

There's going to be a two-word phrase in the first section, then there's going to be a two-word phrase in the second section that we need to pay attention to. The first two-word phrase is "we have." So, we need to pay attention to this "we have." And then, the second two-word phrase is "let us." So, you're going to see the Scriptures saying, "we have...we have...we have. So let us...let us...let us." And that's going to be how this text kind of breaks down. And so, we need to pay attention because it's going to unpack for us how we live out what we've talked about for the last five weeks here. If you've been here the last five weeks, we've been stuck in some severe repetition, because we can't get out of it. It's like the writer of Hebrews is not going to allow us to get out of it, because literally for three chapters he says the same thing in a different way over and over and over again. He just pounds his point into us that the old tabernacle with its laws and systems has gone away and the new covenant of grace and the sacrificial death of Christ covering all our sins is in place.

Let's look at Hebrews 10:19, "Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus,..." Now, I'm going to stop there because we have a "we have" and so I want to talk about what he's referencing. Several weeks ago, we talked about how the tabernacle was an outlay of how things are at the deepest level of the universe, that you and I were created by God to operate in three worlds: The world of matter or the world of taste and touch, the world of senses. And we do well in this world. Like, most of you have eaten today, you have tasted, you feel the clothes that are on you, a lot of you came here tonight with your windows rolled down and kind of felt the warm air. We live in a world of matter, a world that can be seen, tasted, touched. It's here. And then, there's the world of the mind, and this is thoughts and emotions and art is kind of birthed out of the mind. And the majority of us, we do really well at those two worlds, and we can be very successful at those two worlds and still have something kind of eating away at us because we were also created, not only to live in the worlds of matter and mind but the world of the spirit. And this is a very difficult world for all of us. We do very well at matter, most of us do very well at mind, but most of us intensely struggle with spirit, alright. And so, the tabernacle kind of modeled this idea by having an outer court that everybody could go into, or a world of matter. And then they kept the scrolls in this room called the holy place that only the priests could go into. And that would be the world of knowledge or the world of mind. And then they have the holy of holies, which only the high priest could go into once a year where the actual presence of God was, and it was separated from the rest of the tabernacle by this thick veil. And no one could go in there without penalty of death. And so, it's just there to illustrate that this holy place, that this world of the spirit, where you and I have been created to walk in is difficult to get into, if not impossible to get into for some of us.

Now, go back and read this with me again, because you'll see what's happening. "Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus,..." He's saying, "I have done away with the tabernacle system, the veil has been torn, and now anyone who wants to come in by the blood of Christ can come in. So, if you've heard us reference being made whole here, we talk about wholeness and healing here a lot, this is what we're talking about. That through Jesus, we don't just have to live in a world of matter and a world of the mind, but the Spirit has finally been opened up to us. So now, you and I can now enter the holy place, not by our own works and our own efforts but by the blood of Jesus, alright.

So, let's keep reading, we have another "we have," "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, and since we have a great priest over the house of God,..." Now, if you were here last week, we went through and got to verse

18, where the Scriptures said, "I'm no longer taking offerings." And this was God's way of saying, "Whatever you want to bring to Me and whatever you want to lay down at My feet, I'm not interested in it, alright. The debt has been paid in the death of Jesus Christ, and whatever little religious action you want to come in and bring and lay at My feet, I'm not interested in. I'm closed. It's paid for. Your sin is paid for, not because you do this or don't do that but because Christ died on the cross. I am no longer taking offerings for sin." So, every time we get into that little messed up place where we're going, "I'll do this for you and I'll stop doing this for you and I'll quit doing this," God looks down at the altar and goes, "What's this for again?" "Well, I'm a bad person." "Well, absolutely you are. I've known that for hundreds of thousands of years, alright. But I've already paid for that." "Well, I really blew it yesterday." "Yeah, I know that, and I knew that when I died on the cross several thousand years ago. I knew that. I paid for it then. It's paid for. Take this petty stuff...it's cute, but I don't want it. I'm not taking offerings." And that's what's being referenced here. Since we've got this great high priest who handled our sins. That's what the high priest did. He would get into the holy of holies with this bowl of blood representing the sins of Israel, and he would go in and make atonement for the sins of all the people. That what Jesus did, "I don't want your gifts. I've done it. I am your high priest, My blood, I'm not taking offerings anymore, paid for."

