

**Let Us Consider How To Stimulate One Another
To Love and Good Works
Hebrews 10:24-25**

In recent years a new movement within the evangelical church has come into play. It is commonly referred to as the "seeker sensitive" movement and generally speaking there has been a good deal of numerical growth associated with this movement. Many "seeker sensitive churches" are now mega-churches with well-known pastors who are riding a wave of considerable popularity.

So, what is this movement all about? Basically, the seeker-sensitive church is about trying to get as many unsaved people into the church as possible so that they might hear the gospel and be saved.

So what have seeker sensitive churches done in order to accomplish this end? They have tried to make the church experience for the unsaved as comfortable, inviting and non-threatening as possible. This in turn has led those churches to shorten their messages, to make those shortened messages more topical rather than expositional, and to make sure that those shortened topical messages are more positive than negative or in other words that those messages are more focused on self-help themes rather than on biblical themes that could be perceived as negative, such as sin, hell or repentance.

We are obviously not a seeker sensitive church. Or in other words, we are not seeking to fill our church services with unsaved people by making our services more comfortable, more inviting and less threatening.

So what are we trying to do in our services? We are seeking to equip saints for the work of ministry, through the faithful expositional preaching of God's word, believing that His word is the Spirit's primary tool in molding us and shaping us, so that over time we might become more and more conformed to Christ, which in turn will make us a stronger and healthier church.

And what will we see as we become a stronger and healthier church through the faithful expositional teaching of God's word? We will see more and more of our church members boldly and effectively sharing the gospel of Christ with their friends, family, co-workers, fellow students, neighbors and even acquaintances. And what else will we see, as we become a stronger

and healthier church, through the faithful expositional teaching of God's word? We also will see more and more and more of our members not only seeking to love one another unconditionally but we will also see more and more of our members seeking to stimulate others within our fellowship to love one another unconditionally.

This last thought that I have just shared with you, I believe will be supported in the text that we will be examining this morning as we once again return back to our study of the Book of Hebrews.

As you remember the Book of Hebrews was written to a group of struggling Hebrew believers, living in Rome, who under a great persecution, were in danger of turning away from Christ and returning back to Judaism.

And how did the author of this book counter this danger? The author countered this danger by focusing on Christ's superiority.

He first of all focused on Christ's superiority to prophets, then to Moses, then to angels and finally he focused on the superiority of Christ's priesthood over all other priesthoods, which concluded with a section that emphasized Christ's superior sacrifice.

After this, the author, based on Christ's superior priesthood, as well as His superior sacrifice, began to string together in **Hebrews 10:19-25** three different exhortations. These three exhortations, not only served as a capstone for what he had just said about Christ's superior priesthood and His superior sacrifice. but also as a point of transition, from the former doctrinal emphasis of this epistle to a more practical emphasis.

So what was the first of these three exhortations? The first of these three exhortations was this: Let us draw near (Hebrews 10:19-22). So now let me read for you **Hebrews 10:19-22** and see if this is not so: **"Therefore brethren since we (In light of everything that was said to you in Hebrews 5:1-10:18 about Christ's superior priesthood and sacrifice) have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, (20) by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, (21) and since we have a great priest over the house of God, (22) LET US DRAW NEAR with a sincere heart in full assurance of**

faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

So what was the point of this exhortation "**to draw near**" to God? These readers were in danger of falling away from Christ and returning back to Judaism but this possibility did not have to become their reality. And why was this? It was because Christ, the superior high priest, who had offered up His superior sacrifice, had made it possible for all those who had exercised faith in Christ to continuously draw near to God and to His throne of grace, to receive grace to help in the time of their need, based on a parallel passage in **Hebrews 4:16**.

So assuming that these struggling Hebrew believers, who had just been exhorted to draw near to God were now seeking to do that very thing, what would this author have specifically wanted them to seek God's grace for, in light of their current struggles?

