

Confidence Before God, Boldness Before Others (Hebrews 10:19-39)

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[0 : 00] Over the next couple of weeks, I am very blessed to have the opportunity to go on a sabbatical. Now, in addition to this time off to take some time to relax, one of the main goals for the sabbatical is to think through a discipleship pathway for the church.

It was interesting that many of the things that I was already thinking about as far as this pathway goes, many of those things were reinforced this week as I began to look at this week's passage. After a number of chapters of theology and right doctrine, we get to some of the applications that all of that theology brings to our life this week.

And the text that we're in today has a couple of options of teaching through it, in my opinion. I'm sure there's many, but one of those is to take three or four weeks and gradually go through some of these things and really dive in deep to some of these things.

But the other option that we're going to be taking today is kind of taking a step back and seeing the overview and seeing how all of these truths come together that we should be applying to our life.

[1 : 13] And so our passage this week covers a significant portion of scripture. It's going to be Hebrews 10 verses 19 through 39. But the main idea that the author is trying to communicate to us from this passage is because of Jesus, we can confidently come before God and boldly live for him.

Because of Jesus, we can confidently come before God and also boldly live for him. Now, the main thing that I want us to see today is that our salvation was bought and paid for by Jesus.

And living for him will be counterculture to this world, but living for him is worth it. Living for Jesus will be counterculture to this world, but living for him is worth it.

Now, we're going to be reading all of this passage today, but we're going to do it as we walk through it and break it up into these sections. Now, there are five truths, five things that I want us to make very clear today.

And we're going to very quickly go through some of these things. We're going to very quickly go through those. So I just want to go ahead and give you all five of them to begin with. And so it'll save some of you from afterwards.

[2 : 26] I missed the third one. I missed the fourth one. Some of you like to make sure you have all of those down. So I'm going to go ahead and give you all of those things to begin with so that we can work our way through them. To begin with, we want to see the importance that we know Jesus.

We know Jesus. We follow Jesus. Don't reject Jesus. Count the cost of following Jesus and be faithful to Jesus. So know Jesus.

Follow Jesus. Don't reject Jesus. Count the cost of following Jesus and be faithful to Jesus. And so to begin with, I want us to see how important it is that we know Jesus.

We get this from the first two verses of our section this week, verses 19 and 20. It says this.

Therefore, brothers, since we have comforted, confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is through his flesh.

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus. You see, for the last nine chapters, the author has been showing us the supremacy of Christ.

[3 : 38] How Christ is so much better than anything and everything in this world. And sharing the good news of the gospel. Now, as he gets ready to give us some application and also share some strong warnings, he gives us a very quick recap of the gospel.

He gives us a very quick overview and review of what we've already been learning for nine chapters and wants to make this very clear as we get ready to apply this to our lives.

He says, We have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus. We have seen the author make it very clear that the holy place here doesn't just refer to the most holy place in the tabernacle or the temple, that part that only the high priest could go behind once a year. But he's telling us very clearly that Jesus doesn't just enter into the shadow. He doesn't just enter into the cup. He goes into the real place, the real presence of God to secure our forgiveness. And it says he went through the curtain, that is, through his flesh. You see, the thick curtain in the tabernacle stood as a constant reminder that our sin has separated us from God.

[4 : 56] That we can't enter into his presence. And so it tells us that Christ went through the curtain, that is, through his flesh. And so when Christ's flesh was torn for you, the temple curtain was also torn.

Now, this actually happened in history. It actually happened at the death of Christ where the temple curtain was torn in two. It was a physical sign of a spiritual reality.

Now, because of Christ, you and I, as believers, can walk straight into the most holy place. We, as believers, because of what Christ has secured for us, can go straight into the presence of God. And this is not because of our worthiness, of our actions, but it's because of the worthiness of the sacrifice. Because Christ made this sacrifice for us.

You see, one of the things that Hebrews does beautifully is to show us the uniqueness of Christ. He was uniquely qualified to make a permanent and lasting sacrifice for us.

[6 : 02] Jesus was uniquely qualified to pay for our sins because he is both God and man. You see, in order for him to make a perfect sacrifice for us that would be enough forever, that wouldn't require another sacrifice to be made over and over again, like the priests of the Old Testament, in order for this sacrifice to be enough to be done, then he would have to be God.

