

Love and Good Deeds:

Setting a Tone for 2021

Hebrews 10:19-25

January 3, 2021

Opening ILL: All Christians operate with their heart and with their hands. That is to say that all Christians are called to think and feel a certain way and have a certain perspective and attitude. Similarly, all Christians are called to do certain things, to perform certain tasks that our Lord calls us to and that our fellow believers need and benefit by. I am also aware that there we all tend to lean in the direction of emphasizing one of these two categories: hearts and hands. In that sense and to that degree, there seem to me to basically be 2 types of Christians: Those who are interested in the internal things of Christianity, like doctrine and attitude and affection, etc. and those who are focused on doing the great things of Christianity, like organizing, leading, feeding the poor, serving one another. In my experience, all thinkers do and all doers think, but most people would find their giftedness leaning them toward one of those things over the other. What I would like to call us to in 2021 is the question of how we encourage each other to feel the things we are called to feel, to believe the things that we are called to believe and to do the things that we are called to do. All of this is summed up in the simple phrase: “Love and Good Deeds.”

I. Introduction

A. To this year’s preaching theme: Love and Good Deeds

1. Last year’s general theme was that “He is, and He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”
2. This year’s general theme is simply “Love and Good Deeds.” This year (Lord willing) we will feature:
 - i. “Remarkable Grace”—An Exposition of Jonah
 - a. We will see how Jonah’s lack of love led him to resist good deeds.
 - b. We will see how God’s abundant love leads Him to perform good deeds.
 - ii. “A More Excellent Way”—An Expository Study of 1 Corinthians 13
 - iii. “A Sincere Faith”—An Exposition of the Book of James.
 - a. In this study, we will see how important sincerity is in the Christian life.
 - b. We will also see how sincerity in belief leads to good deeds.
 - c. So much more.

B. Some things to remember:

1. These things change—I think we learned that from 2020
2. I am always in need of your prayers and I value them very much.

C. To this sermon

1. The life and death of Jesus Christ has given us the basis by which we may approach God. Now our sin is dealt with (at least in a judicial sense) and now can focus on how to live in Him.

II. The Author’s Two Since Worth (vv. 19-21)

Point: We cannot afford to undervalue the “sinces” in the Christian life. If we do, we will struggle to do what we are called to do, either out of a lack of proper motivation or a confused and confounded, wrong motivation.

ILL: Christmas gifts since: If you say to your wife, “Since you got me something, I went ahead and got you something,” that would not really honor her. After all, you only acted out of a sense of fairness and duty. On the other hand if you say, “Since I love you so much, I got you this,” well, that’s a whole other story. Why we do things is just as important as what we do. The author of Hebrews knows that, so he starts with 2 “sinces.”

A. Since we have this confidence

1. What confidence?
 - i. The confidence that we can stand before God and be found by Him to be acceptable through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 - ii. See v. 18. This confidence springs from the fact that there is now no sacrifice for sin needed. Jesus paid it all!

2. On what basis do we have this?
 - i. Through the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 - ii. Notice that this way is considered by the author to be a new way, as opposed to the law.

B. Since we have a great priest

1. Who is this?
2. What does this mean?

Point and transition: Anything we attempt in this life, anything we seek to accomplish or develop in our walk of faith is because of and in light of the Lord Jesus Christ. He changes everything and everything we now do, or think, or feel is in light of who He is and what He has done.

III. The Author's Three Commands (vv. 22-25)

A. Let Us Draw Near (v. 22)

1. What does this mean?
2. How shall we draw near?
 - i. With a sincere heart
 - a. What does this mean?
 - This means that we are genuine in our desire to draw near to God.
 - This means that we are honest in our pursuit of a relationship with God.
 - b. Why is this important?
 - Because there is nothing virtuous in insincere worship.
 - Because there is nothing virtuous in insincere service.
 - Why you do something is just as important as what you do.
 - ii. With full assurance of faith
 - a. What does this mean?
 - Assurance that what we are trusting in is true.
 - Assurance that we are truly trusting in it.

Point: Be very careful here. When we look at ourselves, we will only be discouraged. We can fall into what many have called the paralysis of analysis. Cast yourself on Jesus, not your feelings, not your performance. Look to Him.

- b. Why is this important?
 - iii. With a clear conscience
 - a. What does this mean?
 - b. Why is this important?
 - iv. With a bathed body
 - a. What does this mean?
 - b. Why is this important?

B. Let Us Hold Fast (v. 23)

1. What does it mean to hold fast?
 - i. This is the Greek word (katecw) which means: "hold fast, retain faithfully [BDAG]." The idea seems to be to cling to something...to stick to something. This word is used to tell us to cling to:
 - a. The word (τὸν λόγον Lk 8:15)
 - b. The traditions (τὰς παραδόσεις 1 Cor 11:2).
 - c. That which is good (τὸ καλόν 1 Th 5:21)
2. What do we hold fast? Our Confession.
 - i. This includes:
 - a. What we confess

- b. The fact that we confessed it
- 3. How? That is to say, in what manner? Without Wavering.
 - i. **ILL:** An open mind is like an open mouth. Once there is something solid in there, you're supposed to close it. We don't spend the rest of our lives trying to endlessly analyze our faith or lack thereof. We believe. We trust. We are settled. We have come to a conclusion.
- 4. Why must we hold fast? Because He is faithful.

C. Let Us Consider

- 1. What is the author's point in telling us to "consider" this?
 - i. Is he saying that it is up to us whether or not we stimulate one another to love and good deeds?
 - a. Ex: Here is an option for you to consider.
- 2. What are we to consider?
 - i. How to stimulate one another to love and good deeds.
 - a. What does mean?
 - This means that we should be strategic about helping one another feel a certain way and to act a certain way.
- 3. How?
 - i. By refusing to abandon each other.
 - ii. By encouraging one another.

IV. Conclusions

- A. Let me call you to pray.
- B. Let me call you to action.
 - 1. Don't just sit there...do something.
- C. Let me call you to think and feel.
 - 1. Don't just do something...sit there!
- D. Let me call you to strategize.
 - 1. How can you be helpful?
 - 2. How can you be useful to the people in your life to encourage them to love God and to serve Him more faithfully?

One thing that is crystal clear after 2020 is that we really don't know what 2021 holds. I hope that we have outgrown the distorted notion that we have any real control over the future. We know Him...we love Him. All we do know is that we are called to encourage one another, pray for one another, challenge one another

To the Praise of His Glory,
Amen