

12th December 2022**Not Forsaking the Assembling...
Hebrews 10:25**

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.. KJV

...not abandoning our own meetings, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and even more so because you see the day drawing near NET

Context

The Apostle has been explaining the fulfilment of the Mosaic law in Jesus Christ for the benefit of the Jewish converts to the Faith, and the effectiveness for all time of the Sacrifice for sins in the offering of Jesus Christ for the benefit also of the Gentile converts, all Hebrews together. As he builds the case he compares what the high priest had to do continually every year, for the sanctification of the whole congregation every year, and to enable an atonement with the Creator, the God of the Fathers, to ritually cleanse the congregation of sin. But the damage caused by sin was never taken away, by the mere sprinkling of animals blood, nor did it guarantee forgiveness of sins of an individual. This was because it was all representative of something far greater. The Apostle explains carefully, how that the sacrifice offered was clearly ineffective as it had to be offered every year, and it was impossible just through this process alone, that those who would approach unto God, could ever be made perfect. Instead, that which was greater did come in the person of Jesus Christ, whose was a true and complete representative of his people in ways that mere calves and goats could never be, he who partook of our nature, and being touched with all the feelings of our infirmities, laid down his life willingly – not forced – like the sacrificed animals under the law, and intelligently sacrificed himself, in perfection, because though partaking of human nature, he never gave in to its lusts, thus, his pure, innocent, precious blood, was of

the highest esteem, and value, great and effectual, proving once and for all, that sin could be conquered, and provided the price demanded for the ransom of death. So much achieved in one short special life. So much pointed forward to that one man, who God raised up, so much depends upon him as we look back. God had no pleasure in the blood of bulls and goats, but the pleasure He had in abundance in the victory of His Son, and in His own blood, such that he raised up the Son, from death, forever destroying the notion of the all powerful consequence of sin – death, by granting the Son, eternal Life and establishing him on His own right hand, waiting until all His enemies be overcome. A way to overcome sin and death had been demonstrated. It was the same Way that God taught through the Gospel since the very beginning of course.

For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. That one offering was preordained, predicted and presented also in the law, psalms and prophets, in the same way that the sanctification of individuals was also taught.

That Way - was a way of life. Belief and practice in the effectiveness of the one offering – belief in the Anointed Saviour, but faith also, by allowing that life to - at first influence, and then to infiltrate, and then to become at one with that life, so that the Way, the truth and the Light become as one in a person. – not in perfection of course, because of the continued presence of Sin. But the sin can be blotted out through the continual washing of the word, by having the law, written in the hearts and minds, and an aversion to sin, a revulsion and a loathing of sin, a desire to seek forgiveness, *And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.*

Having drawn a parallel with the highest accomplishment of the holiest day in the Jewish calendar, the Apostle explains that the Believer stands likewise on the threshold of eternity, - able to draw near – through the veil, cleansed and washed, to be part of the cherubim. The contrasts have been made, the teachings are clear, the rewards most apparent, the Word a guarantee, a Covenant. The Apostle has built up to this point, bring us along with him. BUT....

Let us... he says, Let us... now it is the turn of the believer to do something. Not everything is just through faith. Works are also required. Let us, - it is an invitation to action, together - US.

Verse 22 Let **us** draw near....

Verse 23 Let **us** hold fast

Verse 24 Let **us** consider one another....

Only the high priest was qualified and able to do things alone. Because only he had the faith, works, Spirit, and was the Son of God.

We are sinners, and so to enable us to KEEP the covenant which we have been invited into, we are invited together with fellow disciples. To have hearts sprinkled, and bodies washed, involves outside help, we are capable of doing that ourselves, we need to help one another. – For example a dead person cannot bury themselves. So another is required to baptise, to wash our bodies. Obviously this is a literal example, but illustrates the point, as the next verse points out – it is a tendency of human nature to be wavering. Left to ourselves we waver, wobble, and doubt, and wander off some random pathway. So we are commanded to hold fast, because we tend to let go. We need help to keep hold. We need to consider one another – to provoke unto good works, and to provoke to love. So it is that alone, we are not reminded of the needs of others, so we do not do good works, because by definition we will only have ourselves to think about. If we are alone, then how is it possible to love. Love is not demonstrated by words. It is by deeds, and actions. So when one lets go, or wavers, we consider them, as we are in proximity, or we keep in touch so that we know the personal lives, issues, temperaments, and circumstances of fellow believers.

It is not good that the man should be alone – Genesis 2:18.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him

that is alone when he falls; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

Noah was not asked to build the ark alone. He did not embark on the journey alone. He was with his fellows in the ship. The High Priest under the law did not carry out the work of the Tabernacle alone, he worked everyday with fellow priests. In the Holy Place were three items of furniture representing fellowship (table of showbread) preaching (lampstand) and prayer (incense altar) the three strands which bind believers together with bands of love. Even Jesus was given disciples to be his companions. If it is at all possible therefore, the choice to be in grand isolation is not something we should chooses, instead should step away from

When it is possible therefore to be together with likeminded brothers and sisters of Christ, why ever would it be so, that someone would forsake that, and look for excuses not to be amongst or with fellow companions? How can they be provoked to love or do good works?

It begs the question why did the Apostle find it necessary to warn against forsaking the assemblies and meeting together?

Because by nature, men and women are not keen on discipline, and like it to be easy come, easy go, do as I please, answerable to no one – kind of attitude.

It is easier to maintain discipline as a group when there are more, but when there are less, just a few, people can become fatigued with the same company and same idiosyncrasies and eccentricities, same routine, can become more easily irritated and less tolerable of those foibles.

In our circumstances in Dartford, and especially in Cupar, the above descriptions can come to the fore. What is required therefore is the realisation and mutual agreement to be more ready to provoke to love and good works. We should not be afraid of dealing with foibles, and mention them. We should not avoid difficult conversations but

welcome them. We should be more tolerant, but more open. We should not be secret, and defensive, but more ready to laugh at ourselves. Perhaps these attributes will lessen the pain as we provoke one another to good works and love. When pebbles constantly bang against each other, it may be noisy and disruptive, but the end result is smooth stones from the brook, ready to smite the image on the feet. A Kenyan saying is “Hoes that plough on the same farm and are kept in the same store, usually hit one another. Most importantly they clean one another.”

Many of the attempts we make as a community to carry out good works can be easily decided upon by meeting together, and discussing, rather than artificial yes-no decisions forced upon us by the COVID regimen.

The Apostolic tradition was to come together with one accord. We as the Apostolic Ecclesia therefore should not hesitate to seize the opportunity to do the same.

Brother Terry