So, this is what we've been talking about for five weeks. I mean, this is it. In a simple two-verse summary, this is what's happened. The tabernacle and its rules and laws has given way to the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ. Here's the question though. Because I think the best way to explain it is through this phone. The church gave me this phone, and it was an attempt to really make us connected. And it's this phone that has like my calendar and e-mail and it can like make a cup of coffee for me if I want it to. I mean, it's a pretty cool little gadget. But in the end, I can tell you how those things work, but I'm not really using it a whole bunch. I just kind of use it as my gargantuan phone, alright. I kind of feel like sometimes I'm in World War II, calling in an air strike or something, but I'm not getting the fullness of the device. I can tell you how it works, but I'm not really using it in its fullness. And I think when it comes to grace, a lot of what happens to us is that we kind of get it and we can talk about it, but we find it very difficult to live in. And we keep going back to the tabernacle and back to the law because we're not really sure what it means to follow Jesus in the new covenant. It's confusing to us. Good thing, the text is going to try to unpack for us what that looks like. So, since this new thing, since this new covenant has been brought to us by the blood of Christ, who is our high priest, then "let us."

So, let's see what the "let us's" are. Starting in verse 21, "...and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart..." Now, I'm going to stop there. "Let us draw near." Now, we taught on this about eleven weeks ago, so let me, once again, try to unpack this idea that this "draw near to God" is not a reference to church attendance. Let me try to get this across to you. You are no closer to God in this room than you were in your car on the way to this room. He does not hang out here. Like if you came out here on Tuesday, He's not like in the back room, drinking a soda. This is not where God dwells, alright. In fact, this is an old argument if you'll remember the woman at the well. When she is engaged with this grace and with this love, she immediately wanted to make it about location. Didn't she? She says, "Oh well, you Jews say it's in Jerusalem, but we say it's on that mountain. Which one of us is right?" And Jesus goes, "You're confused. It ain't about place. It's about personhood, it's about what's in your heart. It's not whether you worship here or here that matters. It's what's going on in here, your heart." In fact, here's the perfect illustration. We launched out, a year ago next month, a church in Frisco called "Providence." We looked everywhere for a place for them to meet and we found, on the corner of Main and Main, an old bar called the "Broken Spoke." Something went wrong there about eight months ago, and the place caught fire. So, a half burned down bar on the corner of Main and Main was found, and we went, "Yes!" And so, we purchased the "Broken Spoke," remodeled this deal, and to this day, Providence Church is meeting in what was formerly the "Broken Spoke." And one of the cool things that's happening there right now is that as men and women are coming to know the Lord, they're worshiping in the place that used to be a place of debauchery for them. So, God's not in the heavens going, "I'm sorry, I can't go in there. I'm sorry, I can't walk into that." Places aren't holy, people are, people who have the Holy Spirit take over their lives. So, when this says, "Let

us draw near to God with a sincere heart," it's not referencing church buildings and church attendance. That's not the reference. That's not what he's talking about.

Now, I want to talk through this idea of drawing near to God with a sincere heart because it gets difficult and it gets cloudy when you weigh it against the tabernacle. Like, here's my example. Have any of you...and maybe I really am all alone in this...have any of you tried to get away from legalism and so you drew up a list of things to do to get you out of legalism? Anyone? Yeah, you're like, "I've become legalistic. I will do these things to get out...I've got to get number 3 done...I will create another set of laws to get me out of this set of laws that has been absolutely devastating to me." So, I got married and got out of college and was trying to figure out what it meant to let Jesus have my heart and to not just live by the rules, but really walk with Him and have this relationship with Him. And I found it unbelievably difficult. Because if you've grown up in church, you get trained even when you're a kid. You're trained to have a quiet time, right. And we probably should find a cooler way to say that, it sounds like discipline, "You get in the corner and think about it. You meditate on that." You've got this idea of "this is what it's supposed to look like, this is how it's supposed to work, this is how it's supposed to feel and work itself out." And for me, I kept feeling like I'm trying to do this thing that I'm taught to do, and it's very, very fruitless. So, I'm getting up and I'm having my quiet time and I'm writing some things out and I'm going through my Bible study, but in the end, it felt very fruitless and lifeless to me. Any other testimonies?

