
Words of Truth

Hebrews 10:25

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In our previous study we discussed having unwavering faith and being considerate of each other to provoke one another for good (Hebrews 10:23-24). In this study we will consider the following passage of Scripture: *“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching”* (Hebrews 10:25).

The term translated forsaking [ἐγκαταλείπω] means: “To leave behind in some place, i.e. (in a good sense) let remain over, or (in a bad sense) to desert: — forsake, leave...” (Strong’s #1459). The term translated “assembling” [ἐπισυναγωγή] means: “a complete collection; especially a Christian meeting (for worship): — assembling (gathering) together” (Strong’s # 1997).

Let me first remind us that the local church does not just assemble for worship. There are various authorized reasons for the saints to come together. If a problem among the saints has reached a point wherein collective disciplinary action is necessary among the saints, the brethren must assemble together (Matthew 18:15-17). The saints may assemble together to hear of the work of the Lord (Acts 14:26-27). The congregation is to assemble for purposes of teaching and/or discussing spiritual matters (Acts 15:1-35). So, as we proceed in discussing forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, it is of great importance that we do not just think we are talking about a worship assembly.

In context, the instruction not to forsake assembling with brethren is about our work in aiding each other spiritually. Before we get into that, let’s discuss why assembling was so significant for these first century saints. The key is the phrase, “so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” Jesus foretold of a time, in the first century, when judgment was going to come upon the city of Jerusalem. He spoke of signs to indicate when it was coming. He said it would be in their generation. It was a coming of the Lord, as in a judgment day such as we’ve seen several times in the Old Testament (Isaiah 13:1-14:23, Isaiah 34:1-8, and Jeremiah 46:1-10), that was observable (cf. Romans 13:12, James 5:8, and I Peter 4:7). At that time, even the temple was going to be destroyed (Matthew 23:37-24:34 and Mark 13:1-30). In Luke’s account we read: *“And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the*

countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (Luke 21:20-24).

Saints in the first century assembled together in one place (I Corinthians 14:23). In the time of coming peril that was clearly evident before their eyes, there were some that had been forsaking the assembling of the saints. That was the wrong action (Jude 1:17-19). In those troubling days, brethren needed to be in the company of one another. We do not know how often they assembled. We know it would have at least been upon the first day of the week (Acts 20:7 and I Corinthians 16:1-2). Regardless of the frequency, the instruction was to come together rather than to be apart.

Earlier in this epistle, these saints were told this: *“But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin”* (Hebrews 3:13). The word translated “exhort” in that earlier instruction is the same word that appears here in Hebrews 10:25. The Greek word in Hebrews 3:13 and Hebrews 10:25 is “παρακαλέω”. It means: “to call near, i.e. invite, invoke (by imploration, hortation or consolation): — beseech, call for, (be of good) comfort, desire, (give) exhort(-ation), intreat, pray. To call to one's side, call for, summon; to address, speak to, (call to, call upon), which may be done in the way of exhortation, entreaty, comfort, instruction, etc.; to admonish, exhort; to beg, entreat, beseech; to strive to appease by entreaty to console, to encourage and strengthen by consolation, to comfort; to receive consolation, be comforted to encourage, strengthen; exhorting and comforting and encouraging; to instruct, teach” (Strong's # 3870).

Most focus on the assembling of the saints being about worship to God. The instructions in Hebrews 10:25 helps us to understand that assembling together is about the saints too. Whether in the first century in times of extreme conditions or today in times of lesser peril, brethren need each other. Paul wrote: *“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love”* (Ephesians 4:15-16). Like the human body, every member is necessary for the proper working of the local body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:12-27).

For us, we learn from Hebrews 10:25 not to forsake assembling with our brethren. It is so important for us to be together, at least once per week. Even the Lord's Supper includes instruction to wait for one another before partaking (I Corinthians 11:17-34). So, let us not ever fail to assemble together as some of those in the first century did!