

Open with me to the Book of Hebrews.

I would like to start our message today – just by reading our passage

READ Hebrews 10:19-25

- We are also excited as this is the point in our sermon series where we are leaving the summer series
 - o I pray that it was a blessing to your heart

FIXING OUR HEARTS ON JESUS

- o And we are returning to our teaching to complete our study in the book of Hebrews.
- o It is kind of like where you took the first in a 2 class series in the Spring and then you had to wait all summer to jump back in...
- o Or maybe you just think of it like taking algebra last spring and you are getting ready for pre-calc right now...
- o I know for our girls that had been asked to keep up on some studies through the summer.
 - Josie had over 300 math problems to solve and Grace had to watch movies in Spanish...
- o But since we put our whole focus on Relaying on the Comforts of Christ in the words of Jesus in the summer.
- o We probably need to take this first day back in class to review and remember what we have learned.
- o So instead of more stories or illustrations...

Introduction - Remembering where we are in Hebrews:

- Let's take the time to remember where we are...
- And how we got here...
 - o If you would open the Word with me – our main passage today will be Hebrews 10 starting at verse 19...
- YOU see our passage today was both an appropriate step off point for the summer and a great beginning to the fall
- That is because

A. Hebrews 4:14-16 introduces the central section of Hebrews and 10:19-25 concludes it

- And so today brings us back into the study with the latter bookend
- Take a look at the parallels

Slide with Heb 4 and Heb 10

- It is all reflecting a central theme of the whole of the Bible and God's desire when He says I will be their God and they shall be My people
 - o God's want to be with His people, just as He was in the Garden of Eden
 - o But we need to acknowledge that being with God, well, that is a scary place to be because of who we are...Even the prophet Isaiah declared Woe to me when he encountered the living God
 - o Even so – our passage today reminds us that being with God is not just a possibility, it is a calling from God...we are commanded to do so
 - o And how is that possible?
 - o Because what we have been studying together is true
 - o So let's go back and look again where we have been...

B. The central theological arguments of Hebrews 5-10:18 are summarized in Hebrews 10:19-21

- The author uses our first three verses today to summarize that last 5 ½ chapters of his argument

Hebrews 10:19-21 - *Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God...*

- Before we have even completed the sentence here, we can find the 3 main points that we covered in the spring...
 - o That Jesus is our better High Priest, better than the High priests of Israel...
 - o Jesus is the mediator of the New Covenant, a promise first given by the prophet Jeremiah, a new and better covenant
 - o And Jesus is our sufficient sacrifice
- We saw the first truth detailed in chapters 5-7

1. Jesus is our sinless, great high priest forever (Hebrews 5-7)

- Hebrews 5 showed us the weakness of every human high priest

Hebrews 5:1-6 – **For** every high priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; he can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself also is beset with weakness... Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest, but He who

said to Him, “You are My Son, today I have begotten You”; just as He says also in another passage, “You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”

- Human High priests were appointed by God just as Jesus would be as well
- But Jesus stands out, shining with a brilliance beyond compare
 - o To say He is better is just not enough...
 - o But our great High Priest was also needed.

Hebrews 7:26-27 – For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.

- Jesus is the better High Priest who represents us before our Holy God
- And he is

2. Jesus is the mediator of the New Covenant that brings the Old Covenant to an end (Hebrews 8-10)

- The Lord declared through the prophet Jeremiah that in a New Covenant, “I will forgive their iniquity and their sin I will remember no more.”
 - o There were High priests at that time mediating through the sacrifices called for in the law...What would change?
- Jesus would be our mediator...

Hebrews 9:12-15 – ...and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption... For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

- Or in short...

Hebrews 10:9 – ...He takes away the first in order to establish the second.

- And God’s forgiveness can be complete because...

