

(19) 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,

- (22) 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.
- (23) Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.
- (24) And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,
- (25) 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.

Think on these things:

- 1) In the old covenant (testament), NO ONE but the Jewish High Priest could enter the Most Holy Place, and that only one time per year on the Day of Atonement. According to v. 19, on what basis can ANY believer now enter Heaven’s Holy Place confidently, without fear of punishment or death? Consider the message of Ephesians 3:11-12.

**The shed blood of Jesus on the Cross is our “right of entry” into heaven’s Holy Place.**

- 2) Continuing from Q1, what is different between the “new and living” heavenly curtain and the earthly curtain (v. 20)?

**The earthly curtain was a thick, colorful cloth material. Jesus’ body (flesh) serves as the heavenly curtain.**

- 3) Jesus is called here the “great” high priest over the house of God. Consulting Matthew 23:25-28, how does the greatness of Jesus compare to the Jewish Priests and Pharisees?

**Though appearing clean outwardly to most people, the Pharisees were inwardly corrupt: full of greediness, self-indulgence, hypocrisy and lawlessness. Jesus called them white-washed tombs filled with dead men’s bones, ceremonially clean but inwardly unclean (hypocrites).**

- 4) In the NIV Bible version, the five bullet points from vs. 22-25 are all commands, “Let us....” We obey these commands because we have a new-found confidence. Four of them are actions to take, and one of them is an action NOT to take. State simply what each of these commands are:

- 1) **Draw near to God with a true, genuine heart, filled with faith!**
- 2) **Hold fast to your Christian testimony of hope and faith, without wavering or doubting.**
- 3) **Exhort one another to do good works for others motivated by God’s compassionate love.**
- 4) Let us not...**neglect or forsake the weekly practice of community worship in God’s church.**
- 5) **Encourage one another in the Christian walk whenever we come together.**

- 5) For the first command, how can we be cleansed from a guilty conscience (v. 22 --- also consider Titus 3:4-7). What two parts of our bodies are linked together in “feeling guilty,” and, since this is not a physical matter, what does each part represent in a human being?

How cleansed? **We must allow God to cleanse and wash us. It speaks of both Water and the Word. Titus adds that washing and renewal is the work of the Holy Spirit, whom the Father pours out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ.**

Guiltiness links? **Hebrews v. 22 links our consciences (minds) to our hearts. In a human, the mind represents reason/rationale, and the heart emotions. Our emotions commonly overrule our reason and we end up being driven by passions (wants and desires).**

- 6) Why are we to hold onto our hope in God unswervingly and unwaveringly (v. 23)?

**Our hopes are anchored in Jesus --- not ourselves --- and He will faithfully keep His promises.**

- 7) What should we be “considering” in our believer relationships in terms of spurring one another on in Christian faith (v. 24)? Can you share if you do this for anyone in particular or if someone is doing it for you?

**We are to consider how to motivate our Christian family and friends to put faith into action, the compassionate “agape” love of God translated into good deeds done to benefit others. The 2<sup>nd</sup> question is to acknowledge who we seek to encourage and who encourages us!**

- 8) It is interesting that way back in the earliest days of church history, there were issues with some believers not coming to church in regular worship with the Christian body. It was their “habit” NOT to go to church. List a few reasons you’ve heard why some folks no longer come to church each week? What is any believer’s obligation to the body and to God (consider Exodus 20:8-11; Nehemiah 8:1-2, 8-12; Psalm 92:1-8, 12-15; Ephesians 4:1-13 and 5:19-21; Philippians 2:1-4; and Hebrews 3:12-14)?

Excuses? **‘Sunday’s my sleep-in day.’ ‘Youth sports day for our children.’ ‘Family events are a higher priority.’ ‘I want to watch sports or do something else.’ ‘I’m too old for Sunday School.’ ‘I don’t get anything from the worship services.’ ‘I don’t like...who I see there when I go.’ ‘I prefer to commune with nature on my own.’ ‘You need faith to be saved, not church.’ Etc...**

Obligations? **Exodus – God commands setting aside one day of rest as a sabbath (worship) day per week. Nehemiah – Hearing God’s Word and having it explained clearly is important. Psalms – It is good to praise and exalt the Lord together, who makes the righteous flourish. Ephesians – Every believer has a contribution to make to the Body, and music of gratitude inspires. Philippians – Embrace Jesus’ attitude to accept others as important, too, and work toward unity. Hebrews – Encourage people!**

- 9) What compelling reason is provided in v. 25 for encouraging one another? What is significant about the “Day of the Lord” as it relates to people of the world?

**Judgment Day, the Day of the Lord, is coming. It is the end of chances for anyone to be saved.**

NOTE (Reflection) – Everything about today’s lesson relates to believers acting CONFIDENTLY in their faith. Does confidence exude from you, bubbling over into a positive and encouraging contribution to the Church body where you worship? Those who choose to isolate are easy prey to the devil’s schemes!

People and situations I want to pray for this week: