

**Christ Community Covenant**  
**The Salad Verses: "Let us . . . "**  
**Pastor Dave Scherrer - October 27, 2013**

When I donated blood some time ago, a nurse gave me a card to read while a pint of the vital red fluid was flowing out of my vein. The card showed the percentages of people who have different blood types. Here are some of them:

O Positive	37.4%
A Positive	35.7%
A Negative	6.3%
B Negative	1.5% (1 In 167 people)

The rarest, AB-Negative, is found in only 1 in 167 people. Then the card made this eye-catching statement: ***"The rarest blood type is the one that's not there when you need it."***

There is another supply of blood that is one of a kind and always available to those who ask for it. First John 1:7 states, ***"The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."***

Hebrews 9:12 states that it was ***"not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption."*** Christ's blood is always there when you need it.

This theme of Blood is important, because it is by the shedding of Christ's blood that we are washed clean. And in this new state of purity that we find ourselves in we also find aim and focus on our lives as Christians.

***The Aim and Focus of our Lives as Christians***

I am very excited to bring this sermon today. You will see that I am jumping ahead a bit to Chapter 10. We left off in chapter 6 but I want to eat healthy this morning. I wanted to share with you the Salad Verses this morning for our church-wide encouragement and strengthening. Our verses this morning are all about "Let us" . . . Let's look at the Salad Verses that we find in Hebrews:

4:1 - let us fear lest  
4:14 - let us hold fast our confession  
4:16 - let us come boldly to the throne of grace  
6:1 - let us go on to perfection  
10:22 - let us draw near with a true heart  
10:23 - let us hold fast our confession  
10:24 - let us consider one another  
12:1a - let us lay aside every weight  
12:1b - let us run with endurance the race  
13:15 - let us continually offer the sacrifice

The little sermon we call Hebrews is a different kind of book. Throughout we find there are personal plural imperatives. They are different than other commandments or imperatives found in many places of Scripture in that they include the writer. He is enjoining the reader and the listener to participate with all the other readers and listeners - and the author - in these strong words of encouragement. Some people call them warnings but I think it might be best to think of them as strong encouragements.

***Warnings or Encouragements?***

We already studied this one strong encouragement, found in Hebrews 4 that we studied a few weeks ago:

**Hebrews 4:16**

<sup>16</sup> Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

We know that we can have confidence to come to God because of His great supremacy that the writer showed us in chapters 1, 2 and 3, and now in chapter 5 we can see that we have even more confidence if that is possible because Jesus is our Great High Priest. We discovered that it is hard to connect with this idea of a High Priest but you remember he is the one who goes before us, who beckons us to follow Him into battle. So with this newfound confidence let us get after our "Let us" verses.

**Hebrews 10:19-24**

<sup>19</sup> Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, <sup>20</sup> by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, <sup>21</sup> and since we have a great 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 with pure water. <sup>23</sup> Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. <sup>24</sup> And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, <sup>25</sup> 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.

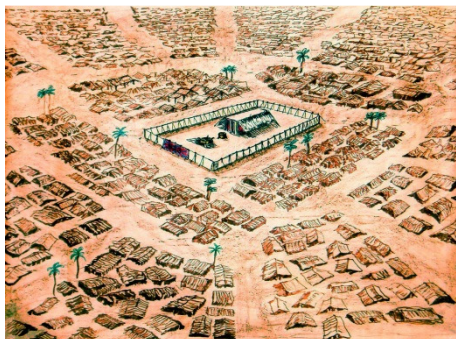
Let's tackle this idea of being able to boldly enter the Holy Place.

