

August 29, 2010 by Steve Brandon



Stimulate to Love and Good Deeds

Hebrews 10:24-25

Let's begin by considering our text.

Hebrews 10:19-25

Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

I trust that you remember from recent weeks that we have three commands in this text. And they all begin with "let us." Let us draw near (verse 22). Let us hold fast (verse 23). Let us consider (verse 24). Since these applications are so important in the flow of the book of Hebrews, we have taken one week on each of them, seeking to dwell upon each of them.

Several weeks ago, we looked at the call to "draw near." It's a call to seek Jesus. It's a call to come near to Jesus. It's a call to depend upon Him. We have every reason to do so, because He has given us access to the Father (verses 19-20) and because he is a great priest, ready and willing to help us in our need (verse 21).

Last week, we considered the call to "hold fast." This is a call to cling to Jesus. This is a call to hold on to who He is, what He has done, and what He will do. We can have confidence in these things because of God's faithfulness.

Well, this morning, we come to the third exhortation in this section. Fundamentally, it's an exhortation to encourage one another to love and good deeds. I'm simply going to work through the text, beginning with verse 24,

Hebrews 10:24

And let us consider how to stimulate one another to **love** and good deeds.

This verse is a simple call to do what God calls all believers to do. We are called to love. We are called to be engaged in doing good deeds.

Love is central to the Christian life. Jesus said it as plainly as anyone else. In John 14:15 He says, "If you love Me, you will keep my commandments." You say, "Well, what exactly are the commandments of Christ?" A few moments later, Jesus clarified this for His disciples. He said, "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you" (John 15:12). Love to Jesus will compel us to love one another.

The heart and soul of God's law is love. When asked what the greatest commandment is, Jesus replied with two commands. They both center around love: love toward God and love toward men. Jesus said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'" (Matt. 22:37-39). The core of the law is to love! Love the Lord! Love your neighbor! This call to love is so complete that Jesus continued, "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets" (Matt. 22:37-40). In other words, you can take any command in the law or in the prophets, and you can trace it back to love - either love to God or love to others.

That's why Paul said, "Love is the perfect bond of unity" (Col. 3:14). That's why James called love, "the royal law" (James 3:8). That's why Peter said, "Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another" (1 Peter 4:8). That's why the apostle John said, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love" (1 John 4:7-8). Love is a characteristic of Christians. Love is the fulfillment of the law.

Now, true love isn't merely a word. Genuine love will be shown and demonstrated in one's deeds. Again, I quote from the apostle John, "Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth" (1 John 3:18). The call to love is a call to action, and that's what we have in our text here this morning. It's a call to action, "Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and **good deeds**."

When God saves us from our sins, He saves us for a purpose. He saves us to produce in us fruit. He saves us to do good deeds. Titus 2:14 explains, "Christ Jesus ... gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds." Ephesians 2:10 tell us that, "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God has prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." James says, "faith without works is dead" (James 2:26). God saves us to produce a people who will act upon their faith, for such is the will of God.

On one occasion, Jesus told a parable, ...

Matthew 21:28-31

"But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go work today in the vineyard.' And he answered, 'I will not'; but afterward he regretted it and went. The man came to the second and said the same thing; and he answered, 'I will, sir'; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?" [The chief priests and the elders of the people] said, "The first."

Of course. As I quoted before from 1 John, "Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth" (1 John 3:18). Such is the will of God—to believe and obey. And this is the call of our text; it's a call to love and good deeds.

However, please notice that it's more than that. Verse 24 is a call for you to encourage one another on to love and good deeds. In other words, the emphasis of the text isn't so much on how you are showing love and good deeds. Rather, the emphasis of the text is upon you encouraging another to love and good deeds. Do you see it? The main thought in verse 24 is this: "**Let us consider** how to stimulate one another." This is the call of God upon our lives.

See, it's not merely enough to be engaged in love and good deeds. God's call upon our life is to bring others along in love and good deeds. We are called "to stimulate" one another. Or, "stir up" one another as the ESV says. Or, "spur one another on" as the NIV says. A great way to translate it would be, "provoke."

