**Assembling With the Saints**

The pandemic has been disruptive as we have struggled to continue faithful service to God and one another while protecting the most vulnerable among us from the virus. As vaccinations roll out, we must seriously contemplate the critical importance of gathering to worship God.

Hebrews 10:25 warns us to not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, but I believe the theme of chapter 10 is actually stated in verse 23: “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering,” Beginning in verse 26, the Hebrew writer describes the disturbing consequences of failure. He writes of “a terrifying expectation of judgment” and “the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries.” It truly is “a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” In light of that, we must “consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.” (Hebrews 10:24-25)

Is it important to obey the commands of Christ? Of course. But the primary threat to my soul is that I would waver in my commitment to the hope that Christ has made available to me. He loves me enough to make provision for my continued spiritual vitality, and one source of strength is regular assembly with the saints so we can stimulate one another to love and good deeds, to encourage one another with a view of coming judgment. That is the point of verse 25.

Excuses for failure to worship clearly indicate where the person’s heart is.

**It’s not all about me.** If I take a self-centered approach to assembly, it is no wonder I will feel dissatisfied. One reason Jesus wants me there is to encourage others, and that should be my focus.

**We assemble to worship God.** Every missed assembly is a lost opportunity to pay homage to the Creator of heaven and earth.

**Worship is not a spectator sport.** Those who feel they aren’t getting anything out of the service act as though they are on the outside looking in. Instead of sitting in the stands expecting to be entertained, they should get on the team and participate.

The next assembly you attend, sing with enthusiasm! Concentrate on the thoughts of the public prayers and whisper amen when you agree! Contribute to the work with joy! Look past the shortcomings of the speaker and appreciate the power of the gospel message! Empathize with the Savior’s excruciating pain as you partake of the Lord’s Supper! Once I truly understand that worship is not about me, it’s all about service to Christ and service to others, I will begin to view assembling with the saints as a privilege instead of a chore.

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