

Hebrews 10:19-39

“Don’t Draw Back, Patiently Persevere”

Today we want to pretty much just jump right in and get started on that which is set before us. We don’t really need an extended introduction because the author himself briefly summarizes what he’s already said so as to put us into a position to rightly respond. Or to understand that another way he’s developed the principle, now let’s get practical, he’s established the doctrine, now it’s on to the duty.

That’s fairly typical once again of a “Pauline” type writing style. He spends the 1st 3 Ch’s of the book of Eph developing doctrine (½ the letter) before he says a thing about the Christian responsibility. In the book of Romans he dedicates even more content to developing principles before he begins to get practical, and that’s because the way we *behave* is intricately attached and connected to what we *believe*. and So it’s critical that we have a solid foundation upon which to build before we begin to set in order that which makes for the frame work of our day to day lives. If I don’t have a balanced *belief*, I won’t have a very balanced *behavior* pattern, I’ll be all weird, or do things disorderly and inappropriate. It’s essential to proper practice, to have a proper perspective.

So all this time has been spent developing doctrine. We’ve seen the superiority of Christ and the N.C. as compared and contrasted with the law and the O.C. in virtually every category. He outshines the angelic hosts, Moses, the law, again Joshua, the prophets, Aaron and the Levitical priestly order, He’s obtained a more excellent ministry, He’s the mediator of a better covenant, which has been established on better promises through the means of a greater sacrifice. Through the sacrifice of Christ we no longer focus on our failure as sinners, but His finished work as our Savior. He did for us what we could never do for ourselves; He provided the solution to our sin dilemma.

Vs 19-25

So as you can see it’s like the author here says, “Ok class, for all this time we’ve had our text books open so as to study up on the competency of Christ, the superiority and proficiency of Christ. Now it’s time to get out there and respond properly/practically to all that we’ve learned principally.” It’s like the question is anticipated, “Mr. author, I’m tracking with you doctrinally, Christ is greater in everyway to the O.C....obviously, but how does this play out in my everyday activity?”

He says here in Vs 19, “Therefore, brethren,” and as you well know by now (you could probably explain it better than I can) but this word, “therefore” is generally a transitional word. It’s that word that alerts us that we’re stepping out of the realm of principle and into the realm of practical. “In the light of all that we’ve come to realize, this is how we’re to respond.”

But then just before he launches into what we're to be doing practically in light of all that we've learned doctrinally, he issues this summary parenthetically. (Read Vs 19b – 21)

You see it's a quick reminder of what we've learned, exactly who Christ is and what He's done for us. He's our great/eternal High Priest (not after the order of Aaron but after the order of Melchizedek, Ch 7) He's the Lamb of God with out spot, with out blemish whose blood was shed for the sins of the world, and He's the living way through which we come into the very holiest of all, the presence of God Himself.”

The 1st thing the Holy Spirit wants us to be aware of in coming into (entering) the holiest of all is that we're to do so (notice) “...having boldness.”

Not with arrogance; or a sense of personal worthiness as though I've done something to deserve to be there, that's not what this word “boldness” means. We're talking here about a free confidence, grounded on the consciousness that our sins have been forgiven. But what an indescribable blessing, we can come into the presence of God with boldness, with confidence. and Again not because of any work that I've done, or any sacrifice that I've made, but because of the blood of Jesus Christ shed on my behalf, I come through the means of a perfect sacrifice that's accomplished for me perfect atonement.

Now we've rehearsed several times that on that 1 day, the High Holy day of the year, the Day of atonement the High Priest would enter into the holy of holies of the tabernacle. But believe me you it wasn't with *boldness* that he entered in behind the veil. It was with a sense of awe, and incredible fear and intimidation, because if things weren't done just right, (and I mean *just* right) be it ceremonially, sacrificially, in his life personally, he'd be struck dead. and When he emerged from the holy of holies he threw a big party for all his friends because he'd survived in the presence of God. There's nothing *bold* about that, it was with quivering trepidation and reverent humiliation for fear of his very life that he entered into the Holiest. But because of the work of Christ we can come freely, confidently into the presence of God.

