
The New Covenant House of God

Text: Hebrews 10:19-25

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Introduction Our passage this evening is found in the book of Hebrews chapter 10. “What is the Church?” Is it a “community of faith”? Is it an “assembly”? Is it a missionary gathering? Is it simply a meeting point for those in a journey of faith? We are going to briefly look at one of the answers to that question this evening. Hebrews chapter 10:

19 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.

We spent some time in January looking at leadership in the home... and within that discussion we considered the relationship between the nuclear family and the church family. Tonight, we are not going to revisit that issue per se. But we are going to touch on a subject quite close to the discussion of what it means to be a “family”. Closely related to family is the notion of “house”. What does a “house” look like in the Bible? What does “house” mean?

When we think of house, what do we think about? All sorts of images come to mind... usually our own house structure may be the first to pop into our minds... then where we grew up. When I say “house”, not only does that conjure up an image of a structure, you’re also probably already thinking about what it “smells” like... or a favorite memory. For some of you, you may associate a particular “house” with pain. These latter images are not so much the building of the house, but the people who live in the house... the family, or even extended family living within its four walls.

When I say, “house of God”, what comes to our minds? For some, it may be a structure... a building. Again, we typically, for better or for worse, have associated “house of God” with building. When I say I was a member of Emmanuel Baptist Church, most likely some of you will think of that historic edifice on Third Street near Downtown Dayton. Some may think of the people who made up Emmanuel Baptist Church, or even its long time pastor, Nile Fisher. If I say Clearcreek Chapel, do you think of this building first or do you think of the people?

If I were an Old Testament Israelite and I say “house of God”, what image comes to mind? Depending on the era, one would say the tabernacle in the wilderness or the tabernacle in Shiloh or the temple in Jerusalem. The tabernacle and temple were known as the house of God. We see this in the Psalms. It became known as God’s “house” because it was the dwelling place of God among his people. One could look to the tabernacle or temple, see the pillar of cloud or fire and be assured that God, Emmanuel, is dwelling among his people. The temple, the dwelling place of God on earth, his heavenly throne on earth, was THE focal point of the Israelite’s world, the centerpiece of his or her existence.

Beth-el: The House of God

We’re given a snapshot of what “house of God” means very early on in the garden. God walked with Adam in the cool of the day... God made his dwelling with Adam and Even in the garden,

the house of God. God met man face to face in perfect communion... the garden was where heaven met earth without dissonance.

But it isn't until we get to Jacob that we find this idea in more concrete form....

Turn with me to Genesis 28:10... this isn't our passage this evening, but it is a passage upon which the writer of Hebrews is going to build...

10 Jacob left Beersheba and went toward Haran. 11 And he came to a certain place and stayed there that night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place to sleep. 12 And he dreamed, and behold, there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it! 13 And behold, the Lord stood above it and said, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. 14 Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed. 15 Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." 16 Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it." 17 And he was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

18 So early in the morning Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. 19 He called the name of that place Bethel, but the name of the city was Luz at the first. 20 Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, 21 so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God, 22 and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house. And of all that you give me I will give a full tenth to you."

We are not going to spend our time this evening in this passage. However, what I want us to see in this passage is the designation of this "gateway to heaven", "the house of God". This is the first major instance in the scriptures where such a designation is used. Jacob names this place where heaven descended on a ladder, Beth-el or "house of God". Thus, from the very beginning of Israel's existence in the person of Jacob, we have God's meeting place with men, the place where heaven meets earth, the place where promises are bestowed, being called "the house of God". Later, we find Jacob building an altar at this same location... a house of God where sacrifices and worship take place.

