

Heb 10:19-25 Draw Near, Hold Fast, and Consider (part 1)

These verses parallel 4:14-16. And what follows from in cps. 5 thru 10:18 is, by far, the best explanation and defense of the priesthood of Jesus Christ. And then, he says the same thing again in vv. 19-25. So, these two sections serve as bookends to the priesthood of Christ. In other words, the author is saying, SINCE Jesus is our great high priest, SINCE Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Covenant, SINCE He now sits at the right hand of God, WE CAN draw near and WE CAN hold fast. And, WE CAN encourage one another in love. Let me say from the beginning, by way of application, EVERYTHING we do (etc.) depends on the fact that Jesus is our high priest. He is our access to God. He is our source of life. He is our righteousness. This is why we must hold on to the Gospel of Christ. This is why doctrine should excite us so much in this life (etc.) This is why the author of Hebrews spends 5 chapters defending this truth. For without out, we have no substance.

This is the world we live in. This substance of the good Jew is the sacrificial system. The substance of the Muslim is a sinful man. The substance of the Hindu and the Buddhist is a plethora of idol gods. The substance of the Mormon and JW is good works, which is the substance of this fallen world. And in all these cases, there is no high priest who NOW sits at the right hand of God, who has passed through the heavens, who NOW sits victorious until all his enemies are made his footstool. This is the glorious gospel of God, now revealed in the Son. And this is why we are here today as the CHURCH as we come to worship our head, the Lord Jesus Christ. With this in mind, let's turn our attention to the specifics of this passage, and see how the gospel applies to our lives. In our text, we have 3 exhortations: 1) Draw Near, 2) Hold Fast, and 3) Consider (one another). It is very interesting that these 3 exhortations from this pastor correspond with, what are called, the three cardinal graces: faith, hope, and love. To draw near is to have faith. To hold fast is to hope. And to consider one another is to love. So, Faith, Hope, and Love will be my truths. (part 1 today)

1. Faith. Because of the person and work of our great high priest, we can have full assurance of faith. Look at v. 22: “**Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith . . .**” Let me begin by saying, we draw near to God because we have a great high priest! As v. 19 says, “WE HAVE CONFIDENCE to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus . . .” There is no more fear and trembling as God's children. If you are a Christian, you are not standing away from the mountain in fear as the people of Israel did at Mt. Sinai. We do not say with the woman at the well, “**We worship on this mountain, the Jews worship on that mountain**” (John 4). Now, by the blood of Christ, we have unbroken access to the father.

Good parents, which of you will deny your three-year old comfort as he makes his way into your bedroom after a nightmare? He may come with fear and trembling, but what does he find? He finds comfort. He finds security. He comes with confidence and full assurance that you will give him help when he enters your room. In the same way, because of the blood of Jesus, we can draw near to God (every second of every day). The OC high priest could only enter through the curtain into the holy of holies, once a year, and this with great fear. But, now, we enter the holy place of God's presence through the blood of Christ. V. 20 says the curtain is opened to us through his flesh. This is his sacrifice. And as we've seen, we cannot compare the sacrifice of animals to that

of Christ, who is the image of the invisible God, the exact imprint of his nature, the radiance of the His glory.

I think of Eph. 2:12-13 where we read: **“remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”** Moses was faithful as a servant in the house of God. Jesus is not a servant (in this regard). He is the heir! He is the heir because of his priesthood over the house of God. And He is not merely the priest! He is also the sacrifice! But, unlike those animals who died and stayed dead, Jesus lives. He is a priest FOREVER after the order of Melchizedek (5:6). Look at v. 20. We have access by the “new and living way.” Look back at 7:25: **“Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.”** And 7:16: **“who became a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life.”** Today, under the NC, we draw near to God because Jesus laid down his life on the cross . . . And, he rose again. He lives forever! And in these wonderful truths we find our assurance. In these things our faith is grounded. Therefore, we draw near to God through Christ, with full assurance, with boldness, with confidence. This is FAITH.

Look at the 2nd part of v. 22. Because of the person and work of our great high priest, our **“*hearts are sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies are washed with pure water.*”** Many use this verse to argue that our “baptism” with water aids in our washing. But, this is not so. Our baptism is a picture of this washing, which is the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit. Let’s move to some applications concerning faith.

Application: Let me ask, *“What does faith look like?”* (practically) Faith is described as those who draw near from the heart. This implies boldness, confidence, joy This is the assurance of faith. These are the results of the person and work of Christ. We could say, *“these are his gifts.”* Faith itself is a gift. And these things, like boldness, confidence, joy, etc. all accompany faith. Christianity is living. It is not dead as the other religions of this world that can never make faith sure. How is your boldness, your confidence, your joy, your assurance as you approach God. Only you can answer this question. At the end of the day, like a child entering his parents’ bedroom, a Christian is marked by one who draws near to God with full assurance.

Application: Warning! Everyone who names God as their father is not a child. You might say, *“Jon, how do you know this?”* Well consider the words of Isaiah 29:13: **“And the Lord said: “Because this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men . . .”** These are the ones Paul speaks of in 2 Tim. 3:5: **“*having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power.*”** I think of Jesus’ words in Matt. 7 when he says: **“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.”** (Matt. 7:21–23).

