

Hebrews 10:19-25

Jesus Christ is the New and Living Way

The new and living way into the presence of a holy God is through the blood of Jesus Christ.

Because of all that has been accomplished for us by Jesus Christ we can now confidently approach the Lord God in worship. Each time the writer of Hebrews stresses the saving work of Christ, he makes explicit statements about the blood of Jesus Christ. It was "not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. . . . how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Hebrews 9:12, 14). "Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus" (Hebrews 10:19). "How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?" (Hebrews 10:29). "And to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel" (Hebrews 12:24). "Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate" (Hebrews 13:12). "Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord" (Hebrews 13:20). All of these passages powerfully stress the sacrificial death of Christ for the sinner.

Therefore, there is no other way into God's presence. Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me" (John 14:6). "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

How then shall we live since we have explored these great theological truths in the book of Hebrews?

We are invited to enter into the true heavenly sanctuary.

"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" (Hebrews 10:19-21).

"The holy place" is the innermost sanctuary of the holy of holies. It is the place where God dwells in heaven. Our great High Priest intercedes in the presence of God on our behalf in the most holy place.

Enter with boldness

"In whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him" (Ephesians 3:12).

Jesus has entered into heaven as our forerunner. We can now draw near to God through Him. We have full assurance to enter because our confidence rests on the all sufficiency of Christ's death. "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life" (1 John 5:13). That is the bold assurance God gives the believer in Christ. The basis of this boldness is the fact that God is faithful to His promises. We can take Him at His word because He has never failed to keep His word.

Blood of Jesus Christ

The bold entrance is only by means of the blood of Jesus. The atoning sacrifice of Jesus is the vicarious penal atoning sacrifice that covers the believer's sins. This is the stress all through the book of Hebrews.

New and living way

It is not the old covenant with its shadows and types. Christ has opened up a new and living way by means of His death and resurrection. It is the new covenant which will never become old and obsolete. It issues in eternal life because Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. He is eternal life and He gives eternal life.

We enter in through the veil.

The old curtain shut sinful man out from the holy of holies. On the Day of Atonement the high priest entered within the veil by means of the sacrifice. The sinner was excluded, but now the way is open through the shed blood of Jesus. At the very moment Christ died the curtain was torn from top to bottom (Matt. 27:51).

Moreover, the body of Jesus was torn, His blood was shed, and the way was opened for us to enter into God's presence. We have full access into His presence by means of His broken body of Jesus. Christ removed the veil between God and His people.

Here, the author of Hebrews equates the torn curtain of the temple with the flesh of Jesus. The "new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh" (v. 20). In a symbolic way the flesh of Jesus is identical with the veil of the tabernacle. It kept sinful men out, and was also the means of entering into the presence of God. Through His flesh He opened the way for us to a holy God. The barrier that kept sinful man out of the presence of God was torn apart, and now we boldly enter into His presence by means of that shed blood at Calvary. By means of His incarnation Jesus Christ made the perfect and final sacrifice for sin. By means of the sacrifice of Jesus we have full entrance into the holy of holies.

We have a great High Priest

Our great high priest is the very one who opened up the way into the presence of God.

"Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession" (Hebrews 4:14).

Remember, Moses was faithful as a servant, but Jesus is the faithful Son over the house of God (Heb. 3:6). Our great High Priest has opened up the way into the sanctuary of God because He is the eternal Son of God. The writer of Hebrews has stressed that Jesus is seated at the right hand of Majesty on High (Heb. 1:3). He is our "great High Priest." The stress is on the superlative greatness of Jesus Christ as our High Priest. There is none to be compared to Him.

Let us draw near to God.

We are exhorted to approach God's throne of grace with confidence in prayer.

"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" (Hebrews 10:22).

Sincere heart

A "sincere heart" is one that has singleness of purpose. We are to approach Him in honest, genuine, wholesome dependence upon Him without deceitfulness. "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matt. 6:33a). Every born again believer enjoys this freedom of access into God's presence. If we have singleness of heart we experience full assurance of His presence. The writer of Hebrews is encouraging his readers to simple trust in God's great provision in His grace.

The heart is the control center of our being. It is the core of our personality. The Christian believer's heart is sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanses from all sin. We can now freely approach God at His throne of grace because our conscience is clear. We are forgiven of sin by the work of Christ. Christ has removed forever the guilt that keeps the sinner from enjoying the presence of God.

Full assurance of faith

Our faith needs to be focused on Jesus in unwavering trust. We have confidence and assurance in our approach to God through the shed blood of Jesus. "He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, because He always lives to intercede for them" (Heb. 7:25).