Vs20

Only one person was able to come by the old way, the High Priest, and only 1 day a yr for a brief and dutiful ceremony. But by the *new* way, through the new covenant all who are in Christ are invited to enter in and abide continually, every moment of everyday in His presence. Because we enter in through the way which He consecrated for us, which He prepared for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh. Remember last week how we observed the fact that in the volume of the book, all the scripture points *to* and is fulfilled *in* Christ? Here the author points out to us that even that veil that hung in the tabernacle, that article through which one would pass to come into the presence of God spoke of Christ.

So we begin to understand what Jesus meant when He said, “*Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.*” John 10:7 and Again, “*I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved,*” John 10:9 When He said, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*” John 14:6 That veil didn’t grant one access into the Father’s presence, it spoke of the place of Christ who would be the means through which we would approach Him. When His flesh was torn, when He laid down His life, both Matt and Mark record for us that the veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom. No, access isn’t granted through a piece of material, but through Christ. and Of course it’s a *living* way because Christ is alive having risen from the dead on that 3rd day.

Vs21

Christ Himself insures complete and total access; He’s the High Priest over the house of God. and So the idea here is that because there are such rich, steadfast and irrevocable resources available to us in Christ...

Vs22

What are we to do in light of all that Christ has done *for* us, everything He is on behalf of us? “Let us draw near...” We’re to respond and react in humble thanksgiving by drawing near to God. He’s made the way for us to have an ongoing intimate relationship with the Father, hey, let’s do it...

Listen; do you know *why* Jesus died on the cross? Do you know *why* He extends perfect righteousness, perfect cleansing to you? Do you know *why* He sits as our great High Priest enthroned in the heavens? Hey, it goes well beyond the fact of simply avoiding hell and entering heaven (as overwhelming as that is).

It goes beyond making a way for you and me to simply be apart of some blessing of the month club, or so that we might win friends and influence people. He did it *all* so that we might *draw near* to Him. and To think of how it must be to God, how it must feel for God after He’s done all that He has for us, then we don’t *draw near* to Him. But rather we *distance* ourselves from Him; we go weeks, or months with out drawing near to Him. It’s like we’re on the, “Don’t call me I’ll call You, God” plan. and There He is, and it’s like He’s saying, “I did all this for you, I made a way for you where there was no way, I’ve extended grace and mercy when I’d be perfectly just to judge and condemn, I gave My only begotten Son to pay the penalty of death and incur My wrath which you deserve, because I *love* you...and you won’t draw near to Me.”

What’s it going to take for you to consistently, persistently just *draw near* to God? I didn’t say, “What’s it going to take to get you to read your bible X-amount of time each day?” Or, “What’s it going to take to get you on your face praying each and every day?” Push all that aside, God wants you to *draw near to Him*. Now, I want you to realize that I don’t think you really *can* draw near to God apart from His word, or apart from prayer. But here’s the catch, so often the enemy gets us caught up in the routine, in the regimen, and so we’re all about getting our “bible time” rather than drawing near to God through the study of His Word.

We search the scriptures because we think that in them we have life, but these are they which testify of Christ and we don't draw near to Him *through* them, we just do our duty and move on. Or we're all about making sure we start our day out with a little prayer time, or working through our prayer list as opposed to really drawing near to God and seeking His heart through prayer. Oh that we would learn what it means to truly draw near to God.

