

PROVOKE ONE ANOTHER

Sunday Morning: November 4, 2001

Text: Hebrews 10:24-25 "And let us **consider** one another to **provoke** unto **love** and to **good works**: 25. Not forsaking the **assembling** of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; **but exhorting one another**: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching"

I am going to read beginning at Hebrews 10:19-23 "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20. By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21. And *having* an high priest over the house of God; 22. Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. 23. Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised;)" and then focusing on verses 24 and 25.

Reading some thoughts from Warren Wiersbe, he made the comment that a lot of people come to church for something that they can get rather than coming to church to see what they can do. When God leads some one to a body of believers they can expect to be ministered to but they also must come seeking to minister to others. Here in verse 24 we have the exhortation to provoke each other and that does not mean to make them angry. We all know that the word provoke carries the thought of contention and strife, When Paul and Barnabas were discussing whether to take John Mark with them there was strong provocation or contention between them in Acts 15:39. To provoke some one is to stimulate strong feelings.

When we are gathered to gather we are exhorted to stimulate strong feelings about, from our text, *love* and *good works*. Stimulating ourselves to *love* and *good works* is hard to do by ourselves. We need others to exhort us to do these things. Being together will help us to love each and to love God and to have good works, care about each other.

A lot of people think that when you get saved you love God. That is not necessarily true. Jesus said if you love me you will keep my commandments. I know a lot of God's kids that are not keeping his commandments, by rebelling against them. Just being saved does not mean that you love God. I think about those who get married. They think that they love each other. Just stay married for 40 years and you will find out what love all about. It takes time. It also takes time to provoke one another to love and good works.

WHAT CAN I CONTRIBUTE

Romans 12:10 "Be kindly **affectioned** one to another with **brotherly love**; in honour **preferring** one another;"

A body of believers should show and demonstrate genuine care for one another. Rather than having to be in first place, allowing others to have that place especially when they have the gift in a particular area of ministry.

If we lived closer together and we had just a few places to shop our lifestyle would be closer and it would be easier to apply this verse. Many live miles away and shop sometimes 20 miles away, so togetherness is more difficult. When we do gather for fellowship around the word we should make the time count. Maybe get here a little earlier or linger a little longer after service. Another way to have the time needed to consider one another is by participating in Sunday school.

THE MIND OF CHRIST

Philippians 2:2-5 "Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be **likeminded**, having the **same love**, *being* of **one accord**, of **one mind**. 3. *Let* nothing *be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of

mind let each **esteem other** better than themselves. 4. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of **others**. 5. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:"

Part of being likeminded is the assembling of yourselves together. How can you be like minded if you do not hear the same messages and exchange ideas that help us to grow in the word. Being able to communicate effectively with each other helps us to develop the ones in the body that is so essential. A divided house will not stand and Satan would divide a body of believers so that he can get the upper hand. Strife is gendered when people want their own way. They want the glory of being the leader and we need to be meek and lowly esteeming others before ourselves.

MINISTER TO OTHERS

Matthew 20:28 "Even as the Son of man **came** not to be ministered unto, but **to minister**, and to give his life a ransom for many."

The mind of Christ is others. He ministered to others and gave himself for their well being. He did have those that did minister to him as did Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. When he was where they lived he stayed with them. The Lord did not advise them to sell all they had and give to the poor, they used what they had to minister to him and others.

MOTIVATION

Matthew 24:12 "And because **iniquity** [lawlessness] shall **abound**, the love of many shall wax cold."

One strong motivating factor for exhorting each other to love and good works is the state of our society today, lawlessness. We are living in the day when iniquity abounds. The word *iniquity* would be better translated *lawlessness*. Lawlessness simply means if you don't like the law, you have the right to break it. Lawlessness is self justified disobedience. The attitude of society will rub off on the church, and it has.

LET US

Hebrews 10:22-24 "**Let us draw near** with a true heart in full assurance of **faith**, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. 23. **Let us hold fast** the profession of *our faith* [hope] without wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised;) 24. And **let us consider** one another to provoke unto love and to good works:"

I put these verses that have the phrase *let us* in them because they emphasis the practical part of doctrine which is the meat of the word. It is a bit of play on words, but the *let us* is the salad of the word. The meat of the word tells us how the way into the Holy of Holies was upon unto us and the salad of the word tells says *let us draw near*. The meat of the word tells of the hope of glory and the salad of the word says to *let us hold fast the hope*. The meat of the word tells us that lawlessness will abound in the last days and the salad of the word says *let us consider one another* to provoke us to *love*, which is obedience, and *good works* of faith.

