

THE COMMANDA OF JESUS - WEEK 9

Gather: Heb. 10:22-25

Though there is no direct command of Christ to gather, the concept of His followers gathering together regularly was certainly part of Christ's plan for us (See Matt. 18: 15-20). From the earliest days of the Church, gathering was a key component of what it meant to be a Christ-follower (Acts 2:42-47). In Heb. 10, the writer of Hebrews reminds us of what we have in Jesus—we have a new life and way of living opened to us through His sacrifice (verses 19-21). The writer goes on to outline for us the purpose for gathering together in verses 22-24. Let's look at some of those purposes:

1. **Gathering draws us nearer to God and others (vs. 22).** When we become Christ-followers, we are given the grace of salvation. We are all also given a special measure of grace that equips us for a unique ministry within the body of Christ. When we fail to gather, we deprive others of the grace given to us and we deprive ourselves of the grace given to others. Conversely, when we do gather, we experience God's grace in new and amazing ways. We get to more fully experience what it means to be the bride of Christ, and we get the blessing of God's grace through the ministry of others. (See. Eph. 4:1-16).
2. **Gathering brings assurance of faith (vs. 22).** One of the chief tools of Satan is doubt, and isolation is the breeding ground for doubt. 1 Peter 5:8 tells us that Satan is a lion seeking someone to devour. We've all seen the nature shows where the lions seek the weak among the herd and then isolate that animal so they can go in for the kill. There's safety in the herd, and there's safety and assurance when we gather with other believers.
3. **Gathering grows our confidence in the faith (vs. 23).** While salvation is an event, sanctification is a process. When we get married, there is a marriage ceremony that seals us as husband and wife. Yet, that ceremony is just the beginning of that relationship. After 22 years of marriage, I can assure you that my understanding of my marriage vows far surpasses the understanding I had the day I made that commitment, and it will continue to grow until the day I die. The same holds true with our faith. Our understanding and confidence in the faith grows each day as we strive to become more like Christ. In gathering we are enlightened, encouraged, admonished, and emboldened as we grow in our love for God and others. The more we experience God through seeing His work in our lives and in the lives of others, the more we know and love Him.
4. **Gathering stirs up our love and encourages us to do good (vs. 24, 25).** In Eph. 2:10, we find a mysterious and wonderful truth: we were created for good works. We were created for an active, demonstrable faith, not a passive one. The difference between these good works and charitable deeds done by the lost is that that the work we are called to do is rooted in the love of Jesus Christ that has been poured into our hearts. The purpose of gathering is to stir up this love, to remind us of its power and God's faithfulness so that we are encouraged and equipped to transform the world around us.

Questions:

1. Has there ever been a time when you were isolated from other believers? How did that isolation impact your faith?
2. The purposes of gathering listed above is not exhaustive. What are some other advantages/purposes to gathering?
3. How does gathering stir us up to love and good works? Is your faith an active faith?