



Ministry of the Word

Sunday 24th March 2019

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Scripture: Hebrews 10:19-25

Subject: Part 25 - Superior New Way

¹⁹ Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, ²¹ and having a High Priest over the house of God, 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 confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, ²⁵ not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

We have seen so far the lengths that the writer of Hebrews has gone to in proving Christ is the fulfilment of the Old Testament. Here in these verses of chapter 10, we see the shift from teaching doctrine to applying it to the readers hearts, minds and lives. This resolve on the interconnection between theology and action is a distinctive mark of the New Testament. Doctrine must be applied. Faith must be practiced as well as professed. Truth must be lived.

Paul made it clear in chapter 13 of his first letter to the Corinthians, that salvation involves faith, hope, and love. It is these three aspects of salvation that are focused on here.

Draw Near in Faith - V19

“Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus,”

Remember that this book was primarily addressed to the Jews, therefore we can take it that the term ***brethren***, is an invitation for fellow Jews to draw near to the throne of God. They are being urged, on the basis of the careful doctrine which the writer has already laid down, to take hold of the perfect sacrifice, Jesus Christ, and to come confidently, through Him, into God’s very presence and to dwell there for all eternity.

In the last few chapters, the doctrinal layers of truth have been laid down and we’ve already looked at the old system and the many barriers that the ordinary Jew had, the ordinary Priest had and even the High Priest had in relation to entering God’s presence. So just imagine, the first readers of this book even contemplating the very thoughts, that not only could their sins be completely forgiven but they could have direct access to God in His Holy Sanctuary. Imagine them grappling this truth, that they could go personally into the Holy Place any time, any day, all year round and they could be personally known and accepted by God all because of Christ’s shed blood, His perfect sacrifice.

Here in verse 19, we see once again that Salvation is only through faith in Christ alone and through His atoning finished work on the cross. The invitation through Christ is that we can approach God, and do so boldly. Boldness here is more that coming knowing that you will be heard, but it is also the freedom of speech before him, no formula or repetition required. You can talk to God about anything, he already knows, but he wants you to pour out your heart to him. As Soren Kierkegaard said - Prayer does not change God, but it changes him who prays.

As believers, we have assurance and confidence to successfully approach God. We can go expecting mercy and grace (Hebrew 4:16), rather than justice. For if God gave us justice, He would have to condemn us, because this is what we deserve. But Jesus, through His shed blood, satisfied God’s justice on our behalf, so that we can now claim God’s mercy and grace.

You know, many people ask me ‘How do I know that God will accept me?’ The answer I can only give them is – He won’t accept you for you, but He will accept you only through Christ Jesus His Son and what he has done. Jesus gave no clearer or more moving illustration of

God's grace than the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32). The son returning home did not deserve anything and he certainly did not deserve to be accepted back with such lavish celebration. But it was the father's love, not the son's merit, that prompted the welcome. The son came back out of desperation, but the son did go back; and his coming was all the father required. Everything else the father himself provided.

The concept of simply coming to God is revolutionary to many, throughout the centuries and today. When Adam sinned, had not God put him out of the Garden and placed the angels and the flaming sword to guard the entrance? And were not all men forbidden, on pain of death, to enter into His presence in the Holy of Holies? But now, the writer says Jesus' blood, in effect, has quenched the fiery sword of judgment, and He has torn the veil of the Holy of Holies in two. If you come through Him by faith, you not only can come into God's presence, but you can come with confidence. Now you are a family member, you have family rights that strangers don't.

This leads us to Verse 20-21

²⁰ by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, ²¹ and having a High Priest over the house of God,

Jesus is the new and living way. An uncrucified Saviour could not have saved. If Jesus had come into the world to only ministered in His flesh, He could not have been Saviour. No matter how many years He may have preached or how many thousand more miracles He may have performed, it still would not have qualified Him as Saviour. As long as He was alive, in ordinary human flesh, it was a barrier, in the sense that only by its sacrifice could men's sins be atoned for and the way to heaven be opened. When the physical veil of the earthly Temple was torn in two during Jesus' crucifixion, the spiritual veil, so to speak, of His flesh was also torn. Roman 5 verse 10 tells us

For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

An old preacher said after reading these verse, which to me says it all. ***"If His death could do so much to save me, what must His resurrected life be doing in the presence of God to keep me?"*** Jesus not only opened the way to God but He is now our great priest over the house of God.

We are the house of God as I Peter 2 verses 4 and 5 tells us –

“Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, ⁵ you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

We as God’s people are being built up, not torn down by God. We are being built with purpose and for purpose, and if we allow God to have His way, He will use us for His Glory.

Verse 22.

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.

This verse opens up actioning us to draw near to God. This is similar to what James had to say in his Book, in chapter 4 verse 8

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Being able to draw to God is one of the greatest privileges that we as Christians have. I’m sure back in Old Testament times, there were many Jews who would have ponder about what that might be like, and probably many Jews, over many Centuries, and yet today, we have this amazing privilege to do just that, and to know His presence, to know communication with Him, to know His abounding love, grace and mercy, and we can talk to Him freely, without fear or condemnation. So why do we hesitate, why is it a burdensome thing to go to the place of prayer? It’s a battle isn’t it, it’s a spiritual battle, but one that Christ has equipped us for! But as we are actioned to draw near, in verse 22, we are told how we should approach, with a sincere heart, in full assurance of Faith.

