

# Hebrews

## Living a New Life in Christ

### Hebrews 10:19-25

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**CONCLUSION:**

# Hebrews

## Living a New Life in Christ

### Hebrews 10:19-25

#### INTRODUCTION:

Most of the book of Hebrews up to this point has been doctrinal. He has compared the new covenant with the old covenant and demonstrated how Jesus Christ is superior to all in His **person** and in His **priesthood**. Starting with our passage this morning, he is going to begin to show us how Christ's superiority should spur us on to enduring faith, even in the face of trials. He will show us how to put our new position in Christ into practice.

Because of our new position in Christ, we should draw near to God in faith, hold fast the confession of our hope, and consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds.

#### All Stand and Read Scripture

##### **Hebrews 10:19-25 (NASB95)**

<sup>19</sup> Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, <sup>20</sup> by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, <sup>21</sup> and since *we have* a great priest over the house of God, <sup>22</sup> 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. <sup>23</sup> Let us **hold fast the confession of our hope** without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; <sup>24</sup> and let us consider how to **stimulate one another to love and good deeds**, <sup>25</sup> 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.

#### Prayer

#### BODY:

##### **I. Our Position.**

##### **Hebrews 10:19-21 (NASB95)**

<sup>19</sup> Therefore, brethren, **since** we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, <sup>20</sup> by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, <sup>21</sup> and **since** *we have* a great priest over the house of God,

Verse 19 begins, once again, with "therefore". What is it there for? Since Jesus is superior to all in His **person** and is superior to all in His **priesthood**, it has allowed us to have a restored relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

He presents two vital truths, both introduced with the word “since”:

### **A. We Have Confidence to Enter the Holy Place by the Blood of Jesus.**

He presented the same truth in 4:16.

#### **Hebrews 4:16 (NASB95)**

*<sup>16</sup> Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

But here, instead of the "**throne of grace**", he says that "**we have confidence to enter the holy place**"—the Holy of Holies. Only the high priest could enter there, and only once a year. It was blocked off from all worshipers and even from the other priests by a thick veil. The author uses it here as a metaphor for the presence of God. It was a radical concept for a Jew to think about going into the very presence of God, much less, doing it **with confidence!**

The basis of our confidence has nothing to do with anything in us. Rather, it is “**by the blood of Jesus.**” As we saw in chapter 9, the author emphasizes the importance of Christ’s blood to provide for our forgiveness.

#### **Hebrews 9:22 (NASB95)**

*<sup>22</sup> And according to the Law, **one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.***

His shed blood satisfied the just penalty that God imposed on our sin. Thus we do not approach God with any good works or any merit of our own, but only through the merit of Jesus’ blood. The name "**Jesus**" emphasizes His humanity and the fact that His blood atoned for human sins in a way that animal sacrifices could not.

In verse 20, the author elaborates on this way of approach to God.

#### **Hebrews 10:20 (NASB95)**

*<sup>20</sup> by a **new and living way** which He inaugurated for us **through** the veil, that is, His flesh,*

The word “**new**” comes from a Greek word that originally meant “**freshly slain.**” But this sacrifice was not only freshly slain, but Jesus is also “**living**”. He has risen from the dead! This new way is not only living because Jesus lives, but also because He imparts spiritual life to us. The beginning of salvation is regeneration.

#### **John 1:13 (NASB95)**

*<sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*

This means that by God’s power, we move from spiritual death to spiritual life.

#### **John 5:24 (NASB95)**

*<sup>24</sup> “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.*

The word “way” in verse 20 reminds us of Jesus’ claim...

### **John 14:6 (NASB95)**

<sup>6</sup> Jesus \*said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

The author asserts that Jesus inaugurated this new and living way for us “**through the veil, that is, His flesh.**” The emphasis of the writer is not so much on the **veil** as a means of separating men from God. But rather, it is on the fact that when Christ died on the cross, the veil was torn in two from top to bottom which opened the way into the Holy of Holies. The point of the analogy is that Jesus’ flesh had to be torn apart in order for us to have access to God.

But there **is** a sense in which Jesus blocks sinners from the presence of God. Listen to Luke.

