



Day Four Devotional.

By Josh Harrison

Lead Pastor of Canopy Church

19 Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

One last time, let's recap:

As our heavenly high priest and our atoning sacrifice, Jesus has opened a way for us into the Most Holy Place. The presence of God is the inheritance of all Jesus people. And with that staggering truth in mind, the writer of Hebrews (strongly) encourages us to three courses of action. First, as we discussed on Tuesday, run to him! If the Way is open, then the very thing we've all been searching for our whole lives, the meaning of life, the key to complete joy and abundant life is available to us. Second, from yesterday's conversation, don't settle for anything else (less). Even though it's all true, sometimes it doesn't seem like it is. The world is loud and difficult and distracting, and it does everything it can to keep us from him. "Don't let it," the writer of Hebrews tells us. "Don't veer off course. Run to him!"

Today, we look at our final encouragement: "Let us consider how we may spur one another on..." In other words, "Don't let anyone else settle for less either."

You see, Christian community is kind of a big deal. In fact, the New Testament is consistent in its perspective: we cannot live the Christian life on our own. I mean this in two ways. First, we cannot maintain a Jesus-centered identity in this world without the help of other Jesus-followers. Like I said earlier, this world is just too loud and too persistent and too oppositional to the Kingdom of God. It will do everything in its power strip away our God-given identities. We're kind of like the exiles living in Babylon, our God-given names stripped from us, given new "Babylonian" names, given every creature comfort. So effective was the Babylonian indoctrination that 90% of the exiles never returned home to Jerusalem. They simply became Babylonian. As for ones that did return home, I imagine they must have had a pretty solid community telling them daily, "Remember who you are. Don't forget your true name." I think this is what it means to spur one another on in "love." It means primarily remind one another of our belovedness, which is the bedrock of our identity.

Second, we cannot live a life of missional effectiveness. In John 13, Jesus told us that loving one another is the key to letting the world know that we're his disciples. He reiterated in John 17 when he said that unity among his followers is the key to the world knowing the radical love of God. Then, in the book of Acts, the secret to the "unlikely" success of the early church was the Spirit at work in and through their community. They were people devoted to living out the Gospel together. In other words, they modeled the Gospel by the way they loved one another, and the watching world was captivated and perplexed. They'd never seen anything like this. Their community was their apologetic, their greatest witnessing tool. They quite literally spurred one another on in good deeds, enabling one another to do the work of the Kingdom simply by living in radical, devoted community.

This kind of spurring-one-another-on-in-love-and-good-deeds community is what the world needs, now more than ever, as the day approaches. Sacrificial Christian community is more essential now than ever before. We need one another more than ever before. So, as we're running to him, let's be sure that we're bringing others along with us.

