

Hebrews 10:19-25

May 2, 2021

It seems to me that we have an opportunity much like Nick Carraway—the character/narrator of F. Scott Fitzgerald’s—The Great Gatsby. Nick said upon moving to New York,

“And so with the sunshine and the great bursts of leaves growing in trees just as things grow fast in the movies, I had that familiar conviction that life was beginning over again with the summer.”

We might say—in some respects—all of our lives were set on hold last March when the governor gave the shelter in place order. And now, in these days, for most of us—it’s like life is beginning over again.

The gears of the whole world ground to a halt and we all felt it. COVID-19 changed our way of life by forcing us indoors away from:

Soccer games

Concerts

Graduations

Weddings

School

Work

Birthday parties

Funerals

Vacations

And Church. And by Church I mean each other. All of us being together.

If we aren’t careful we will miss this new beginning. As the gears of the world begin ever so slowly to shudder and move again we won’t ask: How do I want to begin all over again? Because if we don’t watch it, we may just slide back into life and not think too much about this new beginning.

For the next few weeks we are going to think together about how take hold of this opportunity—together. This is a Re-boot: We are going to remember together things we already know.

And Church.

I think this is something every genuine Christian sorely missed. The simple joy of being together as a church. We all felt the angst of being sequestered off into our homes. We could text, email, facetime, and zoom but it wasn’t the same.

I know there are some—due to serious health concerns—who are not yet able to come out. Of all of us—you watching at home are going to say, “Its not the same.”

Through this time we found what we already know: We need each other.

Here is the truth—

It is not just nice to see people: We need each other.

It is not just that is it good to get out: We need each other.

It is not just that it is better not to be alone: We need each other.

It is not even that we are better together: We need each other.

As Christians, we all know this more than ever. Especially in these days.

Today we are going explore what others need from us. Each of us has a part to play in this church—and in these days of new beginnings we need to be clear about what others need from us. To have Jesus means to need others. This is need for others is not a sign of weakness, but the way God made us. The Lord has designed us to be together.

To have Jesus means to need others.

That might sound a little strange. When you have Jesus what else do you need?

One of the primary ways Jesus works in your life is through other people in your church. Those who have a genuine relationship with Jesus will always have an authentic connection to a particular church.

But what do WE need to be? That is the exact question the writer to the Hebrews takes up in Hebrews 10:19-25.

PROP: Others need you to be confident and considerate.

Confident in Christ.

Considering others.

When we understand who we are to be to others, we are seizing this day of new beginnings with both hands.

“Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, [20] by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, [21] and since we have a great priest over the house of God, [22] 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 with pure water. [23] Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. [24] And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, [25] not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but

encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” Hebrews 10:19–25

PRAY

PROP: Others need you to be confident and considerate.

**1. Confident Together—**

Did you see where I got that?

Vs. 19,

“Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus...”

This confidence is something the writer to the Hebrews is assuming all Christians should have. But you have this confidence?

We should/must grow in our confidence in our standing before God.

Entering the holy places might not be something you think about this side of the resurrection, but in the OT, the holy places in the temple were behind thick curtains where only ONE priest could go ONCE a year. He would go and take the blood of a bull and offer it to God in atonement for the sins of the people.

No Israelite would ever dream of entering into the holy places, much less entering with confidence.

The reason the temple had these holy places was because that was where the presence of God was. Today, we have and need no temple made of brick and mortar. We have Jesus instead.

Now, whenever we all come together in worship—we enter together into God’s presence. We enter into his holy places. And the writer to the Hebrews wants us to be confident as we approach our God.

Are you confident?

How we approach God matters.

Are you confident?

This is not a brash cockiness of a MMA fighter. Self-assured and blustery, singing his praises and challenging all comers.

Not like that. But confident.

“Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus...”

Do you see?

We have confidence to enter into God’s presence by the blood of Jesus. That means we can approach God together because of Jesus’ sacrifice.

Each time we gather as a church we enter the holy places.

Can you enter alone? Absolutely!

But notice verse 19 is plural—

“Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus...”

This means when we come on Sundays to worship together we must be confident that we have reason to appear in the presence of God by the blood of Christ.