MORE SALAD

Hebrews 12:1 "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, **let us lay aside every weight**, and **the sin** which doth so easily beset *us*, and **let us run** with patience the race that is set before us,"

The meat of the word tells us that there is a prize to be won and the *let us* of the word says to lay aside things that will slow us down. Weights that can slow us down are found in Mark 4:19 "And the **cares of this world**, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful." The key thought about *weights* is that

what ever it is in our lives that chokes the word is a weight even though it may not be wrong in itself. Laying aside *the sin* which can and will *beset us* is the sin of lawlessness. The sin of lawlessness will cut us out of the race and we will be disqualified.

PROVOKE

Root meaning of provoke: **incitement** (to good), or **dispute** (in anger):--contention, provoke unto. **to sharpen alongside**, i.e. (fig.) to exasperate:--easily provoke, stir.

The idea behind the word provoke is to stir up some strong feelings. We can become so complacent when it come to our walk with the Lord.

STIRRED YOU UP

Acts 17:16 "Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was **stirred** in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry."

The word *stirred* in verse 16 is the word *provoke*. Paul was provoked in spirit because of the idolatry in the city of Athens. Being provoked, he did something about it. He did not let this strong feeling just go away. We should allow our selves to be provoked to the extent that we will love one another and be faithful in good works. Paul was not able to establish a church in Athens but he was able to start one in Corinth and other places. Paul was stirred of heart in each city he went to. We need to be provoked to action as Paul and other in his day.

AN EXAMPLE TO OTHERS

1 Thessalonians 1:6-8 "And ye became **followers of us**, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: 7. So that **ye were ensamples** to all that believe in **Macedonia** and Achaia. 8. For **from you sounded out the word** of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place **your faith** to God-ward is **spread abroad**; so that we need not to speak any thing."

Paul was able to provoke the church at Thessalonica to be *followers* of him as well as Silvanus, and Timotheus. The word *followers* means to imitate. We get the word mimic from the Greek word. Paul and his companions provoked those in Thessalonica that they became ensamples to the ones believing in Macedonia and Achaia. It was their faith toward God that was touching the lives of those in Macedonia and Achaia. We effect each other by our attendance and testimony and we effect the lives of people in Chattanooga, Ashland WI, in Bombay India, and other cities around the country. People in Paul's day knew the testimony of the church in Thessalonica because the Word of God sounded out to other areas. Not only the Word of God but their faith in God was worth sharing.

ARE WE EXAMPLES?

Philippians 3:14-17 "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. 15. **Let us** therefore, as many as be perfect, **be thus minded**: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. 16. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. 17. Brethren, **be followers** [imitators with] **together of me**, and **mark them** which walk so as ye have us for an **ensample**."

When we look around the fellowship we may say in our heart, "He has what I need." I want to imitate what he does. We need to live our lives with that in mind, so that those in the church will want to do what we do. For what reason? So they can press toward the mark *for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*. That was Paul's burden. Do you have that burden? If you have that burden, we need to imitate what you do. We need that burden for ourselves. If we do

not have that burden or mindset, God shall reveal that through others in the church. It is through the teaching of the Word of God is part of the way that God reveals this priority. Along with the teaching of the Word is fellowship. Paul exhorts them to be followers of me. The word *followers* comes from the word that means to mimic. Paul said to the brethren to mimic him and those who walk as Paul walked.

IMITATE ME?

1 Corinthians 11:1 "Be ye **followers** [imitators] of me, even as I also *am* of Christ."

Paul encouraged those at Corinth to imitate him because he imitated Christ. Paul had the mind of Christ and the purpose of Christ to do those things that were pleasing to the Father.

PROVOKE TO LOVE

Hebrews 10:24-25 "And let us **consider** one another to **provoke unto love** and to **good works**:"

Why do we need to provoke unto love? In the book of Hebrews we have over and over again the word *faith*. Faith comes through hearing and studying the Word of God. The reason we want to have faith is so that we can please God. Hebrews 11:6 "But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*:. . ." If you expect to please God you have to live by faith.

