LET US DRAW NEAR

**DATE: 6/11/2014 Wed.**

**TEXT: Hebrews 10:19-25, Ephesians**

**INTRODUCTION**

The word *“****therefore”*** in **v.19** indicates that the writer is about to make a practical application of the Truth that he has just shown us in **vs. 1-18**

(Remember when you have a ***“therefore”*** we need to look back and see what it is *there for*)

If you remember; the Great Truth is, that Jesus’ Sacrifice was Made *Once for All*

**v. 19** - The context here is of the believer's entrance *“****into the holiest”***

The ***“holiest”*** refers to the Heavenly Holy of Holies

The very idea is of someone entering into God's presence

We can enter, because we have as it says in **v.21 –**

***“...******an High Priest over the house of God”***

Since Christ is our High Priest and He has by one Sacrifice fully and forever satisfied the righteous Demands of God

(**7:25** – He now *“****ever liveth to make intercession”*** for us)

**v. 22** says we can ***“... draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith”***

The idea is that since Jesus Christ is sufficient as both Sacrifice and Mediator,

We can go on to perfection / maturity, in our relationship with God, through faith in Christ

I want to look at these verses using the thought found in the little phrase at the beginning of **v. 22**

***“Let us Draw Near”***

I want to show you the 3 ways we …

*Draw Near Unto God*

**~~~Prayer~~~**

First, we can Draw Near through …

**I. OUR “ACCESS” – vs. 19-21**

When I use the term Access, I’m referring to someone being allowed to enter somewhere

I’m talking about Entrance /Admission / Approach

When Jesus died on Calvary, man's Access to God forever changed

The Old Testament priesthood is now set aside

We read in **v.9 – *“He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second”***

Thatis what happened in **John 19:30** when Christ cried - *“****it is finished”***

The veil in the Temple was ripped open and man could *approach* God through the finished work of Christ

Jesus became the *“****one mediator between God and men”* –** spoken about in **I Timothy 2:5**

We can Draw Near because we now have **Access**

**A. The ‘Boldness, Christ Secured’ – v.19a**

***“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter...”***

The word *“****boldness”*** conveys the idea of *having confidence and freedom to speak openly*

The idea is that we do not have to approach timidly with fear and doubt,

**II Timothy 1:7 – *“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind”***

But that we can enter with Confidence into the throne room and speak to the God of all glory!

This in no way implies an irreverent approach to God

It does however, stress the Confidence with which we can draw near to our Heavenly Father

**Ephesians 3:12 *– “In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him”***

What a contrast to the Old Testament High Priest who, on the Day of Atonement, entered the Most Holy Place with fear (legend of the rope tied to the ankle)

**The ‘Boldness, Christ Secured’**

We now have Access to Draw Near because of …

**B. The ‘Blood, Christ Shed’ – v.19b**

The reason we can approach with such Confidence is because of the Blood

*“...* ***into the holiest by the blood of Jesus”***

The Precious, Pure, Pardoning, Purchasing Blood of Christ was the satisfactory payment for man's sin

The Old Testament Priest had to approach God with the blood of bulls and goats

As we have already learned, the blood of bulls and goats could never take away sin and make the believer perfect

**9:11, 12 – *“But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;” “Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us”***

Christ's Blood is different

Christ’s Blood is God’s Blood, Perfect, and Pure

We come boldly into God's presence because Christ our High Priest has once and for all offered His sacred Blood in the Heavenly Holy of Holies

**Colossians 1:20 – *“And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself”***

We can have peace with God because the Blood of Christ paid man's sin debt and settled the enmity that separated us from Him

**Ephesians 2:15, 16 *– “Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace;” “And that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:”***