The tabernacle and temple as "house of God"

These themes of God meeting with men, heaven meeting earth, God dwelling with man, sacrifices being made to God, and worship taking place in the very glory-presence of God, are repeated throughout the Old Testament in relation to the "house of God". The next time we find this phrase is in relation to the tabernacle before it is even built...In Exodus 23, the children of Israel are told, "The best of the firstfruits of your ground you shall bring into the house of the Lord your God." And in Exodus 25 we read this, "The Lord said to Moses, 2 "Speak to the people of Israel, that they take for me a contribution. From every man whose heart moves him you shall receive the contribution for me....8 And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst. 9 Exactly as I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle, and of all its furniture, so you shall make it." The purpose for the building of the sanctuary, the house of God, was so that God could dwell among his people. And once the tabernacle was built, this is exactly what happened. Exodus 40 verse 33: "So Moses finished the work. 34 Then the cloud

covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. 35 And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.” Again we see these themes in the tabernacle of heaven meeting earth (especially at the mercy seat), God meeting with men in the mediation of the priests, sacrifices on an altar, worship through the priests, God dwelling among his people with a shekinah glory-presence. These themes that began in the garden and further expanded with Jacob at Jacob’s ladder are now true of Israel’s mobile tent, the tabernacle... the house of God.

This is repeated in Solomon’s dedication of the temple... turn to 1 Kings 8... verse 10:

“And when the priests came out of the Holy Place, a cloud filled the house of the Lord, 11 so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord. 12 Then Solomon said, “The Lord has said that he would dwell in thick darkness. 13 I have indeed built you an exalted house, a place for you to dwell in forever.”

Do you see a pattern here? Solomon’s Temple, like the tabernacle is a dwelling place for God among his people, a dwelling place on which Solomon places eternal expectations... it is a place for God to abide in, or take up residence in, “forever”.

The tabernacle and later the temple were not simply a place for God to meet his people, but a place where God was visibly dwelling among his people. So closely linked were the ideas of dwelling and Israel’s sense of identity, that the tabernacle was closely tied to the covenantal promises of God to his people. Leviticus 26:11-12 makes this connection:

11 I will make my dwelling (or tabernacle) among you, and my soul shall not abhor you. 12 And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people. 13 I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that you should not be their slaves. And I have broken the bars of your yoke and made you walk erect.

The tabernacle and temple were so closely linked to Israel’s identity that God’s dwelling place was the focal point for the covenantal promises, especially the promise that summarized all of the covenants: I will be their God and they will be my people. Here in the one passage God explains to them that the great promise of the covenant, I will be your God and you will be my people, is most brilliantly seen and on display in the tabernacle and later temple. The highest manifestation of God’s presence was tied to the highest of promises: I will be their God and they will be my people.

The church as the “house of God”

And in the course of redemptive history, what was true for Israel ultimately becomes true for the church in the Person of Jesus Christ, who is the Temple of God. This same connection is found in the book of Revelation where John alludes to Leviticus 26:11-13 in Revelation 21:3... the language used about Israel in Leviticus 26 is now applied to the church in Revelation 21:3:

3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.

Just as any Israelite could look off toward the center of camp or look to the mountain in Jerusalem and see the visible dwelling of God among them in the tabernacle, so too, with the coming of Jesus we see in Jesus the dwelling of God among us. Jesus, the Emmanuel, dwells with his people, the church. And it is in Christ tabernacling among his people the fullest measure of the great covenantal promise is realized: Christ dwells with us, we are His people, and He is

our God. In this final temple that covers the whole of the earth, Christ will dwell among his people. And in the church, even as we await that day, Christ Emmanuel, has already begun to dwell among his people. The church is the dwelling place of God among men. All of Israel's hopes and expectations that were wrapped up in the temple have come true in Jesus and now are lived out among His people. As Christ dwells with us in our corporate gathering, we enjoy the emergence of the New Covenant: I will be their God and they will be my people.

Paul picks up on this kind of thinking in Ephesians. Paul affirms that God's dwelling presence with men is now found in the church. In Ephesians 2, the temple and the "house of God" language is applied to the church at Ephesus. this understanding of the "house of God" is applied to the church at Ephesus. Ephesians 2, verse 18:

18 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

Notice here in Ephesians that the household *is* the "holy temple in the Lord", and the "household" *is* the habitation of God through the Spirit. It is Christ through His Spirit in this New Covenant age who is building a new temple, of which the former temple was merely a shadow. We are a new temple, being built on the new temple, the cornerstone Jesus. There is a new dwelling place of God among men, and it Christ and His church. We can look many places for where God is dwelling among men, but the only place we are going to find it is in the person of Jesus and the church He is building.

