

Exod 05-01-16a

This is Sunday, the 16th of January, 2005. We continue our studies this morning in the book of Exodus. Let's take a moment as we approach the time that we spend together in God's Word to go to the Lord in prayer.

Father, we thank you for another opportunity to gather, to nourish our souls on the manna of your Word. We thank you for the ministry of the Holy Spirit that makes that possible. We thank you most of all for the Lord Jesus Christ, for his work on our behalf, his continuing work of intercession on our behalf, and the bright hope of his return to take us to be with himself.

We thank you that you have assigned us a place in your plan, that our lives have a meaning beyond the ordinary, beyond the immediate, beyond the details and the circumstances of this life. We thank you that we have not been left as orphans, but we have the Comforter who ministers your Word to our hearts. We pray this morning as we study and seek to learn from your Word that we will find those truths that are necessary for each one of us to learn, to grow, to conform to the example of the Lord Jesus Christ and to be prepared for every good work.

We thank you for the country in which we live. We thank you for our President and his unashamed stand for his faith. We pray that you will protect and preserve him, that you will comfort and encourage and strengthen him as he is at the helm of our country and makes very difficult decisions and resists the pressures of those who do not understand, who do not appreciate the necessities and the values that guide his thinking that are based on your Word.

We pray for those who are in harm's way both at home and abroad. We ask your blessing on each one for those believers who are unable to attend a worship service and are unable to find fresh teaching from your Word that you will remind them of what they have learned that God the Holy Spirit will bring to their mind those relevant and applicable truths that will comfort and encourage them and strengthen them for the task at hand. And for all of us we ask Lord that you will enable us both individually and collectively to reflect the glory of our Savior the Lord Jesus Christ.

We pray it in his name. Amen. Our script reading this morning is from the book of Hebrews chapter 10.

Hebrews chapter 10. Of course the book of Hebrews is a reflection on many of the truths that we are studying in the book of Exodus in terms of the experience of God's people in the wilderness. It is an application of those truths in the chapters 5 through 10.

You have an explication of the priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ and its meaning, its interpretation, the relevance if you will of the Old Testament model and the New Testament fulfillment in the Lord Jesus and in the church to you and me. And that is the section of the book that we are embarked on in our Friday night studies. We have not yet reached chapter 10 but here in chapter 10 it talks about the shadow of good things to come that exists in the law.

Exodus is the second book of the law. It is talking about the book of Exodus. It is talking about the things that we are learning as far as the construction and the operation of the tabernacle.

Now, the tabernacle existed about 3400 years ago. That's a long, long time. I can't think of very many things that were going on 3400 years ago that really have an impact on us at the present time.

The great empires, the kings, the technologies, the trade, the commerce, the culture, the thinking, the literature, whatever it may be, outside of the Bible, what do we have from 3400 years ago that makes a difference when we walk out of here and go about our lives? But this chapter in Hebrews reminds us that the content that God communicated to Moses and through him to the people of Israel about how to worship and how to approach God is important. It is vital. So when we find chapter 10 before us, looking at the Levitical priesthood beginning in verse 11, he says, This is every Levitical priest that has ever operated.

For that matter, every family priest that has ever operated. You go back in the patriarchal period. You look at Job.

And these sacrifices were required and they were effectual in terms of obedience to God and fulfillment of their purpose, but they did not take away sins. It doesn't mean they were meaningless or that they were a waste of time, but they did not take away sins. But this man, the Lord Jesus, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till his enemies are made his footstool.

For by one offering he has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us, for after he had said before, this is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts and in their minds I will write them. Then he adds, their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.

Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin. The point in this paragraph is twofold. There was a continuing problem of sin, despite the animal sacrifices in the patriarchal and Levitical systems.

But he applies this quote from Jeremiah 31-34, the new covenant to Israel. This is not us. He does not say I will put my laws into their hearts and I will write them in their minds to the church.

This is not talking about the church. This is talking about Israel. His point is, there is coming a time in the restoration of Israel, i.e. the millennial kingdom, when, in verse 17, their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.