3. Jesus is the perfect sacrifice that brings about the complete forgiveness of sins (Hebrews 10:11-14)

- In the Old way
- In truth, ever since the fall in Genesis 3
 - o The way into God’s presence had always been paved with death

- First the priest slaughters an ox to cover his own sins with the blood of the sacrifice
 - So that He might enter into the Holy of Holies
 - The very dwelling place of God
- But what about the rest of us
 - We were not allowed to enter because even with the priest's sacrifices on our behalf – we could not enter
- Jesus's sacrifice changes everything

Hebrews 10:11-14 - *Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, waiting from that time onward UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET. For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.*

- If you are still looking at our passage today
 - V 20 says that Jesus inaugurated a new and living way into the Holy place
 - Into the Holy place of God
 - And not just in the temple
 - Not just as a peak behind the curtain
 - A new and living way into the very throne room in heaven
- And death is no longer necessary for you and for me

You Can have access to God – Use It!

- Because the sacrifice of Jesus was sufficient
 - Once and for all that those who ever shall believe in Him
 - No longer needs to taste death
 - But that we might have eternal life
- “The pathway to God is a new and living way.
 - It is new because Jesus has inaugurated a new covenant.
 - It is living because we do not have a dead savior.
 - Sacrificed animals would stay dead but Jesus came to life again at the resurrection.
 - now he lives to mediate for us
 - He is eternally there for us
 - He is our great high priest over the House of God, his people.”¹

¹ Kruger – Hebrews for You p. 146

- And because this is true, the author wants us to see what it means for our lives today.
- Thus he gives us...

3 responses to Christ's sacrificial and priestly work

- I say it that way because that is what the author has written...
- Since we have a great high priest
 - o This is how you should respond
 - o And the author exhorts us to respond in three ways
 - To Draw near
 - To hold fast
 - And to consider what we are doing
 - o Let's take a look at those together
- The first exhortation is to respond and...

I. Draw Near to God - FAITH (v.22)

- All through the spring, we looked at the contrasts between the Old and the New to be able to see that Jesus makes life better
 - o We contrasted Jesus with the old sacrificial system called for in the book of Leviticus and the High Priests who carried it out.
 - o From the time that God gave direction for the Tabernacle in the wilderness and then for the building of the Temple by Solomon
 - o The people of Israel knew the rituals that were tied to worship of God
 - They came to the temple year after year
 - And would have been familiar with the sounds and smells that came with the sacrifices...
 - But yet they only came so close
 - o The Court of the Gentiles was supposed to be a place of prayer accessible to all people
 - o The Court of Women came next – accessible only to Jewish men and women
 - closer, but not near to God...
 - o The Court of Israel was for ritually pure Jewish men so that they could participate in worship and religious ceremonies
 - o The Court of the priests held the altar where only the priests could go
 - o And within the court of priests was the holy place and the most holy place
- At each level less and less people could draw near to God
 - o But it was not just the rules that kept people out...
 - o The people understood the meaning of the Holy of Holies

- The place only entered once per year and only by the High priest who had to prepare in a precise and detailed manner
 - Or the result would be his death...
- As the high priest entered, others remained outside and prayed, listening for the bells attached to his robe to know that He was still alive
- For anyone else, entry was out of the question and for those who understood, they would have found the idea terrifying...
 - They would have known the stories of those who attempted to approach God in an unworthy manner – and the result in every case was death.
- For us today, that is not our experience
 - And so the weight of this exhortation may not seem as significant...

Hebrews 10:22 - *...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.*

- Should we fear drawing near to God?
- In the Narnia Series – C.S. Lewis depicts Aslan, the Christ-like savior figure as a Lion

[Picture of a Lion]

- If you are on safari in Africa, and you have stepped away from your vehicle and you see a lion like this...
- Let's me ask – Which way will you go?
 - To run towards the Lion seems to bring an assured death...
- But in our passage – we are being told to draw near to the lion
 - And that we can do so with full assurance that we will not be mauled and eaten...
 - If you look back in Hebrews – we find that this has been a theme all along
 - To draw near
 - That regular men and women might draw near to the mighty presence of God without fear of death
 - In chapter 4 we are called...

Hebrews 4:16a – **Therefore** let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace...

- Because we have

Hebrews 7:19b – **[the New Covenant]** is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.

- And we need not fear the terrifying glory of a Holy God because

Hebrews 7:25a – Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him...

- The key point is that we draw near through Him, not through the old way...

Hebrews 10:1 – For the Law... can never... make perfect those who draw near.

Our passage for today...

Hebrews 10:22a – ...let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith...

