

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Open your bibles with me to Hebrews 10

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through the book of Hebrews

A letter that was written to a group of Jewish believers who because of difficulties and persecution were tempted to go backwards to the formality of religion, they were tempted to go backwards to that which they lost – to a place of comfort.

In their minds, it was much simpler to go back to the sacrificial system, it was simpler for them to go back to observing the feasts and observing the law.

It was a lot harder to walk by faith in Jesus Christ.

So, the author of Hebrews is reminding them that that that through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ - that He ushered in a New Covenant and that New Covenant replaced the Old Covenant – exactly as God had promised to them in the scriptures.

And that Jesus is greater than anything they were contemplating returning to.

In our study this evening, we are going to see a transition – you see, for the last couple of two months – from chapter 5 until our study last week – the writer has been making a theological argument of why Jesus is greater –

Beginning our study this evening – he is finished making his biblical argument, now he is going to bring the exhortation to this group of Jewish believers and to us, to continue to endure and not go back.

Let's pray...

[Heb 10:19-39 NKJV] 19 Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus,

Under the Old Covenant –

One of the things that happened once every year on the day of atonement was that only the high priest would get to go into the Holy of Holies (tabernacle and then the temple) to sprinkle blood upon the Mercy Seat.

No other priest could go in and certainly no Israelite worshipper could go in.

One person, one day out of the year -

As the writer has mentioned previously in his letter – the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle and the temple - these were just models/they were shadows – they were not even real thing.

And also remember that before the High Priest could even enter into Holy of Holies – he would have to offer a sacrifice for his own sins.

So even the high priest under the Old Covenant could not enter the model with boldness – because he could only go in one time on one day out of the year and he had to make a sacrifice for his sins each time.

However, under the New Covenant – because of the work that Jesus did on the cross – those who have put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ can enter with boldness – not into the model – but into the presence of God Himself.

And we can enter with boldness – not by our own righteousness – not by how religious we are – we can enter with boldness into His presence because we have been consecrated by the blood of Jesus.

Remember the high priest – would offer a sacrifice for his own sin before he could enter.

Jesus, offered the perfect sacrifice (Himself) – once and for all – so that you and I can enter with boldness into His presence.

We have direct access to Him, we can come to Him at anytime as many times as we desire.

But, here is the problem

Many times, we choose to not enter into His presence with boldness – and the reason is that we don't deem ourselves worthy.

We don't think we deserve it.

Therefore, we measure our lives by our works

And when we see that our works don't measure up – we tend to say, “I am not going to go in because I am not good enough – I am not worthy”

And in a sense we are not good enough and not worthy – but remember, we enter not because of our righteousness – we enter because of His righteousness.

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,

We can enter boldly into His presence – not by the Old Covenant -

But a new and living way –

Remember the Old Covenant had the law on tablets, the Old Covenant could only point out that we were sinners, the Old Covenant was incapable of changing us, the Old Covenant was a constant reminder that we are in need of a Savior.

In order for the high priest to go into God's presence – behind the veil - he needed the blood of a dead animal

However, the New Covenant – God put the law – not on tablets made of stone, but in our hearts – the change happens from within.

And the One who gives us access into His presence is alive – sitting at the right hand of the Father.

And notice – through the veil –

Remember, the veil was the curtain that separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the tabernacle/temple

The veil, under the Old Covenant was the barrier between people and God

Turn with me to Matt 27

[Mat 27:50-53 NKJV] 50 And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. 51 Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, 52 and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; 53 and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

Matthew gives us examples of some of the miracles and signs that took place at the moment that Jesus breathed His last.

Earthquakes

Rocks splitting

People that were dead being resuscitated

But the most significant miracle that happened was the veil being torn.

And the reason is that it ushered a new and living way where no longer is there separation between us and God

Only the death of Christ could tear that veil and open the way into the heavenly sanctuary where God dwells.

The torn veil was God's sign that the way to Him has been made wide open to all who will come by faith in His Son.

Under the New Covenant– there is no longer a separation between God and man that hasn't been bridged by Jesus Christ

So, anyone can enter into the presence of God – by faith in Jesus Christ

22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith (1), having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience(2) and our bodies washed with pure water. (3)

I want take a closer look at these three points that the writer of Hebrews tell us on how we are to come boldly into God's throne room.

1. With a true heart. We draw near with a true heart. Notice, it doesn't say we draw near with a pure heart or a clean heart – but a true heart

That means we don't enter into His presence and try to draw near to Him as pretenders or as hypocrites

In the Gospel of Matthew 15 –

Jesus rebukes the scribes and Pharisees who had come to see Him -

[Mat 15:7-8 NKJV] 7 "Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: 8 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with [their] lips, But their heart is far from Me.

So we come before Him with a true heart –

“I know I am a sinner. But I also know what Jesus did is sufficient”

And we do this in full assurance of faith – meaning, we are completely confident that it is His desire that we approach Him.

So we don't approach Him with “Lord, I am such a loser, I am so sorry You have to deal with me, I shouldn't even be here”

The sacrifice was too great to have that type of relationship with God

We desire to draw near to Him knowing that He desires to have a relationship with us as well.

He is happy to hear from us

He is eager to hear from us

He doesn't get tired of us coming to Him again and again

2. having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience –

We draw near to Him with the confidence that we have been freed from our guilt by the work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

That Jesus has not only forgiven us but He has cleansed us a guilty conscience

So, we don't have to come before God and remind Him of sins He has already forgiven us from.

We sin, we ask for forgiveness and repent and continue moving forward in our walk.

