

## **Reconnect: Community**

Good morning church. So very good to be with you this morning as we continue our time of worship, now through the Word. If you have a Bible or device, I invite you to go ahead and turn to Hebrews 10. If you need to look at the table of contents...that's why it's there. Judgment-free zone. One of my Bibles I had folded over the first dozen or so pages so I could get to the TOC easily.

Hebrews 10 today, as we continue in our Reconnect, Back to the Basics series. Kids – what basics have we looked at so far? Kids?

- The Gospel
- Generosity
- Prayer
- The Great Commission

Today – we're looking at the BASIC of Christian community. And now kids, next week is our last week in this series – we will be at the beach next week, and I've got a surprise for each of the kids (under 20) that can remember...

Today's basic though, is all throughout the Scriptures, the need for Christian community. We need community – not like a group of guys to have a beer and watch the fight with – I mean people that love Jesus and love each other – and are committed to helping each other live for the glory of God and the good of others each day. We were created for community. God is relational – He exists as 3 persons (Father, Son, Ghost), and as a part of His good creation of people, He created us to be in community. From the very beginning, in Genesis 2:18 we hear the words of God recorded "It is not good for the man to be alone."

You and I were created to be in community with others. To live out relationally. And hear me, the Gospel of Jesus Christ needs to be at the center of our community. There's lots of things that people try and build community around – sports teams, common hobbies, jobs, kids activities, school activities – but I want you to know that as a Christian, if you are a Christian, have more in common with other Christians than any sports team, kids activity or hobby. And as Christians, we are called to community with each other – as we live our lives relationally for the glory of God and the good of others.

### **READ Hebrews 10:19-25**

<sup>19</sup>Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have boldness to enter the sanctuary through the blood of Jesus— <sup>20</sup>he has inaugurated<sup>[e]</sup> for us a new and living way through the curtain (that is, through his flesh)— <sup>21</sup>and since we have a great high priest over the house of God, <sup>22</sup>let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed in pure water.

<sup>23</sup> Let us hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering, since he who promised is faithful. <sup>24</sup> And let us consider one another in order to provoke love and good works, <sup>25</sup> not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day approaching.

## **PRAY.**

Ok, so we're jumping right to the last part of the book of Hebrews. Since we haven't studied it all, we really need to at least at a high level see what's already been said in Hebrews.

**Hebrews, the entire book, can be summarized in 3 words – JESUS IS BETTER.** Every verse, chapter, word, whatever, should help us to see how Jesus is better. The opening words in Hebrews 1, set up the entire book for us:

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets at different times and in different ways. <sup>2</sup> In these last days, he has spoken to us by his Son. God has appointed him heir of all things and made the universe<sup>[a]</sup> through him. <sup>3</sup> The Son is the radiance<sup>[b]</sup> of God's glory and the exact expression<sup>[c]</sup> of his nature, sustaining all things by his powerful word.

This is the set up for the entire book – JESUS IS BETTER. Better than the angels, better than the prophets, Jesus is better. The forgiveness that He offers is better, the sacrifice (once for all time sacrifice) that he has made is better – everything's better. He's the better priest, in fact he's the GREAT HIGH PRIEST. We don't know for sure who wrote this book, but what we know is that it was written to a group of early 1<sup>st</sup> century Jewish Christians – they would have practiced the OT sacrifices, they would have worshipped at the Temple, they would have relied on the appointed high priest's ministry → but now Jesus has come – the perfect and great high priest, and JESUS IS BETTER. Let me encourage you this morning – anything that you think is great, that you can't live without, that you cling to – old habits, old practices, religious activity → JESUS is Better.

And it's through this lens that we get our main verses for today – under the caption in my English translation of "Exhortations to Godliness" we have what I'm going to call (2) "Since we have's..." and (3) Let us's (not lettuces but let us's). And what I want us to see together is that the "Since we have's" are the fuel for the "Let Us's". The let us's only make sense if we get the "since we have's".

### **1. Since We Have #1 → Boldness to enter the sanctuary**

We really lose the gravity of this as 21<sup>st</sup> century Christians. The sanctuary was the most holy place in the temple, only accessible by the high priest and even he only went once a year. Tradition has it that they would tie a rope to the priest in case he was struck dead they could pull him out without having to go in. No one would go into the sanctuary without permission or they would die.