In order to bridge the infinite chasm between us and God would require an infinite sacrifice. But we also see that this person would have to be human.

Like us, familiar with our shortcomings, understanding what we're going through in this life, in order to pay the price for humanity, he would have to step into humanity.

And so we also see that this person would have to be perfect in order to make a sacrifice. Because if he was not perfect, then a sacrifice would have to be made for him, much like the priests of the Old Testament.

And so what we see very clearly as we work our way through the book of Hebrews is that the sacrifice to pay for our sins, to pay for our sins once and for all, that wouldn't require a constant sacrifice, that would have to be made over and over again, would require this person to be God, would be like man, and also to be perfect.

[7 : 26] And so what we very clearly see is there's only one. There's only one God, man. And there's only one who is God, man, and perfect, and that is Jesus. And so it makes him uniquely qualified to pay this sin debt for us.

J.I. Packer, speaking on this incarnation, he knows, he says, Hebrew stresses that had he not thus experienced human pressures, weakness, temptation, pain, he would not be qualified to help us as we go through these things.

As it is, his human experience is such as to guarantee that in every moment of demand and pressure in our relationship and walk with God, we may go to him.

Confident that in some sense, he has been there before us, and so is the helper that we need. In every single situation and circumstance in life, we have one that we can go to.

One that will never fail us, and this is the confidence that we have. This is why it's important to know Jesus. What the author has done beautifully, and what I hope to have accomplished as we look through this, is to see that Jesus is not only enough for us, but Jesus is available to us.

[8 : 43] Not only is he enough for us, but he is available to us. We are all dead in our sins, but the sacrifice on the cross is enough for all of us to be able to come to God, for all of us to be able to come to him.

And so next, the author gives some application to this understanding of who Jesus is and how we should follow him and how we should know him. And so once we know the gospel, once we know Jesus, we are called to follow Jesus.

We're called to follow him. Look at verses 21 through 25. It says this, And let us consider how to stir up one another, to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

And so in this passage, the author gives us several let us statements. To begin with, as believers, as those who know Jesus, it says, let us draw near.

And it says to let us draw near with true hearts. The passage tells us that as believers, our hearts are sprinkled clean from an evil conscience.

[10:27] You see, under the old covenant, the priest would take the sacrifice of these animals and they would sprinkle objects in the temple with the blood in order to cleanse them.

And in order to make them pure, they would sprinkle the blood of the sacrifices on these things. And so figuratively speaking, Christ's blood has been sprinkled on our hearts so that we can have new life.

Because of this, we can draw near to God. And as believers, we have the full confidence that we can go into the presence of God, not in ourselves, but in the precious blood of Christ that has been sprinkled on us to cleanse us.

And this is wonderful news for us because it is the presence of God that gives our lives joy, meaning, and purpose. It is being in his presence that gives our life meaning, that fulfills us because in the garden, this is what we were created for, to have this relationship with God, to be able to be in the presence of God.

Sin has destroyed this, but Jesus has restored it. And so we see we are to draw near. But next we are to hold fast. We are to hold fast to our confession, to what we believe.

[11:42] And when I read this, my mind immediately went back to Hebrews chapter 6 when we were talking about holding fast. In Hebrews 6, we are told it says, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope that is set before us.

And we have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain. There's a song, and it's actually a song that the choir is going to be singing this week in the 11 o'clock service.

It was written by Matt Boswell, and it's called Christ the Sure and Steady Anchor. And in this song, he writes these words. He says, You see, we're to hold fast to this anchor that is in Christ, that has gone before us, that has gone into the presence of God, that has bought and paid for our redemption.

This is what we are clinging on to. In this life, when our faith is put to the test, whether it be by our own doing or others trying to bring us down, we must hold fast to the anchor of our souls, hold fast to our confession that our hope in this life and the life to come is in none other than Jesus Christ. And there is nothing that is more secure than Him. We recognize what we are holding on to is truth. And that truth is what we build our lives on.

[13:37] Finally, in this section right here, we see that we are to consider how to stir up one another. It says, Let us stir up one another. Now, some of us are really good at stirring up one another.