3. our bodies washed with pure water

Just as the high priest had to stop at the laver and wash himself before He was capable of entering the holy places – so we must be clean if we are to enter the presence of the holiness of God.

As we approach the throne of God, there should be a concern for personal holiness.

We do not have access to the throne of God on the basis of personal holiness but we are never to lose sight that personal holiness is important to God.

[2Co 7:1 NKJV] 1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

If we separate ourselves from worldly thinking and acting, we are promised a closer relationship with God.

23 Let us hold fast the confession of [our] hope without wavering (4), for He who promised [is] faithful.

Remember who this letter is written to –

To Jewish believers who were being persecuted for their faith

Wavering was precisely what they were doing – as they were contemplating going back to Judaism

So the writer here calls on them - to recenter themselves and lay confident hold of the hope they had in their Messiah

“Hold on to the confession that you made as Christ as your Savior and don’t move from it because God never makes a promise He doesn’t keep”

He has promised everlasting life and the forgiveness of sin found in His Son – then that is what He is going to deliver to us.

Their hope was to be based, not in their own faith or faithfulness, but in what?

Their hope was in God who is faithful.

You & I can hold fast to our hope without any wavering because God is as good as His word

24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,

Unfortunately – this is one of those verses that are lost in translation to the English language –

These are strong words –

A better translation would be the following -

Let us take careful thought for how we can provoke and bug one another into a lifestyle of selfless love and a habit of doing good.

What a wonderful thing to strive for!

That as the followers of Christ, we would be devoted to provoking each other to love and good works.

But the writer says – if we've spent time in the presence of God, how can we do anything else but come forth with a renewed conviction that it's all true!

And because of that, we owe each other a debt of love and good.

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.

Again – everything in context

Verse 25 is connected to verse 24

Verse 24 is all about considering one another

And verse in verse 25, what the writer is saying is -

How can we consider one another if we don't know one another?

And how can we provoke each other to love and good works if we don't see each other?

You see what was happening here was that this group of Jewish believers – instead of continuing to meet with other believers – they started forsaking the assembly – they started missing church

Even in the early church – there was a problem with those who devalued the assembly they thought they could maintain a solid, healthy relationship with God apart from participation in the community of Christ.

but the Holy Spirit is clear – no they can't.

it's God's plan that being a Christian involves active participation in the Body of Christ

You see, this group of Jewish believers – because of them forsaking the assembly - started to be influenced by the Judaizers – the religious sect that had infiltrated the early church and was telling everyone that they had to go back to doing works, they were being influenced by the Jews that were telling them how much easier it was to simply live by the law.

Paul in his letter to the church in Ephesus – wrote the following

[Eph 3:17-18 NKJV] 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what [is] the width and length and depth and height--

the language makes it clear that Paul understood this as something that was apprehended by believers corporately!

What good is it to know what love is but to not receive or give it?

Also, love is not something we can experience in isolation – it presupposes the presence of others!

26 For if we sin willfully after we have received **the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.**

I had you make a note of the word “knowledge”

This is not talking about an intellectual knowledge of the Gospel

This knowledge is a knowledge that comes by experience

So the writer here is not referring to backsliding – he is referring to apostate that remains and apostate until their dying breath

He is referring to those who deliberately and willfully reject Jesus Christ as the Way the Truth and the Life –

And for those individuals - there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins. Why? Because they have rejected the One sacrifice for sins.

All that's left is the certain expectation of the wrath of God.

28 Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on [the testimony of] two or three witnesses. 29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?

If an Israelite was caught and convicted of blatant rebellion and defiance of the Law of Moses, he was executed.

They would take that individual outside the city gates and stone him or her

If that was the punishment for a willful violation of the Old Covenant, how much more severe is a willing and purposeful violation of the New Covenant?

Look at how God views apostates

- trampled the Son of God underfoot

In other words, he has despised the person of Jesus Christ.

This is indeed the case with apostates – they do not remain neutral toward Jesus they come to the point where they loath Him.

Apostates come to despise Him.

- he has counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing,

The apostate not only despises the person of Christ, he comes to mock the cross.

It is to say that the blood that Jesus shed on the cross is no different from anyone else's blood.

It is to treat His blood and His sacrifice as a common thing

- He has insulted the Spirit of grace?

In the ancient world, hospitality was an expected virtue; it was simply a part of life to open your home and entertain others.

There were few insults greater than to invite someone into your home and then tell them to leave.

That is exactly what the apostate did - He's invited the Holy Spirit to take up residence in himself, then he's told the Spirit to get lost!

30 For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The LORD will judge His people." 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

The writer is making sure that they understand what is going to happen to them if they reject Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

32 But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: 33 partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; 34 for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven.

The writer of Hebrews is telling this group of Jewish believers to try to remember when they first came to the Lord

Remember when you endured hardships and sufferings back then

Remember when you identified with other Christians who were also being persecuted and you paid a price for it.

What he is saying to them is – “You have been through hard times before and you stayed faithful to Christ – and if you did it in the early years of your Christian life – you can do it now that you are more mature in Christ”

He is reminding them of their testimony

He hits on an element of our faith that can only be developed by trial

– and that is endurance.

35 Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: 37 "For yet a little while, [And] He who is coming will come and will not tarry. 38 Now the just shall live by faith; But if [anyone] draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him." 39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

Our faith is not a sprint – it's a marathon and we need endurance.

The writer knew that so he encouraged them with the reminder that Jesus who came once, is coming again.

The faith that brought us to Christ must be maintained till He brings us home.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'