So, I asked my wife for permission to get out and do some camping. We didn't have any kids, and she had some friends in Dallas, and she was like, "get out of here." And so, me and a buddy of mine drove out to Mexico and we set up two separate camps. And I just went out there to try to get alone and get my head back on straight. And out there, I really feel like something was taught to me, out there in the nowhere, that really kind of changed the way I engaged God from that moment forward. And what happened is, the first day where you kind of get alone and fast, you always kind of feel like you're crazy and you really don't know why you're out there. And then usually by day three, you're just crying a lot. And then, day four or five rolls around, and you can actually get some clarity and thought. And in that moment, I completely stopped considering what has historically been told to me as right and wrong when it comes to a devotional life and a relational life with Jesus Christ and started going, "Okay..." and here's two questions I want you to wrestle through, "...what stirs my affections for Jesus Christ? What, when I'm doing it, when I'm around it, when I'm in it, when I'm a part of it, what stirs my heart, what stirs my mind in it's affections towards Jesus? What, when I'm doing it, reading it, a part of it, wants to make me know and be faithful and walk deeply with Jesus Christ?" And so, I started this list, and honestly, the list was really, really strange.

Like an example is, it was close to that time that Lauren and I had gone to a funeral, and she was doing some talking, while she was at that funeral, with some friends. I really didn't know too many of the people. And so I just started walking the cemetery, and I came across...I was about 26 at the time...came across a tombstone of a young man who died when he was 26. And so, I sat there and stared at his tombstone and started contemplating the fact that 26 year olds die. And listen, I'm young, man. I feel immortal. I do. I don't think, "I need to live today to its fullest, because it might be my last." I mean, that thought rarely, if ever really penetrates my soul. It just doesn't. I'm young, I'm in somewhat of shape, my mind's sharp. I just don't go, "I could die on the way home tonight." It's a rare thought to come across my head. So, I'm sitting there, looking at this guy's tombstone wondering if he had a wife, wondering if he had children. You don't die of natural causes at 26. What took him? It's something that's out there that can take me. And all of a sudden, I began to be just filled with gratitude for the life that was given to me, and there was this deep desire in me, all of a sudden, to know Christ deeply and to live life to its fullest. And so, that's on my list of what stirs my affections for Jesus Christ. And on a regular basis, it's not like once a week or once a month, but I guarantee you a couple of times a year, I take my journal and usually Jonathan Edwards' resolution statements, and I head to the cemetery. I've even taken the staff and said, "Let's go. Read the headstones." And they head out, and we take in the headstones. Now, I don't expect that your list is going to look like my list. And if I try to make your list look like my list, we've gone back to the tabernacle.

Another thing that get me, and I don't do this as much, is there's something about really early mornings and really dark coffee. I know, listen, I know this is weird stuff and it's just how I'm wired. There's something about it still being dark outside, because no matter what time of the year it is, it's always cool outside at 5:36 in the morning. It always is. And so, there's something about the cool wood of our porch on the bottom of my feet and a hot cup of coffee that makes me aware of the presence and reality of God. And there's something to me about reading books. Like, there's something about that smell. There's something about music that stirs and moves the soul. There's something about these things as I go through them. There's something about, in the Scriptures, the narratives. There's something about the stories in Scriptures. Now, I get it. I get theology and I get Romans and I get the combination, but there's something to me about the stories of Jesus' interaction with people. There's something about the absolute flaws in just about everybody in the Old Testament that fills my heart with the hope that maybe God can use me.