Sincere means genuine, without superficiality, hypocrisy, or underhanded motive. Coming to God with full assurance requires commitment that is genuine. You are coming because you want God Himself, you want relationship, His presence, His divine company, His will. The nation of Judah, like many individuals, often came to God with anything but a sincere heart.

“Judah did not return to Me with all her heart, but rather in deception,’ declares the LORD” (Jeremiah 3:10).

But a day was to come when His people would change.

"I will give them a heart to know Me, for I am the LORD; and they will be My people, and I will be their God, for they will return to Me with their whole heart" (Jeremiah 24:7).

Simon the magician made a profession of faith in Christ, but his heart was corrupt. He wanted to use Christ's name and power for his own glory and benefit, and was harshly rebuked by Peter.

"You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. Therefore, repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray the Lord that if possible, the intention of your heart may be forgiven you" (Acts 8:21-22).

Paul counselled slaves to be obedient to their masters,

"in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ" (Eph. 6:5).

From the earliest days of the Old Covenant, God had demanded a sincere heart.

"You will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul" (Deuteronomy 4:29).

The people who find God are those who seek Him with their whole heart, with total genuineness. You must have resting assurance of the finish work of Christ. This faith requires hope and love, hope of the things to come and love for God and His people.

We might well ask the question, "If faith is so important, how do I know I have the right kind?" The faith that God honours, is the faith which stems from a sincere heart, which in turn requires, felt need, content, and commitment.

Felt Need

Faith cannot begin until a person is made aware of a spiritual need in their lives by God. When Saul was persecuting the church, he had a great need for salvation, but he certainly felt no need for it. He was thoroughly convinced he was doing God's will. Only when the Lord confronted him dramatically on the Damascus road did his need become known and felt. The need in people's lives may not, at first, be clearly understood as a spiritual need. On the Damascus road, Saul could not have explained his spiritual need in the way that he was able to do some years later when he wrote the book of Romans. He simply knew that something was desperately wrong in his life and that the answer was God. Felt need does not require theological understanding of the doctrine of salvation, only a sincere heart that knows it

needs salvation. On the other hand, a person who does not feel a need for salvation, no matter how good his theology, is far from faith in God. Felt need is essential, but inadequate on its own.

Content

This is based on content of the Gospel. A person does not have to comprehend the full knowledge and understanding of the doctrine of salvation before he can be saved, but he does need to understand and accept the basics of the gospel truth (1 Corinthians 15:1-5). They must know that they are lost in sin and need the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. The idea of "blind faith" sounds spiritual, but it is not biblical. God wants us to trust Him because we know Him, we may not know the details, but we know God who makes them.

Commitment

I was once told a definition of the difference between loyalty and commitment, because we can get that confused. Loyalty, I was told, was like a Hen laying the egg, but Commitment was the pig giving us the rasher and sausage! You see, many people think that they are committed but in fact they are loyal. They will just do what they believe duty calls them to do, but they will not give their all. The climax of faith is commitment. Professing Christ, without commitment to Christ, is not saving faith. In the open air with the sketch, I often told the story of a tightrope walker who liked to walk a wire across Niagara Falls. He liked to do it preferably with someone on his back. Many people on the bank expressed complete confidence in his ability to do it, but he always had a difficult time getting a volunteer to climb up on him. Many people express complete confidence in Christ but never trust themselves fully to Him. A believer, in the same way, must totally commit his life to the Lord Jesus Christ. Only then is faith, saving faith.

We draw near to God, with a sincere heart and in full assurance of Faith, all because God is satisfied with the sprinkling of the blood of Christ. He has removed our sin and freed our conscience. We are changed on the inside as we are washed by the Word and born again. Having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience is a beautiful picture of deliverance, already mentioned in Hebrews 9:14. This assurance has nothing to do with what we have done, or what we can do, or bring, but it is placing our confidence in Christ alone!

Having our bodies washed with pure water, does not refer to baptism, but has to do with our living, and how the Holy Spirit changes our lives. It is the same cleansing mentioned by Paul in Titus 3:5 "the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit" and in Ephesians 5:26 "the washing of water with the word".

Christ's death pays the penalty of sin for us and God is satisfied; and the cleansing act of the Holy Spirit begins to change us on the inside and He is satisfied. God's justice and righteousness are both satisfied; and because of this, a believer can come into God's presence with confidence.

From being called to action to draw near with boldness because of what Our Lord Jesus has done, we are called to another action here in verse 23 -

Verse 23

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.