### **Luke 10:22 (NASB95)**

<sup>22</sup> All things have been handed over to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*.”

Also you will also remember that Jesus spoke in parables and disciples questioned why He spoke to the multitudes that way.

### **Matthew 13:11, 13 (NASB95)**

<sup>11</sup> Jesus answered them, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted.

<sup>13</sup> Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

We are also told that many of the Jews stumbled over Jesus’ common humanity, because they saw Him as just a carpenter.

### **Mark 6:3 (NASB95)**

<sup>3</sup> Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?” And they took offense at Him.

So in these instances His humanity was like the veil in the temple, blocking sinners from God. But the cross opens the way for us to enter the holy place with confidence.

If some were still hesitant to enter with confidence, the author reminds them of a second vital truth.

## **B. We Have a Great Priest Over the House of God.**

### **Hebrews 10:21 (NASB95)**

<sup>21</sup> and **since** *we have* a great priest over the house of God,

As I have said, the Book of Hebrews is the only book in the Bible to develop the truth of the priesthood of Jesus. By offering Himself as the sacrifice for our sins, He fulfilled everything connected with the Levitical priesthood. Beyond that, Jesus is a priest forever

according to the order of Melchizedek. In that role, He surpasses the Levitical priests and He abides forever at the right hand of God to intercede for His people.

### **Hebrews 7:25 (NASB95)**

<sup>25</sup> Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

The author, once again, refers to believers as “the house of God”.

### **Hebrews 3:6 (NASB95)**

<sup>6</sup> but Christ *was faithful* as a Son over His house—whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.

God does not dwell in tabernacles or temples made by human hands, but in the hearts of all of His people. As true Christians, we are collectively the temple of the living God.

### **1 Corinthians 6:19 (NASB95)**

<sup>19</sup> Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?

Paul uses this great truth to drive home our need for holiness.

Thus to recap our new **position** in Christ, the author emphasizes these two vital truths: We now have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus and we have a great priest over the house of God. Now he is going to instruct us on how to apply that position in Christ to our practice.

## **II. Our Practice.**

As we saw in 6:9-12, the author brought together the three Christian virtues, faith, hope, and love. Now He is doing that again.

### **A. We Should Draw Near to God in Faith.**

#### **Hebrews 10:22 (NASB95)**

<sup>22</sup> 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.

The exhortation is, “**Let us draw near**” (“to God” is implied). Under that command are four things that describe the true Christian:

#### **1. A Sincere Heart.**

“**A sincere heart**” is literally, “a true heart.” It refers to a heart without divided loyalties. Christians live to please God, who examines our hearts. This does not mean that believers are beyond temptation or sin. Listen how Paul describes our transformation for God.

#### **Romans 6:17-18 (NASB95)**

<sup>17</sup> But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, <sup>18</sup> and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

Christianity is not just a matter of outward conformity to certain moral standards, but also a matter of loving God from a heart that has been transformed by His grace. This requires that we judge and confess our sin on the heart (or thought) level. It is easy to fake out others about how spiritual we are, but if our hearts are not sincere before God, we are only deceiving ourselves.

## 2. A Full Assurance of Faith.

We are to draw near to God “**in full assurance of faith.**” The author will devote chapter 11 to this theme. He says there, “**Without faith it is impossible to please God**”. Faith is both God’s gift and our responsibility. Faith rests on the promises of God. We are saved through faith and we are to walk by faith. Our faith is not a mindless, blind leap in the dark. Faith rests upon the person and work of Jesus Christ, which the author has been expounding on from the start. The better we know Him as revealed in His Word, the more we will trust Him. The more we trust Him in the difficult matters of our lives, the more we prove His faithfulness and can trust Him the next time.

## 3. Having Our Hearts Sprinkled Clean from an Evil Conscience.

Also, we are to have “**our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience.**” For this and the following expression, the author is drawing on the picture of the Old Testament priests, who were consecrated for their office by being washed with water and sprinkled with blood.

