

Jesus is Better 9

Hebrews 10 v 19 - 39.

We finally return to the writers principle aim - to encourage his readers not to slip back but to persevere. I am sure this is why the book of Hebrews is so appropriate for the times we are in right now. In the remainder of this chapter (10) we see the run-up to the climax of the whole letter. The old ways are gone - we have "Access to the Father". (Ephesians 2) Jesus has made a way - and we can enter "confidently".

Just a brief aside:- 'Confidently' - verse 19, does not mean that we can be strident or superior (The whole point of Ephesians 2) but that the sacrifice of Jesus is wholly efficacious - (successful in producing the intended result). Our confidence is NOT based on our worthiness but upon Jesus' sacrifice. He did it all, does it all and will do it all! Never forget it cost God everything to achieve our salvation - something that the Old Testament foreshadows in Genesis 22 v 1 - 19. Have a little read.

"There must be a beginning of any great matter, but the continuing unto the end until it be thoroughly finished yields the true glory." Francis Drake.

This time the writers' call to persevere is a much more 'emotional' appeal to his readers. There is also an element of nostalgia for those who were known to him and who were endeared to him. This is so relevant to the situation we find ourselves in with the coronavirus pandemic. Maybe we have drifted into a more lax attitude to the significance of 'church' under 'normal' circumstances. (There has been a lot written recently about irregular attendance at formal church services. Many have considered themselves to be 'regular' and committed who actually attend once a fortnight or even worse, once a month!)

Under lockdown it is really interesting to see there is evidence that this trend seems to be reversing. Our own statistics seem to show that more people have engaged with Alive Christian Ministries Sunday service than ever before. Other churches report a significant upsurge in interest from spouses and extended families of their church members. This is amazing - especially in the light of verse 25. I find it fascinating that the immediate context of this desire to continue meeting together is not just for the individual concerned but for the good of all the believers. Although we may not be able to physically meet under the current circumstances we can meet together and encourage one another by so doing. The 'buddy' systems set up by so many churches and our own continual contact and support systems are wonderful - although a 'virtual' hug seems somehow not to be quite the same as a real hug!

Back to our text! In addition to the earlier thoughts about losing a Sabbath rest we are told that it is a "Fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God". Verse 31 (Compare Luke 12 v 5.) There follows a nostalgic look back to the good times they had together. Verse 32 and following. This is the sentiment that finds expression in Francis Drake's prayer. This is the most emotional moment in the whole of Hebrews - you can almost sense the passion and the pain of the author. Remember the good times. Hang in there. He who is coming will come. But if you have shrunk back the consequences do not bear thinking about.

"But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved" - verse 39. There follow a few examples from the Old Testament of those who were of a like mind and dispensation. What a list. We turn to Chapter 11 next week! You might like to read ahead.

The appeal not to shrink back is full of concern for what might be lost. This second warning is a passionate appeal to remember what an amazing salvation Jesus won for us. Son of God, not an angel. Brother to the believer. King and great High Priest as well as Sacrificial Lamb. No-one could be better than that. Hold on. Anchor yourself (Hebrews 6 v 19) again in Him and keep in touch - with Him and with us at Alive Christian Ministries. He loves us more than we could ever know and we need each other! Therefore encourage one another.

Send someone an email or a text. Pick up the phone and give someone a call. I think there used to be an old BT advertisement that said "Remember, you're only a phone call away". True - more than ever now!