So, since I've come back from the woods, I have tried to live life not by "Is this right or wrong?" but "does this stir my affections for Jesus?" Now, Scripture's pretty clear that there are some things that definitely are right and definitely are wrong. I'm talking about drawing near to God with a sincere heart. I'm not talking about, "Actually, adultery makes me feel close to the Lord." That's not what we're doing here, alright. You're wrong, that's not what we're doing here. I'm talking about drawing near to God with a sincere heart. Now, I would be wrong, I would be sinful...and I know for all of us, it's going to involve the Scriptures, and I know for all of us it's going to involve prayer, outside of that, it's all over the map. And I believe that I would be sinful, if you came to me and said, "How do I draw near to God?" And I said, "You're going to need a journal and a cemetery." "Do you drink coffee? You don't drink coffee? Well, I've solved your problem. Oh, you're putting cream and sugar in it. Well no wonder you can't find Him." For me to unpack my devotional pattern on you gets us back to the tabernacle. Doesn't it? It gets us back to the tabernacle. The question is, "What stirs your heart, your affections for Jesus Christ?"

And then, the reciprocal is true, "What robs of your affections? What robs your heart from really wanting to know and walk with and experience the fullness of Christ?" For me, once again I don't expect your list to look like mine. For me, for whatever reason, vegging out and turning off my mind and watching TV for extended periods of time completely robs me of the ability to think critically. It just does. And so, if I watch hours and hours of TV, before I know it, I'm either laughing at something that God calls reprehensible...Have you ever woke up and found yourself in that place...or I'm completely in a fantasy land in my head wishing and pretending that I was Jack Bauer. If you don't know, I can't help you. So, watching long hours of television really robs my heart from being able to think critically and experience a longing and a desire for God. Following sports too closely will do the same thing to me. All of a sudden, I'll care. Why should we care? I mean honestly, in the eternal scope of things, why should we care? It's a ball. We're not eleven. Why should we care? And listen, I have a friend, the night before the Cowboys play, they're nervous. I'm like, "You're nervous?" "Yeah, it's a big game." "For who? You don't play. You got....let it go, man. And if I see you in body paint again, you're out of the church." And so for me, I can't start following it, because it will start meaning something and it shouldn't mean anything. Okay, it shouldn't mean anything. It's a game.

And so for me, this is kind of the pattern of how I've lived my life since then, not "Oh, you do it this way?" Now, when I hear guys say, "This is how I do it," I always want to test those things. Like I go, "Oh, okay. You do that. Well, I'll try that in my own life and see what happens." But what's happening here is He goes, "Hey listen, draw near to Me with a sincere heart as you. I created you to come to Me like I made you." I always say Bleecker's always singing, always playing his guitar, always kind of engaging the Lord through song." That's not happening in my office. It's just not. And it's not that my way's right and his way's wrong. It's that we're both drawing near with a sincere heart. This is how God made us. So, I'm going to read, I'm going to write, I'm going to try to get away, I'm going to guard how much television I watch, I'm going to try to get up early a couple of times a week. "Let us draw near with a sincere heart."

Now, look at the fruit of us drawing near to God. Look at the fruit of us pursuing what stirs our affections for Jesus and fleeing and running away from what robs us of the affections. Look at this, "...let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith..." Now, we start to get full assurance that God is who He says He is and that He works, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience. So, now what's happened is, as we draw near, as we pursue those things that stir our affections for Jesus, and shun those things that rob our affections for Jesus, God begins to change the way we think. Did you see that? You should see growth in how you think as you follow Jesus. Like, I am not and have not been historically high compassion. Now, my parent's are here, and I don't know how that happened. I don't know if something turned the switch or if I was like four, going, "Get over it, alright." But I have not historically been high compassion. I tend to be low in patience. I tend to be like, "Get over yourself, and let's go." I mean, that's just how my personality is. But as I have gotten older and as I have started to mature in Christ, I mean sometimes the Lord really squeezes my heart, and I do hurt. And there is this compassion, and there is this patience. And this is the Lord renewing the mind, renewing the way you think and the way you see the world.