And like John and like Paul, this theme of God dwelling on earth in His church shows up in the book of Hebrews, especially in the passage we've read at the beginning. In Hebrews 10, we find Christ serving as both a Son and a High Priest over the house that he is building, a house that was foreshadowed in the Old Testament tabernacle. While Moses was a faithful servant in God's house, Jesus is the more faithful, more glorious Son over God's house of which he is the owner. Not only is he the Son over the house, he is also the priest over the house.

Once again, all the themes from the tabernacle and temple are in play here. In the Incarnation, heaven and earth meet... the Emmanuel has come to dwell among his people. He himself because the sacrifice on the altar in the holy of holies, establishing a new worship as a New Covenant... the Shekinah glory not only comes to dwell in a new temple, but to create a new temple. We as God's people can have confidence entering the very presence of God.

Here that imagery from the Old Testament is being applied to those to whom the writer of Hebrews is writing... notice the language... "we have a great high priest over the house of God.." We put all of these things together and we are to understand the "house of God" here in Hebrews and in the New Covenant as none other than the church, the people of God.

The "house of God" in Hebrews

It is here in the church that God in Jesus Christ, has chosen to dwell and to walk among His people. It is through Our Emmanuel, God with us, that heaven and earth meet as the church gathers. This gathering of God's people into an assembly isn't simply a gathering by human effort. This gathering of God's people has been instigated in heaven. This assembly is the church come down from heaven, a place where Christ dwells in and with His people.

Some may wonder then, so what does *that* look like? What does it look like for the church to be the "house of God" where Christ dwells with his people as a faithful high priest?

Our answer is found in this very text. We are not left to speculate. We are not left to vague mysticism as to what this looks like. The answer is in this text.

Our text is found in the book of Hebrews, a book written to a people who were under the gun. The original readers or hearers of this sermon were Jews being tempted to go back to the Judaism that they knew. These former Jews were already being persecuted for their faith... Instead, throughout the book of Hebrews, they are encouraged to persevere. The writer of Hebrews insists that Jesus is better than the angels, better than Moses and inaugurator of a better covenant in a better house of God. And it is at the end of this long argument about Christ being better than anything else that Old Testament Judaism has to offer, we find our passage this evening... the new house of God is the result of a new covenant between God and His people, a New Covenant who has redeemed for himself a people and now lives among his people through the indwelling Spirit.

... beginning with verse 14 of Hebrews 10:

14 For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

15 And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying,

16 “This is the covenant that I will make with them

after those days, declares the Lord:

I will put my laws on their hearts,

and write them on their minds,”

17 then he adds,

“I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.”

18 Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

19 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...

Notice the transition... moving from the promise of the New Covenant now realized in Jesus and being lived out among the recipients of the book of Hebrews... the forgiveness of sins that has forever removed sins from God’s people... this New Covenant brings into existence a new house of God... a house over which Christ is the priest.

For the rest of our time tonight... I want us to see what it means for Christ’s people to be his tabernacle. What does it mean for the church to be the New Covenant house of God? How does the church function as a “house of God”?

The church as the “house of God” in Hebrews 10

I think one thing we can say about the church as the house of God before we even look at this passage this evening is when we talk about “church” and when we talk about “house of God”, we are not talking about a building. The passages here in Hebrews as well as 1 Corinthians and Ephesians make it very clear that Christ’s “house” or the church as a temple is not speaking of a building but speaking of a people. Christ who is the temple in John 2, now dwells among his people who are a temple. The people of God in the New Covenant constitute the temple of God... it is among the people where Christ dwells through His Spirit. Rather than the temple being inanimate stones, the temple in the New Covenant is organic... a living, breathing

organism which has been given life from above. So... the first thing we see here is that the “house of God” is a people.

Two “sinces” (realities) that mark the church as the house of God

Notice the two “sinces”... in verses 19 and 21... these words mark off two realities that are true about the house of God and become reasons for the church to meet together.... We will see that in a moment.