But it's important that we see what we are to stir up one another to do. We are to stir up one another to do good works. You see, my kids are really good at stirring one another up. In fact, another translation that some of your Bibles may have, it says to provoke.

Charlotte has a master's degree in provoking. She can provoke everybody and get them all stirred up. But what this is telling us to do is to stir up one another to love and good works.

Now, either way that you look at it, whether your translation says provoke or to stir up, either way, what the author is communicating is we are to do this to the point that it can become uncomfortable. You know, when you're provoking somebody, when you're stirring someone up, when my kids provoke each other and stir one another up, they do it to the point that they get a reaction from somebody. They do it to the point where they actually understand that their provoking, their stirring up, has caused a reaction.

[14:47] The author is calling us to push each other to do what God has called us to do. And it's more than just a suggestion. It's more than saying, hey, it might be a good idea to do this.

It's an encouragement that leads to an action. It's an encouragement that goes beyond just a suggestion. And one of the ways that we are to encourage one another, in the early church that they were writing to, one of the ways that they were encouraging one another was to make sure they didn't neglect coming together.

Corporate worship is important in the life of every believer. The gathering together like this is important in the life of every believer.

This is what we are called to do. One commentator that I was reading this week said it like this. He says Christians must not neglect gathering together for corporate worship and for the times of prayer and encouragement.

He said verses 24 and 25 are strong words of judgment against those who are in the habit of neglecting other believers. Those who neglect the assembling together cut themselves off from the very means whereby Christ feeds, assures, and protects His people.

[16:08] to say that I can do this alone is to defy the very command of Christ. Some may claim they can hear better preaching on the internet. Probably so.

Others said they are too busy to attend church. But these excuses revealed the reality of a disobedient heart. Instead of searching for an excuse, Christians should be doing everything within their power to meet together not only because they need to be fed by the preaching of God's word but also because it is part of their faith to stir up fellow believers to love and good works.

You see, you need someone to stoke the fire in you. You need someone who will call you out when you need, you need someone to keep you on the right track to help you when you get, to get up when you don't want to get up, to shake you occasionally and tell you to get it together.

This is part of what it means to be a follower of Christ is that we stir up, we provoke one another to love and good works. The next thing the author does is he highlights only two possibilities when it comes to knowing the truth of the gospel.

When a person knows the truth, when they understand the truth of the gospel, they either believe and give their life to this truth or they reject it. And so the next thing the author makes clear for us is a strong warning and the warning is this, don't reject Jesus.

[17:41] The author gives us a very strong warning here, don't reject Jesus. Look at verse 26, we're going to pick up right there, it says this, for if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.

Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much God is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God?

This is one of several challenging passages that we have dealt with in our study of the book of Hebrews. In this passage, the author addresses an issue that was most likely prominent in this church.

That is, there were people who knew the facts about Christianity, they knew the truth, they had heard the gospel, they knew it well, and yet they went about deliberately sinning and living in sin. In the Greek, this word that's translated deliberately here, it actually comes at the very beginning of this sentence. the very beginning of this, and so what the author is trying to do is emphasize something very clearly for us.

[19:04] What he's emphasizing is stop living in sin. Stop deliberately living in this sin. The warning against sinning deliberately does not mean that all sin that we commit nullifies Jesus' sacrifice for us.

It doesn't mean that, but it does mean that just because you grew up hearing truth, just because you walked an aisle and was baptized is not evidence that you're truly saved.

You see, perseverance in a changed life is evidence that you're saved. Perseverance in a changed life is the evidence. It is people who repent of their sins that are truly saved.

And this is what God allows us to do once we believe, once we are saved, then this process of repentance begins. And this is evidence of the change that has happened in our life.

A lack of repentance shows very clearly a lack of understanding of the gospel. I think one of the things the author is doing is showing that you can't keep playing this game.

[20:12] He's showing that you can't keep straddling the fence where he's saying, you know what, I want to follow God, but I also want to follow this world. You know, I want one foot here and one foot here.

One foot that is clearly looking towards God and one foot that is clearly looking away. He says, you can't do this. And it reminds me of Elijah when he's calling out to the people of Israel there, when there was many that were following the Baals.