Now, look what happens after you start to draw near to God and He begins to change the way you think. Because you don't change the way you think and then come to the Lord. That's not how this works. That's not what we're talking about. You come to the Lord and have the way you think changed, which leads to...this is going to answer the question that we've gotten over and over. There are some of you that are absolutely terrified that, as we preach grace these last five weeks, that everybody's going to end up naked and drunk. That's not how it works. Look at the next line, "...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." We do not change the way we behave in order to come to Christ. We come to Christ, who in turn, changes the way we think, which in turn, changes the way we live. This is the reason why people come to Jesus and are alcoholics and quit being alcoholics. They don't quit being alcoholics and then come to Jesus. That's not the way it plays out. They don't quit being addicted to this, then come to Jesus. That's not the ticket in. No, you come to Him, He changes the mind that changes the outward body.

So, let us draw near to Him. Let us run towards Him. He's opened the gate, He's torn the veil, He's paid the debt. Let us draw near with a sincere heart. How has He wired you? What stirs your affections? What robs you of those affections?

Now, let's move on to the next one. We're hardly going to spend any time on it at all, because I really need to get to verse 24. "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;..." This little "hold fast to our confession," if you'll remember, our confession, from the last five weeks, is that Jesus paid it all. Jesus paid it all. He did it all. So, let us hold fast to the confession that Jesus paid it all, because if you begin to add to the cross, you begin to lay the foundation for an arrogant, judgmental, lifeless Christianity. When you start saying, "It's the cross of Christ plus this behavior," or "It's the cross of Christ minus this behavior," or "It's the cross of Christ plus this devotional," or "The cross of Christ minus this action," then, what you've done is you've given us grounds by which to judge one another sinfully instead of holding fast to the confession that Jesus paid it all. I am not who I am because of my own effort or merit but by the grace and mercy of Christ. And this is the kind of Christianity that we've talked about that doesn't stand next to the cross and tell other people they had better get it right but finds themselves kneeling at the cross, telling others there's room. That's the difference.

Let's go to verse 24, because it's the big one for us today. So since Jesus has torn the veil, since He has paid it all, let us draw near with a sincere heart. Let's hold fast to the fact that He did this. And then verse 24, "...and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,..." Now, this is a great little message here. "Let us figure out how to do life with each other in such a way that we're stimulated on, that we're pushed on towards more love and more good deeds.

And so then, the question is "How?" Well, He's going to tell you how in the next verse. "...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." Okay, there is a common misconception about what church is. And I want to talk about that misconception. Your attendance here, no matter how frequent, does not make you a part of this church. The church is not a gathering of Christians to listen to preaching. The church is a gathering of men and women who have covenant with one another and Christ to do life together. So you just attending here does not make you a part of this body. So, you can come here every week, but that doesn't mean your family. Now, you might be a part of the big family, but the covenant community here at the Village...I mean, you're talking about a church that runs 3,000 and I think we've got like 1,200 members. More than half of the people who come here just come here. But until you sow in, that's not the church. Now the problem with this, specifically is that that's not preached. Normally what is preached is that you come and you're here and then you're a part of the church. And there tends to be this idea that we're okay if you just come and sit here, and we're successful if you just come here and sit. But that's not success. Because this is an inkling of what it means to be the people of God.