We are absolutely secure because of our great High Priest interceding on our behalf.

Hearts sprinkled clean

Only the heart that is sprinkled with the blood of Jesus can enjoy this entrance into the presence of a holy God.

The imagery is the Old Testament priests consecrating themselves by washing with water and the sprinkling of blood of the sacrifice. We have been cleansed and washed by the blood of Jesus (1 John 1:6-10). Our hearts have been purged of all sin by the blood of Jesus once for all. "If we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

"He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior" (Titus 3:5-6).

"Water, because it cleanses, is indicative of the Holy Spirit," wrote Thomas Aquinas. We have the water, the word, and the blood that cleanses. Hence, we see the Word of God, the Holy Spirit and the blood of Jesus working together to provide a great salvation. The Word of God sanctifies as the Holy Spirit applies the atoning sacrifice to the believer. The great truth of this passage is "the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin." Water is simply a visible sign of the inward and spiritual cleansing that God accomplished by the atoning sacrifice of Christ. This passage is not teaching that we are saved by faith in Christ plus water baptism. We are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ's death and resurrection alone. It is never Christ plus something else, no matter how religious sounding it may be.

Let's hold fast our confession of hope in Christ

"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" (Hebrews 10:23-25).

The writer has already told us to "hold fast our confession" (Heb. 4:14). The new covenant of Christ is the ground of this better hope (3:6; 6:11; 7:19; 11:1). The new and better covenant has a unique and better High Priest with a perfect sacrifice that covers all sin and therefore provides a better hope for those who come to Christ for salvation.

The confession of the early church was, "Jesus is Lord" (1 Cor. 12:3). No one can be saved without confessing Jesus is Lord (Rom. 10:9-10). If He is not your Lord He is not your Savior.

John Calvin said hope is the child of faith and is nourished and sustained by faith to the end. Hope looks to the future. Our hope is centered upon God's faithfulness. We focus our eyes on Jesus, and in Him we have salvation, righteousness, eternal life and assurance that on that great day of the resurrection we will be with Him for all eternity. We will experience that hope fully when Jesus returns in glory.

God is faithful.

God has demonstrated Himself faithful down through history. Peruse through the Old Testament and see His sustaining grace and provision for His chosen people. He has been and is faithful to all His promises. "He Himself has said, 'I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you'" (Hebrews 13:5b).

The prophet Isaiah said, "Because the LORD who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel who has chosen You" (Isa 49:7h). "Can a woman forget her nursing child and have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you" (Isaiah 49:15). Can God forget His child? Never!

That was also the testimony of the apostle Paul when he wrote: "God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Corinthians 1:9). "God is faithful" (2 Cor. 1:18). "Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass" (1 Thess. 5:24). "The Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one" (2 Thess. 3:3). "Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen" (Ephesians 3:20-21). Paul says literally, but to Him who is able above all things to do exceedingly above. It means to exceed some number or measure over and above, more than necessary. He adds the idea of exhaustlessness. Our great God and Savior provides beyond all things, super, abundantly and over and above all our need to accomplish His eternal purpose. He is faithful. He is faithful even when we are not faithful.

I could go on with many more verses from both the Old and New Testament, but I think you get the idea. God is faithful. Now go on to encourage and build up one another in that faith.

Stimulate one another to love

In verses 22-24 the author exhorts his readers to faith, hope and love. The apostle Paul also stressed this theme in several of his letters (Rom. 5:1-5; Gal. 5:5-6; Col. 1:4-5; 1 Thess. 1:3; 5:8).

God demonstrated His love for us by sending His Son to die for us while we were still sinners (Rom. 5:8). We love Him because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). Moreover, "We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him" (1 John 4:16). "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3:16).

The apostle Paul observed that the church at Corinth was a selfish, unloving divisive church (1 Cor. 1:10). It was full of divisions and competitiveness. Self-love in any congregation breeds dissention. The I, me and mine, get all I can get for myself attitudes in the great American dream is destroying churches. The American evangelical churches have been sold a bad bill of goods by a lot of false doctrine during the last 25 years. The tragedy is it is tearing churches up, and the devil is having a good time. Prosperity, health wealth and blessing theology are false heretical teachings based upon false interpretation of the Scriptures. The only ones receiving "blessings" and prosperity are the ones selling DVD's and TV programs peddling the emotional nonsense. The evangelical church needs to get back to Biblical priorities and sound teaching on how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds. Here is how Jesus said to do it: "'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'" (Matthew 22:37-39).

