

Consider Jesus: Our New and Living Way (Part 1) Hebrews 10:5-39

In Hebrews 10 the write continues to assert that although the Old Covenant was imperfect in many ways, the New Covenant is perfect in every way. So much so, when the Messiah "comes into the world" (10:5), "He takes away the first (covenant) in order to establish the second." (10:9) As a consequence of His full and perfect salvation a "new and living way" (10:20) has been made possible that provides everything needed for life as God intended it to be. Jesus Christ alone has done what tens of thousands of priests and animal sacrifices could not - provide a "perfect sacrifice by a perfect person (priest) to perfect some very imperfect people." (See 10:14; The Message). He did "everything that needed to be done for everyone" to be fully and perfectly saved!

For those of us daring to believe that Jesus Christ alone is enough, we are encouraged to bear witness to these saving realities through three specific invitations (each beginning with the "Let us..." of grace):

- 1) "Let us draw near..." (10:22) Let us honor God's "open door policy" with a holy and humble boldness by making use of our immediate (without "go-betweens") and personal access in order to cultivate intimacy with such a gracious God. We can draw near in the full "assurance of faith" that our hearts are no longer "wicked and deceitful" (Jer 17:9) but rather are now "sincere" and true... "sprinkled clean" and made new. Draw near... and never depart!
- 2) "Let us hold fast..." (10:23) Let us put all confidence, all "hope", in the character of God and His faithfulness. When we begin to "waver" we remember the Unwavering One, connect the promises of God to the Promiser Who now resides in us, and transfer the "source" from ourselves to Christ in us. Our confidence of glorifying God in every contingency is always our New and Living Way!
- 3) "Let us consider others..." (10:24-25) Let us become so confident that God has us (and our needs) so fully covered, we can freely look our for others. As we "practice the presence of God" (Let us draw near...) and rest in His promises ("Let us hold fast...") we are set free to "practice the presence of people" - personal and concretized expressions of loving others into being. To enter into the "New and Living Way" is to enter into life for others. We are urged to creatively stimulate others into loving as well - perhaps like a mother "smiles" her baby into smiling! Our role in the Body of Christ is to look out for one another, to bring the best out of one another, to build up one another... just as Christ - our New and Living Way - has done for us.

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Greetings

The witness of joy is all over the Christmas story. How could it not be? Joy is the witness of God's Spirit upon the poured out life.

Take the witness of the Old Testament prophets. Try Isaiah 9:2-7 on for size - no less that three times in this one prophecy of the "child" to come do we find references to gladness and joy. How about the witness of Mary? After the initial bewilderment, she sang a song of gladness (Lk 1:46-55) replete with exaltation and rejoicing. Certainly the witness of the angels was full of "good news of great joy" (Lk 2:10) as they proclaimed the peace to come through this child. Don't forget the shepherds, "glorifying and praising God" (Lk 2:20) as some of the very first witnesses to the joy-filled gift of God's son. Last but not least, the Magi, full of knowledge and following the brightest of stars, bow low in the presence of True Knowledge and Unquenchable Light and "rejoiced exceedingly with great joy." (Matt 2:10)

How shall we then live at a time when "Tis the season to be jolly?" Will we work hard to play at a game of superficial happiness? Or, will we dare to release "Joy to the world" Himself into our every day... for the Lord has, indeed, come to us?

Have a joyful holiday!

CALENDAR

DECEMBER

2,9,16,23 CCF
4 Ocala Study
11 Alachua Study

FEBRUARY 2019

8-10 FLORIDA RETREAT (*see info below)
22-24 San Antonio, TX (210-478-0618)

MARCH

3-6 Anderson, SC (864-226-1789)



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"Not I, But Christ"

February 8 - 10, 2019 - Gainesville, Florida

\$50 deposit (per person) due by January 14, 2019

\$325 per Couple (meals, room & retreat fee)

\$275 - per person, single room (meals, room & retreat fee)

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