**Entering boldly before the Throne of Grace****Hebrews 10:19-20**

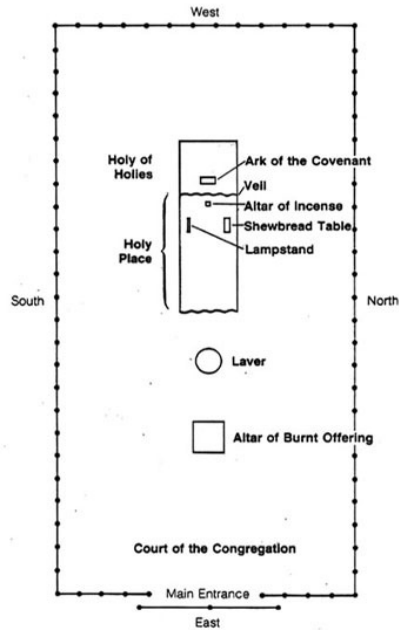
<sup>19</sup> Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, <sup>20</sup> by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,

I think you remember us talking about Yom Kippur the great Day of Atonement. When it was first established with the newly freed nation of Israel, to wrongly enter the holy place was to die. Aaron lost his two oldest sons who trespassed into the presence of God without being fully made ready. The God of the Jews is not a cuddly friendly kind of stuffed animal kind of God. He is not safe at all but He is good. This is the God that the readers of Hebrews are considering. He is clearly a God to be reckoned with! Now days we don't really think of Jesus in these terms and indeed he said "I no longer call you slaves but friends." Still, none of us dare to approach God on our terms but only on His!

It was in the wilderness and wanderings that God began His stay with Israel, when he instructed them to build the Tabernacle so that he could remain with them and so that they could worship Him. We read about that in Exodus 25, 26 and 27.



Its construction and the arrangement of the objects within it teach us that we come into God's presence only on His conditions.



In the inner court of the tabernacle and then later in the temple in Jerusalem, in the most sacred space of cosmos perhaps, the Holy of Holies, where the Ark of the Covenant was placed. As I said before, this is where the high priest would go once a year to offer atonement for the sins of the people. A veil, a very thick, woven curtain, separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the tabernacle and later the temple. Josephus, a first century Jewish historian reported for us first hand. There is uncertainty as to the exact measurement of a cubit, but it is safe to assume that this veil was somewhere near 60 feet high. Josephus also tells us that the veil was four inches thick and that horses tied to each side could not pull the veil apart. The book of Exodus teaches that this thick veil was fashioned from blue, purple and scarlet material and fine twisted linen.

When Jesus died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, that heavy curtain was torn from top to bottom. It was not ripped from bottom to top, as though a man were ripping it. Instead, it was ripped from top to bottom, because God was ripping it. Christ offered a better sacrifice than the other Priests. He is a better High Priest of a better priesthood than the ones who had come before. He offers a new covenant better than the other one. In every way Jesus is better! And so all the way through chapter 1 to chapter 10 is a presentation of the superiority of Jesus Christ. God was saying, "You no longer have to stay on the outside. You can come in. My Son has made a way for you."

This is the great truth that the writer depends on, God has made a way for us and now it is time to aim and focus our lives. But how?

Now remember this is a *plural* imperative. This is something we are to experience together. In the Old Testament, God was not something you experienced by yourself so much - more as a community or nation. Here in the 21<sup>st</sup> century America, our tendency is to translate everything individually. Certainly that is not wrong. Jesus died for you and me. But He also died for us, for 4Cs and the greater church. So the writer is asking us to consider *together* how we are to live together in the light of this glory and grace called the Savior Jesus Christ. First we must let our faith compel us forward:

**Let our Faith Compel us**

**Hebrews 10:22**

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.

God has given us the authority to commune with Himself in a personal and intimate manner, not trembling from afar. Jesus has opened up the way, and he has clothed us with the proper wedding clothes. So we can now draw near to God. The work of Jesus at the cross makes worshiping such a God even possible. There is a cost. Jesus paid it. So we should draw near. Get close. Get to know. Worship. Together! We offer ourselves up to him. Together. He is not for us to fear in the sense that we stay away. We come before him in sincerity because he knows we don't have to fake it. We come before him with assurance.

At this season in our 4Cs church history, as we see God act on our behalf, it is time for our faith to be increased and thereby our worship to be increased, our joy increased, our endurance, our giving increased, our obedience increased. Together. Then this is also a time to experience increased faith together and to see what that means for us. It is also a time to experience hope together. It is time to embrace our hope.

### ***Embrace our Hope***

#### ***Hebrews 10:23***

"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful."