Modernists and liberals scoff and attempt to make a mockery of Christ's Blood

They call the doctrine of the Blood Atonement …

*… slaughter-house religion*

While they sneer and laugh, the Bible still proclaims -

***“When I see the blood, I will pass over you”* – Exodus 12:13**

**Quote:** The famed evangelist, D. L. Moody said: *“The blood commences to flow in Genesis, and runs on to Revelation. That’s what God's Book is written for. Take out the scarlet thread, and it would not be worth carrying home”*

Let no one think that he will ever enter the presence of God apart from the Blood of Christ

Jesus' entrance into Heaven, with ***“His own Blood”*** …

Perfectly fulfills the Old Testament typology of the High Priest's work

Therefore, we are told to come with Boldness into His presence

***“Having therefore, brethren, boldness”***

*“Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe, Sin at left a crimson stain, but He washed it white as snow”*

**The ‘Boldness, Christ Secured’**

**The ‘Blood, Christ Shed’**

The 3rd reason we have Access to Drawn Nearis …

**C. The ‘Body, Christ Sacrificed’ – v.20**

***“By a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh;”***

You'll remember that under the Old Covenant there were veils in the Tabernacle and Temple

One covered the doorway to the Holy Place

The other covered the entrance of the Most Holy place

Only the Priests could enter the Holy Place and only the High Priest the Most Holy place

Matthew tells us that at the very moment of Christ's death the veil covering the Holy of Holies was torn in two

**Matthew 27:50, 51 – *“Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;”***

The rending of the veil is one of the most significant events surrounding the death of Christ

It’s mentioned in 3 of the Gospel records

**Quote:** According to Alfred Edersheim – “*The veil that covered the Most Holy Place in the Temple was 40 cubits (60’) high, and 20 cubits (30’) wide, and was the width of a man’s hand”*

It said that the veil was so heavy, that to hang it, they had to use two yoke of oxen (4) to hoist it

It would be like ripping a phone book

One thing is for certain!

The rending of this veil was a Divine act

The veil was torn from the top to the bottom signifying that the rending of the veil originated in Heaven

Under the Old Covenant, the common man did not have access into the presence of God

However, in the NT he can come before God *“****in a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh”***

In this verse we learn that the veil of the Most Holy Place was a type of Christ's flesh

Jesus was God clothed in flesh

According to **John 1:14** He *“****was made flesh”***

Jesus Christ clothed His deity in a body of flesh and died as man's substitute

According to **Isaiah 53:6,** at Calvary, God *“****laid on Him the iniquity of us all”***

Jesus in His flesh bore and paid for the sin of mankind

His torn and bleeding body was a testimony that the penalty for sin had been met and there was no longer a barrier between God and man

The veil of the Old Testament kept God and man apart,

But the Veil of the New Testament is Jesus Christ,

And Brings God and man together

Therefore, we have Confidence / Boldness to enter the Holiest by the Blood of Christ

We now have Access to Draw Near Unto God!

**WE HAVE “ACCESS” TO GOD, BECAUSE OF JESUS**

**II. OUR “APPROACH” – vs. 22, 23**

***“Let us draw near...”***

Think about those words!

***“Let us draw near!”***

This is an invitation to fellowship with the Holy God of the Universe

The unapproachable God of the Old Covenant ripped the veil open and said; *come on in*

We can now **Approach** God with …

**A. ‘Sincerity’ – v.22b**

***“... with a true heart in full assurance of faith,”***

The text calls for ***“a true heart”*** as opposed to an *insincere* or *hypocritical heart*

The word *“****true”*** means *to be genuine*

God is not saying that we have to be perfect,

But we do have to be serious and genuine

**Philippians 3:12 – *“Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus”***

Paul wasn't perfect but his heart was set on trying

The Psalmist often spoke of the ***“whole heart”*** as opposed to the divided heart

**Psalms 9:1; 111:1; 119:2, 10, 34, 58, 69, 145; 138:1**

We should **Approach With ‘Sincerity’**

We can **Approach because of …**

**B. ‘Salvation’ – v.22c**

**1. *“... having our hearts sprinkled …”***

The *“****heart”*** being *“****sprinkled”*** refers to the application of the Blood