But the first reality we see is that God’s people, the household of God, now have confidence to enter the very presence of God... a presence that had been shut off from the people. Since we have confidence to enter the holy places... this is a collective “we” here... we as the people of God can enjoy without fear of death the very presence of God himself. The very mercy seat, God’s throne where heaven met earth is no longer cut off from his people. Because Christ has become the final sacrifice the curtain has been torn in two and God’s people may enter what once would have killed us.

This is the glory of the Incarnation. The Incarnation made it possible for God’s people to see God and live. We now have confidence to enter the very throne room of heaven.

This confidence or boldness correlates to a parallel passage in Hebrews 4:16:

¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Notice the similar language: we have a great high priest... we come boldly unto the throne... what throne? The Mercy seat, guarded by the wings of cherubim. The blood of Jesus that has ratified a New Covenant in the Person of Jesus has opened up the gateway to heaven whereby the church enters the throneroom of heaven looking for grace and mercy to help in our time of need. What made Isaiah tremble is now ours whenever we need help... the ever listening Jesus invites us into His presence as the house of God...

And the second reality we see here in the second “since”... verse 21...Having an high priest over the house of God... the priest who mediates a better covenant now presides over a New Covenant House... The One mediator between God and man who has opened up the throne room of heaven to His people continues to mediate on behalf of His people.

*Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession. ¹⁵ For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin.*

His once for all sacrifice has cleansed His people. He has given them His righteousness. And now He continues to represent his people even as they gather in the throne room to find grace and mercy to help in time of need. We have a confidence to enter the throne room of heaven to find grace and mercy because we know that the One who continues to be an Advocate for His people before God has already been there, done that. Whatever it is that afflicts us in this fallen and broken world, our High Priest knows it first hand. We enter through the curtain and appear before God when we gather to find grace in full confidence that Jesus has paid our penalty and has gone through what we are going through yet without sin. Christ has endured the pain and the suffering on behalf of his people... in order to give his people the righteousness they need in order to come into the throne room looking for grace and mercy.

That’s the backdrop then... of what it means for the church to function as the house of God... or the dwelling place of God. What happens when Christ dwells among his people, the house of God? What are we supposed to be as a church?

Let us draw near

These realities in verses 19-21 give rise to three commands... there are three things we are to do, in order to function as the meeting place between God and his people.

There are three commands or resolutions here... 3 “let us’s”... because we have confidence and because we have a high priest... the first thing we are to do is “draw near”.

Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

This isn't “draw near to God” in the sense of some individual prayer closet experience. This is tabernacle language. What did it mean to draw near? We could run with this all day as to how this doesn't mean what evangelicalism claims it is. This is not a personal or individual activity. This isn't to say these things done privately are not important. But that's not the point here. For the writer of Hebrews and for the embattled church to whom he is writing, this “drawing near” is in the context of the house of God in the previous verse. This is a continuation of the thought that Christ is the high priest over the house of God and that we have boldness, as a corporate assembly, to enter the holy place. Because he is a high priest and because we have confidence to enter the throne room of God, let us, collectively as the house of God where Jesus dwells, draw near to the very glory-presence of God, in full assurance of faith. We have been washed, we have been cleansed, we have been given the righteousness necessary for right standing with God... now we as a church are to gather in order that we might access the grace and mercy we have been promise through Jesus who has given us his righteousness. We come together as a house in order to draw near to that which once would have condemned and killed us. We need grace... let us come together as a house and draw near.

Let us hold fast

The second command here, or the second “let us”... is found in verse 23..

Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)

The confession of the church's faith is a group effort. It happens corporately. These former Jews being tempted to go back to their Judaism were to hang together as the house of God confessing a common faith. So, we have confidence to enter the very glory-presence of God and our high priest Jesus continues to mediate on our behalf, this gathering is given an identity and meaning. Our confession of faith that we express doesn't simply serve the purpose of communicating what it is that we have in common. No, it becomes the expression of who we are as the dwelling place of Jesus. Ultimately, it is Christ who is our Confession. We hold fast to Jesus and we hold fast to that which he has taught us without wavering because he bought us with his blood and placed us in this community in which He dwells. We entered this New Covenant corporate gathering through the confession of faith... if we confess with our mouths the Lord Jesus... How much do we value our corporate confession of faith? Do we much think about our confession of faith and what we believe as a means of worship and gathering as the dwelling place of Jesus? Show me someone struggling in the faith and I will show you someone that has is no longer holding fast the profession with the rest of the house of God.

