

One of our children actually requested a *Rand McNally* road atlas for Christmas. He loved maps and on trips he'd have it open and follow along as we drove. Now, every one of my kids, Phyllis and I have GPS thanks to Google maps and our phones. What is your opinion about the best? Let me suggest that any answer needs to consider one's desired destination.

People have died following a GPS off onto an unimproved road. They think that since it's on the GPS it should be okay. Joy told me a person looking for a non-existent road to PIR from their truck lot. Their on-line map showed it. If you are driving across the nation and sticking to major roads and are smarter than a bag of rocks you can use your phone GPS without many problems.

But head off hiking or into the wilderness a paper map may serve better, but both might just save your life. Cell phones get dropped, die, or just not work. The small-screen also works against you trying to get the 'big-picture' of where you are at any given time. "The best way to stay safe on trails is to use multiple sources for directions (Trimble)."

The first question in the Westminster Shorter Catechism is, "What is the chief end of man?" The answer is, "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." Perhaps you would like to get to the place where we glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

For the Jews this was achieved as daily and annual sacrifices were given for their sins and in thanks to what God had done for them. The words in 10:11 underline the continuity of sacrifice, "*stands daily at his service*" and "*offering repeatedly the same sacrifices*." The work of the priest was ineffective, offering repetitious sacrifices which could never take away sins. By contrast, Christ's single offering effectively removed sins for all time (Lea 184)."

In stark contrast to the daily ritual of the priesthood Jesus "*offered*" (past tense) Himself. It was 'one and done', "*a single sacrifice for sins*". Whereas the priests must stand in order to offer the sacrifices before God, Jesus is seated. The work is done, His work is done.

Louis Evans Jr. who founded Bel Air Presbyterian and pastored National Presbyterian in Washington D.C. preached on this passage and wrote,

*"Now cast your eye across the temple courtyard to the endless activity of sacrificial liturgy. What does it mean to you now? Yes, every sin is forgiven by that One Sacrifice; those of the past? Yes, even those. Present failures—the one this morning? Yes, He forgave that in the name of Christ. Tomorrow's sins which make you tremble now. Fear not, He will forgive that too, in the name of Christ (Evans 173-174)."*

To seek out where Christ is seated the best maps and most accurate GPS are no help. We are left being guided by God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The best maps and most accurate GPS are no help because God has, through the Holy Spirit and the blood of Christ created a *new covenant*, verses 16-17.

A covenant in which God's Law is engraved on the hearts of those being saved not on tablets, kept locked in the Ark of the Covenant. With this comes the promise that God will remember our sins no more.

The "confidence" which are in many translations of verse 19 is not about boldness or hubris but "authorization or permission (Lane 274)." We received the authorization to enter the throne room of our dad by means of Jesus' blood. What which was dripped on the sand in Jerusalem and poured from Jesus' side on Golgotha gives us permission to come before our God, Savior, Lord, and daddy.

In verses 19-25 you will find plurals like, we, our, and us used at least 11 times. This directly impacts a theology of the Church as the Body of Christ, a community. Communities are where people interact with one another. Communities develop concern for other members of the community. The Body of Christ goes beyond any secular community as we listen to hear God and His direction for us.

A key principle in criminal investigation is "Locard's Exchange Principle" that "every criminal leaves a trace behind him (Sutherland)." Sutherland, a London police officer sees this principle as applicable to all interpersonal contact. In his TEDx talk he said,

*Every time two people come into contact with one another an exchange takes place. Whether between lifelong friends or passing strangers, we encourage, we*

*ignore, we hold out a hand, or we withdraw it. We walk towards or we walk away. We bless or we curse... And every single contact leaves a trace. The way that we treat and regard one another matters. It really matters (Sutherland)."*

I believe that this principle is, perhaps, the most notable truth for us as Christ's people because, as Prov 27:17 says, "*iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another*" ESV. Between theological truth and living life there can be serious and far-reaching disconnects. One commentator pointed out that our 'theology' is there to aid us as we learn, through doing. We discover how to give into the lives of others in such a way that we become loving (O'Brien 369-370).

How important is this for our world? Back in 2013 *The Atlantic* published an article that makes the case that social connections make us mentally better. Emily Smith describes the cost of disconnection socially.

*We volunteer less. We entertain guests at our homes less often. We are getting married less. We are having fewer children. And we have fewer and fewer close friends with whom we'd share the intimate details of our lives. We are denying our social nature, and paying a price for it. Over the same period of time that social isolation has increased, our levels of happiness have gone down, while rates of suicide and depression have multiplied (Smith).*

These letters like Hebrews and others we not posted in the church newsletter or taped to a bulletin board. They were read aloud to everyone. Imagine for a moment you are hearing this read aloud. When the last sentence, vv 24-25, is read you immediately think of those who aren't present. Those who were once active. Those who have good reasons for not being able to attend worship.

One's absence is more than just "neglect, but as wrongful abandonment (O'Brien 370)." The Greek Old Testament, LXX, uses the word which indicates revolution against the things of God. "God's people have forsaken Him along with his covenant, laws, and commands (*ibid.*)."

'*Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus*' is a Latin phrase meaning '*outside the church there is no salvation*'. Historically the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches have applied the definition of 'Church' to their bodies. It is not

limited to those communions, but it is still very true. Apart from the one, universal, spiritual house, and Body of Christ there is no means of salvation.

In verse 25 it is made clear that becoming part of the Body of Christ is to be saved. It is to be placed with others who have failed. It is to be set amidst a group of people who rely on the forgiveness Christ offers; depends on the spiritual gifts of other members of the Body of Christ for encouragement; and have been so drawn together that to escape our ties would dry us out and rule our charging cords... Let us pray.

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