

However, when Jesus died on the cross, Mark 15:38 tells us that the curtain in the temple was torn from top to bottom – in other words miraculously torn by God – not a person who would have had to tear the curtain in half from the bottom up. What God was saying was that the way into his presence was now opened up through Christ. The writer of Hebrews makes this point when he says that it is through the body of Christ who suffered – whose body was torn on the cross for you and for me to pay for our sin – that a way has been opened for us into the presence of God.

Having put our faith and trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of our sin, we are forgiven and washed clean of sin. We can draw near to God in a personal relationship with him. Then when life gets difficult and becomes a struggle to live our faith, we can hold on to that faith without wavering, without doubt and hesitation, because God is faithful to be with us until that day when in heaven we will come into his presence for eternity.

Having talked about what God has done for us through Christ and the implications of that for our relationship with Him, verses 24-25 turn to the implications of this for our relationships with one another as we live life in the Christian Community of God's people.

Read Hebrews 10:24-25 ---

1. Resist the temptation to go it _____.

This message is swimming up-stream and against the current of our culture because in our American culture, there is a high value on individualism and individuality.

Individuality as opposed to individualism is a good thing. Each of us is fearfully and wonderfully made, uniquely fashioned by our creator so that no two of us are exactly the same. But, individualism is bad in that it is a fundamentally self-centered way of understanding what it means to be human. It means that the individual is the center of reality and the ultimate standard of value. This devalues the role of the many in favor of the one, and togetherness and community are radically diminished. In our culture today, individualism reigns and it's all about me, not about we. And yet when the Lord saves us, he saves us to be a part of the community as he not only saves him from sin, but from self-centered individualism.

Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 ---

In ancient times, falling in battle with heavy armor made a soldier vulnerable because they couldn't get up and were defenseless. So they needed each other to help one another up. At night as they camped on the battlefield, it got cold in that desert climate. To keep them from hypothermia they would huddle together as they slept. Also, their armor covered their front but not their backs. So by fighting back to back they protected each other from an attack that came from behind. They needed each other as it didn't work in battle to go it alone.

As God's people, we are in a spiritual battle living life in this world. The exhortation of the writer of Ecclesiastes is that same as the writer of Hebrews – Don't Go It Alone! – ⁸ (Stay alert!) *Be careful! Watch out for attacks from the Devil, your great enemy. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for some victim to devour.* 1 Peter 5:8

2. In Compelling Christian Community ----

A. We draw near to God _____.

²² *let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, ...*
Hebrews 10:22

We are to have a personal worship time, but whenever we come together before the Lord to worship him, something profound happens in us as we worship in community.

B. We hold fast to our _____ of faith together.

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

It is much easier to believe in the face of a hostile culture that we live in, when we are part of a community of faith.

C. We _____ one another to live up to our full potential in our relationship with Jesus, and live beyond ourselves.

²⁴ *And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,*
Hebrews 10:24

D. We _____ one another.

²⁵ *And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.*
Hebrews 10:25

The Pathway To Compelling Christian Community

- 1. Come** - You have to come to where the community is gathered.
- 2. Connect** - Begin to share some of your story with others, and learn some of someone else's story.
- 3. Care** - When you connect and share your story and hear someone else's story, caring for one another can begin to happen.
- 4. Commit** - You say, You can count on me! This is not just A church that I attend, but this is MY church, and every Sunday I am in town I am going to be here. I am going to be invested and involved. You can count on me.
- 5. Contribute** - You are no longer just a consumer but you begin to invest your time, your effort, your money -- you begin to serve.
- 6. Conflict** - Instead of running out the door to some other church when conflict happens, work through and resolve the conflict. Doing so will develop real deep community.
- 7. Continue** - Continue in the fellowship as depth in relationships takes time. When you continue in the fellowship, rich things happen.

Today the message is get beyond your fear, get beyond your pride, and take the steps so you can get connected to the church community. Then as a part of this church community, touch our larger community with the love of Jesus. When we do, people outside the church will know us by our love -- they will know us by our Compelling Christian Community -- and the gospel will spread as we will be a healthy missional church.



Missional Marker #6: Compelling Christian Community

Extended Notes for Sunday, October 20th

Introduction: In his book, *11 Indispensable Relationships You Can't Do Without*, Leonard Sweet asks, When you think about the meaning of life, is the meaning of life primarily a journey question or a destination question? For some people the meaning of life is in the journey, while for others it is in the destination.

Then Sweet suggests that while the journey (how we live the Christian life), and the destination (heaven) are both important, the meaning of life is really a relationship question. Are we in a relationship with Jesus and others as we live our life, and when we cross the finish line?

Today, as we continue the message series on Missional Markers of A Biblically Healthy Church and what makes a healthy missional church and a healthy missional Christian, we are focusing on the reality that relationships are a vital part of that. So we are looking at what it means to have Compelling Christian Community.

Read Hebrews 10:19-25 (ESV) ---

In Hebrews 10:19-23, the writer of scripture says that in light of what Christ has done for us on the cross, we can now be in the presence of God. Prior to Jesus coming to earth to take on the consequences of our sin by dying on the cross, God's people were not allowed into the Most Holy Place in the temple where God's presence resided with his people. This was because the blood of animal sacrifices could never completely atone for their sins. So there was a heavy curtain that separated that area from God's people.