Three years ago, there started to be all these changes, some good, some bad. I think we've done some things well, and we've done some things too quickly and got holes that we're trying to fill because of that. Specifically Dell, and Dell and I talk about this a lot. Dell's preference is not the music we play. He thinks it's loud and that there's not enough melody in it. I mean, I don't know what a melody is, so I don't know what he's talking about, but he doesn't like it. He's like, "It's hard to sing to, and there are too many words." And he sits in the back, and I think he's stuffed things in his ears. I think he puts stuff in his ears. I have seen him fidgeting with something in there, and he does not wear a hearing aid. So, I think he's just like, "It's too loud." And I do know that Tiff Cotherans's talked to Michael and me before, and he's like, "You will play 'Just As I Am' or I will..." You know, their preference is...well their preference. And this is conversations we've had, and they know I'm talking about them. Their preference would be that we're holding hymnals and we're wearing nicer clothes than I'm wearing right now. And that's their preference. And I can't speak for the rest of those I mentioned. But Dell, that's not his preference, but he's still here. He doesn't like some of the moves we've made, he's voiced that in elder's meetings. We've had to talk through some things before we can move on them. But still he's here. Tiff Cotheran wants us to sing "Just As I Am" every week. We haven't done it...we did it once I think, but still he's here. Dell told me, about six months in here, over a cup of coffee, he says, "If you'll preach the Scriptures and men get saved, tweak whatever you want as long as it's biblical.

And the funny thing is that God's honored Dell in this real crazy way. Like, I had this conference call with a bunch of guys in California last week, and they're this church that, I think the median age of their church is over 55, and they're having a really hard time, and they're dying really quickly, and they're a traditional model church, which, for whatever reason it is, is dying quickly. Because I think there a lot of valuable things in the traditional model. The funny thing is that our generation thinks we kind of discovered something new, and really, we're doing the same thing. It's not new. Anyway, I think it's funny. But I got a call, and we're having this conference call with a group of deacons out there, and they were like, "Do you think you can put Dell Steele on a plane out here?" I was like, "You want me to send Dell out there?" "Yeah, we don't want you. You're 31, no one will listen to you. Can you send us Dell?" So, it looks like, in the fall, Dell Steele is going to be a conference speaker. And he's spoken up in a church in Denton and he just talks about them. And this is his language, "Don't cater to me. I just want to hear the word taught, and I want to see men and women come to know Him. And I'm in. I'm all in. And I'll serve, I'll work and do what ever I can. I'll meet with young men, I'll do whatever you need. Don't cater to me, just reach people with the Gospel." And he sits in the back with his slacks on, maybe with something in his ears, and he serves lights out.

Why? Because Dell Steele is not married to a personal preference. He has not made a covenant with a personal preference. He desires to spend his life here in this place with this group of people. And there's something really beautiful about that, and it's just rare, man. It's just rare. Because everybody's going, "Well, here's my needs, and here's

what I want." And so, you've got like that kind of community church idea, where there's a billion programs, all meant to make you feel good about being here. So, we'll put kids on stage, looking cute so we can go "Oh, look how cute our kids are." I mean, we just do all these things, and we just fill our lives with this reckless business that, in the end, I'm just not sure what it produces. And where it's not there, we're like "Well, if they don't have one of those, I'm gone." And I promise you, it's by serving the bride and the community that maturity and nearness to Christ and grace occurs. Not by having a bunch of bells and whistles. I believe that bells and whistles, they just complicate stuff. They get you off mission, off task. You start going, "Look at that bell. Was that a whistle? That's a great sounding whistle. We should write a book about the whistle. Everybody should have a bell. You guys don't have a bell at your church? I wouldn't go there without a bell. No, the church, it's not this series of programs, it's this group of people. Are you tracking with me on that? Like, it's not you attending here. That's not the church, that's not the fullness of Christ. You're not doing it, you're not living this thing out, you're not walking in this grace.

There's something that occurs when we try to do life together. It's ugly. We're a bunch of sinners. We're selfish. We will fight. I'm not going to like some of you. Some of you are not going to like me. There's going to be conflicts, and there's going to be hurts, and there's going to be things called out, and it is going to be messy. Have you ever found yourself in that small group where you're like, "I don't even like these people. That's it. I'm searching for another one." And you're like, "What am I even doing here? I don't even care for these people. I want out." Or you've found yourself where you're going, "Man, that guy just grates against me, man. I mean, everything about that guy bothers me." I contend that maybe that's because of him, but maybe that's because of you. Maybe you've got some pride, maybe you've got some issues. See, these things never come out in isolation. Your sins, those secret tendencies of your heart, it's why I always encourage single people, live together, girls, guys. All of a sudden, I saw this flurry of notes being taken. I'm like, "What happened here?" No! That's not what I mean. Girls, guys, right. The reason being, a bunch of guys living together, there's going to be conflict. Because laziness is going to come to the surface. Dirtiness is going to come to the surface. Girls, you live together, there's going to be conflict. Why? Well, because you're living with sinful people.