Now how can he predict that if he is already not remembering their sins and lawless deeds back in the days of the Levites, back in the days of the monarchy, back in the days of the prophets, then why would he speak of another day? This is similar to the earlier argument in Hebrews. If God had given them rest, why does he yet speak of another day, saying, today, if you will hear

his voice, do not harden your hearts. Enter into his rest.

There is a rest that remains for the people of God. So his earlier argument in Hebrews is, the Israelites did not enter into rest. A rest remains and it is important.

Indeed, it is mandated that we enter into that rest. Now he makes a similar argument. He says, if sins had been taken care of in the old system, then why would he say, when I restore them and write my law in their hearts, their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.

The means of fulfilling this new covenant to Israel is the finished work of Christ. God could not make this promise to them and fulfill it until a permanent solution for sin is made. All of that leads up to the therefore in verse 19.

Therefore, just like earlier in the book of Hebrews, he said, therefore, since a promise remains of entering into his rest, pay attention, be cautious, be careful, be diligent, lest you come short of it. Same thing here. Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holy of Holies by the blood of Jesus.

That is what this holiest is. In Hebrew, the Holy of Holies is the holiest. Having boldness to enter the Holy of Holies by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he consecrated for us through the veil, that is, his flesh.

And having a high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another and so much the more as you see the day approaching.

It ought to make a difference that Christ is our great high priest. There is a command to approach God on the basis of his work. This is a daily opportunity.

Let us draw near. There is a way to draw near. Draw near with a heart of truth, a true heart.

How do you get a true heart? You say, alright, it's like Dorothy and the characters going in there to see the Wizard of Oz. You've got to know how to get there. You've got to know how to get your request granted.

Well, that's a crude human story about how to try to get the thing that you want. There are rules for approaching God. The whole Levitical system is how to approach God in the right way lest ye die.

It seems in the modern day we take a much more casual approach, doesn't it? You look at a lot of church services. You look at a lot of ways that people worship and conduct their personal spiritual life. There doesn't seem to be a sense of awe or reverence or the idea that your life

could be on the line if you approach incorrectly.

Without necessarily developing a fear for our lives, we ought to have the same level of reverence for God that was generated by the knowledge that failing to pay attention to instructions could cost you your life in the Levitical system. That ought to communicate something to us. Therefore, brethren, having boldness.

We can be bold. Why? Because we know the right way to approach. It's not because any old approach will do.

We can be bold because it doesn't matter how you come in. It doesn't matter if you're sanctified. It doesn't matter if you're purified.

It doesn't matter if you have the right kind of fire. It doesn't matter if you compound the incense out of the right ingredients. It doesn't matter if the sacrifice has a blemish or not.

Is that why we have boldness? Why do we have boldness to go before God's throne? It isn't because God has removed the restrictions and anything goes. It is because the Lord Jesus has opened a new and living way which He consecrated. The word new here, *kino*, means new.

But this is *enkinos*. It's a compound word and it means inaugurated. That word is this word.

Enkinos is used two times in the book of Hebrews. Once earlier when it says even when the first covenant was ratified it was not without blood. The word ratified is *enkinos*, inaugurated.

It can mean renewed in secular Greek. But this is not a renewal. This is an inauguration.

And most of the time even in secular Greek means to start something up, to begin a new thing. And it has emphasis on the inception. A new and living way which He consecrated for us through the veil that is His flesh.

Therefore, having boldness, let's run into the throne of grace and find mercy and grace to help in time of need. Is that what it says? Because there's a new way. And all the rules, what does it say? We have a high priest over the house of God.

Let us draw near and here are the conditions. The new conditions for the new and living way with a true heart. Condition number one, true heart.

How do you get a true heart? *Kardia*, word for heart. *Aletheia*, the word for truth. Where is truth? What's Pilate's famous question? What is truth? What is truth? If you believe the people in Christian education, all truth is God's truth.

So if you know a lot of geometry, I guess you have a heart full of truth and you can approach God. If you're an expert in zoology, you can run in there before the throne. It's nonsense.

What is truth? God's truth is biblical truth. God's truth is divine truth. God's truth is promises,

principles and doctrines from His word.

God is the author of truth. God is truth. And the truth that we bring to Him is going to pertain to Him, be about Him, and His plan and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

So if you're coming to God, how do we come to God, by the way? The whole idea is prayer, right? It's the approach in prayer. And that's our subject this morning is prayer. Interestingly, it is a companion piece to our study in Hebrews, which has also hit the subject of prayer.