In the original Greek, this word is usually used in a negative sense of provoking or irritating or rousing to anger. Kids, you know what this is about, don't you? You probably know about this, even in church. Your brother is sitting there, minding his own business. But, you start to poke him in his leg. Not to hurt him, mind you, rather to annoy him. At first, he thinks it's an accident, so you poke him again. And then, again, and again. Pretty soon, he acknowledges the problem that you are and gets angry at you. And you have succeeded (in your sin) to get him to sin. That's how this word is usually used.

But, in this context, the provoking is a good provoking. It's a provoking to love. It's a provoking to good deeds. This is the sort of provoking that Yvonne and I did with each other this past summer, when we decided to work on being diligent in our physical exercise. We began running together. There were times when I didn't want to go running, but she provoked me to run. There were times when she didn't want to go running, but I provoked her to run. Together, we benefitted each other for more than we could ever do on our own. (If the truth were known, we need some more provoking to get off the couch).

And this is our text this morning. We are called to be those who provoke others to good things, like love and good deeds. "Well," you say, "how is this to be done?" I'm glad you asked, because this text is begging us for application this morning; and, you'll get application today. As most translations say, "let us consider **how to**." This is eminently practical for us this morning. So, "How is this to be done?"

Now, one of the keys to knowing how is the word order in the original text. It's translated faithfully in the major translations. However, there's an emphasis in the Greek text that helps us a bit at this point. Here's a literal translation, keeping the word order of the Greek text: "Let us consider one another towards the provoking of love and good deeds." I will say that again, "Let us consider one another towards the provoking of love and good deeds." The key to stimulating one another to love and good deeds in the study of one another.

It's done like this. Get to know others at the church, and study them. You ask them questions. You find out their strengths. You find out their weaknesses. You discover what their gifts are. You notice what areas of need are in their lives. You observe the areas in which they flourish. You detect the areas in which they are floundering. And then, think about them. Then, do what you can do to encourage them on to love and good deeds.

When you see something commendable, honor them by telling them that you noticed God's work in them in a specific way. This would encourage them to pursue these things more. Perhaps they are weary in doing well, but your encouragement maybe be truth they need to help them to endure in their work (see Galatians 6:9, 10). When you notice a lack of love, speak to them gently to encourage them in the right way. If done right, this would encourage them in the ways of love.

When you hear of an opportunity of something that they can do for others, when their gift fits the need of others, notify them of the need and encourage them to help. You may open up a new opportunity for them that they didn't know anything about, but would be glad to do. An example of this would be our friend Karen, who has a love for animals. If you have a question or concern about animals, Karen is the one to ask. The same with financial questions: Phil and Ray are gifted in financial matters. Ask them your financial questions. Dirk knows how to fix pretty much anything around the house. Call him with your household questions.

It may be as simple as asking them for help in your own life. Recently, I had a problem with my roof; some shingles flew off. And so, I talked with Brian, who has worked as a roofer. Anyway, he came over and spent 30 minutes way up high on the roof (a place where I was too scared to go), replacing the broken shingles. Now, think about what happened here. I had a need. And so, I looked across the body and said, "Well, now, who can help me?" I asked Brian. He engaged in a good deed, helping his friend in his distress. I stimulated Brian to love and good deeds, by making my need known and asking Brian for help. And the result is that I gain! And, Brian gains by engaging in love and good deeds.

This past week, we had problems with our air conditioner, so, I called Garth and he helped me out, thereby showing his love to me and at the same time, engaging in good deeds. It's win-win all the way around. These were just two examples of many in my life.

And I have noticed that if you are in a position of weakness in the church, there are plenty in the church who are willing to help. They just need to know of the opportunity. And as you make the opportunity known, they are stimulated to love and good deeds. When other

opportunities come, I encourage you to let them be known.

But, it's not merely you telling others what to do, as a supervisor. Often, it's bringing them along to help you. "Hey, here's an opportunity to serve. Why don't you come along with me?" The most effective way of provoking is to modeling it before others and bring them along.