FAITH NEEDS LOVE

Galatians 5:6 "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but **faith** which **worketh by love**."

We find something very interesting and very important in the last part of verse 6. For *faith* to work there must be *love*.

JUST LIVE BY FAITH

Hebrews 10:38 "Now the **just** shall **live by faith**: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him."

For faith to work, we must be just. How does that fit in with *love*? The just are those who are obedient to the commandments. In the Old Testament the just were those who kept the commandments and the ordnances of Moses. Luke 1:6.

JUST

Galatians 5:14 "For all the **law** is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt **love** thy neighbour as thyself."

The word *love* is used to fulfill the law so that we can be just, for the Bible says that the just shall live by faith. The Lord told his disciples that if they loved him they would obey him. John 14:15 "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

For faith to work we must have love, not only for the Lord but for each other. This love is not just talking about it. It is a ministry of love to each other. It is not always ministering money. Some times money is necessary, but sometimes is just an arm around somebody shoulder and honest inquiry about how things are with the possibility of giving assistants. It is not like the fellow on the TV add who pulled up in a fast food restaurant and was ask how he was. When he begin to pour out his heart, the people who asked the question were irritated by it. Our inquiry should be genuine and we need to have time to listen to people who are hurting. If they are having a grubby time we need to get down where they are and become grubby.

FOUNDATION OF FAITH

Hebrews 6:1 ". . . let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the **foundation** of

repentance from **dead works**, and of **faith toward God**,"

Notice here that we should already be beyond dead works and into good works if we expect to go on to completion. What is the foundation material? Faith and I believe that good works are a part of the foundation as well.

IMITATE MEN OF FAITH

Hebrews 6:12 "That ye be not slothful, but **followers** [imitators] of **them** who through **faith** and **patience inherit** the promises."

To be imitators of them who through faith inheritance the promises we need to read about them. I believe that reading about their lives causes our faith to grow. Who are those who inherited the promises? It was Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Were these perfect? No, they had their warts. They all failed. Some failed in the same area more than once. They did not learn the first time and who does. We need to be imitators of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and the list goes on.

On Saturday morning I was doing the dishes and was listening to the radio. They had a dramatization of Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar on a children's program. I really got into the story about Daniel and his dealings with the king and his peers. I really enjoyed the dramatization. A man with integrity and fortitude. It was exciting and I enjoyed it. It encouraged me.

We need to imitate those who have gone through the war, so to speak. We need to see that the Lord did not forsake them when the going was tough and beyond them in their ability.

ASSURANCE OF FAITH

Hebrews 10:22 "Let us draw near with a true heart in **full assurance of faith**, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."

We can be confident that faith in God is not a vain thing. It works and we can have full assurance that it works. If your conscience is still bothering you about some sin, put it under the blood and the washing is that of repentance from those dead works.

LIVE BY FAITH

Hebrews 10:38 "Now the just shall live by **faith**: but if *any man draw back* (from faith), my soul shall have **no pleasure** in him."

Live by faith that works by love and don't draw back from faith. Do not quit, the Lord will not be pleased with you and he will not take pleasure in you.

PAUL WAS PROVOKED

1 Thessalonians 1:3 "Remembering without ceasing **your work** of faith, and **labour of love**, and **patience of hope** in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;"

Paul remembered some things about the church in Thessalonica. He remembered their work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope. How did he remember that? He remembered it because he had considered them as we are encouraged to do in Hebrews 10:24.

When Paul remembered those at Thessalonica he was encouraged. What was he encouraged to do? To continue in the faith. To continue in works of love and to be patient in hope. When you remember me what are you encouraged to do? When I remember you what am I encouraged to do? When we consider one another it should be with the intent to encourage each other to finish the race strong.

GOD WON'T FORGET IT

Hebrews 6:10 "For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your **work** and labour of **love**, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."

One thing that we need to remember and that God is not going to forget your work of faith and

labor of love. He is not going to forget it! This is something that he wants to remember. Isn't it exciting to think that there is something that we have the capacity to do that he wants to remember. We may not be rewarded here and now so we are obedient to the faith with an undying hope of obtaining the promise in the age that is coming.

