

**TITLE:** PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO ATTENDANCE

**TEXT:** Hebrews 10:24-31

**THESIS:** This sermon is an exposition of Heb 10:22-31 (w/emphasis on v. 24-26) designed to encourage each member to be faithful in attendance (God commanded it, it is necessary for spiritual growth, and failure to attend is sin).

**INTRO:** Elicia and I recently attended the annual Primerica gala, and I saw how they were so fired up and excited - about their jobs! And I thought, what if we were as fired up about our job (as Christians) as they are? They had doubled from 500 to 1000 in a year. Two weeks ago we talked about how so many Christians aren't even sure *why* they're Christians (just going through the motions). It's hard to get them to even show up all the time, much less evangelize! This is a problem! If we don't even care enough to be here at every assembly, then there's something wrong!

### **I. REASONS FOR OUR ASSEMBLING (v. 22-25):**

- A. (v. 22) Draw near with a true heart – “true” is a form of the same word as in John 8:32. Draw near with a heart set free by the truth. When we became Christians, our hearts were set free from the sin and deception of this world. Our eyes were opened to the simple truth of God's existence, his creation of this world, and his desire to be with us for eternity. So now, we must continue to draw near to Him (through assembly and worship; through study and prayer). We can only draw near to Him on His terms.
- B. (v. 23) Hold fast the profession of faith *without wavering* (not “leaning,” but standing firm). For He that promised is faithful. Do we really believe God's promises? Consider the effects on this profession when we miss worship. Imagine being invited to worship...and then you show up, but the person who invited you didn't!
- C. (v. 24-25) Consider (observe, perceive, understand; to fix one's eyes or mind upon) one another to provoke (incite, irritate – usually used in a negative sense – **Acts 15:39**–“there arose a sharp *contention*” between Paul and Barnabas) to love (agape) and good works. **\*How?** Two things he says were necessary in order to “stir one another up” to love and to do good works:
  1. By *not* forsaking the assembling of ourselves together,
  2. By exhorting one another (comfort, encourage, beg, instruct) in our gathering
    - a. Forsake (abandon, desert, leave behind)- This can be a one-time incident. If I decide to go fishing Sunday morning, haven't I forsaken the assembling of the saints, which is going on while I'm fishing?
    - b. How can you do what God said (incite/encourage your brothers & sisters to love and good works) if you're not here when your brothers & sisters are assembled? How can you be encouraged to love and good works if you're not here with the saints are assembled? This encouragement is a good work (seeing that God commanded it)!
    - c. James 4:17 – knowing to do good, and not doing it, is sin. Missing worship and Bible study is sin.

### **II. CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ASSEMBLING (v. 26-27, 31):**

- A. Failure to be at the assembly (and exhort one another) is willful sin. **Thayer** “voluntary sin, opposed to sins committed inconsiderately, and from ignorance or from weakness.” So failure to assemble is not just a sin done in ignorance or a sin committed because of weakness. It is blatant rejection of God! It is a rejection of Christ and His church (the only vehicle of salvation we have). We're rejecting Christ's plan (the only way you can be saved) because His plan is for you to be here!
- B. If we sin willfully, there is nothing left to save us. We've already been taught the truth, but are now rejecting it. The church is the eternal purpose of God, wherein lies the mystery of salvation of all (Jew & Gentile) (Eph 3; 1 Pet 1) **\*\*How must this make God feel?** After all He went through to provide a way to Him (a way of salvation from sin and hell), giving advance notice to the prophets of its coming (who intently searched for the time it would come), then when it did come, people didn't recognize it or long for it. And today we have the complete mystery revealed, the *salvation that is in Christ's church*, yet we choose to be other places when the church is assembled. **We already know God's reaction (Lk 14:15-24** – Parable of the great supper...v. 24 – “none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.”)
- C. Again, **James 4:17** – sin = knowing it but not doing it! We don't have any excuses. We know we're supposed to be here (we need to be here).

### **III. ENCOURAGEMENT TO ATTEND:**

- A. We shouldn't need to be encouraged just to attend. This should be what we want to do.
- B. We should look forward to being here:
  1. To avoid willful sin
  2. To be obedient to a command
  3. To learn more about God and grow spiritually
  4. To see one another and build each other up, encouraging each other as we prepare to face a sinful world
  5. To express our thanks to God for taking us in and saving us, even though we weren't worthy
  6. To please God by worshipping him the way He's commanded us to
  7. To glorify Him by our example
  8. To increase our own happiness by knowing that we are right in God's sight and that we have a home in Heaven waiting!

**CONCLUSION:** For the Hebrew writer's recipients, failing to assemble with the saints was a symptom of a bigger problem. For them it was the problem of abandoning Christianity...they thought there was something better and, therefore, they didn't need Christ and his system of religion. If they'd really believed, they probably wouldn't have had any problems assembling together. They were still interested in seeking God, they were just ignoring what God said.

Really, it's worse for us today. Failing to attend worship and Bible studies is generally not an open abandoning of the church. We're not expressing that we think there's a better system of religion than Christ's. We're saying that we still believe Christ's system (his church) is the right way, but that we simply don't care enough about it. We're saying that:

1. Something was more important than assembling with Christians and encouraging them.
2. We just don't feel the need to worship God
3. We don't need God's instruction like others do
4. We don't care about our influence on others who see us missing service
5. We don't believe what the Bible says about obedience, judgment, and attendance
6. We don't really care about our eternal destiny.

Instead of having these attitudes, let us realize the importance of not only being together, but *desiring* to be together. Let us draw near to God and to one another in our assembling and worshipping God.