

LESSON 14
May 31, 2026

Unit III: Fulfilling Our Obligations to God and Society Provoke One Another!

DEVOTIONAL READING: Hebrews 1:1-6

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURES: Nehemiah 8:1-12; Micah 4:1-2; Psalm 122:1-9;
Matthew 28:18-20; Hebrews 10:19-25

PRINT PASSAGES: Matthew 28:18-20; Hebrews 10:22-25

KEY VERSE

Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised). (Hebrews 10:23, KJV)

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Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.
(Hebrews 10:23, NIV)

Lesson Aims

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

- Examine God's purpose and design for meaningful worship.
- Experience fellowship and worship in God's presence.
- Exercise leadership and creativity in worship.

*Key Terms

Authority (Matthew 28:18)—Greek: *exousia* (ex-oo-see'-ah): the power or right to act, decide, or control; "power" (KJV).

Baptizing (Matthew 28:19)—Greek: *baptizó* (baptid'-zo): immersing or dipping; engaging in a ceremonial act symbolizing cleansing and commitment.

Conscience (Hebrews 10:22)—Greek: *suneidésis* (soon-i'-day-sis): the inner voice guiding moral judgment.

Faithful (Hebrews 10:23)—Greek: *pistos* (pistos'): trustworthy; reliable; believing.

Hope (Hebrews 10:23)—Greek: *elpis* (el-pece'): expectation, trust, or confidence; "faith" (KJV).

Observe (Matthew 28:20)—Greek: *tēreó* (tay-reh'-o): to guard, preserve, or keep watch over; to hold fast; to keep; "obey" (NIV).

True (Hebrews 10:22)—Greek: *alēthinos* (al-ay-thee-nos'): genuine or real; "sincere" (NIV).

*(Word Study Supplement—Refer to page 2)



The Biblical Context

The text from Matthew is part of Jesus' closing instructions to His disciples. He wanted them to understand not only the full scope of His authority but also their commission to carry the Gospel to every part of His dominion. Fulfilling this command would mean leaving familiar ground. These disciples had learned that God's covenant people were limited to Israel. Yet, Jesus was sending them far beyond what they could imagine. They were being stirred—provoked—to a new realm of service.

The text from Hebrews offers an inward call to trust God while on the journey. The Hebrews epistle targets a later group of believers separate from the original disciples, because they also needed the Spirit's urging to remain faithful. The book reminds Christians that Jesus is the full revelation of God, a truth that strengthens faith and unites the church. Persecution was common in the first century, and gathering gave believers courage and strength to keep going. The Hebrews' exhortation was clear: provoke and inspire one another to love, faith, and perseverance.

Introduction

For years, the missionaries held a fifth-Sunday fund-raising program to support the church library. Dressed in white, they highlighted missions' events across the denomination. The service was lovely, with worship followed by a full meal, which the ladies always called "snacks." No one questioned the routine until a new missionary, Sister Washington, joined their church.

Sister Washington had very different ideas. The "missionary society" should be renamed the "stationary society," she said with a smile, challenging the group to pray about ways to move beyond their fifth Sunday activity and make a bigger impact in the community. She suggested supporting the work of an actual missionary in the foreign field—gathering supplies and donations. Some of the ladies wondered, "Who does she think she is? We were doing just fine until she came, trying to take over." But others took the ideas to heart and put them into practice. The mission is real. And sometimes it takes a fresh voice to remind us that the Lord never called the church to stand still . . . only to go.

ANALYSIS OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT

Pushed to New Service *(Matthew 28:18-20)*

KJV

18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

NIV

18 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

19 “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

20 “and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

The Great Commission is one of the most powerful charges in Scripture. God sends His people not to conquer but to invite others to discover God’s greater purpose. This call involved three responsibilities.

First, Jesus commands His followers to *go and make disciples*. Leaving home was not enough—they were called to create learners, people shaped by the teaching of Christ. These new disciples would bring their own cultural and religious backgrounds, but the Gospel would transform their worldview.

Second, they were to *baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*. Baptism was not simply ritual—it signified belonging to the family of God. Identity is tied to name and relationship, and baptism marked both.

Third, Jesus charged them to *teach obedience to everything He commanded*. Jesus’ teaching was wide-ranging—delivered on mountains and plains, in synagogues and temples, and in the streets. His disciples were now to pass on a way of life, not a single lesson. Christian growth would be lifelong discovery, guided by the ongoing presence of Christ.

The call to go was daunting, but Jesus promised that His presence would go with them as they faced cultural barriers, persecution, and doubt. The same promise empowers believers today to cross boundaries and live out the Gospel faithfully.

🔍 WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Imagine arriving in another country to share the Gospel and finding that the people only have a portion of Scripture. How would you help expand their understanding of God’s full story?