The answer to this question can be found in the second exhortation. And what was the second exhortation? It was this:

Let us **hold fast** the confession of our hope (Hebrews 10:23). So let me now read for you **Hebrews 10:23** and see if this is not so. And what does it say? It says this, "**Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful...**" So what was the second exhortation? "**Let us hold fast the confession of our hope.**"

Or we could rephrase it this way "**let us, through the grace that God supplies, continue to hold fast to our confession of faith in the Gospel of Christ and the hope associated with that gospel.**"

These readers in the midst of this great persecution were suffering and certainly needed God's grace but from this author's perspective what did they need God's grace for? Was it for them to be delivered from this very severe persecution? No! It would appear, based on the second exhortation, that he believed, in the midst of this ongoing persecution, they needed God's grace, so that they through God's grace might be able to continue to hold fast to their confession of faith in the gospel of Christ and what would be the best means by which these struggling Hebrew believers might be best able to do that very thing according to this author?

This question brings us to the third exhortation in this string of exhortations that are contained in **Hebrews 10:19-25**. So what is this third exhortation?

MESSAGE

Let us **consider** how to stimulate one another to love and good works (Hebrews 10:24-25). So now let me read for you **Hebrews 10:24-25** and see if this is not so. And this is what these verses say, "**And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and goods deeds, (25) not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near.**" So what is the third exhortation? The third exhortation is this: "**Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds.**"

This author had just exhorted his readers "**to hold fast to their confession of hope**" or in other words "**to hold fast to their confession of faith in the gospel of Christ, which of course is a message of hope.**" And now they are being exhorted to do what? They are being exhorted "**to consider how to stimulate one another to love and good works.**" So how are these two exhortations connected?

If these struggling Hebrew believers were going to be put in the very best position to continue to hold fast to their confession of faith in the gospel of Christ, this author believed that they would need to be a part of a church fellowship largely composed, if not entirely composed, of individual members who were committed to loving one another and doing good works.

And how could a church, such as theirs, become such a church? A church could become such a church by heeding this third exhortation. And what is this third exhortation? "**Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good works.**"

If a church purposes themselves to heed this exhortation, "**to consider how to stimulate one another to love and good works**" they will most likely over time become more and more composed of what kind of individuals?

They will most likely become more and more composed of individuals who are committed to loving one another and doing good works.

And what will this do? Those within the church will be in a far better position to hold fast to their confession of faith than if they were not in such a church.

So is there a connection between the second exhortation and the third exhortation? Absolutely!

SO NOW LET US LOOK AT THIS THIRD EXHORTATION MORE CLOSELY.

So how does it begin? It begins with these words, "**Let us consider....**" The word translated "**Let us consider**" is the main verb around which **verses 24-25** revolve. It occurs 14 times in the New Testament. And what does this word mean? The word translated "Let us consider" (KATANOEEO) means "to look closely at (Hebrews 3:1). The author used this word earlier in this epistle in **Hebrews 3:1** when he challenged his readers "**to consider**" or in other words "**to look closely at Christ.**"

But here in **Hebrews 10:24** this author is not exhorting his readers "**to consider Christ**" or in other words to look closely at Christ but rather this author, here in **verse 24**, is exhorting his readers "**to consider**" or "**to look closely at how to stimulate one another to love and good works.**"

If we are going to be a church that will provide the very best environment for those within our church to hold fast to their confession of hope or in other words to hold fast to their confession of faith in the gospel of Christ, we will need to take this exhortation to heart. Why?

If we take this exhortation to heart "to consider how we might stimulate one another to love and good works" we will have an ever-increasing number of people committed to loving one another and doing good works. And hopefully this, by the grace of God, will make it possible for us to provide, for those within our fellowship the very best environment for holding fast to their confession of hope or in other words for holding fast to their confession of faith in the gospel of Christ.

So what do we need to do if are going to put the people of this church in the very best position to hold fast to their confession of faith in the gospel of Christ? We need to consider how to stimulate one another to love and good works.

How might this look? There is no singular answer to this. As we fully give ourselves up to God and His Spirit fills us, He will, through His word and through the events of our lives that He is sovereignly orchestrating, lead us.

And are any of us here excused from this exercise of taking this question before God of how to stimulate one another to love and good works? No! Why? This exhortation was directed at the whole of the church. And can any of us go on vacation in respect this exhortation? No! And how do we know this? We know this because the verb translated "Let us consider" is a present tense.

So if we do this together and we do this all the time will there be an awareness, on the part of this congregation, that we are in fact stimulating one another to love and good works? To help us answer this question let us consider the word "stimulate."

