

Winning Together

2007-03-03

At the end of this sermon today, I am going to ask you to become a part of a small group.

Key to next step for the Lord.

- to rescue Christianity from the swamp of apathy
- to make Jesus lord and top priority of our life
- to break the relegation of Christianity to an after thought
- to turn passive, weak Christians into overcoming power houses for God.
- to seek the Kingdom of God and
- to see the life of faith come alive
- to see the birth / rebirth of Joy
- to see the power of God at work in our life to overcome sin and work miraculously through our ministry as a church.

- Normal Christianity

Heb 10:25 And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage and warn each other, especially now that the day of his coming back again is drawing near. 26 Dear friends, if we deliberately continue sinning after we have received a full knowledge of the truth, there is no other sacrifice that will cover these sins. NLT

Verse 25 - Do not neglect to meet with other believers.

The Context tells us why. . .

Heb 10:19 Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and having a High Priest over the house of God, 22 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. 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, NKJV

Heb 10:25 Not forsaking or neglecting to assemble together [as believers] . . .AMP

Let us

Three Times the Writer Uses the Phrase, "Let Us".

Verse 22 LET US draw near . . .

Verse 23 LET US hold fast the confession of our hope . . .

Verse 24 LET US consider one another . . .

Three times he says, Let us... Let us... Let us...

These are biblical imperatives. They are not suggestions or requests.

Notice also, they are given in the Plural, Not Singular.

It is not, "Let me... Let me...let me..."

It is, "Let us...Let us...let us..."

Saint vs Saints

I want to tell you something very interesting. In most versions of the NT, the word "saint" is used only once.

Phil 4:21 Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. 22 All the saints greet you, NKJV

But, you see the "saints" all over the epistles in the NT. It is "let us" not "let me".

#1 - Let Us Worship

Heb 10:19 Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and having a High Priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.
. nkj

The writer is saying that we come together to. . . we Christians assemble to "Draw near..." "Draw near" to what?

He means for us to Draw near TO THE LORD! When Christians assemble it is to draw near to God. We DON'T COME to church TO HEAR A SERMON. We come, to DRAW NEAR TO God - by a "new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh."

In other words, He died so that we can be here today and come into his presence. When we think about ditching church, we should remember that.

OT Background

You see, in the OT, the Jewish people had a house of worship called a "TABERNACLE".

That tabernacle was a house of 3 ROOMS:

- (1) The Outer Court
- (2) The Inner Court
- (3) The Innermost Court

God's presence dwelt in the in the "Holy of Holies" and could be approached on the Day of Atonement and only by the high priest. And if the high priest didn't go in ceremonially clean with a BLOOD SACRIFICE, he would die. He went in mighty carefully.

A person had to be a JEW TO GO into the Holy of Holies.

Not only a Jew - PRIEST.

Not only a Priest - HIGH PRIEST.

The High Priest COULD GO IN THERE;
Only - WITH BLOOD...
only - ONCE A YEAR...
- With BELLS ON...
- With a ROPE TIED TO HIM...

When the bells stopped ringing he was pulled out by the rope. No one else was going in there to get him.

(Acts 5 - Presence of God still a dangerous place for duplicity and hidden issues)

The Privilege of the NT Christian

Heb 10:19 Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh. . .nkj

We, like the high priest, come into the presence of by the blood - but, the blood of Jesus. EVERYONE of us can go into the very presence of God. We have ACCESS to the "Shekinah Glory" of God that NO OT Jew ever had. We can go in ANY TIME, with boldness - cleansed by the blood. We can go in to HAVE COMMUNION with our God. What a privilege to come, by our great high priest, the LJC into the Holy of Holies of the PRESENCE OF GOD.

God DOESN'T NEED our worship. WE NEED to worship! Worship is NOT IMPORTANT, because of what it DOES FOR GOD. Worship is important, because of what it DOES FOR US.

We become like what we worship.

We come to church to draw near to God.
#1 - LET US WORSHIP

Changed in his presence
Empowered in his presence. . .

#2 - Let Us Witness

Heb 10:23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. NKJ

Heb 10:23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) KJV

What is ". . . the profession of our faith"? The "profession of our faith" is our witness. When you come to church, it is a witness. Every time that you go to church, you say to everybody in your life, "I still believe!"

I believe that going to church is the single most important testimony you can give your children.

It says,
"I believe in God!"
We believe in God.
This is a visible demonstration of our faith in God.

If you stop coming, it is a way of saying,
"I'm no longer holding to my profession".
"I've wavered in the faith."
"I've gone back."
"I no longer believe".
"God is not very important."

Dangerous message to children.