Let us consider

And then there's the third “let us”... the third command that flows out of our confidence to enter the holy places and Christ as our high priest over the house of God..

When we gather as the corporate New Covenant house of God... the corporate house of God is not only to draw near to find grace and is not only to hold fast to the confession of our faith... but it is to “consider”.

let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

When we have found grace and when we have corporately affirmed the very basis for our gathering in the confession faith... there is then an outward expression of that confession. Notice this is not the place for this particular love and good works... this is where we consider. Before we can truly love and truly be involved in good works, we must first be energized by the enabling grace that comes from the One who brings us together in our gathering. This “considering” calls to mind those old testament passages in which the parents brought remembrance of the exodus to their children... that great salvation event. As we corporately gather as the house of God, we are to call to mind our great salvation event in the person of Jesus... which the writer of Hebrews has already outlined in the rest of the book. This great salvation event in Christ becomes our motivation for love for each other. We love each other because he first loved us. We engage in good works, because he has first begun a good work in us.

“Let us consider” our great salvation event in Jesus. What Jesus has done for us in his life and in his death moves us to come together to motivate us and move us toward loves for each other and the kind of good deeds that mark us as the place where God dwells. When we come together we come together to be reminded of what Christ has done for us. And as we do that, we are to strategize with each other how best we are going to serve each other and love each other as Christ has loved and served us. The house of God then becomes a launch pad for the kind of love and the kind of service that is characteristic of Jesus who dwells among his people. They will know we are Christians by our love.. they will know this is the place where God dwells by our love, a love that is on display in good works done in Christ’s name.

Not forsaking... in order to “draw near”, “hold fast”, and “consider”

But before we leave off these three commands and consider what this means for us... there is one final qualification... these three resolutions are tied together with a qualification of the final resolution:

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

This isn’t not the primary command of this section. It is a secondary command that ties together the first three commands... this phrase wraps up the entire section. This command cannot and should not be considered apart from the rest of this paragraph. “not forsaking...” is a qualifying clause connected to all of this... It is through the assembling of ourselves together that we do the “lettuces”. In other words... we do not forsake because we are to draw near.... We do not forsake the gathering because we are to hold fast the confession... we do not forsake the gathering because we are to consider how to spur or motivate one another to love and good deeds. We do not forsake the gathering because the gathering is the household of God where God’s people meet in full confidence to find grace and mercy. We do not forsake the gathering because Jesus Christ is the high priest over this gathering the house of God. The gathering *is* the house of God... found in verse 19. If we don’t assemble, we cannot do the lettuce... and in fact, assembling is an assumption of the “house of God”.

Doesn’t that change how we understand this verse? Doesn’t that change the import attached to “gathering.” It’s not simply a matter of obedience... well... when the doors open we should be there because Christ tells us to. NO. We gather because it is here Christ meets with his people. It is here that heaven meets earth. It is here that we find grace and mercy to help in time

of need. It is here that we draw near into God's glory-presence. It is here that we confess our faith. It is here that we consider how we are to motivate one another to love and good works. It is *here*. Not *out there*.

The Day of the Lord draws near

One final thought from the writer of Hebrews... just as we draw near to God's presence in his throne room... so now also the Day of the Lord of Old Testament proportions is drawing near. That has more implications in this passage than we have time for this evening.. but one thing we should note is that this paragraph ends with a hint of warning.... That is coming in subsequent paragraphs. We gather as the people of God as the house of God where Jesus dwells as a high priest because it is here that we find salvation from the judgment of God. It's not simply coming together and gathering... that's not our salvation. Our salvation is in the One who is gathering us together, the one who is the Priest over the house of God. Our salvation is found in Jesus, who is Better than the angels, Better than Moses, the Better sacrifice of a Better Covenant, who has gathered his people together as a Better House. We do not neglect to meet together because in meeting together we find Jesus meeting with us. We meet here, we meet Christ. We neglect the meeting here, we neglect Christ.