The word for stimulate (PAROXUSMOS) is a strong word that literally means, "to sharpen" and figuratively in this context is referring to an **incitement** to action.

This word is in fact related to an English word (PAROXYSM), which describes a sudden attack. And although this is certainly not exactly what the writer is telling his readers to do here, this word does convey the sense that these efforts to stimulate one another to love and good works will not go unnoticed.

Hopefully if you are around me for any length of time you will see my efforts to stimulate you to love and good works. And hopefully if I am around you long enough I will see your efforts as well. Now having said this, I know this all takes time but I believe that over time our work on behalf of one another will be felt and will not go unnoticed.

So what kind of love are we striving to spur one another on to? The love that is in view here is an **unconditional** and sacrificial love (AGAPE) that can

only be expressed when we surrender ourselves completely to Him and are filled with His Spirit.

This is the kind of love that we are spurring one another on to. This will require us to be spurring people to look at God and the beauty of God as well as to spurring them on to looking at all that He has done for us especially in respect to what He has done for us through Christ and His superior sacrifice.

When this kind of love is expressed and when these kinds of works are done, and done by all of us all the time, will this encourage us to hold fast to our confession of faith in the gospel of Christ? Absolutely!

So after the author exhorted his readers in verse 24 "to consider how to stimulate one another to love and good works" what did the author do next in verse 25? Let me now read for you **Hebrews 10:25, "not forsaking our own assembling together as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near."** In this verse the author underscored his appeal in **verse 24** for them to consider how to stimulate one another to love and good works by emphasizing two contrasting expressions that explain how this can and should be done. So what did he explain in the first expression?

He first of all explained to his readers in light of his exhortation that they must **not** stop meeting together. Isn't this what the author meant when he at the beginning of **verse 25** said, "**not forsaking our own assembling together as is the habit of some.**" Yes, this is exactly what the author meant.

If we want to stimulate one another to love and good works so that everyone in this fellowship is in the very best position to hold fast to their confession of faith in the gospel of Christ we cannot stop meeting with each other.

The failure of some to continue together on a regular basis is cast not simply as neglect but rather as abandonment. This author did this by using the word "forsake". In the LXX the verb "forsake" was used as a covenantal term that often points to the standing reproach of Israel for having abandoned the

Lord and His ways. And this could be the thought that this author is trying to convey to his Hebrew readers here when he explained to his readers that they cannot stop meeting together.

So if we are not going to do this what must be true: Our commitment to meet together must dictate how we live our lives rather than the other way around.

If we had such a commitment this would mean that we would not let the tyranny of the urgent or the felt needs of the moment dictate to us whether we are going to gather together with other professing believers or not going to gather together with other professing believers.

So after he explained to them that not gathering together was not an option, what did he do next at the end of **verse 25**? He then explained to his readers the better option. And what was this better option that he explained to them?

He explained to his readers in light of his exhortation that they must **continue** to meet together for the purpose of mutual encouragement and all the more as they saw "the day" drawing near.

The Christian life is not easy and we need to continue to gather for the purpose of mutual encouragement....

So what is this "day" that he is referring too? Is it the day when the temple would be destroyed? Was it the day when the church will be caught up with Christ? Or is it the Day of the Lord that describes a period of time that would include not only the tribulation with its judgments, and the second advent of Christ with its judgments, but also the millennium with its subsequent judgments that will take place at the end of the millennium, and that will in fact prepare the way for the establishment of the new heavens and earth.

So what day is being referred to? I believe that it is the day of the Lord that is being referred to and I believe that the verses that we will cover the next time I preach to you or in other words **Hebrews 10:26-31** will confirm this to us.

CONCLUSION

So is meeting together absolutely necessary? If we truly want to hold fast to our confession of faith and to encourage others to do the same we must absolutely do this.

And what can we do to ensure that this will take place? We must every one of us continually be considering how to stimulate one another to love good works. For if we do not do this, then more and more people will be vulnerable to be less motivated to come together for mutual encouragement; but if we do this, our church will be putting the people of our church in the very best position to continue to hold fast to their confession of faith in the gospel of Christ.

May we by God's grace truly understand how **important** it for us to be continually gathering together with other fellow Christians for the purpose of mutual encouragement.