Holding fast, is the opposite of letting go. We are told here to cling onto the confession of our hope without wavering. The confession of our hope is Christ. Regardless of the circumstances we need to be ready to give a reason for our hope. Peter encourages in 1 Peter 3 verse 15 –

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defence to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

A person who is genuinely hopeful will hold fast. Continuing on is a mark both of faith and of hope. Holding on does not keep us saved, any more than good works will make us saved, yet, both are evidence that we are saved.

Holding fast is the human side of eternal security. The Reformers called it "the perseverance of the saints". It is not something we do to keep ourselves saved, but it is evidence, on the human side, that we are saved. It is a paradox, just as the doctrine of election. God sovereignly chooses those who are saved, but He will not save anyone who does not believe. God keeps us secure in His Son, but our own wills, expressed in holding on in perseverance, are also involved. God's sovereignty does not exclude man's responsibility. Jesus said, "*No one can*

come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him" (John 6:44), as well as, "*If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine*" (John 8:31).

How sad that many come to Christ and say they believe and yet are gone so soon, they don't hold on to Jesus who is faithful. In the parable of the sower, Jesus illustrated four different kinds of response to the gospel. Some people are so far from wanting salvation that the devil simply takes away the seed of God's Word before it has time to germinate at all. Others respond joyfully at hearing the Word, but their "belief" lasts only until the first temptation. Still others believe until they run into a few problems. True believers, however, "*are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance*" (Luke 8:15).

These types of response were exemplified by those who heard and saw Jesus. During the first Passover of His ministry, "*many believed in His name, beholding His signs which He was doing.*" But Jesus, knowing that their hearts were not with Him, "*was not entrusting Himself to them*" (John 2:23-24). These were examples of the second or third type of response. They made a superficial start with Jesus, but soon left Him. Jesus knew right away they were not sincere; in a few days or weeks, everyone knew it.

A true believer will be around to the end. He may become discouraged or frustrated, and occasionally fall into a sinful habit but he will hold fast the confession of his hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. A true believer's faith and hope are never in vain, because they are in a God who is faithful to His promises.

"Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass" (1 Thessalonians 5:24).

God will do His part and the true believer will also do theirs!

God's answers may seem to be a long time in coming, and our waiting may be uncomfortable or even painful but He will always do just what He promised. The reason we can hold fast to our hope without wavering is that He who promised is faithful.

With this in mind, we can encourage one another in Love.

Verse 24-25

“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”.

Yes, it is time to think of other members of the family of God, to think of each other rather than just ourselves.

If you were given the task to write down, in response to this verse, three ways in which you could stimulate another to love and to good work, what would your answer be?

Would one of your answers involve encouraging another to know and Love God more? To encourage them to share the Gospel with others? To fellowship with each other? To help and assist each other practically? To give to the work of the Lord and to the Church? Encourage people in their ministry?

To motivate another person, you must be around them. Now this seems a bit obvious, but yet, people often think that they can do this by just saying ‘Oh I’ll pray for you’ which really can be just a cliché, rather than taking the time to listening, to understand, to encourage them with Scriptures, as well as practical help. It’s easier to criticise than to encourage, but the more you love someone and encourage someone, you get better at it.

It is important to come together, either a small group or as a church to fellowship and to encourage one another. The Devil loves lone rangers, but there is strength in numbers. That is why there is always a battle for you Sunday morning, to come or not to come, that is the question! There will always be something to do in relation to life, that you will use as an excuse not to come but we need to prioritise. What is more important? You have to decide, it’s an action. Don’t get me wrong, it’s not just attendance to the church, it is about attention to the church, to the body of Christ. Jesus Himself commanded us in John 15 verse 12 –

“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.”

In verse 25, it gives us the reason why we should do this – it says because the day is drawing near. Which day is this? It is the coming of Christ. Do you know that there has been more persecution in the 20th/21st Century of Christians than in all the other centuries put together? Jesus warned us that as the day draws near, trials and persecutions would increase. You only

have to pick up the newspaper, or even the Church in Chain Magazine, to see what is happen in our world today. Free speech isn't free any more, there is a cost. Just as a storm can strengthen a tree, so too can these things, but it is so much harder if we do not encourage one another, if we don't make it our business to be surrounded by other Christians at some point. The only place where we can remain steadfast until He returns is with His people. We need each other. We need to be in fellowship with each other.

As we look over these verses, we really can consider our blessings as believers, all because of what Jesus has done on our behalf. We have been made children of God, and have many family privileges with that. We can come boldly to His throne, and talk to Him freely, with no barriers because we are forgiven, we have been reconciled. Theses verses are about looking forward to the coming hope, not looking back to old traditions, they are about holding fast and not letting go of the promises or of our hope, it is about refusing to weaver even in the face of trails, temptations, persecutions. We should not neglect our relationship with God, nor should we neglect our relationship with each other, for God has given us to each other for a purpose of encouragement and strength. Jesus himself told us in John 13:34&35 –

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵ By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Let me just encourage you, and motivate you to really get to grips with these things, get your priorities in life together, for the hour is drawing closer to His return and we will be made accountable. You have been given gifts, you have.. and if you don't know what they are, don't worry ask God, and it's time to share them. It's time to encourage each other and really love one another.

Amen.