



# The Christian Life Institute

Friday, April 3

Thank you for joining us today, as we continue our series, at the Christian Life Institute, presented through 15-minute encouraging messages three times per week, Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 12:45 Central time, on practical ways to grow forward in Christ in uncertainty, unpredictability, and upheaval.

This message is entitled: Perseverance and Community

I was talking with a friend yesterday about feeling strange on Wednesday. I shared that there was a little uneasiness or unrest and she shared she too felt a little off on Wednesday, April 1. We decided that perhaps it pertained to the extension of the shelter-in order in Dallas which is now through at the time I prepared this message, April 30<sup>th</sup>, but as of an hour ago now May 20<sup>th</sup> and for many it is perhaps longer as the impact of the virus is more significant in different areas. My friend shared that it was like someone had moved the finish line. We thought perhaps this was a ‘momentary light affliction,’ as we shared on Wednesday but now it is longer; yet spiritually it is still ‘a momentary light affliction.’ What came to both of us was the continued reminder for the need for perseverance and the gathering (now virtually) together as members of His body. She shared, “the New Testament has a lot to say on perseverance.” I responded, “no, really” (yes, sarcastically), to which she said “you have been in isolation too long” – we both laughed. I apologized for the sarcasm, she smiled and we both said this is the message for Friday. So, let us turn first to Hebrews 10:24-25, where we read:

“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, <sup>25</sup> 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”

The author of Hebrews in the midst of this chapter is focused on the importance of living by faith – Christ-centered faith and that the focus on laws and rituals – legalistic tendencies and habits is not the Way (capital W), but Christ is the Way and starts in verse 19 of this chapter with a call to perseverance in the faith. In Hebrews 10:19-23 we read:

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, <sup>20</sup> by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, <sup>21</sup> and since we have a great priest over the house of God, <sup>22</sup> 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. <sup>23</sup> Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.

As we continue to be faced with uncertainty, unpredictability, and upheaval and as we, perhaps, struggle with extensions, continued isolation, overuse of technology, finding boundaries and balance in work and life, maintaining meaningful relationships, and authentically processing a myriad of feelings, it is essential that we truly digest the importance of perseverance and gathering – prioritizing time for the body – His body. As we shared in the Friday message, we have a choice as to how we will choose to live during these unfamiliar times.

Today, our encouragement is based on the recognition, we read in verse 19, that we have a confidence that comes through Christ – He is the new and living Way that allows us to draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith. What do we need, we need?

- The confidence we have in Christ
- Drawing near
- An open, soft, vulnerable heart (there is a blog post on the Christian Life Institute Blog page, entitled, Distancing or Summoning the Courage – posted yesterday)
- Full assurance of faith

As we shared on Wednesday, as humans it is not uncommon or unusual to be discouraged – which is why we need the confidence that we have in Christ. It is also common when we are discouraged, fearful, apprehensive to pull away as we need to draw near. We also know that as we allow negative emotions and thoughts to take root that a heart can become hard. Our choosing not to dwell or ruminate on these real and very human emotions is a critical part of our ability to maintain an open heart so that we can draw near and be the receptive, surrendered vessels Christ desires us to be so He can continue to grow us forward in Him. We do this through the faith we have in Him. Whatever we are experiencing in the diversity of our situations we have a commonality – the

ability to look past what is seen (the circumstances, the externalities, as we refer to them therapeutically and spiritually) to what is not seen – to walk by faith.

Let us turn again to Hebrews 10:24-25. In a commentary on Hebrews, by John Calvin, we read “let us consider” indicates a desire for intentional and carefully considered action, the object of that action is “one another” referring to others in the body, members of the Christian community for the stated goal of “love” that produces an outward expression of that love – “good works.” The author of Hebrews previously connected love and good works in Hebrew 6: 10 and love is an internal spiritual disposition that naturally ends up expressing itself in an outward intangible way.

The challenge for us during these times, when we are connected in different ways, and technology can quickly become more tedious and draining than energizing it is essential that we do not forsake the assembling together. Calvin, in his commentary, adds, *But exhorting* one another; by which he intimates that all the godly ought by all means possible to exert themselves in the work of gathering together the Church on every side; for we are called by the Lord on this condition, that everyone should afterwards strive to lead others to the truth, to restore the wandering to the right way, to extend a helping hand to the fallen, to win over those who are without<sup>[1]</sup>

So then Let us persevere and not forsake assembling (virtually). Let us as the Scripture reminds us stir up (exhort, encourage, move) one another to love. Love is the tie that binds us together and through His love we can spur each other to the good works, referenced in these verses, which are not legalistic, check the box good works but the using of His gifts which He has poured into His to minister to one another during these times and in all times which is not only poured forth through the urgency of the one-on-one technology-driven gathering but not neglecting the meeting together, collectively, as His body so as to continue to build community and not fall prey to withdrawal and isolation, as the author of Hebrews refers to when he writes, “as is the habit of some.”

The author of Hebrews is emphasizing the need for encouragement and encouragement comes as we gather together to grow forward together. In verses 35-36 we read, “therefore do not throw away your confidence, which

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<sup>[1]</sup> John Calvin and John Owen, [\*Commentary on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews\*](#) (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 241.

has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.” In the NIV, verse 36 reads “you need to persevere.” Perseverance has many Biblical synonyms:

- Patience
- Steadfastness
- Endurance
- Constancy

Thayer’s Greek Lexicon states perseverance is “the characteristic of a man who is unswerving from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings. According to Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology:

In the New Testament, the main sense of the Greek work, ‘hypomone’ is perseverance or endurance. There are two main strands of teaching about perseverance in the New Testament: (1) the indicative or doctrinal-type statements, which basically describe the nature and the presence of this virtue in the lives of believers; and (2) the imperative or hortatory statements, stressing the need for or the results of perseverance.

For us, we need both. The doctrinal truth of the importance of perseverance as a part of who we are in Christ and the need for the result of this perseverance which are staying the course, encouraging one another, gathering together as the fruit of our perseverance.

In this season, and life which is a journey of seasons, we as Christ-followers, have opportunities to, through His strength and His power reflect Him to a broken and hurting world – so, let us persevere and come together, even when technology weary.

Let us agree together to:

“Walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7)

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Thank you for joining us for Live Streaming on YouTube. Please join us again on Monday, April 6th at 12:45 CST. Please check out our other videos on YouTube and please subscribe to us on YouTube as we need 100 subscribers for our own YouTube channel.

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