- Helps us to see that it is not in our sacrifices, our works, our righteousness, but only through Faith in Jesus Christ can we be saved, only by faith in Jesus Christ can we draw near...
- for

Hebrews 11:6 – ...without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

- Over and over again, God is calling us
 - o God is exhorting us that He wants us to draw near
 - o God is comforting us with the truth
- And praise the Lord, he is not asking us to reach a level of faith
- Or confidence does not come in the strength of our faith or the longevity of our faith
 - o That would depend on you or me
- PTL that we draw near with confidence not in ourselves
 - o But...

A. With confidence in the object of your faith = Jesus (v. 22)

- “This confidence does not mean saying “God is lucky to have me on his team.”
 - o Our confidence is about who Christ is and what he has done.
 - o So, our approach to God is humble:
 - we recognize that we do not deserve what we've been given.
 - We walk into God's presence with assurance that he loves us;
 - that this is not because we are great but only because Christ has redeemed us.
- At the same time we can have assurance about the state of our own hearts”²

Hebrews 10:22 – ... with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith...

² Kruger, p. 147

- Why can we have confidence in a sincere heart, a new heart as promised in Jeremiah...
- That new heart assumed two things
 - o First that you are not willfully deceived about your own heart
 - Jeremiah describes the heart this way...

Jeremiah 17:9a – The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick...

- o How could we have confidence in that
 - An insincere heart minimizes its own sin
 - An insincere heart makes excuses for wrongs committed
 - An insincere puts its faith in itself
- o But Jeremiah asks...
- **...who can understand it?**
 - o And the second characteristics of the new heart...
 - a sincere heart will humbly acknowledge its own deception when it
 - o and accurately understands who Jesus is and what He has done

- **Luke 7:47**

- What that means is that our new hearts can draw near to our Holy God only when our hearts have been sprinkled clean and washed

B. By means of Jesus' washing and cleansing blood (v. 22)

Hebrews 10:22 - *...having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.*

Heb 10:31, 12:29

- This summer when we studied how Jesus washed the disciples feet before sharing in the Passover supper,
 - o We discovered and we rejoiced in the truth that our cleansing only needs to be done once
 - o Because the foot washing was symbolic of our cleansing by his blood on the cross.
 - o Jesus told Peter – unless I wash you, you have no part in me
 - o Without reproaching that sermon – I want us to remember that our cleansing by Christ's blood shed on the cross is the once for all act that covers our sins, past, present and future so that we might have the confidence to draw near to God.
- John would later write – These things

John 5:13 - These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life."

- You may have heard me say –
 - you can know that you know that you know...
 - that is the sincere heart with a full assurance of faith...

GOSPEL PRESENTATION

- Because I know you all want to find ways to draw near –
 - Let me propose some application
 - Guys – when you were young and single – if you wanted to draw near to a certain someone...
 - You chose to pay close attention to them
 - To get to know them and to show them that you knew them...
 - That meant spending time and communicating intentionally.
 - Everyone – Let's all draw near to God with a sincere heart with full assurance of faith
 - How will you spend time with the Lord
 - Do you have a specific time chosen to spend with God.
 - You make dates with that special someone...
 - Let's all choose to make dates with God.
 - Set aside time to just spend with Him
 - And when something disrupts that
 - Make a conscious effort to show God that it was important, by changing other things to get it back into your day.
 - Then look at how you intentionally speak with God in prayer...
 - Yes – I believe in those popcorn prayers, or simply stopping and praying in the moments when it is needed...
 - But what about those scheduled phone calls
 - Will you make prayer a priority in your day
 - And consider what you talk about in prayer...
 - Again with the dating analogy
 - If all you did was talk about you and what you wanted...how long will they stick around?
 - God won't break up with you...but

- As you come to know Him through His word – learn to pray for the things that God find most important.
 - Like John the Baptist – do we pray that we would become less and God would become more in our lives
- So Draw Near
 - Spend Time with God
 - And pray personally and intentionally with God
- Draw Near
 - If you are a follower of Jesus Christ – you can draw near
 - Right now
 - With a sincere heart
 - With full assurance
 - Because of your faith in Him alone
- It is a new and living way
 - No more death to gain access to God
- And as you do...

II. Hold Fast to Your Confession - HOPE (v.23)

- This is a second exhortation that builds off of the teachings from the last 5 ½ chapters...