Every time that you come to church, it is a witness to what you believe, or don't believe.

It was utterly unthinkable for the NT Christian to consider forsaking the church.

The NT Christian would never have said,
"I love Jesus, but I don't love the church".

So the writer said,
Let us hold fast the profession of our faith...
Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together.

Going to church is very important.

Jesus & the Church Are Not Identical but Jesus and the Church Are Inseparable!

Jesus & His Church - NT Pictures

Three Figures of Speech Used in the NT to Describe the Church.

A. A BUILDING

Jesus is the foundation.
- invisible to the casual observer.

We are the LIVING STONES, built upon the foundation.
We are the visible part of the church.

*A building without a FOUNDATION will surely crumble.
The church without Christ will surely crumble.

*The foundation without the LIVING STONES is INCOMPLETE.

B. A BODY

- * We are the various members of the body.
- * Christ is the HEAD, Who Directs the Members.

*A body without a HEAD is DEAD! (church without Christ)
*A head without a BODY is GRUESOME.

C. A BRIDE

Jesus is the BRIDE-GROOM. We are the BRIDE. Our lives are joined to Jesus in love, fidelity, faithfulness & fellowship.

The bride can't be a bride without a bride-groom.
The bride-groom can't be a bride-groom without a bride.

IT TAKES BOTH!

While JC and the Church Are Not Identical, They Are Inseparable!

That's the reason the scripture says,

Verse 23 LET US hold fast the profession of our faith...KJV

When you come to church, you preach a sermon.
When you walk in the church door, that says,
 "I still believe JC".
 "I'm holding fast the profession of my faith".
 My faith still holds.

When your NEIGHBORS see you leave the house, time after time, to go to church, they say; "He still believes!"

Every time, I see you walk in that door, I SAY, "He still believes!"

When you DON'T COME, I worry.

You say, "Well it's none of your business, Pastor".

A Pastor that doesn't care when his people waver in their faith needs to change jobs.

- 1 - Let us Worship
- 2 - Let us Witness

#3 - Let Us Win (Over Sin)

Heb 10:23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) 24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: KJV

Verse 24 - amplified . . .

Heb 10:24 And let us consider and give attentive, continuous care to watching over one another, studying how we may stir up (stimulate and incite) to love and helpful deeds and noble activities, 25 Not forsaking or neglecting to assemble together [as believers], as is the habit of some people, but admonishing (warning, urging, and encouraging) one another, and all the more faithfully as you see the day approaching. AMP

There were some ACTION PHRASES in those verses what we are supposed to minister to one another.

Consider one another. . .

Continuously care and watch over one another.

Stir up, motivate to love, right living and ministry.

We are to warn, urge and encourage, build up, motivate one another.

WOW!!

How in the world are we going to do that, without getting to know each other?

. . .without being in meaningful relationships?

. . .when our involvement with each other is a superficial greeting as we get to church or leave church?

How are we going to consider one another without knowing one another?

Without sharing our heart and lives with each other?

Without listening to each other?

We need each other.

WAM,

I love Worship - draw near to God.

I love Witnessing - influencing others for Jesus.

But, what about winning? Overcoming? Living victoriously?

In purity?

Over Sin?

Over Satan?

Over self, selfishness?

What about getting prayers answered?

Being powerful in ministry to help others.

Going to the next level in God?

What about joy?

Fellowship

One key, to overcoming . . .WINNING

Go back to those first two verses I read. . .well let's include verse 24

Heb 10:24 And let us consider and give attentive, continuous care to watching over one another, studying how we may stir up (stimulate and incite) to love and helpful deeds and noble activities, 25 Not forsaking or neglecting to assemble together [as believers], as is the habit of some people, but admonishing (warning, urging, and encouraging) one another, and all the more faithfully as you see the day approaching. 26 For if we go on deliberately and willingly sinning after once acquiring the knowledge of the Truth, there is no longer any sacrifice left to atone for [our] sins [no further offering to which to look forward]. AMP

Notice the contextual relationship to fellowship and overcoming sin.

Verse 24 & 25 - tell us to consider, attend to, care for, encourage, warn, motivate, admonish - generally help each other WIN.

Then in verse 26 - the terrible tragedy of continuing IN sin & the terrible consequences.

Truth:

Sin separates you from fellowship, and Fellowship will separate you from sin.

"Fellowship" - both horizontal and vertical - with God and with each other.

You can embrace sin, or you can embrace fellowship, but you can't embrace both.

Testimony: Full time ministry since 1973

I have learned that people who have decided to embrace sin, will withdraw from fellowship.

