimum, it points to ceremonial cleansing associated with priestly consecration. Before serving in the tabernacle, priests underwent ritual washing (Ex. 29:4; Lev. 8:6).

However, the language also appears to echo one of the great New Covenant promises found in Ezekiel. Although not a direct quotation, the connection is difficult to miss. Before the promise of restoration, God reminded Israel of her rebellion and exile among the nations:

> *16 The word of the Lord came to me: 17 "Son of man, when the house of Israel lived in their own land, they defiled it by their ways and their deeds... (Eze 36:16-21, ESV)*

This passage refers to the historical judgments that culminated in both the **Assyrian captivity of the northern kingdom in 722 BC** and the **Babylonian captivity of Judah in 586 BC**. Israel's covenant unfaithfulness resulted in exile, bringing reproach upon God's name among the nations. Yet God promised a future restoration:

> *22 "Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name... (Eze 36:22-23, ESV)*

Then comes the promise:

> *24 I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. 25 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. 26 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. (Eze 36:24–27, ESV)*

The parallels are remarkable – Cleansing, sprinkling, a changed heart, and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. **The writer of Hebrews is likely referring to the New Covenant promises, found in Ezekiel.**

A Possible Connection to Baptism - Some commentators also see a connection to baptism, though the emphasis should not be placed on water baptism itself. The focus remains spiritual cleansing accomplished by Christ and applied by the Holy Spirit. Peter makes a similar distinction:

> *21 Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, (1 Pe 3:21, ESV)*

The primary concern is not external washing but the cleansing of the conscience before God. **Believers have been made clean inwardly and outwardly.** They are fully **prepared** to **approach** God.

Using one of author of Hebrews' favorite themes, they have been made ***"perfect"*** in the sense of being qualified to enter God's presence. Not sinless in practice. But fully accepted and righteous in their standing before God. All because of the blood of Jesus Christ.

Vs 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.

The author now moves to the second of three exhortations that flow out of Christ's finished work:

- **Verse 22:** Let us draw near.
- **Verse 23:** Let us hold fast.

Notice again the pattern. Theology leads to application. Because Jesus has opened a new and living way into the presence of God, and because we have a Great High Priest over the house of God, believers are called not only to **draw near**, but also to **hold fast**.

The phrase **"hold fast"** translates the Greek word **(*katechō*)**, meaning *to **hold firmly**, to **seize**, to **retain**, to **cling** to, or to **maintain possession of something***. The picture is that of grasping something tightly and refusing to let it go.

The author is telling his readers: Do not loosen your grip. Do not drift. Do not compromise. Do not surrender any ground to the world, the flesh, or the devil. Instead, **hold firmly** to your confession concerning Jesus Christ.

The word translated **"confession"** is **(*homologia*)**. It refers to an **open acknowledgment, profession**, or **declaration of faith**. Throughout Hebrews, the confession centers on the identity and work of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, Messiah, High Priest, and Savior.

The writer is therefore calling his brothers and sisters to cling tenaciously to the gospel they have professed and to the hope that gospel provides. Notice that the object of their confession is **hope**.

This hope is not wishful thinking or mere optimism. In Scripture, hope refers to confident expectation grounded in God's promises. The believer's hope includes the forgiveness of sins, ongoing access to God, Christ's continual intercession, the resurrection of the dead, the return of Christ, the inheritance of the saints, and final glorification in God's presence.

The readers of Hebrews were facing increasing pressure to abandon their Christian confession and return to Judaism. Some were experiencing social rejection, public reproach, and persecution. As we will soon see, many had already suffered significantly for their faith (Heb. 10:32-34).

In light of those pressures, the author includes himself in the exhortation: ***"Let us hold fast."***

This is not merely a command for struggling believers. It is a call for the **entire Christian community.** The confession is also to be maintained ***"without wavering."***

The Greek word is **(*aklinēs*)**, another **hapax legomenon**, appearing only here in the New Testament. The word literally carries the idea of being **unbending**, **unyielding**, **firm**, **steady**, and **unshakable**. The image is of something that **does not lean**, **tilt**, or **give way** under pressure.