These guys to whom this letter was originally written were going through some tough times. They were undergoing persecution, they were confronted by serious problems, being discouraged more than likely on a daily basis. and You can almost hear them, "I'm just confused, I don't know what to do, my family has rejected me, my boss has fired me, I'm just despondent and depressed, worn down and tired..." and The writer to the Hebrews is saying, "Listen, I'm hearing what you're saying; but I think your real problem is that you're just not drawing near... you're not drawing near to God through Jesus Christ" You see they were caught up in symptoms, they thought their problems were their turbulent times, their strained relationships, their economic hardships, whatever. The real problem was that their relationship with God wasn't on track; they weren't drawing near to God on the basis of what Christ had done for them.

You guys I just can't emphasize this enough, if this would just come on like a light in our head, in our heart. Man what a breakthrough it would be if the next time I have a counseling appointment somebody would walk in and *wouldn't say*, "Man, that wife of mine, or oh, the husband of mine, you know that boss of mine, if it weren't for those parent's of mine..." But that they would simply sit down and say, "You know it's been so long since I've truly drawn near to the Lord and I just really feel like it's messing up everything in my life..."

Now, I would never seek to belittle, or take away from the severity of a struggle in a person's life. and Maybe right now hard times are upon you. But consider this; many people have gone through much, much more than you are or I ever will, and they've done so with a great attitude glorifying the Lord. Time forbids us to give a bunch of examples but consider even Paul himself, lost everything because of his love for the Lord. Often in fear for his life, beaten, shipwrecked, with out food or drink, imprisoned, at times cold and naked with nothing to call his own. Yet his attitude was exemplary, and he glorified God with all that was in him. What makes the difference?

He drew near to God. These people drew near to God in the midst of their circumstance. We think that the problems are due to the severity of the circumstance, but if God be for us who can be against us, if we draw near to the sovereign God of the universe what can't we endure? Make it a habit, the practice, the custom of your life, that you draw near to God.

In what manner? with a true heart, with honesty and integrity, “Lord I know who I am, where I’ve been and what I’ve done, but I trust in your sufficiency on behalf of me personally.” You see, with the full assurance of faith; we come boldly, fully assured of Christ’s sufficiency, knowing that He’s cleansed us *inwardly* and our lifestyle demonstrates that *outwardly*. “Our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience (the inward transformation) and our bodies washed with pure water (the outward demonstration).” Whether these be a reference to the waters of baptism, or the washing of the water by the word of God (which is more of what I lean toward) the point remains the same. Jesus has done for you literally, spiritually, what those priests under the law had to go through ritualistically, repetitively. He’s done in truth what they had to undergo in type, He’s cleansed us.

Vs 23

#1 Let us draw near, #2 Let us hold fast. Hold fast *the confession of our hope*, Christ is your confession, you’ve confessed Christ, your hope is eternal life, that’s the assured expectation, the concrete realization that you have in Christ, hold fast, because He who promised is faithful. Again notice the emphasis, it’s not upon you, it’s not upon me, it’s upon Him. This covenant we’ve entered into with God through Christ isn’t based upon us, it’s based upon Him, and He who promised is faithful. Faithful to keep that which has been committed to His trust, faithful to complete the work that He’s begun in you. I’m so glad this whole thing isn’t based upon *my* faithfulness, or I’d be in real trouble, but He who made the promise is faithful to His promise, He watches over His word to perform it (Jer 1:12).

Vs24

#1 Let us draw near, #2 Let us hold fast, and # 3 Let us consider one another. In light of all that Christ is, and all that He’s done, let us have boldness to enter the holiest of all, let us draw near to God, let us hold fast to our confession, and let us consider one another. Notice that in each of those exhortations you don’t find the singular pronoun, it’s always in the plural, we don’t see, “I” or “me” or “you” it’s “us.” “Let *us*, Let *us*, Let *us*.” There are no lone rangers in Christianity, the bible never justifies isolation there’s to be (what I call) a spiritual cross pollination. There’s to be body life taking place between us as bro’s and sis’s in Christ. We’re to consider (not ourselves) but one another, what for? In order to stir up (or provoke) love (which has to do with the attitude) and good works (which has to do with actions).