I didn't plan it this way, but here's where we are. We're looking at the golden altar of incense and the incense that is burned upon it, and it is all about prayer. So our scripture reading this morning reminds us that it's not just a matter of lighting a fire and watching the smoke go upward.

Remember in Job, it says, Man is born to trouble, as surely as sparks fly upward. Well, you can burn incense or you can burn an old tire. Both of them create heat and smoke, but one of them smells fragrant and the other smells awful.

How do we approach? How do we offer that incense that is acceptable and sweet smelling to God? Step number one, condition number one, a heart of truth. You have to know what you're talking about. Do not run in there like a toddler with a leaky diaper.

You need to follow the protocol for entering the throne room. There is a dress. If the Queen of England were to send you an engraved invitation and a plane ticket and said, come see me at Buckingham Palace next week and you're packing your suitcase, what are you going to pack in there to go see the Queen? Jeans and a t-shirt you painted in last week? Probably not.

Why? The Queen is just an old lady. I see old ladies at Home Depot all the time. I wear jeans and a paint spotted t-shirt down there.

Why don't I wear the same thing when I go to this old lady that sits over there in England? Well, it's her office, isn't it? She's the Queen. It's a formal occasion. There are certain formalities and certain requirements that go with that lest you embarrass yourself and render your visit fruitless.

How far do you think I would get if I was going in for an audience? Do you think the butlers and the guards and all the rest of them there would let me in dressed like that? They wouldn't. They'd probably tackle me and dress me by force before they'd let me go in that way. Well, you think about the Lord God of the universe.

How does Elizabeth, the Queen of England, rate to the God of the universe? Who's more important? Who is deserving of more respect and more preparation in anticipation of a visit or an audience? How casual are we when we go to God? Because we have boldness. Our boldness needs to be based on knowledge and on the work of Christ, not on naivete, not on ignorance and stupidity, which is what most of the modern-day forms of worship and approach to God

reflect. Condition number one, a true heart, a heart of truth.

Know what you're doing. Know what constitutes prayer. Know the basis of your prayer.

If I was going to go in and make a request to the Queen to restore my long-lost ancestor, maybe I had some hull ancestor over there in England that had a piece of property and it was wrongfully taken away and I want to make a request to the Queen that it be restored and given back to the family. Well, am I just going to come in and say, Hi there, Queenie baby. How about giving me back some of this land? And she says, Why should I? And I say, well, I don't know.

I just want it. I really, really want it back. You can't believe how bad I want that property back.

It's valuable and there's a lot of things I can do with it. And I really have a big interest in getting it back. And I'm going to really enjoy it a lot if I get it.

So please, Queenie, give me this land. Well, A, I'm disrespectful. B, I've established no foundation for my request, have I? I have no case in English law to say here is chapter and verse in the law that says that this was wrongfully taken.

This is a grievance that needs to be addressed. Here is the basis. Here is why it's in your interest in upholding the laws of the land, which is your job as Queen, part of it, to grant this request.

I don't know if the Queen even has any ability to grant requests of that nature, but you get my drift. If you're going to make a request of somebody, you need to give a basis and show why it is right and good and proper that they should grant the request, not just, I really want it. If you knew how bad I wanted this, well, you'd fall all over yourself.

You'd jump off the throne and call the people and get this request answered. What do we do when we go to God? Do we just go and say, Oh, God, please, please, please, I really, really want it. A heart of truth.

A true heart is a heart that's got a case. A heart that can make a case based on the law of God, based on the truth of God. A heart of truth, characterized by the truth, thinking on the basis of the truth, making requests founded on the truth.

Truth with a capital T, the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in bodily form. This is prayed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I'm making this request in His name, on His behalf, in His interest, for His benefit, to reflect His glory.

Can you say that about the things you bring before God in prayer? I am saying this because Jesus would want this. This reflects the values and the character and the plan and purpose of the Lord Jesus Christ. Is that true or not? If we can't make that case, we don't have a heart of truth.

