

## EXPOSITION OF HEBREWS

### Message #22

### Hebrews 10:19-25

As we look at what is happening in most churches today, it seems to me that most of Christianity has totally missed the whole point of this book of Hebrews. Most churches turn their ministries into crusades or campaigns, programs and parties. They desire to be places that entertain any who come through the doors and most desire to promote good fellowship and happy families.

As important as some of these things may be, the church has lost its way. **According to Hebrews, the Christian life and the Christian church are all about every believer having direct access to God through Jesus Christ.** Do you grasp this point? Every believer has the potential of having an intimate relationship, a close relationship with God. It is our responsibility to govern our lives in such a way that we do, and that is what the remainder of the book of Hebrews is designed to communicate.

We come now to the application of this great theology and Christology in Hebrews. From **Hebrews 10:19** to the end of the book in **Hebrews 13:25**, we learn how to apply all of this doctrine so we may live life in a close, intimate relationship with God. **This text is for believers and believers only.** Notice the noun “brethren” (**verse 19**) starts the section, and the pronouns “we” and “us” show up often throughout the remainder of the book. This text is aimed at believers.

How should the amazing sacrifice of Jesus Christ that gives us access to God affect us? This passage is designed to answer that question. God’s grace needs to be appropriated and enjoyed. We now learn how.

For the past ten chapters Hebrews has clearly established that Jesus Christ is our Perfect and Perpetual King-Priest. He is our Perfect Savior who has opened the door for us to have tremendous access to God.

There are two important Christological realities that the writer mentions here which he uses as impetus to challenge us:

**Christological Reality #1** - Through the blood of Jesus Christ we can have the confidence that we now have direct and forever access to God. **10:19-20**

Now we are to have a confidence, not an arrogance, that the work of Jesus Christ gives us access to God. We have direct, continual access to God through His sacrifice.

The shed blood of Jesus Christ allows us the privilege of having direct access to God, right into God’s presence which, in O.T. times, was originally located behind the veil. But Christ changed everything. The “veil” that opened the door for this was, as **verse 20** says, His flesh. His sacrifice opened the door for all of this.

Every single believer now has this direct access to God through the blood of Jesus Christ. As **verse 20** affirms, this is a “new” and “living” reality.

The word “new” means this is a brand new grace-relationship that we have with God because of the shed blood of Jesus Christ. The emphasis of the present tense participle “living” is that His blood-work is continually giving us this new access to God. Martin Luther said: “It seems but yesterday that Jesus died on the cross” (cited from W.H. Griffith-Thomas, *Let Us Go On*, p. 131).

**Christological Reality #2** - Through Jesus Christ we now have a great Priest over the house of God who gives us access to God. **10:21**

I love what Dr. Ray Stedman said about these two realities: We not only have a “confident spirit, but also a competent advocate” (*Hebrews*, p. 108). We have both access to God and advocacy before God through Jesus Christ. This is what gives us our access to a relationship with God.

Our Personal Savior is also the Divine King/Priest who runs the whole house of God. What we now have is a personal Priest and Savior who is able to take us directly into the presence of God in His house in heaven.

Our High Priest does not just get access to God once a year; He is seated at His right hand every day. Our High Priest is in charge of the whole house of God. Now having reminded us of these two great Christological matters, He now tells us how to practically live in having access to God.

The main thesis really for the rest of the book is:

**IN VIEW OF THE NEW PERFECT ACCESS WE HAVE TO GOD BECAUSE OF JESUS CHRIST, WE SHOULD PRACTICALLY LIVE OUR LIVES IN SUCH A WAY THAT WE ARE LIVING NEAR TO GOD.**

Church is not about my likes or dislikes. It is not about my interests or disinterests. It is about me living my life having direct access to God in view of what Jesus Christ has done for us. In these verses there are three main admonitions given to believers. It is interesting that none of these admonitions suggest the idea of going back under the law. When true doctrine pertaining to the work of Jesus Christ is understood, one does not ever go back under the law.