PROVOKE TO GOOD WORKS

Hebrews 10:24 "And let us **consider** one another to **provoke** unto love and **to good works**:"

I want to pick up on the stirring up of good works. We are to consider one another to stimulate good works.

PROFITABLE

Titus 3:8 "*This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to **maintain good works**. These things are good and **profitable** unto men.*"

In the message on the tape I made a mistake about the word careful. I associated it with the word *careful* in Philippians 4:6 and they are not the same word. The two words, according to Strongs, do carry the idea of being anxious but it seems that they differ in the way the anxiety is expressed. The one in here in Titus come from a root word that means to rein in the midriff yet there is to be thought associated with this reaction. When I think of the thought to be anxious I do think of strong feelings and we are to have strong feelings about good works. Paul expresses the idea of being *careful to maintain good works* with the phrase *I will that thou affirm constantly*. Affirming constantly to maintain good works will produce good works. If we will produce good works it will be profitable for others and it will be profitable for me as well. I do want to hear from the Lord "Well done though good and faithful servant." The faithful servant was a profitable servant in Matthew 25 and I want that kind of commendation from the Lord.

GLORIFIES THE FATHER

Matthew 5:16 "**Let your light** so shine before men, that they may see your **good works**, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

When we are faithful in maintaining good works we will glorify the Father. How is the Father glorified? When those who observe what we do give the Father credit for our behavior. Notice it says *LET your light so shine*. When we *make* our light shine then we get into the flesh. If our good works are done in the flesh we get the credit and the Father is left out.

When our good works are a bye product of our daily life and they are done not to be noticed but to benefit others then we are letting our light shine and not making it shine.

When I worked for NCR I tried to be a faithful employee and maintain a good attitude. I put forth extra effort in my work to help our customers to be satisfied. It wasn't long before a new employee that was hired to be over the programmers of the large main frame computers stopped me and asked me if I was a believer and I affirmed that I was. He said I thought you were because of the way you work.

IT TAKES GRACE

2 Corinthians 9:8 "And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may abound to every **good work**:"

This verse tells us that it takes the grace of God abounding to us so that we can abound in every good work. Do you know what grace is? It is the power of Christ. We see this in 2 Corinthians 12:9 "And he said unto me, **My grace is sufficient** for thee: for my **strength** is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that **the**

power of Christ may rest upon me." When you are maintaining good works in the strength of His power you are serving by grace. If we are serving in our own strength we are serving in the flesh and we get the glory and not the Lord.

HAVE GRACE

Hebrews 12:28 "Wherefore we **receiving a kingdom** which cannot be moved, **let us have grace**, whereby we may **serve** God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:"

The phrase *let us have* is a verb and it is in the present tense. The present tense expresses continuous action.

I found a good illustration of the present tense in John 11:39 "Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been *dead* four days." Look with me at this verse. Do you see the word *stinketh* and that it ends with the letters *eth*? The letters at the end of a word usually means it is in the present tense and in the case of the word *stinketh* it is in the present tense. Remember that the present tense can stop any time and it did in the case of Lazarus. Lazarus stopped stinking in John 11:43 "And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth."

The verb *let us have* is also in the active voice and the subjunctive mood. What that means is that we are to be active in having grace and the subjunctive mood means that we may stop. When stop having grace we stop serving God acceptably and our good works come a screeching halt.

CREATED UNTO GOOD WORKS

Ephesians 2:10 "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto **good works**, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

We have been created in Christ unto good works. This was God's purpose in choosing us and he wants us to fulfill that purpose in walking in good works.

A WORTHY WALK

Colossians 1:10 "That ye might **walk worthy** of the Lord unto all **pleasing, being fruitful in every good work**, and **increasing** in the **knowledge** of God;"

Notice that a worthy walk and being fruitful in every good work goes with increasing in doctrine. That is the reason that we emphasize doctrine in this church. The teaching of the Word of God. It is through the teaching of the word of God that we learn to walk worthy and so being pleasing as well as being fruitful in every good work.

IT TAKES DOCTRINE

2 Timothy 3:16-17 "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for **doctrine**, for **reproof**, for **correction**, for **instruction** in righteousness: *17* That the man of God may be perfect, **thoroughly furnished** unto all **good works**."