This is surely the most effective way in your family to do this. Fathers, model love and good deeds at home. Encourage your children to follow your model. The words of my father still ring in my ears, "Steve, I will never ask you to do anything that I haven't done first, or that I'm not willing to do myself." So, fathers, don't merely order your children around, demanding that they do this and that. No, show them what a life of love and good deeds looks like. Then, use your God-given authority to stimulate them to follow in your steps. Who do you need to stimulate to love and good deeds, but your children?

Now, the extent of these things is broad. This can go on all over the place in many different forms and in many different circumstances. It may be helping someone with a house repair. It may be giving to someone who is in financial need. It may be visiting a hurting member of the congregation. It may mean babysitting. It may mean reminding someone of the gospel. It may mean giving a meal or a ride or a book or a CD. It may mean taking an outing someplace. It may mean praying for one another. It may mean just speaking encouraging words. There is nothing more detrimental to love and good deeds than a complaining spirit.

This is the call of the text. Notice that it's not a program issued from the leadership of the church. Rather, it's a grassroots movement of those in the church, in which the people of the church are involved in each others' lives to such an extent that they know each other well enough to urge them on to love and good deeds. Now, this takes time and it takes effort. And it's not easy. Yet, it's the call of Biblical Christianity.

You can't merely attend some church service and think that you have fulfilled your God-ordained call in your life. We are called to live in community with one another, to love one another, to serve one another, to help one another. And if you are off, doing your own thing, serving Jesus alone, then you are missing a crucial component to your life of faith: the body.

Now, this isn't the first time in the book of Hebrews that this has been mentioned. Turn back to chapter 3. Look at verses 12-13, ...

Hebrews 3:12-13

Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

The danger mentioned here is hardness of heart - refusing to listen to the Lord and refusing to follow in His ways. The antidote to these things is encouraging one another. It's you encouraging me. It's me encouraging you. Or, as others have said, "Sanctification is a community project." I need you to help me grow in my love for Christ. You need others to help you grow in your love for Christ. You need the body, and the body needs you.

The book of Hebrews is filled with warnings. In chapter 2, the warning is Don't Drift. In chapter 3, the warning is Don't Harden Your Heart. In chapter 6, the warning comes, Press On! In chapter 10, the warning comes, Don't Continue in Your Sin. In chapter 12, the warning comes, Don't Come Short of the Grace of God. And the way to heed the warnings is to engage your life in close community, so that others would remind you of how great Jesus is and encourage you to press on!

Perhaps we can learn from the bison. As you all know, our family visited the Badlands of South Dakota, along with Yellowstone. At both of these locations, there were bison. Now, for some reason, David, my three year old son has gained an attraction for these animals. And so, Yvonne recently checked out some books from the library on bison and was reading them to David. I have one book called, "The Bison and the Great Plains." The book follows one animal, Mandan, a cow bison, through the various situations that come about in her life. The book tells of her herd in which she lives, and how she survives on the plain, and the weather she faces, and the dangers she encounters. I want to pick up the story of Mandan as she faces danger.

Although the bison were strong and fearsome, they too were hounded by predators. Only a few species could hope to capture these huge beasts. The bison were threatened by the wolf, the coyote, and mountain lion, and the grizzly bear. ...

Bison herds had a special method of defending themselves. One day a pack of wolves appeared before Mandan's herd. The cows instantly banded together and formed a solid wall of alert animals. All at once the wolves charged at the herd, hoping the frightened animals would start a stampede. If the cows scrambled and ran, the wolves would have been able to take several calves and possibly a cow or two as well. Mandan and the rest of the cows remained in position, however, and the wolves gave up and moved on. This time Mandan and her calf were safe. [\[1\]](#)

We can learn from the bison. The safety of the individual is the strength of the whole. We are all in danger. We are all in danger of drifting away from the Lord. We are all in danger of hardening our hearts. We are all in danger of coming short of the grace of God. We need others to help us keep focus upon the Lord. We need others to stimulate us to love and good deeds.