Encourage one another

Lack of love for the Lord God and His disciples is demonstrated by forsaking the assembling with other believers in worship and Bible study. It is an indication of self-love and self-centeredness instead of agape love for God. As believers in Christ we do have a responsibility for every member of our churches. It is our responsibility to reach out to one another in love and give encouragement to faithfully serve Christ.

In every church where I have pastored I have used encouragement cards. Take a three by five card and print encouraging verses of Scripture on one side and the other write a personal word of encouragement to someone who is hurting, bereaving, going through a difficult time, or a note of thanks or congratulations for an achievement. You will be surprised how often people are in a need of a kind word. Build one another up in the Lord. It is extremely difficult to live the Christian life as a lone ranger. We need one another.

Christ is returning

Our job is to encourage one another, to build up one another in faith until the coming 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" (Hebrews 10:25).

The Day or Day of the Lord in this passage can mean only the last day, the ultimate eschatological day with the consummation of God's eternal purposes.

The Day of the Lord will be a day of judgment for some and a day of blessing for others. It all depends upon one's personal relationship with Christ. He is referring to the "great and glorious day of the Lord" (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:20) that "will come like a thief in the night" (1 Thess. 5:2; Rev. 3:3; 2 Pet. 3:10-13).

It will be a time when believers are gathered together to be with Christ (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 2 Thess. 2:2).

The words of the apostle Paul are very appropriate application of this passage in Hebrews. Both writers are burdened with how to stimulate believers to love and discipleship. "According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a

reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire" (1 Corinthians 3:10-15).

The critical question is what is your relationship with Jesus Christ? If you have never put your trust in Him this is the perfect time to do it. Jesus Christ died for you on the cross. He paid your sin debt to the righteousness of God so you do not have to pay it. He paid it in full when He cried out from the cross, "It is finished!" It was an all sufficient sacrifice for your sins and unbelief. Now He offers you complete pardon, forgiveness and cleansing for all sin. You do not have to face the wrath of God. If you trust Him it is turned away. Jesus bore the full wrath of God on your behalf.

What must you do to be saved? Simply ask Him to be your savior and believe on Him. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved," the Apostle Paul told the Philippian jailer. And that is also true for you and me. "That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation" (Romans 10:9-10). You do not have to psych yourself to some great emotional experience. The Bible says believe on Christ. That is simple trust or dependence upon Christ and His sacrifice for your sin. Jesus paid it all when He died for you on the cross. Believe on Him today and you shall be saved.

I often hear people say, "I am afraid I don't know if I have enough faith." How much faith do you need in order to be saved?

The Bible does not teach that you are justified because of your faith. Faith is not works.

Faith is nothing more than the instrument to receive our salvation. Nowhere in Scripture will you find that we are justified on account of our faith. The Scripture says that we are justified by faith or through faith. Faith is nothing but the channel by which this righteousness of God in Christ becomes ours. It is not our faith that saves us.

What saves us is the Lord Jesus Christ and His perfect saving work. It is the death of Christ upon Calvary's Cross that saves us. It is God putting Christ's righteousness to our account that saves. Faith is only the channel and the instrument by which His righteousness becomes mine (2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 4:24). The righteousness that saves is entirely Christ's. My faith is not my righteousness and I must never define or think of faith as righteousness. Faith is nothing but that which connects us to the Lord Jesus Christ and His righteousness.

The whole emphasis on salvation by faith is clearly on the object of our faith: Jesus Christ. Jesus saves! Faith does not save us. Jesus alone does that.

If we are saved at all it must be through faith in the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12).

Spurgeon once said, "It does not take a strong faith to save you, just faith. The weakness of your faith will not destroy you. A trembling hand may receive a golden gift."

The object of our faith is the all-important thing (Acts 16:31). Our faith must be focused on Christ Jesus and His saving work on the cross. He died as our substitute. We must trust in Christ to save us.

The righteousness that God has graciously provided becomes ours through simple faith. Ponder over Romans 3:22, 24-25, 26, 28, 30 and observe the emphasis the apostle Paul is making in these verses. Faith will not earn your salvation. If it did then faith would be works and God would owe you something. Faith is essential because only those individuals who put their trust in Christ will be saved.

The apostle Paul wrote, "The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe" (v. 22). Sinners are "justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith" (vv. 24-25a). God did it this way as a demonstration "that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (v. 26). You cannot boast if you are saved by grace through faith in Christ, "For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the Law" (v. 28). Moreover, "He will justify the circumcision by faith and the uncircumcised through faith" (v. 30).

If you have never done so, will you believe on the Lord Jesus and be saved today? "Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1).

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