If we are going to be provoked unto to love and good works we need doctrine. What does doctrine or the teaching of the Word of God do for us? It reproves us. It helps us to know what needs to be changed or corrected in our lives. Doctrine helps us to be skilful in the word of righteousness and to be a mature child of God. Doctrine will help us to be complete and to be thoroughly furnished with all that we need for good works and purpose to finish what God has given us to do.

What we need is the truth of the Word. We need hard facts and not an emotional experience.

ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS

Titus 2:14-15 "Who gave himself for us, that he might **redeem us** from all **iniquity**

[lawlessness], and purify unto himself a peculiar people, **zealous of good works**. 15 These things **speak**, and **exhort**, and **rebuke** with all **authority**. Let no man despise thee.

Why has the Lord delivered us from the bondage of lawlessness? So that we can serve him and not the world, the flesh, or the Devil. He redeemed us and wants us to be zealous of good works. Paul told Titus and others who teach and preach the word to speak or talk about these things. Not only to talk about these things, but to exhort to do them and to rebuke when they are not being done. Paul told Titus not to be timid about this because you have been given all authority to provoke the body to be zealous of good works.

DO YOU SEE THE APPROACHING DAY?

Hebrews 10: 25 "Not forsaking the **assembling** of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; **but exhorting one another**: and **so much the more**, as ye see **the day approaching**"

Why are we encouraged to do these things? We can see the day of the Lord approaching. As we see the day of the Lord approaching we are told that lawlessness will abound and men will depart from the faith. As we see the day approaching we will see men become despisers of those that are good (2 Timothy 3:1-4).

In Hebrews 10:24 we are encouraged to provoke each other unto love and good works. In verse 25 we are told over again to exhort one another. Exhort one another to do what? To love and good works.

What is the Lord coming with? Rewards for the faithful that are provoked to love and good works.

THE DAY IS APPROACHING

Matthew 16: 27 "**For the Son of man shall come** in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then **he shall reward every man according to his works**."

Have you been loafing? You will be denied rewards.

I got some email this week about a government office that had four terrorist that were on the payroll. They were able to capture and arrest three of them and their names were Bin Drinking, Bin Sleeping, and Bin Loafing. They are still looking for the fourth terrorist and they can't find him anywhere in the building. They do have his name and it is Bin Working.

We do not need to be hanging our with Bin Loafing or it will rub off on us. If we have been loafing and not working, there will be no rewards for us.

REWARD OF THE INHERITANCE

Colossians 3:23-25 "And whatsoever ye **do, do it** heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; 24. **Knowing** that of the Lord ye shall **receive** the **reward** of the **inheritance**: for ye **serve** the Lord Christ. 25. But he that **doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong** which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons."

What do the rewards have to do with? They have to do with our inheritance. Christ is our high priest after the order of Melchisedec and he is making it possible for us to obtain our inheritance. If we have refused to be provoked unto love and good works we will received for the wrong which we have done and there is no respect of persons when it comes to being rewarded for the things that we have done.

THE DAY IS AT HAND

Romans 13:11-14 ". . . **knowing the time**, that now *it is* high time to **awake** out of sleep: for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed. 12. The **night is far spent, the day is at hand**: let us therefore **cast off the works of darkness**, and let us put on the armour of

light. 13. Let us **walk honestly**, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, **not in strife** and **envying**. 14. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and **make not provision for the flesh**, to *fulfil* the lusts *thereof*."

Paul said "Knowing the time." Do we know the time? No we do not know the day or the hour but we do know the season. We are living in the days of the works of darkness and they are like they were in the days of Lot and Noah. We are living in the day when those who should be working are sleeping. If the night is far spent we should know that the coming of the Lord is at hand and we should not be fulfilling the lust of the flesh in rioting and drunkenness. We should not be making provisions for the flesh in the area of promiscuity and sensuality. We need to be provoking one another to love and good works and not to strife and envying or jealousy.

We are living in the day of lawlessness and that attitude will cause us to fulfil the lust of the flesh and stop loving one another and provoking one another, but abusing one another. Luke 12:45-46 "But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; 46. The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for *him*, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers." If we fall into this we will be living with the hypocrites and the unfaithful and this will not be what we want in the day that the Lord will return with his reward.