### **Exodus 29:4, 21 (NASB95)**

**<sup>4</sup>Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the doorway of the tent of meeting and wash them with water.**

**...<sup>21</sup>Then you shall take some of the blood that is on the altar and some of the anointing oil, and sprinkle *it* on Aaron and on his garments and on his sons and on his sons’ garments with him; so he and his garments shall be consecrated, as well as his sons and his sons’ garments with him.**

Also, the author is probably referring to the ritual of the red heifer where the ritual sprinkling cleansed the **outward** man so that he was not ceremonially defiled.

### **Hebrews 9:13-14 (NASB95)**

**<sup>13</sup>For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, <sup>14</sup>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?**

So unlike the blood of animals, the blood of Christ cleanses the inner man, the conscience, from dead works so that we may serve the living God.

## 4. Having Our Bodies Washed with Pure Water.

The fourth description of the regenerate person is having “**our bodies washed with pure water.**” Although not all agree, this seems to refer to baptism. Both the sprinkling clean and the washing are perfect participles in Greek, which point to a past action with ongoing results. In other words, both of these cleansings took place at salvation, but have ongoing effects. Baptism, which in the New Testament is closely associated with salvation, pictures outwardly what God did to us inwardly, namely, He cleansed our hearts by faith.

## 1 Peter 3:21 (NASB95)

<sup>21</sup> Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

Taken together, having "our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience" and "our bodies washed with pure water", points to an inward purity that manifests itself in an outward behavior. Both stem from our salvation. If we do not have a clean conscience or if we are aware of sins in our conduct, we will not draw near to the holy God. So we must confess and leave our sins behind, so that we can draw near.

Before we move on, let's apply the author's point: Do you frequently "**draw near to God**" through His Word and prayer? I am often amazed to discover professing Christians who do not spend consistent time in God's Word and in prayer! Their only intake of the Word is when they go to church. The only time they pray is when they are in a crisis. Drawing near is really the same thing as "seeking" the Lord. The Hebrew word translated "seek" means literally, "to trample under foot." The idea was that if you frequently sought your neighbor, you would trample under foot a path to his house. There ought to be a well-worn path between you and God because you go to Him so often. What a great privilege this invitation is, to draw near to the living God! But it will not happen if you do not make it a priority to spend time alone with Him.

### B. Let Us Hold Fast the Confession of Our Hope Without Wavering.

#### Hebrews 10:23 (NASB95)

<sup>23</sup> Let us **hold fast the confession of our hope** without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;

"**Hope**" refers to the future hope of our salvation. "**Confession**" is coupled with and follows baptism. At baptism, we publicly confess our faith in Jesus Christ. That public confession should serve as a strong motivation to hold fast to Him in faith and obedience when we are tempted to sin or to compromise with the world. It is comparable to my wedding, where before witnesses, I pledged my faithfulness to June. As a symbol of that pledge, I put on my wedding ring. If I am traveling in a city where no one knows me and an attractive woman tries to seduce me, my ring should remind me of my pledge, so that I flee from the temptation. In the same way, I should remember my confession of faith at my baptism and be faithful to Jesus, my Bridegroom, when I am tempted to sin.

"**Hold fast**" implies that there is some danger or difficulty that is trying to pry me loose from my confession of hope in Christ. The Hebrew Christians were under the threat of persecution. We may yet face persecution in America, and we should be ready for it. We all face the pressure of conformity to the world. It is easier to blend in at work or school, instead of standing for Christ. It is easier not to say anything by way of witness. You do not want people to think you are a religious fanatic. But the author encourages us to hold fast the confession of our hope.

"**Hope**" points to the certain, but not yet realized, promises of God. We know that they are certain, because "**He who promised is faithful.**" Peter warns us that in the last days, mockers will taunt us, "**Where is the promise of His coming?**" But they fail to notice that with the Lord, one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. The day of the Lord will come like a thief, bringing with it His inescapable judgment. Peter

concludes that in light of these certainties, we ought to be people of holy conduct and godliness. Even if we face martyrdom, we have **hope** in the promises of our faithful God.

Because of our new position in Christ, “Let us draw near in **faith**.” “Let us hold fast the confession of our **hope**.” And now is going to add “**love**” to our conduct.

