

Heb 10:19-24 Draw Near, Hold Fast, and Consider (part 2)

Today, I will finish part two of a sermon from two weeks ago. In our text we have 3 exhortations from the author to these Hebrew Christians. In v. 22 he says, “draw near with a true heart in full assurance.” This is faith. We believe in God. We know He is holy, righteous, all-powerful, sovereign, and good. As 11:6 says, “**And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.**” In v. 23, a second exhortation says, “Hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering.” This is hope. As Christians we hold fast to our confession. What confession? It is the confession of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the promised savior of the world. In Him All of God’s promises are YES. A good example of our profession is found in 1 Tim. 3:16: “**He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up to glory.**” This is the Gospel of God, also called the Gospel of Christ.

Now, we come to the 3rd exhortation found in vv. 24-25: “**And let us CONSIDER how to stir up one another to love and good works . . .**” How fitting for today as we take the Lord’s Supper, which is often called the table (feast) of love. Jesus says to us: “**A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another**” (John 13:34). Paul says in 1 Cor. 13, “**So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.**” Why is this? Well, one day our faith will be sight. And, one day, our hope will be realized in glory. But, love will remain. Nowhere does the Bible say, “God is faith,” or “God is hope.” But, it does say, “God is love” (1 John 4:8, 16). And the reason we put so much emphasis on love as God’s people is because the work of God to fulfill his promise is motivated by love. “**For God so loved the world . . . that He gave his Son . . .**” (John 3:16). With this in mind, let’s briefly consider this exhortation of love. I have 4 qualities of love from this text today.

1. Love considers others. We can say this in different ways. “*Love does not seek its own. Love is not selfish. Love looks away from ‘itself’ to others.*” I get this from v. 24. “**Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works.**” With this truth, I emphasize the words “one another.” We often hear people say, “the world would be a better place if we just learned to love one another.” This is certainly true. But, what the world usually means is this: “*You are loving if you agree with me and my position and give me what I want.*” I saw a video a few years ago where a mama was teaching her two young boys to love one another by sharing. And she said, “*Jesus loves. And, Jesus shares. So what are you going to do.*” And one of the boys looks at his brother and says, “*You get to be Jesus today.*”

The love of self above all other things is the rule of this world. The way of this sinful world is Me, Myself, and I. To be selfish is to be an idolater. Think about the woman who argues for abortion. Even though everything screams, “This is murder,” “This is the taking of innocent life,” she still says, “It’s my body. I will do with what I want.” Even though men and women are doing things that scream, “this is unnatural,” they say, “this is how I feel, this is what I want. God has made me this way.” This sinful world loves itself. But this is not so for the Christian! I think of Phil. 2:3, which says: “**Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.**” Or James 3:14-16: “**But if you have bitter**

jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.” This sinful world is the seat of selfish ambition. And this is why there is great disorder and every vile practice.

To love is to “Consider one another.” It is not selfish. Even as we take the Lord’s Supper this morning and remember the death of our Lord, I am reminded of Paul’s words to the Philippians: **“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross”** (Phil. 2:3–8).

2. Love has good as its end. Look at v. 24 again: **“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works.”** In this text, the way we love one another is to “consider” how we can help our brothers and sisters do good works. We encourage one another, we exhort one another to do good. Here we see the phrase “stir up.” Just this week, I made pinto beans. I don’t have a recipe. I start with washing my beans (I have to get beans in my sermon from time to time.) I put them in the crock pot. I add bacon, onions, salt, pepper, honey, and ground mustard. And throughout the day, I taste and then I add. And then I stir so all the flavors can come out well. Or, I think of stirring my decaf coffee in the morning after pouring in my oat creamer. This makes it better! In the same way, we are to “stir” one another to good works. And this is how we love one another.

Again, our great example is God . . . who is GOOD! And what does He do to us and for us? Rom. 8:28 says, **“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for GOOD, for those who are called according to his purpose”** (Rom. 8:28). God sent his SON that the greatest good might come to us. As vv. 29-30 say, **“For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.”** This is salvation! Found in the Son. This is one of the things we remember in the Lord’s Supper. For there is nothing greater than to know that your sins are forgiven because of the mercy and grace and goodness of our God to send his Son.

In the same kind of way, as we follow his example, we also look to do good to one another. This begins with the world, and as we will see in a moment, this love to do good is particularly applied HERE . . . in the body of Christ. Let’s think about the world for a moment. How do we do them good? We are commanded to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. This means we go into to the world in love, particularly as we care for their souls. We can give to the poor. We can build schools. We can stand against unrighteousness as we know that all truth is God’s truth. We can enter the public square to fight for justice. We may improve many aspects of this world. But, the primary way we love the world is by telling them about the love of God in sending the Son.

