“The Worshiper’s Invitation”
Hebrews 10:19-25

There’s a story by Isak Dinesen called Babette's Feast, about a strict, dour, and joyless community in Denmark. Babette works as a cook for two elderly sisters who have no idea that she once was a chef to nobility back in her native France. Her dream is to return to her beloved home city of Paris, so every year she buys a lottery ticket in hopes of winning enough money to return. And every night her austere employers demand that she cook the same dreary meal: boiled fish and potatoes, because, they say, Jesus commanded, "Take no thought of food and drink."

One day the unbelievable happens: Babette wins the lottery! The prize is 10,000 francs, a small fortune. And because the anniversary of the founding of the community is approaching, Babette asks if she might prepare a French dinner with all the trimmings for the entire village.

At first the townspeople refuse: "No, it would be sin to indulge in such rich food." But Babette begs them, and finally they relent, "As a favor to you, we will allow you to serve us this French dinner." But the people secretly vow not to enjoy the feast and instead to occupy their minds with spiritual things, believing God will not blame them for eating this sinful meal as long as they do not enjoy it.

Babette begins her preparations. Caravans of exotic food arrive in the village, along with cages of quail, and other exquisite items for the feast.

Finally the big day comes, and the village gathers. The first course is a special soup. The diners force it down without enjoyment. But although they usually eat in silence, conversation begins to take off. Then comes the second course, and the atmosphere changes. Someone smiles. Someone else giggles. An arm comes up and drapes over a shoulder. Someone is heard to say, "After all, did not the Lord Jesus say, love one another?" By the time the main entrée of quail arrives, those austere, pleasure-fearing people are giggling and laughing and feasting and praising God for their many years together. What once was a group of joyless Pharisees is transformed into a loving
community through the gift of a meal. One of the two sisters goes into the kitchen to thank Babette, saying, "Oh, how we will miss you when you return to Paris!" And Babette replies, "I will not be returning to Paris, because I have no money. I spent it all on the feast."

The story of Babette’s Feast is an illustration of grace, a gift that is given to unworthy recipients by someone who pays a great price at a great cost to themselves.

God has invited us to sit down at the table of grace, and it has been made possible by His Son, Jesus Christ.

This is what the writer of Hebrews says in these verses.

For several chapters, he has explained how all the Old Testament law and system of approaching God has been fulfilled by Christ. He has been writing to Jewish believers who were having a hard time letting go of their former ways of Judaism and simply trusting in the finished work of Jesus Christ.

These chapters in Hebrews shows us how:

• Jesus is a better priest (chapter 8)
• Jesus is a better tabernacle (chapter 9)
• Jesus is a better sacrifice (chapter 10)

This passage in the book of Hebrews marks a transition from the doctrinal to the practical. Verses 19-25 are a pivotal point in the overall message of the book as the writer of Hebrews takes us from doctrine to duty. Having explained our resources in Christ, the writer of Hebrews explains our responsibility in Christ.

What we believe always impacts how we behave.

Beginning in verse 19, the writer of Hebrews tells us that a wonderful invitation has been extended to us as worshipers. No longer do we come bringing a sacrifice, for the sacrifice has already been made. No longer do we seek out a priest, for we already
have a faithful Priest over the household of faith. No longer do we stop at the door of the sanctuary, but we enter in with boldness on the basis of what Jesus has secured for us. Someone has referred to this passage as the “Let Us Patch” of the New Testament. No less than three times does the writer of Hebrews use the phrase “let us” which refers to our personal and corporate responsibilities as the blood-bought, redeemed, worshiping community.

These three phrases are used to describe the invitation that is now ours as worshipers of God.

1. **Let us draw near with CONFIDENCE (10:19-22)**

“Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that He opened for us through the curtain, that is, through His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 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.”

The CALL to worship

Let us draw near! In many ways, we have largely lost the weight and import of these words. This is huge because up until this point, worship was always at a distance.

Drawing near was impossible because of the barriers.

The CONFIDENCE to worship

The call to worship God is accompanied by confidence to worship God. These verses remind believers of the source of their confidence in the faith. Our confidence to enter the holy places is in the blood of Jesus. The shadows of the old covenant have passed, and the substance of the new has come.

“**Confidence**” - means boldness and plainness of speech

Though we approach confidently, we do not approach arrogantly. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus has opened up a new and living way for us.
The CONTRAST of worship

Think of the contrast in these verses. In Christ, we have a new and living way as opposed to the old and dead way of constant animal sacrifices that had to be repeated over and over again.

“New” - this is the only time this particular word is used in the New Testament; literally means freshly slaughtered

We have confidence to draw near to God because of our freshly slaughtered sacrifice. But this sacrifice is not dead; this sacrifice is living!

We draw near to God by a new and living way.

Jesus describes this “new and living way” of worship in John 4. There, we read of an encounter He had with a woman near the well of Samaria. This is a foundational passage that deals with worship. Jesus broke all cultural barriers by engaging the Samaritan woman in simple conversation. 

John 4:21-24 - “Jesus said to her, Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship Him. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

By the time of Christ, the place of worship had become more important than the Person who is to be worshiped. Jesus says that the Father is seeking those who will worship Him in spirit and in truth, not in dead ritual and pretense.

Confidence in worship does not come from place or style, but only in the finished work of Jesus. Those who worship come by means of a new and living way and worship God in spirit and in truth.
The CLOSENESS of worship

Notice that our closeness is described in very picturesque language in these verses. The new and living way that has been opened for us is through the “veil” of His flesh.