We have hope. Listen to this carefully - ***We have hope because hope does not depend on us***. Somewhere in all the mix is a mustard seed of faith that the story we have believed and the Messiah we have followed is true. Frankly, sometimes that's all we have; sometimes less.

But there it is: hope does not lie within us. If it did, it would be destroyed in a minute. Our hope, Peter says, is stored up for us in heaven; it is precious; it is resurrection hope in Christ; it can never perish, spoil, or fade; it is protected by God's power (1 Peter 1:3-5). Praise God.

Our hope depends upon the one who is faithful and therein is our hope. Our hope is not in a building as nice as that is or in a youth pastor and his lovely family as nice as they are. It is important to remember that our hope is not in a symbol, or an idea, or a concept, or a religion or anything of the sort. The author of Hebrews says that we have hope because ***He*** who promised it is faithful. He is faithful. We hold unswervingly to the hope we profess. This is the same thing he said back in 4:14: "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess." Profess is also confess or announce to declare. As priests, we have a confession to make; together we announce to others this hope. We must hold unswervingly to this hope. Finally the "Let Us" verses bring us to one last idea:

### ***Stir Up Each Other to Love and Good Deeds***

#### ***Hebrews 10:24***

"Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds."

The danger, of course, is in trying to hold on to this course alone. We are best served and best serve when we are together. So we must encourage ***one another***- which means that this is a responsibility for everyone in the body towards everyone in the body. These are words we ought to be sharing with one another constantly. But I think it is critically important that these words rest not on a single person, but that the responsibility falls to all of us.

If this is but the responsibility of one person the words can grow weak, the person can grow weary, and the warning can be wasted. I think if I am reading this correctly and all of us have been invited into the priestly class, then all of us have a confession to make, a worship to offer, and encouragement to give. How can we do this? Well, it means we have to talk to one another, share with one another, and be involved in one another's lives. We have to love one another enough to care about them. We have to know enough about one another to do the spurring. Frankly, some people have more access to others than some others do. We all must share in this responsibility so that people know they are loved and cared about and that people are concerned for them. We are companions on this journey. We move at the rate of everyone, neither speeding ahead nor lagging behind. We journey together.

[This week's Matthew 25 illustration]

Let us draw near is an exhortation to worship, fellowship, communion, confidence, faith, and trust. We enter as worshipers.

Let us hold fast is an exhortation to our priestly responsibilities inside our confession. Our confession is not something we keep secret. We enter as priests.

Let us encourage one another is an exhortation to fellowship, communion, companionship, and love. We enter as companions.

Let us.

The profoundest part of these verses is that they are even possible. But Jesus had made it so. We no longer exist in solitude, we no longer live in isolation, and we no longer walk alone.

Let us.

The profoundest part of these verses is surely that Jesus' work does not compel us to laziness and complacency, but rather to work and energy and fellowship. We are together.

Let us.

We are called together in a fellowship in God's presence. He has opened the way for us not to enter singly, on our own, but together; as one. We come before him together. We draw near together. We hold fast together. We encourage one another together. We. Together.

Let us.

Faith, Hope and Love. These are the great triumvirate or trifacta of the Christian. 1 Cor. 13:13 states faith, hope and love abide. Because if you do this you will be with God in the Holy of Holies boldly enjoying His life and light. Not someday, now!

**Hebrews 12:1-2**

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

In 1845, the ill-fated Franklin Expedition sailed from England to find a passage across the Arctic Ocean. The crew loaded their two sailing ships with a lot of things they didn't need: a 1,200-volume library, fine china, crystal goblets, and sterling silverware for each officer with his initials engraved on the handles. Amazingly, each ship took only a 12-day supply of coal for their auxiliary steam engines. The ships became trapped in vast frozen plains of ice. After several months, Lord Franklin died. The men decided to trek to safety in small groups, but none of them survived. One story is especially heartbreaking. Two officers pulled a large sled more than 65 miles across the treacherous ice. When rescuers found their bodies, they discovered that the sled was filled with table silver. Those men contributed to their own demise by carrying what they didn't need. But don't we sometimes do the same? Don't we drag baggage through life that we don't need?

Let's determine to "lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us." Together.