

## 21. The Divine Invitation

May 10, 2015

As I was growing up, I've been in a hospital numerous time, not as a patient, rather as an errand boy, because my daddy was an OBGYN doctor and my older brother is the chief neurosurgeon of a major medical center in Seoul, South Korea.

Out of all the places in a hospital, one place is, understandably, extremely controlled – the operating room, a.k.a., O.R. The room air is filtered; the walls and floors are immaculately scrubbed; the instruments are sterilized; anyone who goes into that room must be authorized and well trained. They, too, must be scrubbed and sterilized, wearing sterilized garbs, masks, gloves, and shoe coverings before they enter in. There is a big sign on those double doors: "Keep out. Authorized Personnel Only." They don't take a chance for any unauthorized person to mosey in. This operating room must be clear of any potential germs, because it has one purpose, and one purpose only – the saving of human life.

The "Holiest of all," a.k.a., the "Holy of Holies," a.k.a., the "Most Holy Place" in the Jewish temple had a similar purpose. It was the cleanest, the most holy place on the face of the earth at that time, because the presence of the Lord was there while the Jewish people were obedient to Him. It was off-limit for everyone with the exception of the high priest. Even he couldn't go in anytime he wanted. Only once a year, on the Day of Atonement, he walked through the large tapestried veil that separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the temple.

According to several biblical scholars and the Jewish historian Josephus, the veil before the Holy of Holies was 60 feet long, and 20 feet wide, and the thickness of the palm of a man's hand. It was so heavy that it needed 300 priests to hang it from the ceiling. But when Jesus died on the cross, according to Matthew 27, the veil was torn from top to bottom, as if God the Father said, "I accept the perfect sacrifice that was made by My Son Jesus, and I don't need any more sacrifices." So the veil was no longer keeping people out, the Lord is inviting people to come into the very presence of Him. Because of our Lord Jesus' Divine Invitation, we can enter into His presence with the absolute assurance and confidence.

This portion of the Scriptures can be divided easily into three sections. This three fold invitation is depending on our boldness to enter into the Holy of Holies, and that boldness is solely depending on the finished work of our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ.

### A. ENTER IN A NEW AND LIVING WAY

*Hebrews 10:19-21 Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and having a High Priest over the house of God,*

I find that two things are common between my opening illustration of the operating room and the Holy of Holies:

**1) The person who wants to enter in must be cleansed and scrubbed by the cleansing agent** – You cannot enter into the presence of God without the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ. In other words, if you don't accept Jesus as your Savior and Lord, you are not clean enough to get in.

When I was in the South Korean Army, we were crawling on the ground all morning one day in training. They handed each soldier a plastic bag that contained a greasy donut. I was so hungry, I yanked it open. Before I caught it, the donut hit the ground. I picked it up and looked at the dirt-sprinkled donut for about a second and rubbed it against my dirt smudged uniform and ate it. Thinking that our own righteousness can earn God's acceptance is like showing dirt-sprinkled and dirt smeared donut to the Lord as a clean one. The Bible tells us that our righteousness is like a filthy rag.

**2) The person must be authorized by the One who is in charge.** – Our God invites all mankind, not simply the high priest, to enter into the most sacred place in the universe. Anyone who would accept His invitation can enter in. But you cannot enter into the presence of God without His invitation. Our own self-made invitation doesn't work.

This open way into God's presence is, first, "NEW", not the Old Covenant, because it vanished away. Second, it is "LIVING" because our Lord Jesus ever lives to make intercession for us.

When Jesus' flesh was torn on the cross and His life was sacrificed, God the Father tore the veil in the temple and accepted His sacrifice once and for all.

Because of this Divine Invitation through Jesus Christ, we now have boldness to enter into His presence every moment of each day. In case you've thought that you'd like to be like Moses, Joshua, or David who had many encounters with the Lord in their lifetime, but rather limited, you have a better privilege than them, because you have an access to the Lord 24/7.

One more thing, this boldness is a complete contrast to the way the high priest entered the Holy Place under the Old Covenant. He went with fear and trembling, because, if he had neglected even the smallest item prescribed by the law or he sinned against the Lord and did not confess and didn't provide a sacrifice for it, he could expect nothing but death. But the true born-again believers can come to the throne of God with confidence that their sins were cleansed by the blood of the Lamb of God that is Jesus and even being justified and have a right to be the heirs with Jesus for the eternal kingdom.

Now let's get into this very practical three fold invitation.

## **B. FIRST FOLD – DRAW NEAR TO HIM**

*Hebrews 10:22 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.*

The OT priests had to go through the washing at the laver that contained water before they started to perform their daily duties in the tabernacle and the temple. Though we have full access to our Lord, it doesn't mean that we can come to Him with an arrogant attitude.

Some Christians think that they can sin all they want, but at the end of the day they can just ask God to forgive them, all of their sins are water under the bridge. The mindset like that only proves that he or she has no intention to repent truly of one's sins. Long ago, I know of a born-again Christian guy who was going out with a

woman who was also a Christian, but she was still married. They both knew that they were wrong, but their logic was that she was gonna divorce her husband and marry this guy and ask God to forgive them for their sins later. Don't you think that it is a wrong attitude? Yes, it is wrong.