There is a both a salvation from and within the Day of the Lord, and encouragement in light of the Day that we find when we gather here. Christ has marked off his people from the rest of the world. And we gather as a redeemed people called out from a world that some day will end in condemnation. The Day is coming in which salvation for those who have been gathered together as the house of God will be complete. And the Day is coming in which there will be judgment for those who are not the New and Better House of God. The former Jews to whom the writer of Hebrews is writing, the New House of God, are not to succumb to the temptation of the old course of things, the old way of life in Judaism. They neglect the meeting as the Better House of God at the peril of their own souls, a thought that is further developed in verses 26 and following.

Salvation and forgiveness of sins and rest is to be found in Jesus, the Priest over the house he has gathered from both Jews and Gentiles. This house of God is an oasis in the Day of the Lord. This house is balm for those being persecuted and suffering. We hold onto the confession corporately and draw near to the throne because we know as God's people that this is the only place where we will find salvation from judgment. We find our salvation and our rest and our peace and our oasis in Jesus... Jesus who is the high priest over the house of God.

Conclusion

As we close.... What does this mean for us?

Because we have such a great high priest, the church must act as if it is the dwelling place of God. If we understand the flow of this passage properly we will begin to see the familiar refrain we are fond of talking about here at the chapel: be what you are. You are the Better House of God. Be the Better House of God.

We act as the dwelling place of God, the house of God, as we practice the three "let us's"... as we draw near... as we hold fast to the confession... as we consider how to motivate each other... we have full assurance that Christ is among us, dwelling among his people as Emmanuel.

And we have to ask ourselves some questions... in light of what we have considered this evening. Are we marked by the reality that we have confidence to enter the throne room of heaven? Is Jesus our faithful Son and Priest over the House? Do we have His righteousness necessary to bring us into right standing in order to enter God's presence? Are we marked by these three commands? When people see the Chapel, can they see that Christ dwells among us

because we have come to draw near, to hold fast our confession, and to consider how to motivate and spur each other to love and good deeds?

Do we value our gathering together for our worship together on Sundays and in flock on Wednesday evenings? Christ meets his people here in his Word. Christ meets us here to feed us nourishment from heaven. Christ hasn't simply brought the church to life and put it on cruise control. Christ brought His people to life through the Word and He continues to sustain the life of His people through the proclamation of His Word. As we gather both here on Sundays, and at the flock gatherings... as we gather around His Word, Christ comes to meet with us. The implication from this passage is "if we don't meet, we don't have". It's not "out there" that Christ meets with his people. It's here. It's not "out there" where these 3 "let us's" of Hebrews 10 are happening, but "in here" as the Better House of God gathered by the Priest over the House.

As we gather, the Great High Priest continues to mediate on behalf of His people in the very throne room of heaven. He is priest over the house of God... His church. We value our gathering together here at the chapel not simply because we value community and its benefits, but because we value Jesus. There is a corporate necessity to these things here in Hebrews 10:19ff. We cannot do these things on our own. If I miss corporate gathering, I am missing something significant in corporate gathering that I cannot experience privately. It is as a gathered "house" that Christ presides over his people as we draw near, hold fast our confession of faith, and consider how to motivate each other to love and good works.

God's eternal dwelling is with His people. Just as in the original garden of Eden God made his dwelling with the first Adam and Eve, and just as in the original Jerusalem God made his dwelling with his people through the tabernacle and temple, so too in the New Creation/New Jerusalem God will fully and finally dwell in the midst of His people forever.

But this passage also reminds us that there will come a day when Christ will no longer be separated from us in time and space. There will be a day when The Emmanuel, who came to dwell among his people, takes up permanent residence physically and gloriously with His people. We will no longer worship in God's presence drawing near with the eyes of faith. Our eyes will see him as we worship in God's presence face to face in the eternal temple with our Emmanuel. And when we gather on Sundays for the proclamation of the Word, we partake in a very real way, of that which will be ours someday... we gather as the house of God within the glory-presence of Jesus longing for that day when what we participate in by faith will be by sight... seeing Jesus our great high priest over the house of God.

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near, let us hold fast, and let us consider... not neglecting to meet together, but encouraging one another.