It’s speaking about the saving work of Christ in the heart

The sprinkling in the Old Testament dealt with the external

**9:9 – *“Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;”***

However, here in the New Testament we see the sprinkling associated with the heart

New Testament salvation is an internal work

It is an internal work of regeneration whereby the repentant sinner becomes a new creature

Under the old covenant a person was declared ceremonially clean,

But under the new covenant believers are regenerated

They have cleansed and transformed hearts

**II Corinthians 5:17 – *“Therefore if any man be in***

***Christ, he is a new creature: …***

***… old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new”***

***“... having our hearts sprinkled …”***

**2. *“…from an evil conscience,”***

Points to the fact that not only is our sin removed but the guilt is also

**Romans 8:1 - *“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit”***

***“condemnation”*** is talking about the pronouncement of our quilt; it’s the jury saying *“Guilty”*

This is a Great and Blessed Truth of Scripture

Every believer needs to latch onto this fact

No child of God has to live under the guilt and condemnation of their past

Too many are living a miserable existence under the load and guilt of sin that has already been forgiven

There may be consequences and sorrows, but the guilt has been removed

We can **Approach** in **‘Sincerity’** because of **‘Salvation’**

***“having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience”***

We can also Approach for our …

**C. ‘Sanctification’ – v.22d**

***“... and our bodies washed with pure water”***

Sanctification is a work in progress

This could be a reference to baptism / the starting point

However, we must understand that baptism does not wash away sin

Only the blood of Christ cleanses us of sin

***“without shedding of blood is no remission”***

However, baptism is the ordinance that symbolizes the conversion experience

**I Peter 3:21 – *“The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:”***

Peter called baptism a figure, or a type, a picture

Baptism does not wash away sin, but it symbolizes salvation and cleansing

**Romans 6:3, 4- “*Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?” “Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life”***

We notice from Paul’s statement here that baptism involves a death, a burial and a resurrection

Paul is picturing the Gospel with baptism

Baptism is a picture of the death and burial of the old man and the resurrection of the new man in Christ

When a child of God is baptized, he is put under the water

That symbolizes burial

Going down into the waters of baptism symbolizes the death of the sinner

When do we bury people? It’s when they are dead

Baptism says to everyone that we have died to our old life

Your burial in baptism symbolizes that you have died to sin

When someone is dead and buried, that life is over

Paul finishes his statement by saying – ***“even so we also should walk in newness of life”***

Paul brings out the last aspect of baptism

The picture of baptism also illustrates the resurrection of the new life in Christ

We were raised to ***“walk in newness of life”***

The word ***“walk”*** speaks of *lifestyle*

Paul is talking about *a changed* lifestyle

The ***“hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience”***

Pictures our salvation and our bodies washed

**I John 1:9 – *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”***

**Ephesians 5:26 – *“That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word,”***

It symbolizes the holy lifestyle that is produced by salvation

Baptism is an outward expression of an inward reality

It identifies the person being baptized with Christ, and says that a change has taken place in his heart

**II Timothy 2:21 – *“If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work”***

It’s the attitude that I’m bought with a price, I’m not my own

Therefore, I devotingly surrender myself to the Lord for His service

We can **Approach** in **‘Sincerity’** because of **‘Salvation’**

We **Approach** for **Our ‘Sanctification’**

We **Approach** that we might stand …

**D. ‘Steadfast’ – v.23a**

***“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; …”***

**1.** It’s what we believe that constitutes a ***“profession”***

Everyone who enters the Christian life, enters with a profession

**Romans 10:10 – *“For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation”***

There is no other way

The words ***“hold fast”*** have the idea of *securing* and *retaining*

The command is in the present tense telling us that such diligence is a contesting way of life

Contesting – struggle for control

**2.** He further states that we are to ***“hold fast … without wavering”***

The word ***“wavering”*** means *to lean*

 It describes the on again-off again, up and down, yo-yo lifestyle that many professing Christians are living