Heb 10:26 For if we go on deliberately and willingly sinning after once acquiring the knowledge of the Truth, there is no longer any sacrifice left to atone for [our] sins [no further offering to which to look forward]. AMP

Point: We need each other's HELP to overcome
the drag of the world,
the lusts of the flesh and
the temptations of the Devil
- all of which influence us to sin.

To help each other like that, we **need to have personal relationships** with each other.

How can we possibly obey these passages if the only time we see each other is on Sunday morning at worship services?

How can we consider, attend to, care for, encourage, warn, motivate, admonish each other when we only see each other superficially on Sunday?

The answer is, we simply cannot.
Nor are we meant to.

We must not only be devoted to
the Word,
to Worship and
to Witness.

We must also be devoted to the fellowship in the body.

According to the 1John 1v3, when we came into fellowship with Jesus, we came into fellowship with those who are in fellowship with Him.

Year of Relationships

This is a year of emphasizing relationships at WAM.

In the past we have emphasized worship and the Word, Worship, Witness. We need to keep those things going, as we move forward in emphasizing our fellowship.
- our relationships, our friendships.

Relationships for helping and winning in our lives.

But, it will take more than coming late and leaving early on Sunday morning to do it. It will take real relationships where we can grow in the Lord together.

Ships that pass in the night, and speak
to each other in passing,
Only a signal shown and a distant
voice in the darkness;
So on the ocean of life we pass
and speak to one another,
Only a look and a voice; then
darkness again and silence.
(Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, The Theologian's Tale)

That's not what God built us for.
. . .not what he intended.

Early Church Model - 2 Kinds of Meetings

The Early Church Met Two Ways:

Acts 2:46-47

46 And day after day they regularly assembled **in the temple** with united purpose, **and in their homes** they broke bread [including the Lord's Supper]. They partook of their food with gladness and simplicity and generous hearts,

47 Constantly praising God and being in favor and goodwill with all the people; and the Lord kept adding [to their number] daily those who were being saved [from spiritual death]. AMP

Acts 5:42 And every day, **in the Temple** and **in their homes**, they continued to teach and preach this message: "The Messiah you are looking for is Jesus." NLT

Corporate gatherings - (temples and synagogues) liturgy

Home gatherings - informal - "gladness", "simplicity", "generosity"

Picture:

Sunday Morning Worship

"Win Groups" - Getting together to help each other win in our Christian walk.

Notice In the NT Church

- the fellowship, relationships were built
- the people enjoyed their Christianity
- People saved daily (not just temple days)

Outreach mentality of groups.

Open door to the church.

W I N - W A M I N N E I G H B O R H O O D S .

Illustration: **Firm** - Dana - Easley Family - three generations

Sunday morning church attendance/involvement leads to superficial relationships and superficial Christianity

Honestly, that's the way a lot of people want it. They don't want their religion to effect their life outside a short time allotted to God on Sunday morning, if that. The problem with that is that we don't get what we need to **WIN** - live overcoming, powerful Christian lives for God.

We come to church on Sunday morning, but during the week we interact with the world, and all its influences. We meet God and our religious friends again the next Sunday morning. And we remain largely unchanged, winning some battles and losing many. We are superficial Christian relationships and maintain a superficial Christianity. We feel disconnected and alone in our struggles.

Why? - don't get from each other what we need.

- don't give what we should give - care
- don't become what we should be.

This is not what God intended for the church. God did not design the Christian life to be lived alone. God is building us together to be his dwelling place. Together. . .

Eph 2:21 In Him the whole structure is joined (bound, welded) together harmoniously, and it continues to rise (grow, increase) into a holy temple in the Lord [a sanctuary dedicated,

consecrated, and sacred to the presence of the Lord]. 22 In Him [and in fellowship with one another] you yourselves also are being built up [into this structure] with the rest, to form a fixed abode (dwelling place) of God in (by, through) the Spirit. AMP

Exposition:

That's why when Hebrews is talking about church it talks about:

- 1) Drawing Near to God
- 2) Being Faithful in our Witness

and . . .what were those words again?

Heb 10:24 And let us consider and give attentive, continuous care to watching over one another, studying how we may stir up (stimulate and incite) to love and helpful deeds and noble activities, 25 Not forsaking or neglecting to assemble together [as believers], as is the habit of some people, but admonishing (warning, urging, and encouraging) one another, and all the more faithfully as you see the day approaching. AMP

I see that as

Actively Loving One Another

John 13:34 I give you a new commandment: that you should love one another. Just as I have loved you, so you too should love one another. 35 By this shall all [men] know that you are My disciples, if you love one another [if you keep on **showing love** among yourselves]. AMP

Rom 12:9 Don't just pretend that you love others. **Really love** them. . . NLT

What is love?