And so, I ask you: are you doing this? Are you actively engaged in thinking of how you might stimulate others to love and good deeds? Are you actively engaged in provoking others to love and good deeds? For those who are (and there are many), I encourage you as Paul did to the Thessalonians, "excel still more" (1 Thess. 4:9-10). And for those who aren't, I call you to realize your danger.

Now, for the original readers, this danger was of crucial importance. The big temptation for them was to go back into their old, familiar Judaism. The big temptation for them was to go back to the priests and offer up their sacrifices. They were being pulled away by their friends

and family members, "Come back! Your Jesus isn't able to save you! You need your family. You need your priests and your sacrifices. You need to follow the Torah!"

Our problems are similar. We may not be tempted to return to Judaism, but we are easily pulled away by the attraction of the world. There is the pull of the world in our lives. There is the pull of the flesh in our lives. There is the pull of the devil in our lives.

John 2:15-16

Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

In America, this is our pull. It's the pull of materialism. America is the richest country in the history of the world. Our easy tendency is to place our hope upon the material world. And so, what do we need beyond anything? We need to hear others talk of the things to come. We need to see others act upon their faith.

So, I encourage you to speak with each other about God. Let your conversations be spiritual. Let your conversations be Bible-saturated. Speak much of the glories of God and of Christ. Set your minds upon the things above, and draw the minds of others there as well. Such will be an encouragement to others to "press on," which is our great need.

Unfortunately, there are many professing Christians in our culture who are off on their own, thinking themselves to be sufficient on their own. But, such is not the case. Alone is a place of great danger. Again, learn from the bison, ...

Most of the time adult bull bison were more than a match for even the large wolf packs. The wolves would test a bull for signs of weakness and, if none were found, they would move on. An animal that stood its ground was much less likely to be attacked than one that ran. A bison that ran allowed the wolves to get close enough to take large bites out of its flanks and belly. The wolves would continue to disturb the wounded bison, so it could not rest or heal. About a day or two later the exhausted bison would finally collapse. The rich bounty of meat a bison would provide was worth the wait. [\[2\]](#)

Perhaps you have heard the often repeated story of the pastor who visited a man who had not attended his church in quite some time. The man told the pastor, "I'm still a Christian. But, I don't think that I need to go to church anymore." The pastor gave no reply. Instead, he took the tongs from the fireplace that was heating the room. He removed one coal, placing it in the corner of the fireplace away from the other coals. The lone coal soon went out. But, when placed back into the heat of the fire, it caught again. The man got the message and was in church the next Sunday.

The story is old, but the point needs to be made once again. You need to be with the saints to be encouraged on to love and good deeds. And that's the point of verse 25, ...

Hebrews 10:25

not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

If sanctification is a community project, it's important for you to be engaged in the community. It's important for you to assemble with other believers so that you might encourage others. Do you realize that one of the purposes in assembling with other believers is for mutual encouragement? Others are to come and encourage you; you are to come and encourage them. When you don't come, you hurt other, because they aren't encouraged.

On one level, this takes place in our corporate assembly. But, you need to know that mutual encouragement is one of the main purposes of our small groups that will be starting up again this fall. We're planning four groups. Darryn is leading one of them. Phil is leading one of them. I'm leading two of them. Exact dates, times, and locations will be coming. But, we'll meet on Friday evenings and Sunday evenings. I encourage you, if at all possible, to make such gatherings a priority in your life. As an application of verse 25, I encourage you to come.

Small groups are times of give and take, enabling the mutual encouragement of each other. And so, I encourage all of you not to forsake your assembling together. Rather, use these groups to be a main source of encouraging others to press on in love and good deeds.

Sadly, there were those in the days when Hebrews was being written who were in the habit of not assembling together with the saints. You can see it there in verse 25, "not forsaking our own assembling together, **as is the habit of some**, but encourage one another" If the problem was in the early church, then there is a greater problem here in America. There are many in this land for whom church attendance is a convenience, not a conviction. And when church is a convenience, excuses can come easy.

But, how different this is than many others in the Scripture, who loved the assembly of the saints. And when there's love for the assembly, there's no keeping people from gathering together. David said, "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go the house of the Lord!'" (Ps. 122:1). In Psalm 84:10, we read this: "A day in Your courts is better than a thousand outside. I would rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God Than dwell in the tents of wickedness."