They lean toward God one day and toward the world the next

Too many believers waste their life wavering

**James 1:8** said – ***“A double minded man is unstable in all his ways”***

The people of Israel were famous for wavering back and forth

In Elijah's day Baal worship had greatly influenced the people of Israel

The old Prophet cried to a wavering people **I Kings 18:21 -**

***“... How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him”***

The word ***“halt”*** means *to limp, to flounder, to reel back and forth*

Figure out who the real God is and stick with Him

There are no vacations from our Profession of Faith

Jesus said in **Luke 9:62 - *“... No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God”***

We can **Approach** in **‘Sincerity’** because of **‘Salvation’**

We **Approach** for **Our ‘Sanctification’**

We **Approach** that we might stand **‘Steadfast’**

Lastly, and most importantly in this thought …

We **Approach because of Our …**

**E. ‘Saviour’ – v.23b**

The Writer reminds us that...

***“… (for He is faithful that promised;)”***

Our hope is built upon the Faithfulness of God

We can persevere and be victorious because Jesus is Faithful

Our omnipotent and merciful God does not fail His people

**Psalm 36:5 -** ***“Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds”***

Throughout the Scriptures we see the Faithfulness of God

Our text says that ***“... He is faithful that promised”***

Think about that!

God has never broken a promise

His Word is good and His Power is sufficient to deliver on what He says

God cannot help but to be Faithful

Faithfulness is in His character

Let’s also understand …

That God's Faithfulness to us is not contingent upon our faithfulness to Him

Whether I fail or prevail, God will continue to be Faithful

**II Timothy 2:13 – *“If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful: He cannot deny Himself”***

God's Faithfulness is the result of His perfect unflawed character

**Titus 1:1, 2 – *“Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness;” “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;”***

God is Faithful

He cannot lie and He will not fail us

He will always be there when you need Him

**I Thessalonians 5:24 – *“Faithful is He that calleth you, Who also will do it”***

**WE CAN “ACCESS” GOD BECAUSE OF JESUS**

**WE CAN “APPROACH” GOD BECAUSE OF JESUS**

The Writer of Hebrews now goes from talking about Our Access and Approach to God / Worship

To talking about the Assembling of the Saints

I guess there is an important association of the believers coming together and our worship

**III. OUR “ASSEMBLY” – vs. 24, 25**

The Assembling of believers together in the local Church is of the utmost importance

In this text we have a direct command from God stating clearly that we are not to forsake the local Church

I guess the question is, how much are we to assembly?

**v.25b – *“and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching”***

**Our “Assembly” …**

**A. Is ‘Essential’ – v.25a**

**1.**We are Called to Assemble

***“… the assembling of ourselves together..”***

The word ***“assembling”*** speaks of *gathering together for worship*

That is what the local Church is …

A gathering of believers

We hear a lot of talk about a so-called *invisible Church* that is made up of all believers

Such an idea is contrary to Scripture

The Writer is not talking about something unseen

He is talking about a local, visible Church

The word Church comes from the Greek word "*ekklesia*" and means *a called out assembly*

Among language scholars there is no disagreement as to the meaning of this word

I don’t have time to get into all the evidence

Notice it is both called out and assembled

Of the 117 usages of the word ***“Church”*** in the Bible,

The context shows that over 100 are referring to visible local assemblies

For Example **Acts 2:41; I Cor. 1:2; II Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:2 Rev. 1:4**

Most of our New Testament is made of letters written to local churches

The idea of an *invisible Church* fails to meet the definition of an assembly or a Church

To have a church you must have something that is assembled!

