Four Cheers For The Church
(A Homecoming Challenge)
Hebrews 10:19-25

Read Scripture Text: Hebrews 10:19-25

INTRODUCTION

Churches aren’t the only ones to celebrate HOMECOMINGS.

- Every fall, High Schools all across the country celebrate a Homecoming with the annual homecoming dance and the crowning of the homecoming King and Queen.

- Likewise, Colleges and Universities all across the country, celebrate Homecoming with a big football game against a favorite arch rival.

- Military Troops returning from war celebrate a big homecoming with their family at the military base where they are stationed.

One thing each of those HOMECOMINGS have in common is there’s lots of CHEERING!

- There’s CHEERING for the High School Homecoming King and Queen.

- There’s CHEERING for the Home Team at the annual Homecoming Football Game.

- And there’s CHEERING for the TROOPS returning home from war.
Church Homecomings are somewhat different.

At Church homecomings we don’t crown a homecoming King and Queen or have a big dance or cheer on a football team.

But if ever there was a time when THE LORD’S CHURCH…. GOD’S PEOPLE need to be “CHEERED ON” it is now!

As the time for the LORD’S RETURN draws closer with each and every passing day, this is the time for the LORD’S CHURCH to WAKE UP, SHAPE UP and STAND UP …….not SIT DOWN, LOOK DOWN and LET DOWN.

****************

While we are not certain who wrote the Book of Hebrews, most scholars believe it was written by the Apostle Paul. And in our scripture text this morning, Paul gives us four admonitions to “CHEER US ON” in our faith.

Each of these four cheers begins with the words: “Let us.”

The First Cheer: “Let Us Draw Near to God!” (v.22)

vs. 22 “Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.”
1. A couple of Wednesday nights ago in our Bible Study on Revelation I demonstrated the difference between “near and far” in a way I believe got the point across.

Many of you were NOT with us that evening so I'll demonstrate it for you this morning.

ILLUSTRATION: If you have ever watched the children’s show Sesame Street, no doubt you are familiar with the puppet named Grover.

In one episode GROVER was teaching children the the difference between “NEAR and FAR.” I shall now demonstrate.

(Step to back of platform then trot to the front and say in a “Grover voice”......”Ne-e-e-e-arrrrr.” Then step back and say, “Farrrrrrrrrr.” (repeat a couple of times)

2. Paul admonishes us to “Draw ne-e-e-e-arrrrr” to God.

Do you understand what Jesus Christ did for you and me at Calvary? Jesus opened up the way for you and me to come into the very presence of Almighty God.

He took our sins upon Himself. He bore the guilt, and the shame and the judgment for our sins. He has set us free from the life of sin.

3. And now we can commune with God and fellowship with God and come into His very presence through prayer any time day or night.
4. And God’s presence in our lives gives us the strength and the power to overcome all our problems, all of our trials and all our temptations that attack us.

   Therefore “Let us draw near to God.”

5. Let us draw near to God HOW? Paul tells us “with a sincere heart.” That means we are not to draw near to God with any hypocrisy or insincerity or dishonesty whatsoever.

   God is looking for “true believers” not “make-believers.” He is looking for “contenders of the faith” not “pretenders of the faith.”

6. Let us draw near to GOD with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith!

   Too many who profess to be Christians have “divided loyalties.” They are not “full assured” of just whose side they are on: The Lord’s side or the Devil’s side.

   ILLUSTRATION: Reminds me of the cowardly Civil War Soldier who didn’t know if he wanted to be with the Union Army or Confederate Army. So he put on a Union Army Coat and wore Confederate Army pants and a Confederate Cap. And guess what, he wound up getting shot by both sides.

7. Brothers and sisters are you “fully assured of your faith?” Are you with the LORD or against Him? If you are truly with the LORD then “Draw near to Him with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith!”

==============

Now Paul gives us a SECOND CHEER.......
The Second Cheer: Let Us Hold Unswervingly to The Hope We Profess (v. 23)

Verse 23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful.

1. That word “unswervingly” is an unusual and interesting word. I doubt that this word is even in our vocabulary and you might never hear this word again until you hear another sermon on this passage.

   Unswervingly simply means “stop wavering” “stop changing directions.

   ILLUSTRATION: Have you ever got behind someone on the highway that was obviously under the influence of alcohol or was drowsy and about to fall asleep at the wheel?

   How were they driving? They were driving “swervingly.” They were “swerving back and forth, veering to the left and then to the right.”

2. A true follower of Christ will not swerve or waver in his or her faith.

   -A true follower of Christ will not “swerve” off the straight and narrow road and go back to a life of sin.

   -A true follower of Christ will not allow himself to get so wrapped up in worldly pleasures and treasures that he no longer has room for God in his life.
A true follower of Christ will not allow bad circumstances or difficult trials to shake his faith so much that he turns his back on God.

3. **Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess!**
   WHY? Because He who promised is faithful!