On the day of Pentecost, 3,000 Jews repented of their sins and came into the church. Here's what we read about them, ...

Acts 2:42-47

They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

For these people, church was no convenience; it was a conviction. You didn't have to push them to be with the assembly of believers. It was a natural desire of their heart to be with God's people, to encourage others to love and good deeds, and to be encouraged by others in love and good deeds. "They were selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need" (Acts 2:45). What heart!

And then, in the days of the epistle to the Hebrews, (some 30 years later), there were those who were losing heart. They were losing perspective. They had neglected the assembling together (Heb. 10:25).

What about you? Do you prioritize the assembling of the saints? As you think about attending a small group, are you thinking, "I don't have time for that?" I would encourage you to think about your time. Going to a small group might just cost you something: your time and effort. But, certainly, it's not as much as believers have sacrificed all throughout time.

I remember reading of a man in China during the days of Hudson Taylor, who made great sacrifice to be with the people of God. His name was Neng-kuei. He was a poor man, a basket maker. He was paid a small wage and given food for his work.

[He] found that it cost him a full third of his weekly wages to attend the meetings on Sunday. He was a skilled workman, and his master was quite willing that he should get through all there was to be done in six days, provided he went without pay on the seventh. If it gave him satisfaction to waste four days in every month he was at liberty to do so, only he must of course provide his food on those occasions and draw wages only for the time in which work was done. It was a clever arrangement as far as the master was concerned, but one that told heavily on the poor basket-maker. Two pence a day and his food had been little enough before, but now out of only twelve pence a week (instead of fourteen) he had to spend two or three on provisions for Sunday, which meant a total lessening of his hard-earned income by a third. But he was willing, quite willing for this, if only he could have the Lord's Day for worship; and there could be no doubt that he was richly repaid in the strength and blessing it brought him all through the week. [\[3\]](#)

It cost him a lot to gather with the believers. But, for him, it was easily worth it. When the heart is willing, the feet will be swift. And it all has to do with perspective. How much do you value the mutual encouragement of the body?

The writer to the Hebrews gives one last perspective: the return of Christ, "Not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and **all the more as you see the day drawing near.**"

The day here has reference to the final day, the day when Christ returns. And that day is drawing near. Do you realize that we are a day closer to that day today than we were yesterday? Do you realize that we are a week closer to that day today than we were last week? Do you realize that we are a month closer to that day today than we were a month ago? Do you realize that we are a year closer to that day today than we were a year ago? And don't you want to be ready for that day? Jesus asked the question, ...

Matthew 24:45-51

Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But if that evil slave says in his heart, 'My master is not coming for a long time,' and begins to beat his fellow slaves and eat and drink with drunkards; the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know, and will cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Recently in our family we have been reading the book written by David Platt entitled, "Radical". The subtitle is "Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream." It's been very good for our family to be challenged by such a book. In this book, He's calling us to a Biblical Christianity. But listen to the experience of those who gather together in other lands. He visited believers in Asia, who were a part of the underground house-church scene. He writes, ...

Imagine all the blinds closed on the windows of a dimly lit room. Twenty leaders from different churches in the area sat in a circle on the floor with their Bibles open. Some of them had sweat on their foreheads after walking for miles to get there. Others were dirty from the dust in the villages from which they had set out on bikes early that morning.

They had gathered in secret. They had intentionally come to this place at different times throughout the morning so as not to draw attention to the meeting that was occurring. They lived in a country in Asia where it is illegal for them to gather like this. If caught, they could lose their land, their jobs, their families, or their lives.

... On my first day with these believers, they simply asked me to lead a Bible study. "Please meet us tomorrow at two o'clock in the afternoon."

So I put some thoughts together for a short Bible study and went to the designated location.

... I don't remember when we started, but I do remember that eight hours later we were still going strong. We would study one passage, and then they would ask about another. This would lead to another topic, then to another, and by the end of the day, our conversation had ranged from dreams and visions to tongues and the Trinity.