**ADMONITION #1** – Let us draw near to God. **10:22**

Under the O.T. law not even the high priest dared to draw near to God unless he met all of the law stipulations concerning clothing, incense, and blood. Now every single believer is invited to draw near to God. Every believer has an open invitation.

The verb “draw near” (προσερχομεθα) is a present tense middle voice verb in the subjunctive mood. **The actual verb means that we are to approach God in movement that comes toward Him** (*Ibid.*, p. 384). The present tense means that we are to continually approach God, and the middle voice indicates that we, ourselves, are to be involved in the action. The subjunctive mood is the mood of uncertainty, which means it is not a guarantee that every believer will do this. The potential for drawing near to God continually exists for every believer, but not every believer will move their lives or live their lives in close nearness to God.

Now there are two important qualifications that are mentioned if we are to draw near to God. Both of the qualifications mention the noun “heart.” Drawing near to God is a matter of one’s heart, not one’s external appearances.

**Qualification #1** - We are to draw near to God with a sincere heart. **10:22a**

It is interesting that the first thing the writer says we must do, as believers, is draw near with a sincere heart. He did not say first draw near with a clear head or fuzzy feelings. The development of one’s head and mind and feelings comes later; first it is a heart matter.

The adjective “sincere” (αληθινος) is one that refers to a heart that is true, real and genuine (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 20). The specific point of the sincere heart is in a full assurance of faith. **Notice full assurance of faith, not feelings** . This has nothing to do with what you feel.

**I understand this to contextually mean that we must truly and sincerely believe in our hearts with full assurance that only Jesus Christ can give us access to God.** You can know that and believe that every day no matter how you feel. The process of drawing near to God starts in our hearts and it is a matter of our faith. If a person does not really believe that only Jesus Christ gives access to God, they cannot draw near to God with a sincere heart. Those who want to rely upon their works or legalism or Judaism to give them special access to God do not have a fully assured faith that will enable them to ever draw near to God.

I want to ask you a question. Do you ever get down on your knees alone before God and give Him your heart? Do you ever ask God to take charge of your heart so you will walk near to Him? I am not talking about inviting Christ into your heart, but of asking God to take charge of your heart so you can live your life in close access to Him? You want to live your life near to God; then you invite Him to take charge of your heart, because in and of yourself you will never do it.

**Qualification #2** - We are to draw near to God with a sprinkled heart. **10:22b**

If we are going to draw near God, we not only need a sincere heart, we need a clean heart. We need to be clean before God. There are two specific areas that are mentioned:

**(Clean Area #1)** - To draw near to God we need a clean conscience .

We must be doing honest business with God if we are to draw near to Him. We must, as Paul said, have a conscience that is not aware of any breach in our relationship (I Corinthians 4:4). Paul said, “I am conscious of nothing against myself.” We cannot possibly expect to go into the presence of God if we have unfaced or unconfessed sin. Our conscience must be clean.

**(Clean Area #2)** - To draw near to God we need a clean body .

If we are to draw near to God we must have integrity in what we are doing with our bodies. We cannot be involved in immoral things with our bodies if we expect to draw near to God. When God has our hearts, our conscience will be clean and so will what we do with our bodies.

This image comes from the O.T. A person could bring their sacrifice to the priest and stand by the brazen altar as the priest killed the animal and sprinkled blood, and the person would leave. But then the priest could enter the Holy Place and sprinkle some of the blood in that place which made him closer to God than the fellow outside. Then once a year the high priest, having been washed and cleaned, could go into the Holy of Holies and take blood and incense in there and be real close to God.

This image is found right here. Some believers have believed and are washed in the blood and as a result never need worry about the condemnation of God. Other believers yield their hearts to God and live with a good conscience and clean life and are very near to God. They have a special relationship with God because they draw near to Him every day.

**ADMONITION #2** – Let us hold fast the confession . **10:23**

If we are going to draw near to God we must be zeroed in on Jesus Christ. We must hold fast continually to Him and what He did. We must keep our hope totally and completely in Jesus Christ. We ought to be living this and sharing this.