We should see our sins the way the Lord sees, and not making an excuse for them so that we don't repeat them over and over.

*Romans 6:1-2 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?*

We must come to the Lord with a pure heart and a clean conscience. Listen, fellowship with God demands purity in our hearts.

*1 John 1:5b-6 God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.*

### **C. SECOND FOLD – HOLD FAST**

*Hebrews 10:23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.*

Throughout the study of this Book, I told you that the recipients of this letter were the first century Hebrew Christians in Israel. They were living under enormous pressure from all around so that they even were considering forsaking their faith in Christ and going back to Judaism.

The point of the author of this Book is not holding fast on their own strength and determinations, rather the very strength and promises of their Savior Jesus where they could find hope. Hope is one of the main themes of this Book.

Hear me, please. When a follower of Christ has his hope fixed on Christ, and depends on the faithfulness of God, then he will not waver, because his strength is coming from the Lord. Instead of looking back to the glorious day like the Jewish people often did, we should look forward to the coming of the Lord Jesus.

### **D. THIRD FOLD – CONSIDER ONE ANOTHER**

*Hebrews 10:24-25 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*

The first two folds of His invitation have to do with your relationship with the Lord. But this final fold has to do with our relationship with one another. Doesn't this remind you of the conversation between Jesus and a scribe in Mark 12? When the scribe asked Him which the most important commandment of all was. Jesus answered him, "First, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. And the second, you shall love your neighbor as yourself." You cannot say that you love the Lord but don't care about the people around you.

I've met a self-claimed Christian who told me that God and Baal, the false god of the idolatrous kingdoms around the ancient Israel are the same. He also told me that he wouldn't go to church because it is not necessary. His theologies for both arguments were completely wrong. Before the Israelis went into the Promised Land, the Lord God told them to destroy all those pagan kingdoms and their idols. If God

and Baal were the same, it is like He was ordering them to destroy Himself. When that man said that it wasn't necessary to go to church, he ignored these two verses from the Bible. Whenever anyone thinks that he knows better than the Word of God, it only proves that he is a total fool.

The Greek word for 'consider' in v24 is "katanoeo". It is not just casually thinking about someone, rather it is putting that person in higher priority than oneself. This verb naturally takes us to v25 to accomplish "love and good works" for others.

What it says in v25 "*not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together*" means "church". Don't look for a perfect church. If you ever find one, don't join it, because you will ruin it. As long as it is a gathering of humans, there are flaws, problems, and bickering. But if we overlook what we want, but put others before us, we can make a small bite size heaven on earth in the church.

The very important point of these two verses is that the emphasis here is not on what a believer can get from the church, rather on what he or she can contribute to the church. Hey, I didn't write that in your Bible last night while you were sleeping. God wrote it in your Bible. It means that it is one of His marching orders for the believers of Jesus to follow.

In case you are wondering, "How can I make this happen in our church?", I have many answers for you, but I will refrain myself to two things:

### **1) Encourage others**

All of us can use massive doses of genuine encouragement, not flattery. It is helpful to remember the difference between appreciation and affirmation. Appreciation comes and goes because it is usually related to something someone accomplishes. Affirmation goes deeper. It is directed to the person himself or herself. While encouragement would encompass both, the rare one of the two is affirmation.

All of us need encouragement – somebody to believe in us. To reassure and reinforce us. To help us pick up the pieces and go on. To provide us with increased determination in spite of the odds. Encourage someone today!

### **2) Make yourself available**

The Greek word for 'exhorting' in v25 is "parakaleo". Its definition is "to call to one's side, to admonish, to strengthen". One of the best ways to do that is making oneself available physically. You may say, "I am not capable to do a lot of things." Can you pray with someone? Can you give a little bit of your time to someone so that you can earnestly LISTEN to what's going on in that person's life, not just hear?

Have you known a person whom you tried to talk with, but that person was not listening to you even though that person is right next to you or in front of you? You, wives are thinking, "Yeah, my husband." Ladies, don't speak it aloud, now.

Seriously, it is very annoying, isn't it? Don't be that way. Make yourself available. The Lord is looking for someone who is available, not capable. He will provide what you need to whatever God calls you to do.

How can we continue to encourage one another and make ourselves available for others in this world which is going down the drain faster than anyone realizes? By keeping our eyes on the Lord Jesus' return. He is going to come and get us out of

this world. I know what the unbelievers told me. They said, "Yeah, He said that two thousand years ago and He still hasn't come back. It might go for another two thousand years." My answer is, "Yes, it's one day closer. If you don't change your mind, I will be gone with the Lord and you will be left behind."

### ***E. APPLICATIONS***

#### **1) Draw near to the Lord and He will draw near to you.**

Read the Word of God daily; pray daily; do what He tells you to do from the Bible. Live for His glory, not yours.

#### **2) Encourage someone today.**