

One Another's- Provoke me, please.

Sermon Notes

March 23, 2025

Read **Hebrews 10:19-27**

A strong pastoral charge given to people on journey in following Jesus. The journey is challenging, but this text paints a picture how our faith can thrive.

Verse 19: God invites us to approach Him confidently because Jesus' blood has provided the entrance into that relationship.

Verses 20-21: The curtain that separated us from God's presence has been replaced by the new curtain—Jesus' body. He is now our priest presiding over this relationship with God.

Verses 22-23: It is safe to draw near to God, because Jesus is faithful. What hope this provides!

Verses 24-25: We need the help of each other to be reminded of this hope and to live in it. Without each other we are left to our own wandering that becomes a cemented path away from the hope that Jesus provides.

Verses 26-27: The deliberate pursuit of sin sets you up as an enemy of God, and a horrific eternal judgment comes to such people.

We are called to consider how we can help each other continue walking with Jesus.

"And let us consider how..."

- Seeking understanding of how we can truly help each other.
- Consideration of how we can inspire someone towards Jesus is a process we should walk in each of our relationships.

That consideration could require provocative engagement.

"...spur one another on toward..."

- Spur*- to provoke, incite, excite, or arouse
- We are called to provoke one another!

- To provoke is to create a quick change of direction. **“Don’t provoke me!”**

What is that one thing that will instantly set you off? It may provoke you to change in an instant?

- I definitely don’t want to give my list, because that is way too many people hearing it and then odds of it being used against me is quite significant.
- I grew up loving to touch people’s buttons: speaking against their team, stating a G.O.A.T. that knowingly is arguable, saying to someone “you can’t do it.”
- Speaking politics for the sake of irritation to get someone wound up.

What would it look like to provoke someone because the aim is for their benefit?

- When in a whining moment of casting blame, someone agreeing with me how at fault someone else is and praising me for how good and flawless I am. [Ugh!]
- Someone masterfully speaking into you when you are coasting and could do better.
- Someone highlighting how immersed I am at serving myself and not considering the benefit of others.

What if it is to help them walk a more exciting walk with Jesus?

Permissible reasons to provoke another.

- Confronting a pattern of sin.
James 5:19-20 *My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, ²⁰remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.”*
- Choosing something better. **[Mary, Martha]**
- Adding wind to the sails. **Luke 16:10a** *“Whoever can be [faithful] with little can be trusted with much...”*

Consider before you provoke.

1. What is your motive?
 - Pray about this!
 - Is it out of judgment or superiority? [*The plank in your eye*]
 - Do you feel defensive or any sense of reactionary emotions?
 - Is it out of love you feel compelled to provoke them?
 - What direction are you offering? [*Love and good deeds?*]

2. How do you do it?
 - What spirit do you desire to bring to the moment? Pray for this.
 - Be intentional about the moment—face to face is always best to keep the motive of love evident.

3. When should you do it?
 - Once your motive is abundantly leading the way.
 - Once you have clarity on where you are aiming them.
 - Once you are ready to go along with them in the journey if they welcome it.

4. Pray for their heart to be receptive and willing to go with you!

Failure to prepare your heart for provoking another can lead to destructive consequences.

- Wrong direction given.

- Cement the wrong direction.

- Protecting yourself over serving them.

- You miss out on experiencing God's leading of your heart.

Provoking each other towards love and good works is helping each other live for Jesus.

Hebrews 12:1b-2a *“...And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith...”*

So, I say “excite me, incite me, spur me, provoke me to follow Jesus!”

Prayer

- Lord, have I been withholding love from someone by failing to speak truth to them?*

- Lord, have I been unapproachable or defensive when people try to speak into me?*

Benediction: Jesus restoring Peter 3x, and he indeed will go to the death for Jesus.