

ENJOYING A SUMMER SALAD

(Three Servings of “Let Us”)

Hebrews 10:19-25

Introduction:

I wonder how many of you find that schedules and patterns and habits change during the summer months. I know that we do in our home. It seems that meal times aren't as regular, the schedule of activities changes and sometimes it seems as though there is no schedule at all. Vacation time changes things, the long daylight hours change the way we do things, and everything gets turned upside down. Unfortunately this summer schedule—or lack of it—can affect our spiritual life as well. Church attendance, Bible reading, times of prayer and devotions, fellowship and interaction with our brothers and sisters in Christ can all be affected by these changes in schedules.

This morning I would like to draw your attention to a passage of Scripture with some suggestions that I believe can help us with maintaining our relationship with the Lord and with others during the periods when our schedules and activities are being interrupted by other events. Obviously these principles apply not only in summer but to all times in our lives.

Turn to Hebrews 10. The book of Hebrews is a very intense theological book. In the chapters leading up to this one the writer has dealt at length with the issue of Jesus' sacrifice for sin and how it relates to the Jewish sacrifices under the old system. He points out the difference between the ongoing continual sacrifices of the old covenant which could never completely take away sin or remove its stain and the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus which forever removed the penalty of sin, and cleansed the conscience of those who applied his blood to their lives.

The writer makes the comparison very plain in 10:11-18 – read those verses.

Now, in our text this morning, vv. 19-25, the writer builds on that wonderful truth of what we have in Jesus Christ. In these verses we

have what I have referred to as a summer salad—three servings of “let us” (lettuce). Three times the writer exhorts us to action with the phrase, “Let us...”

But it is all built on the foundation of what Jesus has done for us and what we have in Him – read vv. 19-21 and comment on what we have:

- Access to the throne room of heaven – vv. 19-20. He has torn down the curtain, the veil that restricted access into the presence of God – refer to the temple...
- A great high priest – v. 21. Not only do we have access to the presence of God, but we have one who intercedes on our behalf, an advocate to represent us before the throne...

So, since He has done so much, and provided all of this for us, what is it that we are to do? The first serving of “let us” is...

I. “Let Us” Draw Near to God v. 22

Even when things get busy, when schedules get interrupted, when our daily patterns are disrupted, we need to keep in touch with our heavenly Father. The key to doing this is having the right kind of heart. We have in this verse two important aspects of the heart that are important in this matter of drawing near to God.

- A. A true heart in full assurance of faith. The writer has already said that because of Christ's work and sacrifice, we have confidence to enter the presence of God. We need to draw near with a heart of faith, with full assurance. The apostle James speaks of the danger of approaching God with doubts and a double mind, not knowing for sure what we believe.
Certainly this is not about assurance or confidence in our own ability or worthiness to stand in God's presence. Look back again to vv. 19-20. It is only on the basis of Christ's work. But we need to draw near to God with a heart filled with assurance and confidence.
- B. A clean heart – “...with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.”
The psalmist says in Psalm 24 – “Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false

and does not swear deceitfully.” (Psalms 24:3-4 ESV)

Again this is not something we do in and of ourselves. Our hearts are cleansed by the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Look back to Heb. 9:13-14 – our conscience is cleansed by his blood. We can draw near to God in full assurance and with a clean heart and a clear conscience because of what He has done for us.

Well, let’s move on to our next serving...

II. “Let Us” Hold Fast to our Hope

Read v. 23 – “...hold fast the confession of our hope...” or “...hold to the hope we profess...” (NIV) What is the hope we profess?

Hope is a word that is used extensively in the Scripture. Did you know that the word hope is found 18 times in the book of Job? There was a man going through unimaginable trials, yet one of the key lessons in the book is about hope. In the NT there are many references to our hope as believers in Jesus Christ. Let me just mention a few of them.

- Hope in the glory of God – “Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” (Rom. 5:2) Our hope is that one day we will see God in all of His glory and experience that glory for ourselves.
- Hope of eternal righteousness – “For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness.” (Galatians 5:5) Our hope is that one day we will be able to stand before our Lord in perfect righteousness, with none of the sin that besets us in this life.
- Hope of eternal life – “Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God’s elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Savior;” (Titus 1:1-3) Our hope is that one day, when we leave this world and this life, that we will be forever with the Lord – the hope of eternal life in heaven.

In this verse the writer includes a couple of qualifiers to his exhortation to hold fast the confession of our hope:

- A. “Without wavering”; the NIV says, “...hold unswervingly to the hope we profess...” There is no room for doubt. Just as we talked about in drawing near to God in full assurance, we need that same steadfast attitude when it comes our hope in Christ. See Heb. 6:11,
- B. Our hope is centered on One who is faithful. “...for he who promised is faithful. Look at Heb. 6:17-20. Our hope is anchored in the promises of God, who cannot lie, so there is no room and no reason for doubting or wavering in our hope.

Read v. 23 again – that is the second “let us”. There is one more...

III. “Let Us” Stir One Another to Love and Good Works

Read v. 24 – we need to think seriously about our responsibility to one another, and how we can stir or prod each other to doing what is good and right. The word that is used here means to stir up or incite. The AV uses the term provoke. It carries the idea of a prod, something to get people moving, to get them up and doing something.

I think that all of us sometimes need a kick in the pants to get us moving, and that is kind of the thought I see here. Let us think about or consider how we can stir one another on to love and good deeds. The writer makes a couple of suggestions:

- A. Regular meeting together – read v. 25a. There are many today who will say, “But I don’t need the church to live as a Christian. I don’t need to go to services. I can worship God in my living room or in the great outdoors.” But that kind of attitude misses a couple of important elements in the Christian life – fellowship and this idea of stirring up action in one another. In Proverbs 27:7 we read, “Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.” Or, as it says in the NIV, “As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.” How can that sharpening of one another occur if we neglect the gathering together with other saints? Yet this is something which is really easy to fall into, especially in the summer. I am glad to see that you all are not like that. The fact that you are here is testimony

to the fact that this is important to you at all times of the year. We are to stir one another on to love and good works, and we do that by our meeting together and interacting in fellowship with one another.

- B. Encouraging one another. This second suggestion is just an extension of the first one. But it is important to note the idea of encouragement. There is a place for stirring and inciting and prodding others to do what is good and right. But it always needs to be done with the encouragement that you are important to the work of God and what you are doing is important to God.

Conclusion:

So we have three servings of “Let Us” this morning:

1. Let us draw near to God.
 - with a true heart
 - with a clean heart
2. Let us hold fast to the hope we profess
 - without wavering
 - looking to the One who is faithful
3. Let us stir one another on to love and good works
 - by regular meeting together
 - by encouraging one another

As we bring this altogether, there is one more thing I want you to see. We began by looking back at what Jesus has accomplished for us in his sacrifice. The foundation for all of these exhortations is the provision and access that Christ has secured for us.

But now, look at the last phrase of this passage – read it. The goal of all of this is the coming Day of the Lord. The whole purpose for which we draw near and hold fast and stir one another on, is that we might be ready and prepared for that day when we will see Jesus and behold him in all his glory. So in the meantime, throughout the summer and all year long, enjoy this “Let Us” salad – repeat the three points.

Let’s not neglect these things just because of the busyness of the season or the disruption of schedules, patterns and habits. Let’s keep growing and encouraging one another in anticipation of eternity.