For “**faith comes by hearing and hearing the Word of Christ**” (Rom. 10:17). And by doing this, we consider them. As I think about this truth, sometimes I wonder if one can be selfish by not telling other people about Jesus. (You can ask yourself this question today.)

And as we think about this sinful world, and particularly those who persecute us (our enemies) we are still told in Rom. 12:14-21: “**Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.**” And as we’ve seen, we are told that one of the main reasons we treat the world in such a loving selfless way is that they may be saved. In 1 Cor. 9:22-23, Paul says: “**To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.**” By engaging the world in this kind of love, we consider them and we want their good.

But, the context of this passage is the church, the people of God. This means we must look to one another FIRST as we do good, which brings me to my 3rd point.

3. Love is displayed in the body of Christ, particularly the local body. Yes, as Christians we love All Christians. We love the entire body. We love our brothers and sisters in the world. But, this love is displayed mostly HERE, in the local body of Christ. We might say, “*Love is acute*” in the local body. It is the focus of attention. Doesn’t Jesus say, “**they will know we are Christians by the way we love**” (John 13:35). The local body and how we love one another is the spearhead of God’s active love in this world. And I would add, particularly as we take the Lord’s Supper. So, let’s spend a few minutes on fleshing this out, as I ask, “*What does this look like in the local body? What are the works of love we are aiming for?*”

Let’s begin with the Hebrew Christians of the early church. Theirs was a great context of suffering and persecution. They were being persecuted by the Jews. They were being persecuted by the Romans and their evil rulers such as Nero, of whom it is written that he used Christians as torches for his gardens. Look at 10:32-34: “**But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.**” No matter what comes our way, we must stand together, even at the loss of furniture and property. (explain context)

What about other places in the NT. In Thessalonica? In his first letter, he remembers their “**labor of love**” (1 Thess. 1:3). What were they doing one with another? In 1 Thess. 1:6-8 we read: “**And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much**

affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything.” In 3:6 he says, in your love, **“you always remember us** (Paul and his companions) **kindly . . .**” And throughout the letter he speaks of their love. And then in cp. 5, he gives some specifics as to how they can consider one another in love. In 5:14 ff. he says, **“And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. 15 See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. 16 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”** Brothers and sisters, these are the ways we “stir” one another up unto good works. This is the “salt, the pepper, the honey, the bacon, we add to the pot, that is the “body of Christ” here at Grace.

When you gather on Sunday mornings, is this your goal? When you meet in your home groups, is this what you do? What about when women meet together and men meet together outside the church? Are we looking to do good to one another, to speak the truth in love, to stir one another up for good works. We must! For this is the will of God for us in Christ Jesus!! And it is our job as elders to help us do this! With this in mind, let’s take a few minutes and read our covenant together.

4. Love is motivated (fueled) by the Gospel. When you read these words, do you wonder, *“How can I do this?” “How can I faithfully keep these commands to love one another?”* Well, you can, love, by the power of the gospel of Christ. As a Christian you can! If you are not a Christian, you cannot. For you are still of the world.

I often see flags in front yards with the word “Love is love.” From a manner of speaking, “yes.” But, I believe they taking God out of the picture. And in so doing, they are taking the gospel out of the equation. For we do not know what love is if we do not know that God is love, and that the greatest example of love is the sending of the Son, which is what we celebrate in the Lord’s Supper. **“In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins”** (1 John 4:10). All the world knows is a love of self, which is idolatry. *“I want what I want and I want it NOW”* is the mantra of this world. But we are different. Why? It is the power of the Gospel. Look back at 1 Thess. 1: 4-5: **“For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you . . . Why? Verse 5: “because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.”**

Brothers and sisters, we love because He first loved us and sent his Son for us. And if you are a Christian today, it is because the gospel has come to you in power and in the Holy Spirit.

And, we must remember that it is the love of God and the grace of God and the power of God that has come down to us in the Gospel of Christ and shows us and teaches about true love. It is because of the gospel that we can truly love and truly love our neighbor. When I want my way above all else, I’m merely throwing an adult tantrum. It is far cry from Jesus who said, **“Let this cup pass before me. Yet, nevertheless, your will be done”** (Matt. 26:39). This is the example of love. Jesus is our example. But, He is also our power. **“Apart from me you can do nothing”** (John 15:5). And this is one of the things we remember today in the Lord’s Supper.

Application: If you are not a Christian trust Christ.

Application: If you are a Christian and you are discouraged by your lack of love, trust Christ. Know that you need the gospel. Take heed to the preaching and teaching of the Word of God week by week.