

Draw Nigh to God

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[0:00] A time of communion. At a time of communion we think about drawing near to God. And James 4 verse 8 says this, Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded.

Thinking on this theme of communion and closeness to God, of drawing nigh to God, let's look at it along these lines today. Number one, closeness. Do you want to get closer to God? To have that deeper walk. What's causing that distance, that gap? What is causing that barrier? Is it that our love has grown cold?

The Bible says that our sins can be a barrier. In Isaiah 59 verse 2, Isaiah writes, Your iniquities have separated between you and your God. They have hid His face from you, so that He will not hear.

Our actions can cause sin barriers to block that fellowship with God. Are you near to God? Are you drawing near to Him? Or are you distant? Far away.

How can we experience that growing close to God? How can we experience that growing closeness to God that He wants for us? What is hindering that sweet communion? The Lord wants us to grow closer to Him, to have that freshness, that fervency, to be so close to Him, in fact, that He will be in us and we in Him.

[1:32] It says in Psalm 66 verse 18, If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. Let us love Him. Let us pray. Let us pray together. Let us partake in prayer. Let us rekindle that freshness, that fervency.

What is your greater love? What is your greater love? To what? To who do you show the greatest devotion? Worship Him. There's a sign on a church, you aren't too bad to come in. You aren't too good to stay out. We need to fellowship. And of course, at the present time, that's a little difficult, but yet there's that fellowship, that drawing nigh to God, drawing nigh to God's people, that is a good thing for us. Worship.

In Ephesians 2 verse 13 it says, But now in Christ Jesus, ye who are sometimes far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

It closes that gap between us and God, the blood of Christ. We draw nigh, we draw near to God by the blood of Christ. Thanks be to God that the blood can take the sin barrier away.

Closeness. Secondly, cleanse your hands, James says. Cleanse your hands. Our hands talk about our works, of our life, our works. What are they?

[2:56] Are they clean? Are they honouring to the Lord? The picture is of the grime and dirt and uncleanness of life. Of our very efforts as being weak and dirty, defiled, faulty.

Is what we do honouring to our God? The Word talks about even religious works as being vain, as being fleshly. In Amos 5 verse 21, the Lord says that he does not delight in their religious events or assemblies.

There are times when people offer strange fire. As it were, they present worship that is done in the wrong spirit for man's praise or applause. Some religious works may be totally in vain if they are done in the wrong spirit.

Are we truly spiritual or carnal? Would the Lord be pleased to find you doing what it is you do in a normal day? Are the labours of your hands, are your works a blessing to others?

The best place to find a helping hand is at the end of your own wrist, it's been said. Are we using our hands to minister, to reach out, to touch people for Christ?

[4:10] What are we working for? Who are you working for? You cannot serve two masters, one or the other. Do you minister by holding out a hand to

help?

Do you extend a caring hand, a hand that touches others, that blesses, that brings comfort? Or is your hand used to push away or strike out?

Take his hand. Let us be Christ's hand, extended to others. Closeness is what we need. Draw an eye to God. Cleanse your hands, it says.

And thirdly, it says, cleanse your hearts. Purify your hearts, your will, your affections, your love. Are we pure in heart? Love one another with a pure heart, fervently, it says.

In 1 Peter 1, verse 22. How is your heart today? The Bible talks about believers being given a new heart, a new life.

[5:20] A new mind. How is your heart? Is it washed clean by the blood of Christ? Or is it stained with sin? Or is it stained with guilt and shame?

How is your mind? How is your mind? Is our mind renewed? As the Bible says it ought to be. Are we becoming more Christ-like or less Christ-like?

In Matthew 15, verses 7 through 9. Our Lord rebuked the Pharisees. And he said this. He said, Ye hypocrites!

Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, Saying, This people draw nigh to me with their mouth, And honoureth me with their lips, But their heart is far from me.

But in vain do they worship me, Teaching for doctrines, The commandments of men. How is the centre of your affection?

[6:18] Your heart? Is your love and motivation to glorify the Lord? The capital of heaven is the heart, Where Christ is enthroned as King.

Let us seek his cleansing power. Do we seek for those things that are above? Do we set our affection on things above?

In Galatians 5, verse 7, Paul says, Ye did run well. Who did hinder you, That you should not obey the truth?

Are you being hindered? Sin can hinder. Sometimes the biggest hindrance is ourself. Are you close to the Lord?

You may be closer than you realise, When we think of the brevity of life, The shortness of life, As we are very much aware of our mortality, Especially these days, When people are very much aware of the virus, And of the frailty of life.

[7:25] You may be closer than you realise. Let us seek him with our whole heart. Let us draw nigh. Let us draw near to him.

As the writer of Hebrews says, Having therefore, brethren, Boldness, To enter into the holiest By the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, Which he hath consecrated for us Through the veil, That is to say, His flesh.

And having a high priest Over the house of God, 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, How is your love for him?

It's been said, Tongue in cheek, Love may not make the world go round, But it sure makes the trip worthwhile.

How is your love? Is your love directed towards him? Is your love waxed cold towards God? Let it be refreshed, Refired, revitalised, Renewed.

[8:39] Let us refresh our love for him. Renew our closeness, Cleanse our works, Our way. Let us love and worship him today, Nearer, my God, to thee.

As we come round this communion time, We think of his body broken for us, Bruised and torn, Of his blood poured out, Of the great work of Calvary's cross, Where he paid the penalty for our sin. And if you would but trust in him, He can take your sin and guilt away. He can purify our hearts by faith. He can give us that cleansing deep, Deep down within.

And at communion time, We do reflect on his blood shed for us, That washes away our sin. So we might like at home to partake, Of a bread and cup, Just now, As we remember our Lord's death until he come.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank you that your word tells us, We can draw near to you, With a pure heart. We can find that cleansing, That closeness, Of that fellowship with you, Of that renewing of our love, Of our devotion, Of our hands, Our works, And of our heart, Our very innermost part, Lord,

That it can be washed clean, Because of the blood of Christ shed for us.

[10:04] Lord, We thank you for that great work, Of forgiveness, That you've given, Your mercy and love. You've extended your grace, To humanity. In Christ, You came, And paid for our sin, Our guilt, Our shame.

And Lord, We remember that today, With grateful hearts, In Jesus' precious name. Amen. Praise the Lord.