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A Holy Invitation

HEBREWS 10:19-25

Introduction

1. Do you enjoy receiving invitations?
2. You might say, it depends upon what the invitation is for — shower, wedding, graduation, shower, dinner date?
3. Jesus told a parable one time about a man who prepared a great feast and those who were invited gave various excuses as to why they could not come (Luke 14:16-24).
4. Needless to say, the man was not too happy.
5. In our reading today, you have I are the recipients of three invitations.
6. Because all Scripture is inspired of God, these invitations come from the Holy Spirit.
7. It is important that we respond to them in a positive way.
8. Today, as we look at God's invitation to us, I would like for us to each ask ourselves, how we are responding.

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I. Let Us Draw Near To God

A. THERE IS A MANNER IN WHICH WE ARE TO DRAW NEAR TO GOD (v. 22A)

“Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith” (Hebrews 10:22a).

1. Many years ago (1903), Cleland McAfee described that which awaits us in God's presence with these words:

**There is a place of quiet rest,
Near to the heart of God,
A place where sin cannot molest,**

Near to the heart of God.

**There is a place of full release,
Near to the heart of God,
A place where all is joy and peace,
Near to the heart of God.**

2. It was David, who in Psalm 16:11, said that in God's presence there is "fullness of joy."
3. You and I are invited to draw near to God, but we are also told there is a manner in which we must do so.
4. It is "with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith."
 - a. "Sincere heart"
 - 1) Jesus said that it is the "pure in heart" who shall see God (Matthew 5:8).
 - 2) Earlier, in Hebrews 3:12, the writer warned us about having an "evil, unbelieving heart" because he said that such a heart "falls away from the living God."
 - 3) Instead, a "sincere heart" is a heart of "complete trust and devotion."
 - 4) It is a heart consumed with love for God.
 - b. "Full assurance of faith"
 - 1) Such faith is "sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see" (Hebrews 11:1, NIV84).
 - 2) If we are going to draw near to God, we must believe that "He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6, NIV84).

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B. TWO BLESSINGS WE POSSESS MAKE THIS POSSIBLE

1. The confidence we have through Christ's sacrifice (vv. 19-20).

“Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh” (Hebrews 10:19-20).

- a. In the tabernacle which Moses and the Israelites utilized, the “holy place” was the place where the presence of God resided among His people.
- b. It was separated from the rest of the tabernacle by a curtain.
- c. The only person permitted entrance into the holy place was the high priest and he could only enter once a year under certain conditions.
- d. There is another holy place for us as Christians:
 - 1) It is the true tabernacle in heaven, where God is.
 - 2) He is seated on His throne, and Jesus is at His right hand.
- e. You and I, as Christians, are granted the freedom to enter God’s presence through our prayers with confidence.
- f. Through his death, Jesus made it possible for you and I as sinful human beings to enter into the presence of His holy Father.
- g. The way to God which Jesus has “inaugurated” or “opened” for us is “new” and “living.”
 - 1) It is “new” in the sense that it did not exist until Christ opened it and entered it Himself (Hebrews 4:14).
 - 2) It is “living” in the sense that it is “life-giving” and is made possible by the one who is “alive forevermore” (Revelation 1:18).

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2. The work of our great High Priest (v. 21).

“. . . we have a great priest over the house of God” (Hebrews 10:21).

- a. Jesus is our “merciful and faithful high priest” (Hebrews 2:17).
- b. He is the One who finished His work and “sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Hebrews 1:3).

- c. He is the one who can “sympathize with our weaknesses” (*Hebrews 4:15*).
- d. He is the One who invites us to “draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (*Hebrews 4:16*).