All believers have never assembled together at one time and in one place

Such an assembly of all the saved will not take place until the rapture

**Hebrews 12:22, 23 – *“But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,” “to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect”***

At the rapture, all believers, dead and alive, will be called out from this earth to meet Christ in the clouds

**I Thessalonians 4:16, 17 *– “For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:”***

 ***“Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord”***

For the first time in history, all believers will be called out and assembled

Then, and only then, will all believers be a Church

The ***“church of the Firstborn”***

However, when the Bible speaks of the assembly of the believers today,

…it is referring to the local assembly

In this dispensation God works in and through the local Church

To be a Church it must be called out from somewhere and assembled somewhere

The Church of the NT is the local Church

A Visible body of baptized believers

Called out from the world and assembled for the purpose of carrying out the great commission

**2.** We are also Called, *“****Not To******Forsake”*** Assembly

Notice the specific command is not to forsake the assembling

The word ***“forsaking”*** means *to leave behind* or *desert*

We live amidst a Laodicean (**Rev. 3:14** …) mentality

Where folks claim to be Christian and yet have no desire to go to Church

They forsake the assembling of the Church

They will go everywhere else on a Sunday & Wednesday while the faithful few are meeting at the house of God

A lack of love and concern for God's people reveals an underlying heart problem

*Worship is an outward expression of an inward affection*

People worship what they have affection for

I have found over the years that the more folks love God, the more it takes to keep them out of Church

The Psalmist said – ***“I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD”* – Psalm 122:1**

Any one that won't come to church has a dead religion

Failure to identify with, and faithfully attend, a Bible believing local Church is a sin

The believer who fails in this area will not enjoy the victorious Christian life

**The Assembly of Believers Is ‘Essential’**

The Assembly of Believers …

**B. Is ‘Encouraging’ – v.25b**

*“...* ***but exhorting one another:”***

The word *“****exhorting”*** means *to call near, to invoke by consolation, to call for, to comfort*

It carries the idea of *admonishing*, *walking along side of someone and encouraging them*

Many Christians have fallen away because of a lack of encouragement

The local assembly is the best place to get encouragement from *“****one another”***

We are created to fellowship

 We need one another

**Romans 14:7 – *“For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself”***

-- Our lives are shaped and influenced by others

-- Our lives shape and influence others

**Proverbs 27:17 – *“Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend”***

**v.24 –** *“****And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:”***

The word *“****consider”*** means *to observe fully, behold, consider, discover, perceive*

We are to look for opportunities to encourage each other

We are *“****to provoke unto love and to good works”***

The word *“****provoke”*** means *to stir up or to entice*

The idea is that we are to encourage others unto love and good works

You can’t be an encourager and be encouraged if you are not here

**The Assembly of Believers is ‘Essential’**

**The Assembly of Believers is ‘Encouraging’**

The Assembly of Believers …

**C. Is ‘Expectant’ – v.25c**

***“... and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching”***

The term ***“the day”*** refers to the return of Jesus Christ for His people

**I Thessalonians 5:2 – *“For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night”***

God's people are to be ready and engaged in His work as they anticipate the return of Christ

**Quote:** G. Campbell Morgan said, *"I never lay my head upon the pillow without thinking that maybe before the morning breaks, the final morning may have dawned. I never begin my work in the morning without thinking that perhaps He may interrupt my work and begin His own."*

The imminent return of Jesus Christ should motivate the believer to live a holy life

It should promote purity and separation from the world

**I John 3:2, 3 – *“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is” “And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure”***

***“Every man that hath this hope”*** … What hope?

The hope of the imminent return of Christ

Any moment

The believer's duty is to live at all times the way he would want his Saviour to find him living at the rapture

**Quote:** Dr. R. A. Torrey said - “*The imminent return of our Lord is the greatest Bible argument for a pure, unselfish, devoted, unworldly, active life of service”*

**Jesus is the Reason why we Assemble**

We Love Him and want to keep His Commandments

**CONCLUSION**

**WE HAVE “ACCESS” TO GOD BECAUSE OF JESUS**

**WE CAN “APPROACH” GOD BECAUSE OF JESUS**

**WE “ASSEMBLE” BECAUSE JESUS WANTS US TO**