Vs 25

Now there’s obviously lots of application we could draw from this, somewhere down the line someone came up with the brilliant idea that you could still believe in God and not go to church. and We could take some time to hammer on that position (not saying that church is a legalistic trip) realizing that it’s clear violation of the written word of God to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, and that the presupposed position of the NT is that believers are assembling corporately for the purpose of glorifying the Lord and building up the body.

There are all kinds of Vs throughout the NT along the lines of “and When you gather...” it’s just presupposed that we will, because God has ordained body life, the corporate structure of the church. But if you don’t like hanging out with believers now I don’t know what you’re going to think of heaven, it’ll be full of them.

Other’s think, “Well, I’ll go to church when I need to.” The problem with that is not only that it lends itself to isolation, which lends itself to frustration and disillusionment, which lends itself to lethargy and complacency which can ultimately lead to abandonment, I’ve seen it over and over again. But that’s not the only problem with that position, the main problem is that it’s self serving, not other’s oriented. “*I’ll go when I need it.*”

I want you to realize something here and that is this, the primary motive mentioned here is the assembling together wasn’t for what one could *get out of it*, but rather for what one could *contribute to it*. Provoking one another, stirring one another unto love and good works. There is so much to be gleaned and gained through body life, and so much to be lost apart from it. You guys there is a purpose for which we gather that goes way beyond getting in, getting a bible study, and getting out, sounds like a whole lot of *getting* your wanting and not much *giving* if that’s your position. and If that’s your aim in being here you’re forfeiting so much, missing out on so much more that God wants to do *for* you and *through* you.

Unfortunately we’re often times guilty of stirring contention, provoking hostility, biting and devouring one another, consuming one another, when the Lord would have us to stir one another unto love and good works. Not assembling primarily for what we can *get* but what we can *give*, how can I build up and edify this body that God’s called me to? Where can I bless, serve and be involved, how can I be an encouragement and an example to my bro’s and sis’s? and All the more as we see the Day approaching, each day takes us closer to *that* day, we need each other.

Vs26-31

This is another one of those bible passages that Satan just loves to preach from. Now I’m not going to spend a whole lot of time on it, however nor am I going to soften it up or lighten its load for us. Context is important, however it says what it says. and This is what it says, (read Vs 26).

Of course the question then that would qualify the statement would be, “What is willful sin?” Because there is a sense in which virtually every sin is willful, I mean, I pretty much know as a general rule when I’m doing something I shouldn’t be, or saying something spitefully, or when I’m motivated selfishly. I mean, that’s willful sin.

As we examine the context here's the general gist of what's being said. "When I come to know through reason *and* experience that Jesus Christ is God's sacrifice for sin, I've *received* this knowledge, and yet I turn *from* it, refuse to *acknowledge* it, and decline to depend *upon* it for my right standing and forgiveness before God. There's nothing else that will merit my forgiveness, nothing else that will merit my righteousness, and all that's left for me is a *certain* (that is guaranteed) fearful expectation of judgment and fiery indignation that will consume those who've taken their stand against God."

The specific context lends itself to turning from Jesus back to the Levitical sacrificial system for the atonement of my soul. These guys were feeling the pressure of persecution and because of it considering reverting to their old customs in order to just get it to stop. But he's saying if you turn your back on Christ, there's nothing else that can save you and all you've done is insult the Spirit of God who's led you to Christ, offended the Father who's given His Son for you. You've said in essence that Christ isn't sufficient for you, that His blood isn't any better than any other animal sacrifice if that good (since you're returning to that) and in so doing are trampling Him underfoot. Now, how do you think God's going to respond to that?

If the person who rejected the law of Moses died with out mercy on the testimony of 2-3 witnesses, (being a lesser covenant) what do you think will become of the one who rejects Jesus Christ the very Son of God (being a much greater covenant)?