Hebrews 10:23 - *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful...*

Guthrie quote

Calvin Quote

- Let's consider what does it look like to hold fast...
- Mark Kruger in the commentary Hebrews for you provides an illustration...
- One of the heroes in Tolkien's Lord of the Rings trilogy would be the Hobbitt Frodo Baggins
 - He is the unlikely hero with the quest to destroy the Ring of Power by casting it into the fires of Mount Doom deep in the territory of the darkest evil in the land, Mordor...
 - He runs into many challenges and trials on his journey, and the weight of the burden of evil is constantly attacking him.
 - There are many points along the way where his hope wavers.
 - But with him is his friend, Sam Wise Gamgee who walks with him, encourages him and reminds him of the truth as Gollum tries to deceive him.

- There is no way that Frodo makes it to the end without Sam...
 - Tolkien's work is a vision of the Christian life
 - If we are to remain faithful in the long and difficult journey of the Christian life,
 - Sam is the example of what is needed
 - Sam embodies two principles that are key – the first of which relates to this point...
 - He holds fast to his beliefs about their mission without wavering
- As we hold fast the confession of our hope
 - Our confession refers to what we believe
 - We must not waver from what we know to be true...
- Kruger goes on to say...
 - "Sometimes people have a negative perception of theology or doctrine. Perhaps they are tired of hearing about disagreements between theologians or denominations, and they decide that it is better not to talk about theology at all. Or perhaps they have listened to the world's message: that what matters is not the truth but your own subjective experience – that you can feel your own way to God, and that is more important than knowing the truth about Him."
- But if you are going to hold fast, stay the course and complete the journey,
 - you need to know what you believe and why
 - and you need to understand the implications of the truth.
- A quick aside to understand what I mean by holding fast...
 - Have you ever felt like you were wavering?
 - TO read in Scripture that I am supposed to hold fast without wavering
 - I don't know about you, but depending on what is happening in my life at that time –
 - The command to hold fast can feel overwhelming...
 - I just can't do it – I don't have anything left in me
 - I know the consequences, but I am holding onto the cliff's edge by what feels like my fingertips
 - We waver in our faith when we lose grip on the OBJECT of our faith
 - Yes, of course we sin
 - Doubt can creep in
 - There are seasons when we have been hanging on for life for what seems like forever

- And when you are there
 - I want you to look at the rest of that verse.
 - Hold fast the confession...for He who promised is faithful;
- This holding fast is not about my ability or my strength
- Rather it is that I can hold fast because of His promise to hold onto us.
 - That makes me think of Jesus's words in John 10

John 10: 27-29 My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me. And I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of His hand.”

- that gives me the assurance and motivation so that I can hold fast
 - If I follow Christ, my salvation is assured and it cannot be lost.
- Yes, I may waver – that is why we are given the command, because we will waver –
- BUT I can have assurance that I am not alone for I will always be in the hands of my Savior, because God's promises will prove true in the end.
- That is my motivation for holding fast and persevering until the end
- So what can we do to help with holding fast to our confession?
 - Ready for another application...
 - Choose to grow in the knowledge of what you confess
 - Choose to take a class or read a book that will help you hold fast your confession.
 - We want to provide that opportunity for you through our fall ministries.
 - Join a Faith group to learn about Transforming Care for one another – See David or me – we have groups meeting on Tuesday and Fridays...
 - There are also Men's Point Man Groups or Women's Bible Studies that happen throughout the week
 - Or for other classes – join us at Faith East on Wednesdays.
 - Classes for every age – Kids of Faith, 4:Twelve Youth ministry and Adult classes
 - Understanding the Trinity,
 - Revelation
 - Or just learning to study through Colossians
 - Or more
- Any and All of these will help you to Hold Fast your confession as you study the truth in God's Word...

- Our passage give us one more exhortation that will also help with the others...
- Just like Sam Wise would not allow Frodo to make the journey alone...
- We are called to the same to...
 - o To walk with, encourage and remind one another of the truth
 - o So that there are others who hold us accountable to holding fast.
- Which leads to our third response...

III. Intentionally Consider One Another - LOVE (v.24-25)

- To recap
 - o We are called to draw near to God through the new and living way in Jesus
 - o And to hold fast our confession grounded in the faithfulness of Christ,
- And we find our third response the last verses today...