This is why we sing/pray/preach/read/think about the death of Jesus so much at Center Church.

Without him and his sacrifice we would have nothing. Because of Jesus we can be confident to appear before God—singing, praying, confessing, rejoicing. This confidence did not come natural to the original audience and it does not come natural to us.

They would have been tempted to offer the sacrifice of an animal to make themselves extra clean before God.

We do the same.

We don’t bring animals but we bring other kinds of sacrifices.

I’ll prove it.

Let’s say you have a horrible week. Bad things happened to you and you did your share of bad things to others. Maybe you fell again into that sin you perpetually struggle against.

Perhaps,

- Got angry and yelled at your husband.
- Wasted money on a foolish purchase.

- Venting all over a kind friend.
- Lied to someone you love very much.
- Went to one of those websites, again.
- Boasted over someone else.
- Drank just a little too much.
- Wicked thought life.
- Haven't prayed very much.
- Been lacking in your Bible reading.

And as you survey your week, you feel burdened.

And you don't think God wants to hear from you.

And you know what You and I and all of us are tempted to do—offer sacrifices—to make ourselves feel better about ourselves. Not animal sacrifices, but a different kind.

What?

- Pray more.
- Confess every sin.
- Do some nice things for others.
- Memorize a few verses of Scripture.
- Pray some more.
- Share the gospel with someone.
- Sing louder
- Listen to the sermon more earnestly
- Pray some more.

And then you feel like you can approach God.

Right? But that is wrong. False, and deadly.

We have only one reason to be confident before God our father--

**“Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus...”**

We plead the blood of Jesus. We can be confident not based on the earnestness of our obedience or the amount of our prayer, but on the sacrifice of our savior.

All we have to bring to God is the blood of his son.

This is why we sing/pray/preach/read/think about the death of Jesus so much at Center Church.

We must be reminded each week that we have GREAT reason for confidence not because we—

Prayed a lot—but because of the blood of Jesus.  
Confessed every sin—but because of the blood of Jesus.  
Did nice things for others—but because of the blood of Jesus.  
Memorized scripture—but because of the blood of Jesus.

If our confidence is based on our own merit we will either be foolishly proud OR slavishly sullen.

But we must look away.

Look away from what you have done that makes you feel unworthy and look to Jesus.

Plead his blood.

If you are not confident God wants to hear from you—look away from yourself. Look away from:

- What you should be
- What you've done
- Where you fell short
- What you regret
- Where you are broken

And look to the blood of Jesus.

Do you see?

We must Look away from ourselves and look at Christ for confidence.

In these days, for most of us—as life begins over again—I need you to be confident. You need me to be confident. We all need to be confident in our approach.

Why does confidence matter?

If you are not confident God wants to hear from you, you won't be much good to others. We can all benefit from those confident in Jesus Christ.

We ALL must be confident in Jesus before God.

We must be confident together—ALSO

We must ALSO

## ***2. Consider Together***

The writer to the Hebrews actually calls us to three things in these brief verses. While we are going to focus on the last thing—I'll show them to you.

They are marked off with, "Let us"

Here is the logic—because we can be confident before God because of Christ—here is how we should respond:

**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 with pure water.**

That accusing conscience has been silenced—go to God.

Privately.

Together.

Corporately.

**[23] Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.**

Holding on to Jesus and not giving up. Even when hope is low.

We will consider the last, "let us."

**[24] And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, [25] not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."**

How are we to begin again?

Consider how we might stir up (provoke) one other to love and good works.

Even as Christians who love Jesus we need help, provocation you might call it, to show love to others and do good for them. To consider means to be on the watch for how you might help others. One of the primary ways that Jesus will help you is through the people in your church. We can say that the other way too: one of the primary ways you serve Jesus is by helping others in your church.

When you accept Jesus—you accept his people too.

Jesus is perfect, his people are not.

Yet we are not designed to get from God all we need by personal prayer and Bible study. Our prayer closets are not enough.

We need others confident in Christ.

You need others confident in Christ.  
I need others confident in Christ.

So how?

How are we to help others?