"It's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." So it's not saying, "If you struggle with sin, or fall *into* sin, you're going to hell." It's saying, "If you reject God's Provision *for your sin* there's no other alternative to make it to heaven." The book of Colossians tells us that we have peace with God through the blood of the cross of Jesus Christ there's no other way.

"So can I lose my salvation?" Hey, I lose my remote control, you don't lose salvation, but you can leave it, you'll always know right where it is, Christ is able to keep you no doubt, but He won't force you against your will. If you don't want to abide in Him you don't have to, just know the alternative. and You can disagree with my position there on freewill if you like, just make sure you have a scriptural reason for doing so.

Vs32-34

This is simply a plea for them to remember and return to their 1st love relationship with Christ, repeat those 1st works. He says, "Hey after you came to Christ you went through so much, too much to throw in the towel now, you've come too far, and the best is yet ahead, don't turn back." It's like when the Lord had some a bunch of disciples turn away from Him because they just couldn't comprehend the fullness of who He was and the difficulties that came along with following Him.

He looked at the 12 and said, “You guys wanna split to?” and Peter said, “Where else are we going to go Lord? You alone have the words of eternal life.” and The writer here is saying, “Think about it guys, where else are you going to go, Christ has given you eternal life. Sure it’s hard in the here and now, but eye hasn’t seen, ear hasn’t heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the good things that God has prepared for those who love Him. You just hold the line, no retreat, no surrender.”

Vs35

Of course Christ *is* our confidence, don’t cast away your relationship with Christ, maintain Christ confidence, your reward is sure in Him. and As we just mentioned it by far outweighs any present struggle you may be facing or ever will face. Paul told the Corinthians, “*For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,*” 2 Cor 4:17 Which is another way of saying that the *eternal* reward that you’ll receive will by far outweigh any *temporal* loss that you might face, remember that.

Vs36-38

Now this quote from Habakkuk Ch 2 sets the stage for the entire next Ch so we won’t linger on it now, but suffice it to say for now that with out faith it’s impossible to please God. It’s by faith that we come *to* Christ, it’s by faith that we abide *in* and walk *with* Christ. and It’s difficult to walk with Christ during difficult days when the reward seems so far away, yet the measure of your obedience, and my spiritual maturity is found in faithfulness during those days when the promise seems unfulfilled and far off at best. The just shall live by faith; but if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.

Vs39

He’s given them a heavy exhortation, but he resolves it with an encouraging commendation. “Hey guys you’re teetering on some heavy things here, but you’re not there yet, and I know you’re not going to go there, you continue to press on by faith, don’t draw back, patiently persevere.” That’s God’s word to us this morning, don’t draw back, draw near, patiently persevere, so that after you’ve done the will of God, you’ve led your life in submission *to* Christ, for the glory *of* Christ, you may receive the promise. Behold He’s coming quickly and His reward is with Him to give to everyone according to their work.

Prayer Points:

God it’s our desire to walk in those works that You’ve prepared for us beforehand and be good and faithful servants to Your Word and Your will for us individually, and collectively as a body. Help us Lord that we not get caught up in reading a book rather than drawing near to You through Your Word, or punching out a prayer list rather than drawing near to You in Prayer. and God may we never waver, but help us to hold fast to our confession, know that You Lord are faithful. and Father be there anyone here wearing out, breaking down, running thin, may you renew them this morning that they leave here today remembering from where they’ve fallen, returning to their 1st love, and repeating their 1st works. Teach us God to draw near to You.

Perhaps you're here and you've *never* drawn near to God, you've never truly surrendered your heart to Christ and today God is dealing with you. and You know it in your heart, God is calling out to you, pleading with you by the cross of Christ that you might be reconciled to Him. You can have peace this morning with God, but only through the blood of Christ, we come to God through Him, and through Him exclusively. Don't count His blood a common thing, His sacrifice as no better than some work that you can do to be ok in God's sight. Surrender *to* Him, hand your heart *over* to Him, and let Him forgive you of your sin and give you life.