Secondly, in full assurance of faith. How can you go to God and say, Lord, I really wish Uncle Fred would get over his gallstones and get out of the hospital? Please heal Uncle Fred. Oh Lord,

I really like Uncle Fred.

Please heal him. He's in the hospital. He's got gallstones.

Oh Lord, please, please, please heal Uncle Fred. How do you relate the concept of full assurance of faith to that? You have to start thinking. I'm not saying that it's a bad thing to pray for Uncle Fred.

I'm saying, make an application of these truths to that request. If I really do want God to heal Uncle Fred, I need to back it up with something. Am I confident that God is going to heal Uncle Fred? No.

It's flip a coin, 50-50. I don't know if God wants to take Uncle Fred home or take him out or run him out under the sin of death. At this point, we don't know anything about Fred, do we? He's in the hospital.

Maybe he needs gallstones. God's got a purpose in it, right? Or he wouldn't be there. I've got to start thinking in terms of the Word of God.

If I'm going to have full assurance of faith when I approach God, I need to have confidence that what I'm basing my case on, that that truth is firm. So, how about I pray a little bit differently? How about I say, Lord, bless Uncle Fred through this time of testing and this time of discomfort. Reflect your glory in his life.

If I know a little bit about him, let's say Uncle Fred's a strong believer and is trying to live on the narrow way and go through the straight gate. Lots of things I can pray now, can't I? Comfort him, encourage him, strengthen him, remind him of the doctrines and the principles and the promises that he has learned. Reflect the glory of Christ in his life.

May others see Christ in him. May he be a light shining in a dark place, a lamp up on a lampstand. May people see the hope that is in him and ask why it's there.

Work your plan and your purpose through him. Make him a blessing to others. Bless him through others.

Make his illness an occasion for the function of spiritual gifts in the body of Christ that many are given exercise and practice and profit thereby. I can pray endlessly if Uncle Fred's a strong believer and if I know enough about him to know what God can do in his life. And then, all of those things I just said, can I have confidence that I'm praying in the will of God? If I say, Lord, please heal Uncle Fred, I don't know if God wants to heal Uncle Fred or not.

Strong believer or no. It may be Uncle Fred's dying grace that he's going to go in there and he's going to have complications and not come out. And I say, please heal Uncle Fred.

How can I have full assurance of faith on that request? I don't know about you, but I can't. I'm not going to tell God what to do. There's a great Old Testament example of a king that was on

his death's bed and prayed to stick around and God granted the request and he wished he hadn't.

He wished he hadn't. His remaining time on earth was a misery. And he should have gone when it was his time to go.

And God said, look, you better let me pick the timing because you don't know what I've got in mind. You don't know what's going on. You may live to see things you wished you hadn't seen.

Full assurance of faith. One flows out of the other. If you come to God with a true heart and you pray on that basis, you will have full assurance of faith because you can quote chapter and verse.

God says, well, why should I make Uncle Fred's life reflect the glory of Jesus? How many scriptures do you want me to quote? That's our purpose. That's our reason for being. Growing grace in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

That's what Fred has done. He's supposed to have a hope that's visible so that people will ask a reason for that hope. Be ready always to give an answer.

And you know, Uncle Fred is ready because he knows his Bible and he knows his God and he knows his Savior and he's loaded for bearers. Somebody should ask him for the hope that's in him. You can pray confidently.

You can have full assurance. Not just moderate assurance. Not just I think it's likely.

Full assurance of faith. Why? Because you're approaching with a true heart. The things that you tell God, the things that you request from God are sitting on a firm foundation of God's Word.

I am supremely confident that if I pray for you and I ask God to enliven and activate the doctrine that is in your soul, the truth that is in your soul, so that you are able to perceive the good, the better, and the best. I have utter confidence that God will honor that prayer. If you pray for me, that God will give me time and give me opportunity to study His Word and to have well-prepared Bible lessons, you can have full assurance that that is a part of the plan and purpose of God.

You know that that's one of the reasons He has left me here breathing good air is to study and teach the Word of God. And if you're praying that I do that well, you can pray that with a true heart and full assurance of faith, can't you? And I could give you endless examples where that's the case. That's the nature of the approach.

