

Not Forsaking the Assembling of Ourselves Together

by H.J. Vine

The sermon emphasizes the importance of assembling together as believers, to prepare for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to encourage one another in Him

Scripture: Matthew 24:42, Acts 2:42, 1 Thessalonians 4:16, Hebrews 2:11, Hebrews 10:25, Jude 1:20, Revelation 2:3, Revelation 22:17

Topics: "Church Fellowship", "Second Coming"

Description

H.J. Vine preaches about the imminent return of the Lord, emphasizing the importance of believers assembling together and encouraging one another as the day of His coming draws near. Those who have been sanctified through Jesus Christ's sacrifice are urged to gather with fellow believers, rejecting the path of neglect and apostasy. The assembling together of saints is a scriptural commandment, not to be forsaken, as it leads to mutual edification and preparation for Christ's return.

Transcript

The Lord is coming again! The midnight cry has gone forth after long ages of slumber! "BEHOLD THE BRIDEGROOM! GO FORTH TO MEET HIM" (Matt. 24). This was foretold in the Scriptures of Truth. And to it and to the glory of the coming One, the Spirit is bearing witness still, unto the churches (see Rev. 2:3) in an unmistakable way. And as the return of the Lord approaches those who are really His will be found assembling together, and encouraging one another in Him, their Lord and Leader.

The one perfect offering at the cross has fitted them to draw nigh to God. They have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. His blood having cleansed away all their sins, they are to be remembered no more; and, it is said, "Where there is remission of these, there is no more offering for sin." The Lord Jesus, who made the one and perfect offering, is now seated at the right hand of God. Therefore they may boldly approach to God as worshippers, and gather together for mutual edification, in a way that becomes the holy presence of our God and Father.

Those who have believed to the saving of the soul will thus approve the reality of their faith and be preserved in the presence of the grave and subtle dangers which beset the closing moments of the present period. These dangers are specially indicated by the Spirit, in the two Scriptures which speak of our "assembling together" (Eph. 4:2; and Heb. 10:25). The coming of our Lord Jesus

Christ is in view in both passages. The first speaks of "the complete collection" (as the word means literally), or gathering of the saints to the Lord Himself when He returns; the second speaks of "the complete collection" or gathering together of those who believe now, as the day of His coming draws near.

Is the reader one of those who will be gathered with all who are the Lord's to our blessed Lord in the air, when He calls us to Himself by His assembling shout (1 Thess. 4:6)? And if so is the reader approving himself to be one by gathering with His own now as he awaits Christ's coming? Hebrews 10:25 tells us that "the custom of some" is to forsake this present gathering; and the following verses indicate that such may be carried away with those who "sin wilfully," by apostasy from the Son of God. For those who do so apostatise there "no longer remains any sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment."

To forsake the assembling together of saints is a downgrade path! In the verses quoted its process is solemnly shown. First, there is neglect; then it becomes a "custom." Sinning wilfully follows--that is apostasy. The unreality of such a one finally becomes evident; for, though he had once been sanctified by the blood, and had been where the gracious Spirit of God acted, now he esteems "the blood of the covenant, whereby he has been sanctified, common, and has insulted the Spirit of grace" (Heb. 10:29). Judgment follows of necessity.

In view of the seriousness of this matter the question may be asked, What is this assembling together?

Meetings may be and are arranged by religious leaders, which certainly do not in any way answer to the scriptural order of an assembly of those who are forgiven, sanctified, and made purged worshippers, through the one and perfect sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. Such leaders may hold meetings to propound their views, right or wrong; but the assembling together of which our Scriptures speak takes no cognizance of these. At the very beginning, before "the faith once delivered to the saints" was falsified and corrupted, we are told in Acts 2:42, "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." In 1 Corinthians 11 to 14, the Spirit gives us, through Paul, further instruction as to assembling together. These Scriptures, which are specially said to be the commandments of the Lord, should be read, and considered well, so that we may have His thoughts in answer to our question. There is the assembling to eat the Lord's Supper in remembrance of Himself: there is also the assembling together for prayer, and for edification. In Hebrews 10:25, the main thought is for encouragement, as it says

"ENCOURAGING ONE ANOTHER" (N.Tr.).

These assemblies together are enjoined in the Word of God. That is quite sufficient for those who are obedient to God, and obedience is more to Him than sacrifice. We have no authority to make meetings, or gatherings, such as we may think suitable, or to arrange to gather together only with those whom we think to be suitable persons. We are to assemble according to the Scriptures, and to do so with those who belong to our Lord Jesus Christ through His work of redemption. We are not left to pick and choose; or to please our own inclinations, but to be obedient to the Word. In that lies both our safety and happiness.

Christ is our bond. We are to assemble with those who own Him. They may not all be to our liking naturally; but it is said, "He is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Heb. 2:11); and we are told to love one another. Indeed, He, the Lord of life and glory, Jesus, the Son of God, speaks of them as "My brethren." They are called in Scripture, saints, the children of God, and the sons of God. They are members of Christ's body, the assembly of which He is the glorified Head. With Him and with them our happy lot is cast, and with these we are to assemble as His coming again draws near.

Mark again, It is no question of arranging a meeting for a preacher or a teacher. There are evangelists and shepherd-teachers; and their labours are to be heartily supported; but what we are speaking of is the assembling together of the brethren themselves--the members of the body of Christ. There may be no teachers or preachers among them, but they themselves are "not to forsake" assembling together. Gifts may be raised up, or sent by the Lord amongst them; but they are to flock together as the sheep of God's pasture. Jude, who desires that we should have the faith as it was once delivered to the saints (v. 3), says, "But ye, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, awaiting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

When our blessed Lord comes for us, and we are caught up in the clouds to meet Him in the air; when the great and glorious

"GATHERING TOGETHER TO HIM"

takes place, not one of His own will be absent from that assembly. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, He will present us all there, to be with Him and like Him for ever and ever. "He died for us that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him." Such is His love that He will have us all there, the complete collection of all who are His, for His own joy and satisfaction! But Hebrew 10 urges that we should be completely collected together now, as His coming draws nigh. It is not conceivable that a saint can truly rejoice in the former and be deliberately neglecting the latter.

Beyond the darkness of the world's night our hearts see the harbinger of the coming glorious day JESUS, THE BRIGHT MORNING STAR!"

The Spirit and the bride say to Him, Come! and to others, who have an ear to hear, they say, Join with us and invite Him to come! and if there is a thirsty soul, to him they say, There is living water for thee. Come! Yea, what our own souls know and enjoy, flows, like the river of God, in divine abundance! Therefore, whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely (Rev. 22:17)! Such is the last beautiful picture of the assembly, the bride of Christ, given in the Bible. Surely there has been much assembling together, and all hearts have been filled with the love and loveliness of Jesus; the Spirit has captivated every one with the beauty of the Bridegroom; and in harmony with Himself, as one, they say to the blessed Lord, COME. How delightful to His ear will be such an invitation from the assembly He loved and gave Himself for. May we therefore, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together now, as the custom of some is--but encouraging one another in Him, who is soon coming to assemble us all together to Himself in the air--so richly enjoy the living abundance of heavenly blessing which is ours in Christ, that together we may truly sing in harmony divine,

"Spirit and Bride,

With longing voice say, Come;

Yea, Lord, Thy word from that bright home,

Is, Surely I will quickly come!

E'EN SO, LORD, COME."

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