Slide 5**C. OUR ENCOURAGEMENT TO DRAW NEAR IS BASED UPON AN EXISTING RELATIONSHIP**

“. . . having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water” (*Hebrews 10:22b*)

1. Almost 1500 years before these words were written, when Moses installed Aaron and his sons in their priestly offices, he sprinkled them with blood and they washed their bodies with water (*Exodus 28:4, 21; Leviticus 8:6, 30*).
2. Some 900 years after that, God spoke through His prophet Ezekiel of a time yet to come when He would bring about an inward cleansing of His people.
 - a. “Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean” (*Ezekiel 36:25a*).
 - b. “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you” (*Ezekiel 35:26a*).
3. Today, you and I as Christians have had “our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.”
 - a. In *Titus 3:5*, Paul wrote, that God “saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.”
 - b. In *1 Peter 3:21*, Peter indicated that it is “baptism” which saves us, and pointed out that baptism is not “the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience — through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”
4. Those who have been cleansed in this way are now invited to draw near to

God.

- Does this describe you?

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II. Let Us Hold Unswervingly To The Hope We Possess

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful” (*Hebrews 10:23*)

A. WHY IS OUR HOPE SO IMPORTANT?

1. Hope is the anchor of our soul (*Hebrews 6:19*).
2. It keeps us looking forward to an eternal reward.
3. It is that which carries us through the difficult times we encounter in this life.
4. It is our confident expectation that what God has promised, He will bring to pass.
5. I personally don't know how any person can live in this world without hope.

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B. WHAT MAKES IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO MAINTAIN AN UNWAVERING HOPE?

1. The answer is simple: God's faithfulness — “He who promised is faithful.”
2. When it comes to temptation in our lives, Paul lets us know that “God is faithful” (*1 Corinthians 10:13*).
 - a. He will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we can bear.
 - b. When we are tempted, “He will also provide the way of escape, so that [we] may be able to endure it.”
3. Another way to put it is that God does what He has promised.
4. God has said that He will “never leave [us] or forsake [us]” (*Hebrews 13:5*).
6. Jesus said that He has gone to prepare a place for us, and that He will come again and take us to Himself, so that where He is there we may be also (*John 14:3*).

- ❑ Unwavering hope believes these promises? Do you believe?

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III. Let Us Encourage One Another

A. YOU AND I HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TOWARD ONE ANOTHER

“Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds” (*Hebrews 10:24*).

1. When it comes to involving ourselves in the work of God and in the lives of one another, we must focus our minds and energies on the needs of our fellow members in order to stir each other up to love and good deeds.
2. To do this, we must possess care and practical concern for each another.
3. Remember, Jesus commands us to “love one another” — it is the way in which others will know that we are His disciples (*John 13:35*).
4. As we noticed last week, Paul said that we are to “do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of faith” (*Galatians 6:10*).

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B. THE FULFILLMENT OF THAT RESPONSIBILITY REQUIRES OUR “ASSEMBLING TOGETHER”

“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” (*Hebrews 10:25*).

1. This mutual care which we are to demonstrate toward one another will never happen if we keep one another at a distance.
2. We must welcome every opportunity we have to come together for fellowship, encouragement and exhortation.
3. There were those in the days of the early church for whom staying away from worship and Bible study had become a habit.
 - a. For them it may have been because of persecution, indifference or apathy.

- b. Today, I am afraid it is more the result of indifference and apathy.
4. We must each be careful that we do not allow Satan to influence us to the point where our assembling together is no longer important.

Conclusion

1. The day of our Lord's coming is drawing near.
2. The apostle Paul wrote in Romans 13:11, that our "salvation is nearer to us than when we believed."

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3. It is a day all of us long for:

**There is coming a day,
When no heart aches shall come,
No more clouds in the sky,
No more tears to dim the eye,
All is peace forever more,
On that happy golden shore,
What a day, glorious day that will be.**

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- There'll be no sorrow there,
No more burdens to bear,
No more sickness, no pain,
No more parting over there;
And forever I will be,
With the One who died for me,
What a day, glorious day that will be.**
4. As we live in preparation for that day, God invites us to . . .
 - a. draw near to His throne so that our prayers may be heard.
 - b. hold fast to the confession of our faith.
 - c. continue encouraging one another.
 5. Our spiritual growth depends upon it.