God says don't come unless you can come boldly with a true heart and full assurance of faith. Don't pray prayers that you don't have a full assurance about. Go in the Word of God and get assurance and then go to God.

Put on your best clothes, your clean clothes, your pressed and starched clothes, then go in for

your royal audience. Don't go in there still buttoning your shirt and trying to figure out, well, now, I've got the law book here under my arm, Queen Elizabeth. You wait just a second.

I'll try to find a law that will back up my request. Be ready. Be prepared.

Go to God with a heart full of truth, fully assured. What's the third condition? Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience. I find this interesting because sprinkling takes care of an existing condition.

He doesn't say get rid of your evil conscience. He says sprinkle it. What did the sprinkling of blood do in the ritual system of the law? You come in there and you're human.

You're a Levite. You're just as conceived in iniquity and born in sin as any other Israelite, but you've got to serve as a priest, so what do they do? Sprinkle you with blood. The altar gets crudded up.

Sprinkle it with blood. Things get defiled. You sprinkle it with blood.

The defilement is an existing case. You sprinkle it and it's cleansed. And you may have to get sprinkled again.

There's not necessarily a once and for all sprinkling. Sprinkling is a thing that sanctifies. Well, we have an evil conscience and we can't get rid of it, but we can get it sprinkled.

We can cleanse it. We can sanctify it. We can put it in abeyance until the next time it rears its ugly head.

So what does this mean? Our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience. What is the influence of the conscience on the heart? Conscience is where our knowledge of right and wrong resides, correct? If we come before God and we're bringing something in there that we think is right, there is a way that seemeth right to a man, but the outcome of it, the ends thereof, are the ways of death. This is a thing to keep our pride in check and reinforce our humility is to realize that our little internal compass doesn't always find the right.

Sometimes we believe in our heart of hearts. We believe with all of our heart and soul that we are in the right, we are correct, we are on solid ground, and we're not. And it's a very scary thing to realize that and to try to find another way to cope with life and to say, you know, I can't always trust my gut that tells me I'm right.

Maybe I'm not. We've got a busted compass. We have an evil conscience.

And it needs rehabilitation. It needs sanctification. Specifically, it doesn't say wash your evil conscience.

Washing would be washing with water by the word. It says sprinkled. That means we have to go to God and acknowledge our sin and our sinfulness.

And it is an act of God through the Holy Spirit to correct our screwed up compass, our bad conscience. Sprinkling of the blood of Christ means you've got to go straight to the source. You have to go to God and say, my heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.

I can't understand it. I can't fix it. It's not a matter of just washing some dirt off the binnacle and now I can see clearly where magnetic north is.

I need my compass adjusted, repaired by God directly. That's the sprinkling of the blood of Christ. Acknowledgement of my sin.

1 John 1.9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience. You get the idea that the heart is big and one part of it or residing within it is this evil conscience.

It doesn't say sprinkle your heart because your heart is evil. It says sprinkle your heart because your conscience is evil. Our hearts are sprinkled because of this component that is maladjusted, that's out of whack, that's evil.

Secondly, our bodies washed with pure water. Now, what is the relationship metaphorically or symbolically between the heart that's on the inside and the body that's on the outside? I mean, literally, what are you going to do? People say, I take the Bible literally. Are you going to crack your chest open and sprinkle your heart? With what? This is in the realm of metaphor.

The heart and the conscience, that's the motivation, the thinking process, right? The body is the outward manifestation of your thoughts and your decisions and your priorities and your values and your goals, right? This is the outworking. This is your actions. This is what you do.

Your body reflects your thinking. If I'm sitting there staring off into space, my eyes and my demeanor reflect that I'm bored or I'm distracted or I'm disinterested, right? If I am running around all elbows and knees flailing trying to get a bunch of stuff done and I am doing it with a bad attitude, it reflects, it shows in my body. Or if I'm doing it with a good attitude and with a smile and a song in my heart, it shows in my demeanor.

It shows in my body. In short, we work from the inside out. We start with our thinking.

Our heart needs to be sprinkled from an evil conscience, specifically as we are approaching God. Secondly, our body needs to be washed with pure water. What does this mean? If I'm coming to God and I'm acknowledging a sin, I'm acknowledging an error, I need to have stopped that sin and that error.