### C. Let Us Consider How to Stimulate One Another to Love and Good Deeds.

#### Hebrews 10:24-25 (NASB95)

*24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 25 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.*

I have often heard people say “I do not have to attend church to be a Christian.” And I suppose there is some truth to that. And I usually make the comment is that we are not to forsake “**the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is**” (KJV). But if attendance was a prerequisite to being a true Christian and you lived out in the middle of nowhere in Alaska and did not have a church within a 100 miles from you that would be a problem. But if you look at this passage closer, it is much more than just attending church.

**Verse 25** is not a fourth exhortation (as the NIV translates), but rather a participial phrase that explains **how** to carry out the exhortation of **verse 24**. Note that the command here is **not** to love one another and perform good deeds, although many other Scriptures tell us to do those things. Rather, the command is to consider **how** to stimulate **one another TO** love and good deeds. It is the only use of “**one another**” in Hebrews. “**Consider**” means that you have to give some thought to this or it will not happen. To give thought to it means that you have to take your focus off of yourself and think about others. “What does this other person need to help him (or her) grow in love and good deeds?”

“Stimulate” is an unusual word to use here. It normally has a negative connotation, meaning to **provoke**. But here, the author may be using it ironically to grab attention: “Rather than **provoking** one another to anger, think about how to provoke one another to love and good deeds.” This also implies that Christian love needs to be worked at. It is not automatic. It requires thought and effort.

The context where this provoking to love and good deeds takes place is when we assemble together. Many people have dropped out of the church. We have even experienced it here. Perhaps they had their feelings hurt by other believers, and now they claim that they could worship God better alone. Almost invariably, when people drop out of church, their focus is on themselves, not on God and others. Instead of thinking, “How can I be used of God to spur others on in love?” they think, “My **needs** are not being met. That church is unfriendly and unloving!” You can practice **faith** and **hope** when you are alone, **but you cannot encourage others to love and good deeds when you are alone!** You have to gather with the saints to do it!

The author adds that this ministry involves “**encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.**” The word “encouraging” can also mean, “exhorting.” The noun is used of one who comes alongside to give aid, such as an advocate who pleads your case in a court of law. If you are in doubt as to whether to encourage or exhort, you should first **encourage!** Save the exhortations for those you know well, and only then

when you have prayed and have the sense that the Lord is so leading you in that direction. “**The day**” refers to the coming day of judgment, when we all will give account to Christ.

## **CONCLUSION:**

I would like to conclude by making some important implications from the third command.

**First**, you **are** your brother’s keeper! It is impossible for the minister and elders of this church to shepherd everyone who comes here. For the body to be healthy, every member needs to take responsibility to encourage their fellow members. If you sense that someone may be dropping out or drifting from the Lord, consider how you can encourage them to deal with the problems that are keeping them away. If they are having a conflict with another believer, encourage them and coach them (if need be) to work through it. If they isolate themselves from the body, it is only a matter of time that the wolves will pick them off.

**Second**, this ministry implies knowing one another on more than a superficial level. Although we are a small church it is impossible to know everything about **everyone** even in a small group. Some of us will have a better knowledge of someone than others do. God can use each of us in your own special way to reach out to that person. This means meeting together outside of Sunday mornings. Our Sunday gatherings are crucial for worship and instruction in God’s Word, but it is also of vital importance that you meet with other believers on other occasions so that you can encourage one another in your Christian walks.

**Finally**, this takes some deliberate focus and effort. You must take your eyes off of yourself and think about others. If you see someone at church who seems lonely or depressed or ill at ease, take the initiative to take an interest in him or her. Perhaps you need to set up a time to meet them later in the week. It is really just an application of the “golden rule”: Treat others as you would want them to treat you.

I would ask you to think prayerfully through each of these three exhortations. Which one do you need most to apply? Do you need more consistency in drawing near to God in faith? This discipline is really the foundation for the other two. If it is lacking, the others will not be strong, either. Perhaps your need is to be bold in holding fast to the confession of our hope without wavering. Probably all of us can improve in considering how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds. Think through some specific ways that you can grow in the area that God prompts you to consider. Ask Him how you can put your glorious position in Christ into daily practice.

**What a Day That Will Be!**