***Consider others.***

This just means we are commanded to think about other people and what they might need. This means that you have to be close enough to others—not everyone—but some so you can know/understand what they need.

This is spending time thinking—how can I help that person?

Do you see how we are to use our confidence in Jesus? For the good of other people.

Here's the truth, confident Christians must consider others because they need you. You are meant to be a tool in the hand of the Lord to help others. Fascinating, the God who by a mere word hung stars in their place and made all things—this God has decided to help us grow not be a mere word but by each other.

This means we all have an obligation to others. The Lord is asking you to consider others.

It makes sense—our God is Three and ONE, ONE and three, perpetually in relationship. And his people are privileged to consider each other so that we might enjoy a taste of that unity. Not impossible.

“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, [21] that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. John 17:20–21

We are designed to need help.  
We must consider others.

Others need you to be confident and considerate.

Not only that, we should use our confidence to—

***Stir up others.***

The idea here is that we need people in our lives to be able to tell us the raw, honest truth and risk a disagreement. These are the kind of relationships that we all need. Everyone is not invited to get in our faces, but we need a few.



We need people that will challenge us when we rationalize or minimize our sin.

You know the story of Odysseus? In Homer's famous *Odyssey*, Odysseus knew that he had to travel past the island of the Sirens. The Sirens would sing their loving and alluring song and cause sailors to turn toward their calls and be dashed to pieces on the rocks.

Odysseus knew this.

He directed his sailors to put wax in their ears and he had them tie him to the mast. He said, I'm going to lose my mind and say all sorts of nonsensical things. Do not listen to me. I'm going to beg to be untied and you must not listen to me.

Sure enough, Odysseus is bewitched by their singing. He looks and see these ladies as beautiful as Helen of Troy. He begs for the men to let him go. He begs to go and see the sirens. The crew—unable to hear their song—see the women for what they are, horrible monsters with dangerous claws.

And so they ignore Odysseus and strain at the oars until they are out of earshot.

From time to time, we are all going to be bewitched by the call of something that looks so beautiful and alluring—we need friends who will tie us to the mast and say—NO!

Listen to me.

It is not safe for you to go that way.

STOP!

We are all tempted to rationalize, minimize, justify unrepentant sin. We need to have friends who have wax in their ears and cannot hear the siren call that you hear. Do you have anyone like that?

We need to have people in our lives who know what siren song we are apt to hear that might lead us away from following Jesus. We need people to know it so that they can help us stay close to Jesus. From time to time we all need friends with wax in their ears.

Why?

You will be allured by something others won't be.

These kind of relationships are precious. They take time and work. But they are worth it. If you do not have a relationship like this—you can but it take work and time.

Do you see why we need to be confident? If we see someone else bewitched by a siren song, we don't say, "I'm no better I can't say anything." None of us have the grounds to provoke on our own.

But we are not on our own. Our confidence is the blood of Christ.

We need to be confident in Christ—

Others need you to be confident and considerate.

Considering others.

Stirring up others.

***Encouraging others.***

This means to come alongside other people to offer support. We need to come alongside others and we need others to come alongside us.

We are all weak in different ways. We need to help each other with our weaknesses—Without each other we will not make it.

We can build others up. We must.

This is where we leverage our confidence in Christ to build others up. Everyone you know needs more encouragement than correction.

When you are confident in Christ's work you can enjoy the gift of self-forgetfulness and remind others—

There is more mercy in Christ than sin in us.

Sin is serious but it need not separate us from Christ.

We can do nothing without Jesus.

With Jesus all things are possible.

Jesus can keep us until the end.

Trials are real and hard, but Jesus will hold you.

You cannot out-sin his love.

Following Jesus is worth it.

There is more hope in believing Jesus than doubting him.

If you are not confident in Jesus, you will be hesitant to reach out to others to build them up— but we must!!

Others need you to be confident and considerate.

These are things we all know.

These are things many of you have lived for decades.

But it is good to remind ourselves of things we already know.

May we all consider how to approach these days of new beginnings—together.

After all, Who are we if we don't have Jesus and each other?

PRAY

May the

“peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (ESV) Phil 4:7