There are people who believe so weirdly in God's grace, so incorrectly in God's grace, that they will commit a sin and while they're still sinning, they'll confess it. Or they'll think about the sin and they'll say, well, I'm going to do this and then I'll confess it because God's grace is free. 1 John 1.9 If I confess my sins, I'll be cleansed.

So I'm going to attack my girlfriend on this date tonight in an immoral way and then I'll just confess it after and everything will be fine. Or I've really got a bad attitude. Oh God, forgive me for this bad attitude.

I'm really mad at my brother for something. And I can't think of the last time I was mad at Matthew, but I'm sure when we were little I was mad at him. So I'm mad at my brother.

Oh Lord, forgive me for that. But I'm still mad at him. Oh Lord, forgive me now.

But I'm still mad at him. You cannot continue the thing that you had to sprinkle your heart from in your bodily actions. You've got to stop it.

If you're engaged in a sin, let's say you get into a bunch of people and every time you're with them you gossip and you tear down other people and information leaks out that shouldn't go. I cannot tell you the strange information to which I have become privy because people, I know things that I would never imagine myself knowing about people that I should not know. And I would be horrified if information at a similar level about me was known to them or to anybody.

You can't believe the things that wives sometimes spill about their husbands. And I'm talking about in the workplace. I'm not talking about anybody here.

I'm talking about in my life out in the world. You can be down there screwing something onto the back of someone's computer and two women are sitting there. It's like you're the janitor or something.

It's like in the royal household the butlers and the maids are just invisible. And people will say the most outrageous things. I know people, I'll just give you one fairly minor example.

Well, I won't even give you that example. You can't believe the level of intimate detail. Why? Because people gossip.

Because it's juicy and people want to tell it. And it should not be known. If you hear something like that it ought to stop with you.

And all that information is stopping with me and I'm not going to tell you. It's horrible. Well, you can't go to God and say, Lord, I confess the sin of gossip and the sin of breaching of confidence and breaching the privacy and the dignity that attaches to another person and then go right off 15 minutes later and go spill all of that to somebody else.

Wash your body with pure water. Stop the defiling practice. If you have defiled yourself with that, stop it.

Don't just say, well, I confess it. Well, now I'm doing it again. Now I confess it.

Well, I'm doing it again. Now I confess it. Wash the body with pure water.

Wash off the dirt and stay clean. If you're going to go into God, don't bother going in if you're perpetuating sin. One example, if you bear a grudge against your brother, God says, don't be coming to me asking for forgiveness if you have not forgiven your brother.

You can claim 1 John 1.9. You can claim the whole book of 1 John, all you want. And if you are bearing a grudge, your sins are not forgiven. And people who view 1 John as a salvation book have a difficult time explaining how your salvation depends on whether or not you forgive other people.

This is talking about our daily operation as believers. If you do not forgive your brother, you yourself are not forgiven. It is a principle of the Word of God.

And this is operational forgiveness. If you do not wash your brother's feet, you cannot come into God's presence because you yourself are not washed. Your body is not washed with pure water.

Stop the damage. Stop the sin. Cleanse your hands, you sinners.

And purify your hearts, you defiled. That's the principle of God's Word. Draw near, number one, a heart of truth.

Number two, full assurance of faith. Number three, heart sprinkled from an evil conscience. Get rid of the mental attitude sin.

Four, body washed with pure water. Get rid of the outworking of that bad attitude, whatever it may be. Sin of the tongue, overt sin.

Other mental attitude sins that have clustered around that initial evil conscience sin. Verse 23, Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. We just saw this up in chapter 4 and verse 14 of Hebrews in our Friday night study.

Seeing then that we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. Same thing here. Let us hold fast our confession for He who promised is faithful.

He who promised is faithful is parallel to having a great high priest having passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God. Let us hold fast. We hold fast, why? Because of Christ.

We hold fast because He who promised is faithful. Because we have a great high priest who partakes of our nature as well as the divine. That is our vertical responsibility, specifically in the area of prayer.

That's how we do it. You want to know how to pray? You want to know how to pray effectively? You want to know how to pray without embarrassing yourself and wasting your time? That's it right there. Verses 19 through 23.