The draws on the tabernacle language from Exodus.

The COUNSELOR of worship

The Bible says that we now have a great priest over the house of God. This simply means that we have now passed through the veil into the holy of holies, and Jesus is our legal representative who gives us this access.

He is our access to God as well as our advocate with God.

The CERTAINTY of worship

We come to Him on the basis of faith. We draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith. The word “true” used in the verse literally means sincere or genuine. The worshiper can be certain that he or she has access to God through faith in Christ.

The CLEANLINESS of worship

Our hearts have been sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies have been washed with pure water. The imagery is taken from the Old Testament. Exodus 29 speaks of sprinkling with blood and washing with water that was used in the ordination of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood. It is symbolic of forgiveness and consecration.

2. Let us hold fast our CONFESSION (10:23)

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.”

Because we worship with confidence, we can hold fast our confession. Faith in Jesus Christ results in our hope in Jesus Christ.
“Hope” - *not a term of uncertainty, but of certainty; refers to that which is both settled and steadfast*

Our hope is sure because God’s promise is faithful.

**Hebrews 6:18-20** - “We who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the holy place behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf.”

Our hope in Christ is what motivates us to move forward in the faith with courage that does not waver.

“Wavering” - *literally refers to leaning this way or that*

Far too many within the church are wavering back and forth in their confession of faith. Though they may say that they trust Christ, the constant wavering in their life reveals very little hope in Christ. They’re all over the map in their relationship with God.

God doesn’t want us to be all over the map. He wants us to hold fast to our confession without wavering. We ought to be confident and committed followers of Christ.

These believers in the book of Hebrews were being tempted to waver because of persecution. Most of our wavering in the church today is because of prosperity.

3. **Let us meet together in CONSIDERATION (10:24-25)**

“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 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 triad of Christian virtue is summed up in faith, hope, and love. Notice the progression in these verses. Faith results in hope, and hope results in love.

True worship involves love and consideration of others.

“Brothers” - *word is ‘adelphos’ and means of the same womb*
These verses apply to individuals, but they also apply to the family of faith as a whole. The first two responsibilities are largely personal, while the last applies to the whole body of believers. You can draw near with confidence personally, and you can hold fast to your confession personally. However, you can’t stir up love and good deeds by yourself. It requires your participation in community and fellowship with others.

Love for the body of Christ is the supernatural result of faith and hope. Or, to say it another way, love expressed is the evidence of faith and hope possessed. The church family is the proving ground of our faith and hope. It is impossible to stir up love and good works while in isolation.

This shows us that worship is not only personal, but it is also corporate. In verses 24-25, the writer of Hebrews emphasizes how true worship results in brotherly love for the body of Christ.

Love’s EMBRACE

“And let us consider…”

“Consider” - word means to fully observe; to pay careful attention to someone else

Corporate worship means that we consider one another in love and high esteem. True worshipers think of others before they think of themselves. We need to get back to a commitment to Christ and to His church. Our commitment must not be based on what we can get, but on what we can give.

The basis of our fellowship is not style, but substance. It is not built around our preference, but upon our deference.

“Deferece” - the condition of submitting; implies a yielding out of respect or reverence

This is the attitude of Christ. It is what Paul describes as the mind of Christ that he mentions in Philippians:

Philippians 2:3-11 - “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to
his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should now, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

The language we ought to speak in the church is the language of deference rather than preference. Instead of saying, “I prefer,” worshipers ought to say, “I defer.” Such an attitude encapsulates what Hebrews 10:24-25 says.

Love’s ENCOURAGEMENT

“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works…”

My participation in the body of Christ is not so much how I can benefit myself but how I can bless others. It is within the family of faith that we learn how to be humble and selfless.

We are to meet together regularly and consistently for the purpose of stirring one another up to love and good works.

“Stir up” - *idea of having a holy fit; word is paroxysm which describes a sudden expression of emotion*

The idea is that corporate worship is provocative in the sense that we are disturbed to our core and motivated to greater love and holiness.

Love’s EXPRESSION

“…*not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some*”
You can’t get any clearer than this verse right here. We ought to be faithful and consistent in our participation in corporate worship with the family of faith. The church is to gather together regularly and consistently. Our gathering involves:

- praying together
- singing together
- reading the Word of God together
- listening to instruction together
- giving together

**A.W. Tozer** - “Has it ever occurred to you that one hundred pianos all tuned to the same fork are automatically tuned to each other? They are of one accord by being tuned, not to each other, but to another standard to which each one must individually bow. So one hundred worshipers met together, each one looking away to Christ, are in heart nearer to each other than they could possibly be, were they to become ‘unity’ conscious and turn their eyes away from God to strive for closer fellowship.”

**Love’s EXHORTATION**

“…but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”

**Encouraging** - *means to exhort or encourage from the Scriptures*

The high water mark of our gathering is the Word of God. We don’t simply gather for social reasons. We gather to worship and hear God’s Word and to motivate one another to greater love and obedience.

The truths contained in these verses ought to be more sought after the closer we get to the Day of Jesus’ return for His church. We are closer now than we have ever been.

God has invited you and me to sit down at His table of grace where we can feast upon His Word and enjoy fellowship with Him and other members of the faith family. It has all
been made possible by the death and resurrection of Jesus who has opened up a new and living way of worship for those who come to God through faith in Him.