**Illustration – Knowing every corner of NNBC as a kid.** But even still,

But now, because of Jesus' finished work on the cross, and his High Priestly work as the intercessor for His people, we can boldly enter with confidence not the sanctuary but what it represented – the presence of God. We can enter the very presence of God. And, for the Christian, you enter as a son or daughter – not as a timid employee – but as a child with confidence in your parent.

**Illustration – D coming into our room at night this week.**

**Since we have #2 → a great High Priest**

The author of Hebrews has already told us of Jesus' greatness, his High Priestly work for us, and here he just gives us another reminder of how great a High Priest we have.

Since we have these 2 things – we have 3 let us's

**Let Us #1 → Draw near with a true heart and full assurance**

Hear me – we as Christians – can draw near to God because of the Greatness of our Great High Priest. Just as certain as I am that it's going to get really hot this summer – even with more certainty I can draw near to God knowing that my PRIEST has accomplished HIS WORK. Because Jesus really did pay it all. All of it. Not some of it. Not most of it. All of it. And we can draw near to the Father, with assurance that we are His children, because of the greatness of Jesus as our Great High Priest.

**Let Us #2 → Hold On**

Re-Read V23

- There are some things worth holding on to and some things worth letting go of.
  - **Illustration – Rich Hopper – telling us to choose our clients wisely**
  - **Some weren't worth holding on to.**
- There's a community effort, as we come together as a church to hold on together.
- Hold on to what? THE CONFESSION – That Jesus is Lord over all, that Jesus alone has the power to save sinners that turn from their sin and trust in Him. And that he will never, ever leave or forsake you.
- **But here the Holy Spirit through the writer of Hebrews calls us to HOLD ON without wavering.** How? Trusting in the faithfulness of God. God is always faithful, God will never fail. And as we hold on we realize we're actually being held by the faithfulness of God.

**Let Us #3 → Watch out, provoke, not neglecting, but encouraging**

- Watch out for one another – we need to have each other's backs.
- Provoke love and good works – NKJV says to stir one another

- You know what comes from a pot of soup or red sauce that's never stirred? Stuff settles to the bottom, sticks on the bottom of your pot, and never becomes what it was intended to become.
- In a far greater way – we need to stir each other on, to provoke one another to love and good works. It's the only way we will become what God desires for us to become, both individually and as a church.
- Not neglecting – This is a command of the Lord, that we wouldn't neglect the gathering of the church for the Lord's day. Not, I'll check out Paul on FB between coffee refills – or I can just "watch" it later when it's more convenient. Fact is, we need to hear each other singing, we need to see and hear each other praying, we need to see and hear each other receive the ministry of the Word of God. None of this can happen through a computer screen.
- Encouraging Each Other – What if we made it a goal that, every time we gather, we're going to be an encourager? We're going to make encouraging people a priority. It's easy to be a cynic or a critic. And let me tell you, cynicism isn't a fruit of the Spirit, nor is sarcasm. Man, I've never met someone that got tired of being encouraged. Not like what happens in kids' sports ok – not saying give fake praise to others, everybody gets a trophy type of nonsense – but genuinely encouraging people as you see the evidence of God's grace in their lives?

We can't do this alone – I need you, and you need me. And, I'd even say we can't really do this through a computer screen. These 4 things that we are called to do together – these are relational.

**None of this can happen in isolation.** We have to do these together, as a family, the church. For some of you, you've heard me say this before but it's worth repeating – when you see the word church – don't see Physical Address or Not-for Profit organization – I want us to see a family of people. People from different backgrounds, age groups, education levels – united together by the blood of Jesus as a family.

## **CLOSING**

**Will you commit to this type of community?** Let me tell you, at some point you're going to get burned, but can I also tell you, even with the scars, a community of people committed to the Gospel, committed to the mission of God in their city, committed to each other – it's worth the risk of getting a few scars.

This only makes sense though, if the Gospel – the good news of Jesus' life, death and resurrection – if it is real and has changed us to the core. That's the only way this makes sense. But for many of us we know that it is real, and Jesus has changed us – so the question is will you commit to this type of community?