Verse 24 and 25 talks about the horizontal. And I like that analogy that it's like the cross of Christ. You have the vertical and you have the horizontal.

The vertical is longer and taller. And most important, the vertical holds up the horizontal. If you don't have the vertical piece, you don't have a horizontal piece up there where it's supposed to be.

So you concentrate on getting your life and your thinking and your approach to God squared away first. Then you can look in the horizontal. You can look around at others.

And let us consider one another. You know, there's not a third piece here. In geometry, a lot of times you start out and you just have the X and the Y axis.

You have the rise and the run or whatever you want to call it. And it isn't until you get into three dimensions and spatial geometry that you get the third axis, the Z axis that goes through. But in most of geometry, you just have X and Y. And you can do all kinds of things.

You can plot curves and do calculus and find the area under the curve and do parabolas and hyperbolas and all of that in your X and Y. In this presentation, you have here's what to do toward God. Here's what to do toward one another. And in both cases, me, myself, and I are subservient.

It doesn't say, and you yourself think well of yourself and baby your inner child or whatever. It doesn't have any addressing of myself. I address myself in the context of going to God.

I sprinkle my heart from an evil conscience. I wash my body with pure water in the context of going to God. And now consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another so much the more as you see the day approaching.

There's not a big emphasis on the first person pronoun here, is there? There's an emphasis on going to God. There's an emphasis on stirring up one another to love and good works. But it doesn't say, and you yourself sit there and have peace and contemplate your spiritual navel.

This is an outward looking exhortation, isn't it? Look to God. Approach Him. After you've done that, look around at one another and do not abandon your brethren.

Do not forsake the assembling of ourselves together as is the manner of some. It is possible to cut yourself off from fellowship with believers. And God says, don't do it.

Do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together. This is not just for worship. There are people who go to church every Sunday, but they are not assembling because all they do is show up, sit in the pew, and get up and leave.

Assembling means interacting. It means fellowship. It means profitable conversation.

Because you cannot exhort one another and encourage one another. You cannot stir up love and good works if all you do is show up and bug out. This means when the pastor is not talking, when the hymns are not being sung, there ought to be interaction.

This is why I appreciate our fellowship because we have time before, we have time in the middle, and we have time at the end where everybody gets to talk to everybody. Everybody gets to share ideas and thoughts and have conversation, whether it's biblical or topical, on other things that take place in each of our lives. That is the assembling of ourselves together.

That is the encouragement to love and good works. It's not sitting here together listening to me. That's not the assembly.

The assembly is you talking to each other, all of us talking to each other together. It's an encouragement. It is an up-building process.

And God says, don't miss it. Don't forsake it. Some have to their loss.

Exhort one another so much the more as you see the day approaching. Why is that exhortation important? Why is our fellowship and our converse, our talking with each other and seeing how each other is doing? What are you thinking about? What am I thinking about? Why is that important? Because the day is approaching. What day? The day of reckoning, the day of judgment, the day of fulfillment, the day of completion.

This life will be over and we won't be doing that for those reasons anymore. We won't have a conscience that has to get our hearts sprinkled. We won't be having bodies that need to be washed with pure water.

We're going to enter a whole new phase of God's plan and this is our training phase. This is our opportunity. This is our chance to learn and resist pressure, wrestle against principalities and powers and we do it as a team.

We do it as a fellowship. We do it as an organic body of Christ that has many parts that do different things and we need to interact. Have you ever gone to sleep and your hand went numb? And when you wake up and the alarm clock is going off and you want to turn it off but you can't find your arm.

Your brain is saying, hit the button and the arm doesn't go. Well, the body of Christ in one sense, if you want to think of it this way, goes numb if you lose contact with the other parts of it. What is the eye if it's got no body to hold it up and move it around and point it? What is the hand if the rest of the body doesn't send blood and nerve signals to it so that it can do its functions? We have to exist together.

We are designed for fellowship. We are designed as a multi-component body of Christ. Well, that's our scripture reading.

That is an application of the truths that we learn about Christ in this tabernacle. I hope we don't lose sight of it as we look at the details of construction. This is the living, breathing application of it day by day by day.

When we come back from the break, we'll take a look at prayer life as it's reflected in the altar of incense.