It was late in the evening, and they wanted to continue studying, but they needed to get back to their homes. So they asked the two main church leaders and me, "Can we meet again tomorrow?"

I said, "I would be glad to. Shall we meet at the same time?" They responded, "No, we want to start early in the morning." I said, "Okay. How long would you like to study?" They replied, "All day."

Thus began a process in which, over the next ten days, for eight to twelve hours a day, we would gather to study God's Word. They were hungry.

On that second day I introduced these relatively new believers to the story of Nehemiah. I gave them the background and history of this Bible book and showed them in Nehemiah 8 the importance of God's Word. Afterward we took a short break, and I saw the leaders talking intently about something in small groups. A few minutes later one of them approached me. "We have never learned any of this truth before, and we want to learn more," she said. Then she dropped the bomb. "Would you be willing to teach us about all the books of the Old Testament while you are here?"

I laughed. Smiling, I said, "All of the Old Testament? That would take a long time."

By this time others were joining in the conversation, and they said, "We will do whatever it takes. Most of us are farmers, and we work all day, but we will leave our fields unattended for the next couple of weeks if we can learn the Old Testament."

So that's what we did. The next day I walked them through an overview of Old Testament history. Then we started in Genesis, and in the days that followed, we plowed through the highlights and main themes of every Old Testament book. Imagine teaching the Song of Songs to a group of Asian believers, many of whom have never read the book before, and just praying that they don't ask questions!

On the next-to-last day, we finished Malachi. I had twelve more hours to teach, and I had no clue what to say. Once you've taught Habakkuk, what else is there to cover?

So the last day I started teaching on a random subject. But within an hour I was interrupted by one of the leaders. "We have a problem," he said.

Worried that I had said something wrong, I responded, "What is the matter?"

He replied, "You have taught us the Old Testament, but you have not taught us the New Testament."

I smiled, but he was serious.

"We would like to learn the New Testament today," he said.

As all the other leaders across the room nodded, I had no choice. For the next eleven hours, we walked briskly from Matthew to Revelation.

Just imagine going to a worship gathering in one of those house churches. Not an all-day training in the Word. Just a normal three-hour worship service late in the evening. The Asian believer who is taking you give you the instructions. "Put on dark pants and a jacket with a hood on it. We will put you in the back of our car and drive you into the village. Please keep your hood on and your face down."

When you arrive in the village under the cover of night, another Asian believer meets you at the door of the car. "Follow Me," he says.

With your hood over your head, you crawl out of the car, keeping your face toward the ground. You begin to walk with your eyes fixed on the feet of the man in front of you as he leads you down a long and winding path with a small flashlight. You hear more and more footsteps around you as you progress down the trail. Then finally you round the corner and walk into a small room.

Despite its size, sixty believers have crammed into it. They are all ages, from precious little girls to seventy-year-old men. They are sitting either on the floor or on small stools, lined shoulder to shoulder, huddled together with their Bibles in their laps. The roof is low, and one light bulb dangles from the middle of the ceiling as the sole source of illumination.

No sound system. No band. No guitar. No entertainment. No cushioned chairs. No heated or air-conditioned building. Nothing but the people of God and the Word of God. And strangely, that's enough.

God's Word is enough for millions of believers who gather in house churches just like this one. His Word is enough for millions of other believers who huddle in African jungles, South American rain forests, and Middle Eastern cities.

[(And then, David Platt asks the penetrating question] But is his Word enough for us?" [\[4\]](#)

I ask you, "Is His Word enough for you?" Have you lost perspective of the importance of our gathering together? And so church family, will you press on, stimulating one another to love and good deeds? Not forsaking our assembling together, but encouraging one another all the more as we see the day drawing near.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on August 29, 2010 by Steve Brandon.

For more information see www.rvbc.cc.

[1] J. David Taylor, *The Bison and the Great Plains*, p. 22.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 22.

[3] Hudson Taylor, *The Growth of a Soul*, p. 464.

[4] David Platt, *Radical*, pp. 4, 23-26.