

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Date : 29 Oct 2023

Sermon Title : Loving Our Church

Speaker : Rev John Foo

Text : Hebrews 10:24-25

INTRODUCTION

This is the last sermon of the “Loving Our...” series. The Oxford dictionary defines “Church” as “a building used for public Christian worship”, but the focus of the sermon is on the “Church” as “the People of God”, the community of faith that we belong to, and in our case, the community here at Faith Methodist Church.

The letter to the Hebrews was written to a specific local congregation, perhaps a small house church. The congregation was starting to grow weary and were struggling to live out their faith as Christians. They also started to show indifference and apathy. In fact, some have stopped attending church gatherings. The letter was written to exhort them to stay strong and not abandon their faith in Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 10:24-25 - Stir up one another and meeting together

“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 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.” (Hebrews 10:24-25)

The text above highlights 2 things God wants us to do – to stir up one another and meet together.

2 important truths that will help us to love the church when we meet together:

1. We meet together as a church to focus on others.

- We do not come to church to focus on ourselves, learn how to do good works, or how we can love. Instead, we are called to stir (other translations say “motivate” or “provoke”) one another to love and good works. So, while there is no doubt that it benefits us, we come to church to focus on others. This is not limited to the Sunday services. It applies to Life Groups, committees, ministries, accountability groups or any ad hoc fellowship groups we are in. Let us take these opportunities to focus on others and love one another to spur one another to love and good works as we meet together.
- We are also required to call out one another if someone is living a life of sin or in any way that does not honour or glorify God. The faith community is to confront

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that person in love, and to restore that person to stay true to God. Let us not be self-absorbed or ignore the brother or sister who is living in sin. Where else will the person get restored to God if we do not do it?

- The way to express our faith and hope in God is through love and good works. If people curse us, we bless them. If people hurt us, we forgive. That is the Jesus way; that is showing our hope in God. Despite what others do to us, we still love them and respond to evil with good.
- We come here to do life. We do not just join the faith community to focus on ourselves. If, as a church, we all stir one another to good works, we will overflow with love and good works and be appealing not only to those in the church, but those outside of it. It is not self-centred, but others centred. The danger of coming to church to get our own needs met, is to become consumeristic in our attitude and living. We will not be interested in others, and everything panders to our desires.

The moment we settle down in any faith community, we need to get into the life of the church. We cannot be on the fringe - we must be connected. What God is telling us is that if you are a true follower of Christ, you need to be plugged in to the community of faith as followers of Christ, to do life and be involved and interested in the church.

The faith community is not like a secular community where people strive to perform. The problem with us bringing the secular ways of companies into the church is that we start laying down key performance indicators (KPIs). A faith community does not need KPIs. All we need to be concerned about is how much love and good works the church is showing. For those of us serving in ministries, we should never see our service as a transaction. The church is the body of Christ (organic), not an organisation. This differentiates us from other secular companies or other communities.

2. We are a church with a common bond in Christ

Hebrews 10:19-22 mentions what Christ has done for us: *“Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 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.”*

- Jesus Christ is the reason why we gather or meet together. He is the common bond that binds us together.
- It is not just about what Christ has done for us – it is about what He has done in us. If we are detached from what Jesus has done for us, we will never be able to

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identify with Him to allow Him to do His work in us. But if we identify with the life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, we will die to our old selves because He has given us a new life in Him.

When we come together as His people, we cannot come with the mindset that we have something to offer to Christ. Each of us has absolutely nothing to offer to God whatever our position or role may be in His community, but God has everything to offer to us. We share that same common bond only because of that common experience in the life and death of Christ.

CONCLUSION

If we come to church still living our old lives as our old selves, ignoring all others because we want Christ to meet our own needs, we have not experienced the life and death of Jesus in us. We need to experience the life and death of Jesus in our lives so we can share the common bond in Christ, as brothers and sisters in Christ, to love with the love God has given us, so that everyone will be attracted to come to an authentic, loving and accepting community. Let us truly “*consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together.*”

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A. Review Sermon Application

Purpose: Reflect on how you have been embodying God's truth.

- 1a. How successful have you been in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do for the last FaithWalk?
- 1b. What were some challenges you faced and what would you like to celebrate?

2. Read Hebrews 10:19-25 aloud. Share and list down what your Life Group members have done to:
 - a. stir up others to good works by meeting with other members; and
 - b. meet with other brothers and sisters in Christ, including meetings outside of the Life Group, such as in ministry and other fellowship meetings.

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B. Relate Sermon Content

Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.

3. Have you experienced Jesus' life and death in you?
 - a. If the life and death of Jesus is a reality in your life, share how you identify with Christ and what its impact is on your life.
 - b. If not, what is one thing you need to do to truly experience Jesus' life and death to receive what He has done for you and can do in you?

4. Look at the list you have from Question 2. What are some other ways you and your Life Group can do to stir up your fellow members and other church members to love and good works?
 - a. What are some challenges you will face in 4 above? What help and support will you need from your members or leaders (GL, CL, LGPTM/PTM, pastors or church leaders) to do this?
 - b. Commit your concerns to the Lord and ask for His Spirit's power and leading to be upon your group as you seek to grow in love and good works.

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C. Testimonies, Prayers and Action

Purpose: Give glory to God, seek Him and embody His Word.

5. Share how the Lord has moved you from being self-focused (seeking own benefit) to others focused as you do life with the people of God in our church.

OR

Give thanks to God for the common bond we have in the life and death of Jesus Christ that gives us the privilege to be called 'People of God'.

6. With a prayer partner or as a group, bring before God any struggles with self-centeredness, and ask for the help of the Holy Spirit to stay focused on others even in challenging situations so you can stir others up to love and good works.

Pray also for our church, especially those who have not been meeting together by attending Sunday services, Life Group and other meetings and gatherings, to truly experience Jesus' life and death and respond with obedience to His call to love the church.

Optional items:

Suggested worship songs:

1. Cornerstone – Hillsong <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-8YFIKh1fK4>
2. All Hail King Jesus – Bethel https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y_5CxG2R0_g
3. The Jesus Way – Phil Wickham <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ARSGqC9iQb0>

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