And he said, he says, how long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him. But if Baal, then follow him.

What he's saying, he says, if the Lord is God, if you are claiming that the Lord is your God, if God is your master, if he's the one that you're following, then follow him. But if not, then stop pretending like you are and follow whatever it is that is most important in your life.

When it comes to our relationship with God, a choice has to be made. We can't go on without making a choice. We must choose who it is that we're going to serve.

[21 : 16] We can't serve two masters. And so the question then becomes, are you going to follow this world or are you going to believe, be saved, and repent?

The next thing we see when it comes to following Jesus is that we must count the cost of following Jesus. We must count the cost here.

We'll pick up in verse 32. It says this, but recall the former days when after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with suffering, sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated.

For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.

Therefore, do not throw away your confidence which has a great reward. You knew yourselves, you had a better possession and an abiding one.

[22 : 24] You see, most scholars will date the book of Hebrews to be written around just the mid-60s A.D., and they do this because of some contextual clues within it. They know that it was almost certainly written before A.D. 70 because that was when the temple was destroyed, and from some of the things that it talks about in here, many of the practices of the temple were still in place.

The sacrificial system was still in place when this was written. But also, there's some other contextual clues that lets us know that it wasn't long before A.D. 70 that this book was written, and a lot of that comes from this passage right here because it speaks of oppression, imprisonment, afflictions, all of which were consistent with what was going on in the Roman Empire.

You see, in A.D. 64, Nero burned Rome and blamed the Christians for it. And at this point, many Christians, the persecution escalated greatly.

Many of the things done to the Christians at this time were so gruesome that I wouldn't even share them in a context like this with everyone. But understand this.

There was a cost to following Jesus. There was a cost that these believers were enduring when it comes to following Jesus. And the truth of the matter is that there is always a cost to following Jesus.

[23 : 50] We can clearly see it here, but the truth of the matter is always a cost for these believers, for them to go public with their faith and be baptized meant that a target would be placed on their back.

You see, for them, they didn't have like we do here, where we can roll out a baptistry and just right here have a baptism. Many of them, for them to be baptized, they would go to a very public place like a river where everyone could see and they would be baptized there.

And all of a sudden, everybody knew that this person was a follower of Christ. Today, we're blessed with these nice air-conditioned facilities, nice heated baptistries.

And when someone is baptized, we clap for them and we get really excited for them. We should do all of those things. That is wonderful. We are blessed in so many ways. Rarely do we have to deal with a great deal of persecution.

In fact, many times the persecution that we deal with is not brought on by faithfully following God, but sometimes it's brought on by not faithfully following God.

[24 : 53] Kent Hughes, one time he noted this. He said, sadly, Christians are very often persecuted, not for their Christianity, but for their lack of it. Sometimes they are rejected simply because they have unpleasing personalities.

They are rude, insensitive, thoughtless, or piously obnoxious. Sometimes they are rejected because they are discerned as proud and judgmental. Others are disliked because they are lazy and irresponsible.

Incompetence mixed with piety is sure to bring about rejection. So don't assume that just because people are rejecting you that you are doing this the right way.

Sometimes what we need to do is to look more like Christ in our context, to show grace and kindness and show people who Jesus truly is.

That being said, there is always a cost to following Jesus. It will change the way you live your life. It will change the way you think about your finances.

[25 : 59] It will change the way that you interact with your family. It will change the way that you love your spouse and your children. It will change the way you spend your time. It will change the way you spend your priorities. You will still live with a sense of urgency, but instead of having a sense of urgency of trying to get the next greatest thing or to keep up with your neighbors, you're going to live with a sense of urgency to get the gospel message to those that need to hear it.

You see, Jesus just asked for one thing, and that's everything. He wants all of us. To put it very bluntly, if following Jesus has not cost you something, then the Bible calls us to question whether or not you are following Jesus.

If following Jesus has not cost you something, then the Bible calls us to question whether or not you are actually following Jesus.

You see, you will not find one follower of Jesus in the Bible who trusts in Jesus and their life doesn't change. It doesn't exist. There is a cost to following Jesus, but it's worth it.