   God has always kept His word……He still keeps His word…..and He will continue to keep His Word!
   He who promised is FAITHFUL!

   And God will be faithful to give us eternal life and our eternal reward when our journey of faith here on earth has been finished.

   But that journey of faith isn’t over yet! So for now **LET US HOLD UNSWERVINGLY TO THE HOPE WE PROFESS!**

Church......**Let Us Draw Near to God!**

Church......**Let Us Hold Unswervingly to The Hope We Profess!**

Now Paul gives us a third cheer.............
The Third Cheer: Let Us Spur One Another On To Love and Good Deeds V.24

1. We have all seen images of cowboys wearing spurs on the heel of their boots. Any time the cowboy wanted his horse to go faster he would kick those spurs into the sides of the horses belly.

2. When we “spur one another on” it simply means we “stir up” one another or we “encourage” one another, not to go “faster” but to “keep going and never give up.”

Paul mentions two areas in which we are to “spur” one another on.

(A) First, we are to “spur one another on to LOVE.”

Can you imagine how much stronger and healthier our Churches would be if we heeded this exortation?

There is no sweeter place to be than a Church where everyone loves one another and gives attention to one another and looks after one another and cares for one another.

And by the same token, there is no more dreadful place to be than a Church where love has been replaced with hatred and animosity……and selflessness has been replaced with selfishness.

Brothers and sisters, as Christians let us “spur one another on to love!”
(B) And secondly, we are to "spur one another on to good deeds."

This means we are to "put our love into action."

I can’t meet everyone’s needs, nor can you. But when you and I keep busy doing good for others like feeding the poor.....visiting the sick.....befriending the lonely....inviting others to Church.....praying for the needs of others....sending cards to lift the spirits of those going through tough times......or helping someone else carry their burdens.....it has a way of bonding us together in love as a Church.

Church......Let Us Draw Near to God!

Let Us Hold Unswervingly to The Hope We Profess!

Let Us Spur One Another on To Love And Good Deeds!

Now Paul gives us a fourth cheer.........
The Fourth Cheer: Let Us Not Give Up Meeting Together (v.25)

Vs. 25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

1. At the time Paul wrote this letter, the Hebrew Christians in Jerusalem and throughout Palestine were being persecuted.

   For many of the persecuted, the LORD’S DAY became even more special. The LORD’S DAY afforded them the wonderful privilege to meet with their brothers and sisters-in-Christ to worship, to fellowship and to observe the LORD’S SUPPER and to HEAR the Good News of the Gospel proclaimed. It was through this weekly worship the early Christians were strengthened and encouraged to persevere.

   But while many remained faithful some stopped going to Church on the LORD’S DAY. If they were like many Christians today, they probably didn’t just suddenly stop going to Church. They probably became more and more lax in their Church attendance over a period of time.

   At first they probably missed a Sunday or two every now and then, and over a period of time they got in the habit of forsaking the weekly assembly.

2. I have always been amused at some of the excuses people come up with as to why they aren’t in Church.

   -Some say “they just don’t like to be around crowds” and yet they will go sit in a crowded gymnasium or stadium to watch a ball game or a crowded movie theater to watch a movie.
-Some say “they don’t go to Church because they don’t like to get out when the weather is bad.” But yet those same people are like a mailman when it comes to getting to Wal-Mart..... they will get there through “rain or sleet or snow!”

-Some say “they don’t go to Church because they just don’t feel very good on Sunday mornings.” I’m not talking about those who are truly sick or shut in. I’m talking about those who get the “Sunday morning flu around 8:00 or 9:00 o’clock then experience a “miraculous healing” at 12:00 NOON!

**ILLUSTRATION 1**

My dad always said, “The only time some people come to Church is on Christmas and Easter.” In fact Dad had a name for them. He called them “C.E. Christians.”

Well one Easter Sunday, my home Church in Indiana was packed. After preaching his morning message, at the end of the service my dad said, “To all of you here today who won’t be back until December, I want to go ahead and wish you a very Merry Christmas.”

**ILLUSTRATION 2**

Brothers and sisters, if someone told you he or she was a student but they rarely if ever go to school, you probably wouldn’t think they were much a student would you?

If someone told you he was a soldier, but he refused to go into battle, you probably wouldn’t think he was much of a soldier would you?

If someone told you he works for some company, and yet he never shows up for work, you wouldn’t think he was much of an employee would you?

Well let me ask you something. If someone told you he or she was a Christian, but they never go to Church, what would you think of them?

If it is you I am speaking to right now, I want to encourage you not to wait until six pall bearers carry you to Church in a casket. Renew your commitment to being in Church every Lord’s Day!
CONCLUSION

Church.....Let Us Draw Near to God!

Let Us Hold Unswervingly to The Hope We Profess!

Let Us Spur One Another on Toward Love and Good Deeds!

And Let Us Not Give Up Meeting Together on The Lord’s Day

May these Four Cheers For the Church challenge all of us on this Homecoming Sunday!