

March 10, 2019

## ***The Deeper Things***

***"We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure. We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised..."***  
Hebrews 6:11-12

***"Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds...do not throw away your confidence..."***  
Hebrews 10:19-25

Doing the same things over and over again can become mind-numbing and boring. This is why many of us struggle with the tendency to just go through the motions and no longer try to do well. Following Jesus can affect us in much the same way. Giving our whole being to him and surrendering our will to his demands that we follow him wherever he goes doing whatever he commands. In the beginning of that walk when the newness of our faith and the joy of our salvation is driving us, discipleship is much easier. But as the years pass it is easy to become lazy and begin going through the motions rather than continuing in our personal and complete devotion to our Lord.

As time passes we begin to substitute the difficult and often complex demands of a maturing discipleship for the simpler forms of Christianity. Maturing discipleship will lead us through a constant and often painful process of self-discovery and will force us to change those things in our own lives many of which can be very difficult and painful to change. Transformation is nearly always uncomfortable. There is a temptation for us in this process to begin to substitute a rules-keeping mindset in place of the demands of a truly transforming discipleship.

One of the passages we are considering today is, I think, a perfect example of this temptation. In Hebrews 10 the author writes, ***"Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds."*** And then the author adds the words that most of us recognize; ***"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."***

This passage focuses on our role as encouragers in the lives of our fellow disciples. It directs us to find ways to ***"...spur on another on..."*** as we are transformed into the very form and function of our Lord.

But many of us would rather focus on the part of this passage that says, ***"Let us not give up meeting together..."*** It is, after all, so much easier to keep that score isn't it? We need to 'go to church' and our Lord is calling us to 'go to church' and so we keep track of how many times a week or a month or a year we 'go to church'. We now see ourselves as faithful.

The author is not just calling us to 'go to church'. He is challenging us to use our gatherings as opportunities to ***"...spur one another toward love and good deeds..."*** and to ***"...encourage one another..."*** We are not being directed to make our attendance at the gathering of the church the central issue. No, we are being directed to find ways to encourage our mutual discipleship; our mutual transformation during those gatherings. Without that encouraging focus attendance accomplishes nothing.

Transformative discipleship is a long and often painful process during which we intentionally let go of our self-centeredness and become more and more the selfless image of Jesus. As Paul would write, ***"...I no longer live, but Christ lives in me."*** (Galatians 2:20)

Going through the motions and carefully following the 'rules' will never make a personal, transformatinve relationship with Jesus a reality. We will never experience Christ living in and through us until and unless we fully and completely embrace our own surrender, our own death. Going through the motions will never be enough. If, as the Apostle writes, "***I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live...***" then "***...Christ lives in me***" can become my reality. Transforming faith requires nothing less.

Discipleship:  
Becoming More Like  
**CHRiST**  
EPHESIANS 2:10