The author's point is clear: Believers are to maintain their confession with resolve. They are not to bend with the culture. They are not to surrender under persecution. They are not to compromise under pressure.

How Can We Hold Fast? The answer is found in the final phrase: ***"for he who promised is faithful."***

Notice carefully what the author does not say. He does not say: "Hold fast because your faith is strong." He does not say: "Hold fast because your resolve is sufficient." He does not say: "Hold fast because you are capable."

The foundation of perseverance is not the faithfulness of the believer. The **foundation of perseverance** is the **faithfulness of God.** Throughout Scripture, God's covenant faithfulness serves as the guarantee that His promises will be fulfilled.

The **perseverance of the saints ultimately rests** upon the **preservation of the saints by God Himself.** Our grip on Christ matters. But beneath our grip is **His greater grip** on us.

So, let us draw near, let us hold fast, and now verse 24...

Vs 24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,

The author now arrives at the third exhortation that flows from Christ's finished work:

- **Let us draw near** (v. 22).
- **Let us hold fast** (v. 23).
- **Let us consider one another** (v. 24).

This **third exhortation** is somewhat different from the first two. While drawing near and holding fast have corporate implications, they are primarily focused on the **individual believer's relationship with God**.

This **third exhortation** is directed primarily toward the body of Christ and our **relationship with one another**. Having drawn near to God ourselves and having held fast to our own confession, we are now called to **think intentionally** about how we can **strengthen fellow believers.**

The author says: ***"Let us consider"*** The Greek verb is **(*katanoeō*)**, meaning *to* ***carefully observe***, ***thoughtfully consider***, ***pay close attention to***, *or* ***contemplate***. It describes **deliberate reflection.**

In other words, believers are not merely to hope that others grow spiritually. We are to give serious thought to **how we can actively contribute to that growth.**

The author is calling Christians to become students of one another. How can I encourage this brother? How can I strengthen this sister? How can I help fellow believers grow in Christ?

Let us consider how to stir up one another - The phrase ***"stir up"*** is especially interesting. The Greek word is **(*paroxysmos*)**. It appears only twice in the New Testament, making it relatively rare.

The word literally carries the idea of **provoking**, **stimulating**, **inciting**, **sharpening**, or **strongly motivating**. It can be used **positively** or **negatively** depending on the context. Here, the author uses it positively. The idea is **not** stirring up conflict. It is stirring up devotion. It is **not** provoking frustration. It is provoking godliness.

The writer is saying that Christians should **intentionally encourage** and **motivate** one another so that **love and good works flourish** within the church.

Notice, the first goal is ***love***. The Greek word is **(*agapē*)**, the New Testament's highest expression of love. This is not merely affection or friendship. It is self-sacrificial, God-like love. It is the kind of love demonstrated by Christ:

> *"By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us..." (1 John 3:16)*

The church is not merely to preach love. The church is to **cultivate love**. And believers are to actively encourage that process in one another.

The second goal is *"**good works**."* The phrase is **(*kalōn ergōn*)**, literally **"noble works," "beautiful works,"** or **"good works."** These are not works performed in order to earn salvation. The author of Hebrews has spent

chapter after chapter showing that salvation comes through Christ's sacrifice alone. Rather, these works are the natural fruit of a life transformed by the gospel.

Paul frequently uses this same language. For example:

> *16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Ti 3:16–17, ESV)*

The expression appears repeatedly throughout the Pastoral Epistles (1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus), where Paul emphasizes that believers should be characterized by lives overflowing with good works. It is interesting that outside of Hebrews, Paul is the only New Testament author who uses this phrase.

The Progression of the Passage - There is a beautiful progression in the author's argument:

- First: **Hebrews 10:14** - Christ perfects His people through His sacrifice.
- Then: **Hebrews 10:19-22** - Believers draw near to God through Christ.
- Then: **Hebrews 10:23** - Believers hold fast their confession.
- Finally: **Hebrews 10:24** - Believers encourage one another toward love and good works.

