



SERMON REFLECTION QUESTIONS for the week of July 19, 2020

“Fully Alive and Together”

Rev. Dr. Steve Miller

Theme/concept

A person who is fully alive in Christ creates life-giving community. In our Vision Frame we say, “We engage in name-knowing, need-knowing fellowship in which we value, encourage, challenge and care for each other.” Our culture tends to idolize the heroic individual, and treats “religion” as a private, personal matter. But God said, “It is not good for [a person] to be alone.” In Hebrews, we see that we are all redeemed by God’s grace in Jesus Christ. He called us together because we are stronger together in the synergy of community. This message explores ways we can be hosts who actively and intentionally engage with others in worship, study, fellowship, and service.

Application

God’s redemptive purpose in Christ calls to be creators of life-giving Christian community in all our interactions.

Icebreaker (for groups)

Has there been a time when someone walked alongside you to encourage you through a tough situation? Or perhaps a time when you were the one giving the encouragement? How did you sense the value of walking together?

Reflections on the sermon

What point from the sermon resonated most with you?

Scripture

Hebrews 10:19-25 (New Living Translation)

And so, dear brothers and sisters, we can boldly enter heaven’s Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus. ²⁰ By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place. ²¹ And since we have a great High Priest who rules over God’s house, ²² let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ’s blood to make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water.

²³ Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise. ²⁴ Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. 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.

1 Peter 1:3-5

All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation, ⁴ and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay. ⁵ And through your faith, God is protecting you by his power until you receive this salvation, which is ready to be revealed on the last day for all to see.

James 2:17

So you see, faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless.

Luke 4:16

When he came to the village of Nazareth, his boyhood home, he went as usual to the synagogue on the Sabbath and stood up to read the Scriptures.

Breaking down the Scripture

1. What is the "Most Holy Place" referenced in Hebrews 10:19-20?
2. What do you believe the author of Hebrews meant by "the blood of Jesus" in Hebrews 10:19, and why does that enable us to enter heaven's Most Holy Place?
3. How does the ability of believers to communicate directly with God differ radically from the experience of the Jews before the temple curtain was torn (see Matthew 27:50-51)?
4. Who is the great High Priest referred to in Hebrews 10:21? What is meant by "God's house?"
5. What is meant by a "sincere heart" in Hebrews 10:22? What might cause you to have anything other than a sincere heart?

6. Those originally listening to Hebrews 10:22 would have been reminded of the Old Testament practice of consecrating priests by washing them with water and sprinkling them with the blood of a ram (Exodus 29:4, 21). How does the cleansing by the blood of Christ differ? What do you believe is meant by the reference in Hebrews 10:22 to our bodies having been washed with pure water?

7. How does the author of Hebrews draw together the three virtues of faith, hope and love in Hebrews 10:22-25?

Going deeper

1. The term “hold tightly” in Hebrews 10:23 implies that something is trying to pull us from our hope in Christ. Why would Jewish believers be encouraged to hold tightly to the hope of Christ? What are some of the pressures that seek to pull us away today?

2. You may have heard some say that they do not need to attend church or be part of a church to believe. What does Hebrews 10:25 say about the importance of meeting together? How are you finding ways to be part of the fellowship of Christ in this time of closures and quarantines?

3. How do the repeated commands in Scripture to love one another and perform good deeds differ from the exhortation of Hebrews 10:24? Do you see a connection between verse 24 and verse 25?

4. Are you finding ways to encourage other believers? What steps can you take this week to encourage or motivate someone else to love and serve others? What might that look like, and what might result, if we each took more responsibility to motivate others?

5. What connections do you see between today's Bible passages and Trinity's six "Missional Marks" of a disciple who is fully alive in Christ?
 - Passionately loves God
 - Hungers for God's word
 - Demonstrates Christ-like character
 - Creates life-giving community
 - Pursues God's call
 - Joyfully reveals the Good News

Closing prayer

Dear Lord,

Thank you that you loved us so much that you gave your life so that we might be in your presence and have fellowship with you. Please increase our capacity to love and care for each other so that we can more passionately share your love and motivate others to do the same.