2. **Hope.** Look at v. 23: **“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.”** Here we see the word “hope.” We are all familiar with the word “hope.” I believe God has placed it in the hearts of mankind. And it’s meaning can be a bit subjective because we use it in so many ways. We say things like *“I hope the Phillies win the World Series this year.”* *“I hope my Betsy makes the volleyball team at school.”* Just this week at a birthday party for Kylie, her grandmother brought home made ice cream. And when I heard it, I thought, *“I hope she brought chocolate.”* We say things like, *“I hope my cousin heals from COVID-19.”* We watch movies like *Star Wars*, where the rebellion is based on “hope,” hope that one day the Empire will be defeated.” We all understand this concept. And here we see the author of Hebrews speak of the confession of our hope. And he says “hold fast” “without wavering.” You see, in our world the hopes we have come and go, they get stronger and weaker with our circumstances and the outcomes of those things in which we hope. And when our “hopes” in the common things of this world fail, so go our hopes. Just think of how many things you hoped for didn’t happen.

But, the Bible teaches that there is a hope that does not waver. We might call this, *“the hope of all hopes.”* And what is this hope? It is the hope of a confession (v. 23). What is this confession? What do we confess as Christians? It is the confession that Jesus is the Son of God. It is the confession that Jesus came to this world, the Son of God took on flesh. It is the confession that Jesus both the high priest and the eternal offering of God. It is the confession that He died and rose again and that He now sits at the right hand of God. **THIS IS THE CONFESSION OF THE GOSPEL OF GOD.** We see these kinds of confessions throughout the NT. Let me give one example. Turn to 1 Timothy 3:14-16. Paul writes to Timothy saying, **“I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.”** And what is this truth? It is what he calls here, the **“mystery of godliness.”** He continues in v. 16: **“Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness . . .”** And what is this “mystery of godliness?” What is this “confession.” He continues: **“He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.”** This is the gospel we confess. This is the gospel we believe. And this truth is SURE!

Brothers and sisters, there is ONLY ONE HOPE that is SURE! It is the hope of salvation found only in the gospel of Christ! The Bible calls this the hope of glory (Col. 1:27). If we think back to my examples of hope in this world, the things in which we hope are almost endless. And though some of our hopes may come true, there is always an end to those hopes in this world. The hopes of this world are transitory. We might even say they are shadows and pictures of the one true hope. They will pass away with this world. And even now, often our hopes are shattered. I am sure that many of the difficulties in this life are not what you hoped for. But, when we look to Christ, there is NO chance of failure. Heb. 6:19 says, **“We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain . . .”**

Turn back with me to 1 Tim. 3:14 as we see Paul use the word “hope” in two ways. In v. 14 he “hopes” to come to Timothy soon. You see, this may or may not happen. Yet, there is hope.

These are the hopes of this world like *“I hope my child will get better. I hope the war in Ukraine ends soon. I hope my children will be godly one day. I hope my cancer can be cured.”* On and on we can go. But then we see, as Christians, our real hope is in a confession of v. 16. Again, **“He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up to glory.”** This is our confession. And in this confession lies our true hope. For our confession shows where our faith lies. Both our faith and our confession is founded and secured in the person and work of our great high priest, Jesus Christ the Lord!

And that’s not all. I’ve left out the DEEPER and more fundamental basis of our hope. Look at the 2nd part of v. 23: **“for he who promised is faithful.”** Our hope is in the gospel of our confession. But, there is no gospel if there is no faithfulness of God. How does the 3-year old child know to run into the bedroom in the middle of the night. Because he knows his parents are faithful. He knows their character. He knows they will not let him down. And it is an instinct upon which the child doesn’t even have to think. The reason we have hope in the gospel of Christ is because our Father is faithful. **“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change”** (James 1:17). God is faithful to do what He says He will do.

More and more do I love Heb. 10:5-7 which expresses this truth. Look there with me. **“Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; 6 in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. 7 Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.’”** These verses describe the will of God in the sending of the Son which I believe took place from before the foundations of the world. And the “book of the scroll” is none other than the secret book of the decrees of God. And by His grace, He has revealed this promise to us in the Scriptures. This is none other than the mystery hidden and now revealed in the Son, so clearly revealed in this letter to the Hebrews. I think of Isaiah 53:10 which says, **“Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him . . .”** And for our sake, as those who have sinned and fall short of God’s glory, this is the promise of all promises. And here we stand on the other side of this promise! We behold the glory of God in the face of Christ (2 Cor. 4:6). This is the promise of salvation, upon which the helmet of hope is secured. God is faithful! God is faithful! God is faithful!

Starting in Heb. 11 this is what we see. All those great heroes of the faith acted because they believed God (faith) and because they did not waver as they knew God was faithful to do what he promised. Heb. 11:13 says: **“These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.”** The principle is the same, the FAITHFULNESS of God. They looked forward with their pictures and their shadows and their copies. We look back to the substance, the fulfillment of God’s promise!

Therefore, brothers and sisters, 2:1: **“we must pay closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.”** If you are drifting, press on. Draw near to God by faith. Hold on to your confession. Know that God is faithful!

Therefore, brothers and sisters, 3:1: **“you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, who was faithful to him who appointed him . . .”**

Therefore, brothers and sisters, 3:12: **“Take care, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God . . .”**

Therefore, brothers and sisters, 3:15: **“Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts . . .”**

Therefore, brothers and sisters, 4:1: **“while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it . . .”**

Therefore, brothers and sisters, 4:11: **“Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience . . .”**

Application: We are confessing Christians. This is what we do! We tell the world Jesus is Lord! God has set his King on Zion, his holy. And we urge men and women to “kiss” the Son (Ps. 2).

Application: Our hopes are not connected with the things of this world. They are “anchored” to Christ, his person and his work. This is our confession! This means that many of the things we hope for in this world will fail. But, our hope in Christ will not. This also means that we can rejoice in our sufferings, our persecutions, and the trials of this sinful world.

Application: Trust the faithfulness of God. There is no confession if God were not faithful.

Application: If the gospel of Christ does not motivate you to good works, you do not possess the gospel. If there is no change of heart, there is no real change of action.