A group of professional people posed this question to a group of 4 to 8year-olds, "What does love mean?"

The answers were quite interesting.

"When my grandmother got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toenails anymore. So my grandfather does it for her all the time, even when his hands got arthritis too. That's love." Rebecca age 8

"When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You just know that your name is safe in their mouth." Billy - age 4

"Love is when a girl puts on perfume and a boy puts on shaving cologne and they go out and smell each other."
Karl - age 5

"Love is when you go out to eat and give somebody most of your French fries without making them give you any of theirs."
Chrissy - age 6

"Love is what makes you smile when you're tired."
Terri - age 4

"Love is when my mommy makes coffee for my daddy and she takes a sip before giving it to him, to make sure the taste is OK."
Danny - age 7

"Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen." (My personal favorite)
Bobby - age 7 (Wow!)

"If you want to learn to love better, you should start with a friend who you hate,"
Nikka - age 6

"During my piano recital, I was on a stage and I was scared. I looked at all the people watching me and saw my daddy waving and smiling. He was the only one doing that. I wasn't scared anymore."
Cindy - age 8

"Love is when Mommy gives Daddy the best piece of chicken."
Elaine-age 5

"Love is when Mommy sees Daddy smelly and sweaty and still says he is handsomer than Robert Redford."
Chris - age 7

"Love is when your puppy licks your face even after you left him alone all day."
Mary Ann - age 4

"You really shouldn't say 'I love you' unless you mean it. But if you mean it, you should say it a lot. People forget."
Jessica - age 8

And the final one -- Author and lecturer Leo Buscaglia once talked about a contest he was asked to judge.

The purpose of the contest was to find the most caring child.

The winner was a four year old child whose next door neighbor was an elderly gentleman who had recently lost his wife.

Upon seeing the man cry, the little boy went into the old gentleman's yard, climbed onto his lap, and just sat there.

When his Mother asked what he had said to the neighbor, the little boy said, "Nothing, I just helped him cry"

Exposition:

John 13:34 I give you a new commandment: that you should love one another. Just as I have loved you, so you too should love one another. 35 By this shall all [men] know that you are My disciples, if you love one another [if you keep on showing love among yourselves]. AMP

Rom 12:9 Don't just pretend that you love others. Really love them. . . NLT

How do you "Really Love Each other" . . .
How do you "Show love among yourselves" . . .

True love is something others can see. . . . That means, it is not a sentimental feeling.

If you can see it, what does that look like?
It looks like real concern and active care for each other.

Reciprocal Commands

Heb 10:24 And let us consider [one another] . . . [And "study" how to help each other.]

I believe that these "one anothers" describe how Christians love each other. I want to just read

you a list of SOME of them. . .I may talk about them more in depth on another occasion/occasions.

The Bible is full of "ONE ANOTHERS".

Rom 12:10. . .show preference for one another
Rom 12:16. . .be of the same mind, one for another (unified in purpose)
Rom 14:19. . .edify one another (build up)
Rom 15:7. . .accept / receive one another
Rom 15:14. . .admonish one another
1Cor 12:25. . .care for one another
1Pet 4:10. . .minister gifts one to another
Five times. . .greet one another with a holy kiss or kiss of love
Gal 5:13. . .serve one another
Gal 6:2. . .bear one another's burdens
Eph 5:21. . .submit to one another
1Thess 4:18...comfort one another
Heb 3:13...exhort one another
1Pet 4:9...show hospitality one to another
1John 1:7. . .fellowship with one another
Eph 4:2 - Put up with one another's faults
James 5:16...confess your faults one to another
James 5:16...pray for one another

Let me close by talking about those two reciprocal commands in James 5:16

James 5:16 Confess to one another therefore your faults (your slips, your false steps, your offenses, your sins) and pray [also] for one another, that you may be healed and restored [to a spiritual tone of mind and heart]. . . .AMP

Transparency

Confess to one another - Transparency in sharing - be open, real

Group Response

- prayer
- help, care, consideration, encouragement, warning

Result - supernatural miracles

Confess your faults, slips, false steps, offenses, sins - transparency (get real)

Pray for one another

Expect miracles

Closing

Key to next step for the Lord.

- to rescue Christianity from the swamp of apathy
- to make Jesus lord and top priority of our life
- to break the relegation of Christianity to an after thought
- to turn passive, weak Christians into overcoming power houses for God.
- to seek the Kingdom of God and
- to see the life of faith come alive
- to see the birth / rebirth of Joy
- to see the power of God at work in our life to overcome sin and work miraculously through our ministry as a church.

What will you embrace?

What will you do?

Want to Win?

Help others Win?