Notice the movement. Christ works in us. We draw near to God. We hold firmly to Christ. Then we help others do the same. The Christian life was **never intended to be lived in isolation**. One of the greatest evidences of spiritual maturity is becoming concerned not merely with our own walk, but with **helping others grow** in theirs.

APPLICATION: Hebrews 10:24 challenges us to move beyond merely attending church and begin actively investing in people. We need to ask: **Who am I intentionally encouraging toward greater love for Christ and greater service for others?**

Vs 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

After giving **three positive exhortations**, the author now adds a **warning**. Having told believers what **they should do**, he now **identifies something they must avoid.**

The connection between verses 24 and 25 is particularly important. It is difficult to stir one another up to love and good works if we are **not regularly meeting together**. The commands belong together. The mutual encouragement described in verse 24 requires the **corporate gatherings** described in verse 25.

The author warns believers against **"neglecting"** the assembly. The word translated **"neglecting"** is **(*egkataleipō*)**, meaning *to* ***abandon***, ***forsake***, ***desert***, or ***leave behind***. This is a stronger word than simply missing an occasional gathering. The idea is that of **progressively abandoning fellowship** with God's people.

Once again, the author employs a grammatical construction that gives added force to his warning.

Throughout Hebrews the author frequently utilizes emphatic language, and here he warns his readers not to fall into the practice of abandoning the regular gathering of believers.

The gathering itself is described by the word **(*episynagōgē*)**, meaning an assembly, gathering together, or congregation. The term is related to the word ***synagogue*** and carries the idea of God's people assembling.

The writer further notes that neglecting the assembly had already become ***"the habit of some."*** The Greek word is **(*ethos*)**, which is often translated elsewhere as **"custom"** or **"habitual practice."** The point is sobering. Only a few decades after Christ's death and resurrection, there were already professing believers who had begun distancing themselves from the fellowship of God's people.

What began as an occasional absence had become a pattern. What began as an exception had become a habit. The author therefore warns: Do not let this become your custom. Do not let this become your pattern of life.

Notice what believers are to do when they gather: ***"but encouraging one another."*** The Greek word is **(*parakaleō*)**, one of the most common and important words in the New Testament. It can mean to **encourage**, **comfort**, **exhort**, **strengthen**, **urge**, or **come alongside and help**

When believers gather together, they are not simply receiving ministry from the pastor or teacher. They are **ministering to one another.** They are **strengthening one another.** They are **encouraging one another.**

One of the enemy's most effective strategies is isolation. A **coal** removed from the fire soon **cools**. A **sheep** separated from the flock becomes **vulnerable**. A believer disconnected from Christian fellowship becomes spiritually susceptible to discouragement, temptation, and drift.

This concern is especially relevant in Hebrews because the recipients were facing persecution and social pressure. Some may have stopped attending because associating with Christian believers carried real consequences.

APPLICATION: We have all heard someone say: *"I don't need to go to church to worship God. I can worship God on the lake, in the woods, on a golf course, or sitting at home."* There is a measure of truth in that statement. God can certainly be worshipped anywhere. David worshipped in the wilderness. Paul worshipped in prison.

But that statement misses the point of Hebrews 10:25. The issue is not merely where worship occurs. The issue is that God has called believers to gather together for mutual encouragement. You may be able to worship God alone. **But you cannot fulfill Hebrews 10:24-25 alone.**

The author then adds an interesting qualification*:* ***"and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."***

Notice that he does not say gather less as history progresses. He says gather more. As opposition increases, gather more. As difficulties increase, gather more. As Christ's return approaches, gather more. The closer believers come to the consummation of God's plan, the more they will need the encouragement, strength, accountability, and fellowship found in the local assembly.

Virtually all commentators understand **"the Day"** to refer to the future return of Christ and the events associated with His coming.

As we watch God's redemptive plan unfold, as we see clear evidence that the return of Jesus is getting closer and closer, we should increasingly commit ourselves to the fellowship, encouragement, and strengthening of one another in the faith.

With newfound energy and purpose, let us draw near to God, let us hold fast to Christ, let us consider how we can encourage one another in our walk of faith, knowing that the coming of the Lord is closer today than it has ever been!