There's something beautiful that happens in the collision that is doing life together. Married people absolutely know this. People who are married absolutely know this. There is a sharpening and a collision that occurs at marriage that refines the soul, if you survive it. It's the truth. Let us figure out how to stir one another towards love and good deeds by not forsaking the gathering together of the saints. There's something magical that occurs when we get together. I think the Scriptures say it like this, "When two or three gather in My name, there I am." Like, even if you don't know it, there's something that fuels the soul in that moment. Like I had dinner with some friends I see here tonight on Friday, and we laughed. And on the way home, I was just kind of giggling. I was just kind of smiling. We just had a good time, man. I see some other friends back there that used to hang out with my sister and her husband. I mean, you can just tell, anytime they get together, they'd be just giddy. I mean, there's just something that feeds into the soul when you get to hang out with godly people. And I'm not saying you just always get together and light candles and sing "Kumbaya." I mean, there's just something that happens when godly people get together, that there's this ministry that occurs to the soul, at the deepest level of the soul.

But it's a romantic idea that has to be fought for. It does not come easy, and there's much to risk. Like this idea of encouraging one another. I mean, this is the same idea. Encouragement is not, "Josh, I was praying for you today. Sincerely, Matt." Hmm, send that to him. I mean, I think that's partly encouragement, but real encouragement occurs when you finally take the risk to be known. Are you tracking with me? Like my wife, we've been married long enough now, that I can't hide from her when I'm not doing well. Like I'll come in, "Are you alright?" "I'm fine." "Are you alright?" "I'm fine!" "You're not. You're not." That's what's being painted here, that the saints would know when you needed encouragement. Are you taking that risk? Are you fighting for it?

“Since we have..., then let us...” And I have to close this before we finish up with this text, but the next part of the text is going to say, “There’s no other offer to take. Like God doing it all and God’s grace. That’s it. There’s nothing else you can do. So, you can do everything thing else you want. You can clean up your mouth, you can stop doing this. You can do everything else you want, and you can put it all on a scale. But when all is said and done, God’s not weighing scales anymore. So, this is the offer, and if you don’t take this free offer, then there’s nothing else for you to take. There’s just this waiting on judgment.” And then he describes this group of people that knew each other so well that they were willing to do prison together. That they were willing to sell all their stuff to provide for other people around them. And then, he says that we who are in Christ, we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed but those who persevere to the end. So okay, here’s this grace, here’s this invitation to it all being paid for. So, since we have it, let us draw near to Him with a sincere faith. What stirs your affections? What robs you of your affections? Let us hold fast to “His grace is what paid the bill.” You didn’t do anything. Don’t walk with a limp. You hadn’t done anything. And let us figure out how to stir one another’s soul towards love and good works. How does this occur? By not neglecting the gathering together for encouragement and life.

Let’s pray, “I thank You for tonight, I thank You for these men and women, and I thank You for an opportunity to talk about what it means and what it looks like to follow You. And I pray that You keep us away from the tabernacle. I know it always tends to call to us, but I pray that we would leave this place for the next several months with the thought on our minds, the thing running through our hearts is ‘What stirs my heart towards You? What stirs my affections towards You? What robs me of those affections?’ When we begin to really pound through and work through how You’ve created us, so that we really can draw near to You with a sincere heart. And I pray that You would always keep the cross fresh on our minds. And I pray, Father, with everything in me that we would learn to stir one another up in love, and that we would fight for genuine community and genuine life with one another. And I pray that this would be a place that it would be true in this last verse of Hebrews 10, that we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but are those who press on. So, since You have, let us. Amen.”