But it is worth it. You see, what is remarkable is not that they lost their possessions because they identified with Jesus. What is remarkable is they responded with joy to losing their possessions.

[27 : 28] It's not remarkable that they lost everything by following Jesus. It's how they responded to losing to everything to following Jesus. They responded with joy to this persecution.

How is this possible? Because what they are gaining is far more valuable than what they were losing. What they are gaining is far more valuable than what they are losing.

But you say, well, some of them were losing their life. Let me say it again. What they were gaining is far more valuable than what they were losing.

And so, finally, we look at this passage and we see that we are called to be faithful to Jesus. Be faithful to Jesus. Verses 36 through 39.

For you have need of endurance so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what is promised. For yet a little while and then coming one will come and will not delay.

[28 : 27] But my righteous one shall live by faith. And if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.

You see, the life of a Jesus follower is a lifetime of faithful endurance, of faithful devotion. We need the hope of God's word for this journey and we need the fellowship of other people to be along this journey with us.

This is what this is telling us clearly. To endure, to be faithful to Jesus over the course of our lives, we need God's word in our lives. We need it to resonate with us. We need it in our souls, but we also need the fellowship of other believers who will spur us on to love and good works.

I've used this quote a number of times, but I believe it bears repeating. Eugene Peterson in his book, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*, he says it this way. He says, one aspect of world that I have been able to identify as harmful to Christians is the assumption that anything worthwhile can be acquired at once.

We assume that if something can be done at all, it can be done quickly and efficiently. Our attention spans have been conditioned by 30-second commercials. Our sense of reality has been flattened by 30-page abridgments.

[29 : 52] It is not difficult in such a world to get a person interested in the message of the gospel, but it is terrifically difficult to sustain the interest. There is a great market for religious experience in the world, but there is little enthusiasm for the patient acquisition of virtue, little inclination to sign up for a long apprenticeship in what earlier generations called holiness.

You see, all too often we see sanctification in the Christian life as a task to be completed. We say, we just need to hurry up and be sanctified. We just need to hurry up and become what God has already declared us to be.

But this is a lifelong process. It's a lifelong process that only sees us in when we get to be with him in heaven one day. And so as believers, we are declared righteous.

We saw this last week, we are declared to be righteous, but we will spend our lifetimes becoming what God has declared us to be. You see, it is my hope and prayer that we are able to see that our salvation very clearly was bought and paid for by Jesus Christ.

And living for him, it will be counterculture to this world. There is a cost that goes along with following him, but also we will see very clearly that it is worth it.

[31 : 18] Because following Jesus is the greatest, most valuable gift that we could ever be given. And so I want to ask you this morning, are you ready this morning to believe, to be saved, and to repent of those sins?

Are you ready to give your life to Jesus? Maybe you're like many of these believers, they know the truth, they've heard it all of their lives, they've grown up understanding this, but now they actually need to get it right.

They need to understand that going all in is not straddling the fence, you can't follow Jesus and follow this world. A choice has to be made. And so maybe today you need to make that choice. Or maybe today you need to think about where you are and look at your life and realize that there needs to be some progression that's happening. There needs to be some sanctification that happens and you need to ask yourself, what or who do I need in my life to help me more faithfully follow Jesus?

But let's be honest with ourselves today and respond in a way that brings God's name, honor, and glory. Father, thank you so very much. Thank you so much for the book of Hebrews, written to a church that is like any church in this world, struggling with so many different things in this life.

[32 : 35] But Lord, I pray that we take the truths that are found in your word, that we would see them not as just knowledge to be gained, but knowledge that we want to apply to our lives to change the way that we live.

And so Lord, help us to see you more clearly today. Help us to follow you more faithfully. Help us to endure. Help us to come alongside other believers. Help us to stir up one another, to provoke one another to love and good works.

And Lord, help us to be open when people are doing that to us. When people that have our best interest in mind are encouraging us or provoking us to follow you more faithfully.

So Lord, help us to see you clearly today. Whether that be for the first time to give our life to you, or whether that is to faithfully follow you all the days of our life.

And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. I'm going to invite you to stand this morning. We're going to sing a song of invitation. And if God is speaking to you this morning, won't you respond as we stand together and sing?