Hebrews 10:24-25 - *...and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 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.*

- To stimulate one another...
 - o Makes me think of - well that was a stimulating conversation over dinner
 - o I am not sure that is the idea we are talking about here...
 - let's all have thought provoking discussions and insightful exchanges
- What the author is communicating is the call to
 - o rouse to activity
 - o Stirring things up
 - o Even provoking
- But this is not about stirring up trouble and being a rabble rouser...
- There is a greater purpose...

A. Purpose: to encourage love and good works (v.24b)

- Let us consider...

Hebrews 10:24b - *...how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds...*

- It is not enough for us to singularly go out and just do good deeds, even in the name of Jesus.
 - o Faith is one of those things we are not called to do by ourselves...
- Hebrews calls us to consider stirring up one another
 - o TO what
 - o To Love and Good deeds

- Love is the internal disposition – the determine will or choice that we each make to love
 - And good deeds are the outflow of that love
- and the stirring up of others is meant then to return the same impact ion your life...
 - You will not go on to neglect good deeds or the assempblig together if you cultivate a love for one another...
 - And this begs the question – What will that take?

B. How do we accomplish stimulating one another to love and good deeds?

- From our passage today – let me suggest three application for this part of the message...
 - Yes – We got application in Drawing near...
 - We got application for holding fast...
 - We need application for stimulating one another as well...
- First...

1. By being in committed groups where you know one another (v.25)

Hebrews 10:25 - *...not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some...*

- Too often we limit this discussion to pleading with you to make commitments to be here on Sundays.
 - But one of the limitations on Sunday is that I do most of the talking and you get to do most of the sitting and hopefully listening too.
 - BUT on Sundays – we are limited on growing in getting to know one another...
 - Even after service, we are either turning around from 9:30 to the 11:00 service or after second service, we go right into tear down
 - I want to encourage you
 - Who can you get to know after the service
 - Go to lunch
 - Invite them to your home for games
 - Be a part of the Faith group where there is more fellowship and prayer
 - Why those things...
 - Because I believe as you come to know and love people on Monday through Saturday – you are going to want to worship the Lord with them on Sunday even more...
 - I won't need to exhort you to not miss Sundays, as is the habit of some, because your love for one another will stimulate you to

- gathering together on all days of the week – including Sundays.
- Next I want to stir you up for good deeds...

2. By giving and receiving encouragement (v. 25)

Hebrews 10:25 - ...*but encouraging one another...*

- Who could you be an encouragement to...
 - I want to stimulate you now...
 - Who do you see persevering in a trial?
 - Call them, text, or better yet, hand write a note
 - Just tell them you see them
 - Who do you see serving in a selfless way
 - Call them, text, or better yet, hand write a note
 - Just tell them Thank you
 - And when some one encourages you
 - Don't deflect or discourage them – say thank you in return
 - And Give God the glory He is due.
- And don't stop or slow down after this week

3. By increasing encouragement until Christ returns (v. 25)

- The word says to keep going

Hebrews 10:25 - ...*and all the more as you see the day drawing near.*

- When Frodo and Sam reached the mountain, Frodo could take no more...
 - So Sam responded – I may not be able to carry the ring, but I can carry you.
- You may need someone to carry you some days
 - To keep you on the right track
 - To help you get up when you don't want to
 - Maybe that they need to shake some sense into you and tell you to get it back together
 - You need to be part of a fellowship – maybe not of the ring – but a fellowship in Christ.
 - Last Application for the day –
 - If you are not yet a member of Faith.
 - Consider signing up for Intro to Faith, to learn about our church.
 - Our next class will begin on Sept 24th, a Wednesday evening at 6:30 pm here at the Northend.

- If you do not have the community of the fellowship of Christ around you, to lift and stir you up, you will find it hard to keep going in the Christian life...

Please join me as we pray

- Drawing Near to God
 - Sincerity of Heart
 - Assurance of Faith
- TO Hold Fast
 - To the truth of our confession
 - Thank God for His faithfulness
- That we might stimulate one another to good deeds
 - So that the name of Jesus will be seen throughout the Northend and beyond.