Holding On to a Faithful God (*Hebrews 10:22-23*)

KJV

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;)

NIV

22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

The book of Hebrews is a message to Jewish Christians facing hostility. Unlike Judaism, Christianity was not a legally permitted faith in the Roman Empire. To identify openly as Christian invited persecution, but to hide behind Jewish identity was to deny Christ.

The writer urged them to *hold fast* to their confession of hope in Christ. To “hold fast” meant not letting go, even in difficult circumstances. Their confession of faith was more than words—it was a public declaration of allegiance to Jesus as Lord. Unlike Judaism, which is inherited at birth, Christianity requires a personal decision and public witness. This made perseverance especially difficult, but it also highlighted the depth of their commitment.

The writer anchored this perseverance in God’s character: “He who promised is faithful.” God’s record of faithfulness was clear throughout Scripture. He had protected Israel, delivered them from bondage, and fulfilled promises through Christ. Because God cannot deceive, believers could rest in His promises of salvation, protection, and eternal life.

Faithfulness to God, then, was not blind optimism but confident trust rooted in His proven nature. The call was not simply to survive hardship but to endure with hope, knowing God was unfailing. That truth strengthened the early church and continues to encourage believers today.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

How do people learn to trust God in both tangible needs and eternal promises?
What practices help you cling to hope when life feels uncertain?

Why We Come to Church (*Hebrews 10:24-25*)

KJV

24 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.

NIV

24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds,

25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

The writer of Hebrews reminded believers to not abandon gathering. For a community facing threats, worship attendance was risky, yet the writer urged them to persevere because of the blessings it brought.

First, gathering nurtured love and good deeds. Love was central to the Christian community—love for God and for one another. Meeting together reminded believers that they were not alone. Good deeds naturally flowed from this fellowship, as needs were shared and burdens carried.

Second, gathering encouraged perseverance. Life’s hardships—whether persecution, economic struggles, or health concerns—could shake faith. Yet, mutual encouragement kept believers from giving up. Even a simple word of kindness could make the difference between despair and renewed hope.

Third, gathering reminded them of “the Day approaching.” Early Christians believed that Jesus’ return was imminent. Worship together kept this expectation alive and gave perspective: struggles were temporary, but Christ’s victory was eternal.

For today’s church, these truths remain vital. While technology can connect believers, nothing fully replaces face-to-face fellowship. Worship binds hearts, builds courage, and strengthens witness. The reminder is clear: worship is not optional, but necessary to sustaining faith, love, and hope.

? WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Why do you think many churches have never returned to their pre-COVID attendance levels? Can online worship truly replace the encouragement and fellowship of gathering in-person?

A Closing Thought

The promises of God are trustworthy and sure. Jesus commissioned His disciples to make new disciples, taking the Gospel beyond the limits of their geography and culture. The book of Hebrews urges believers to hold on to their hope and to continue gathering for encouragement. The message is still urgent—the call to mission is real, the need for faith is pressing, and the blessing of fellowship is essential. When Christians provoke one another to love and good works, they embody the faith that has carried the church through every generation.

Your Life

Many people live as though this world is all there is. But Christians know that history points to the return of Jesus. Gospel artists such as CeCe Winans and Pastor Shirley Caesar have given voice to this longing in songs like “Come, Jesus, Come.” Their music reminds us that faith is not only about today but also about expecting the Lord’s return. Are you living with that same anticipation?

Your World!

Imagine worshipping in a setting with believers from around the world. The languages may differ, but the melodies of familiar hymns can unite hearts. Even without understanding every word, worshippers can find connection in the Spirit. This is the power of Christian fellowship—it rises above race, denomination, culture and language, reminding us that the church is global, alive, and growing.

Closing Prayer

O Lord, help us to live by faith, to share Your goodness, and to encourage one another until Jesus comes again. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Conclusion

(Preparing for Next Week's Lesson)

Next week, we will explore Deborah's leadership as a judge of Israel. In preparation for next week's lesson, read Judges 4:4-10, 14, 21-22.

Home Daily Bible Readings		
MONDAY, June 1	"A Leader Who Sets an Example"	(1 Timothy 3:1-7)
TUESDAY, June 2	"A Leader Who Cares"	(Acts 9:36-42)
WEDNESDAY, June 3	"Leaders Who Build Other Leaders"	(Acts 18:24-28)
THURSDAY, June 4	"A Leader Who Listens"	(Nehemiah 2:1-8)
FRIDAY, June 5	"A Leader Who Intercedes"	(Nehemiah 4:1-6)
SATURDAY, June 6	"Jesus, the Pattern for Leaders"	(John 13:3-17)
SUNDAY, June 7	"A Leader Who Inspires"	(Judges 4:4-10, 14, 21-22)

Notes