You and I are living in a world that fears “herpes more than Hades.” We need to set the record straight. Unbelievers are on their way to hell; and if they do not believe in Jesus Christ, that is exactly where they will go. They will not have access to God by their church, their religion, their goodness, their morality, their catechism, their baptism, or their legalism. There is only one hope we have for access to God and it is Jesus Christ. We need to hold fast to this.

Jesus Christ can give any sinner access to God, and He is the only way to having access to God. We need to hold fast to this confession in a religious world that wants to stress works.

The idea here is that we are to say the same thing and hold fast to the same thing without wavering concerning the Person and Work of Jesus Christ. We are to keep our hope fixed on Jesus Christ and hold fast to His work on our behalf.

**ADMONITION #3** – Let us consider how to properly stimulate each other. **10:24-25**

Our Christianity is not to be an isolated matter. We have the responsibility to keep our eye on each other in the church of God, and we are to stimulate each other to love and do good works. Now there are several important grammatical points to observe here:

**The verb “consider” (κατανομεν) is one that means to give careful consideration and thought to this objective (Ibid., p. 236).** The verb is present tense meaning we are to give continual thought and consideration to this objective, and it is active voice meaning we are directly responsible for this action , and also the subjunctive mood means it is uncertain whether some believers will ever do this.

Now the word “stimulate” (παροξυσμος) is one that refers to a sharp prodding or spurring which stimulates or provokes one to move. The word has in view at times even irritation (Ibid., pp. 346-347). However, the main point here is not finger-pointing but encouraging.

It is our responsibility to give careful thought how we can sharpen and stimulate each other to be spurred on and prodded to a true Biblical love and Biblical good works. I think that is a very important point to see. We are to give careful thought to what we say to each other.

Some people don't seem to use their brains at all when they are at church. They say stupid and hurtful things. I have pretty much seen it all and heard it all.

Do you really think you will stimulate someone to greater levels of spirituality by pointing out how they look? Do you really think that you will cause people to want to come to church if you point out their size or shape? Use your brains. I have a magnet that says, "Make sure your brain is engaged before you open your mouth."

Before you open your mouth you think about this - God has given that brother and sister of yours direct access to Him through Jesus Christ. If we do anything to hinder that brother or sister from drawing near God, we are accountable.

Now the two specific areas we are to think in terms of are:

**Area #1** - How to stimulate each other in the context of love . **10:24a**

Notice carefully that there are three main Christian virtues that show up in this context:

We must maintain a full assurance of Faith (**10:22**);

We must hold fast to our anchor of Hope (**10:23**);

We must encourage each other to the highest level of Love (**10:24**).

The word "love" is agape, which is God's kind of carefully calculated love. This is not the sensual, or emotional, or irrational kind of love; this is a highly calculated type of love. God expects us to think carefully about how to stimulate each other to the highest form of love. Faith looks backward, hope looks forward, and love looks outward.

**Area #2** - How to stimulate each other in the context of good works . **10:24b**

There are a couple of Greek adjectives that may be translated "good." The word used here (*καλος*) is the one that has to do with outward manifested works. These would be external works that are lovely and beautiful (*Ibid.*, p. 228). In other words, it is our responsibility to carefully think through how we can stimulate each other to continually outwardly manifest works that are beautiful from God's perspective.

**Now one specific qualifying area in which we are to stimulate each other is in the area of continually going to church (10:25).** Ray Stedman said, "Corporate worship is not an option for a Christian" (*Ibid.*, p. 109). The problem of some people staying away from church is not a new problem. Kent Hughes said people can give you "a thousand reasons to stay away from church" (*Hebrews*, Vol. 2, p. 34). **If a person stays away from church, they do not and cannot have near-access to God no matter what they think or say.**

We are to think carefully how we can stimulate God's people to continually come to church to hear the Word of God, and we are especially to do this as we see the Rapture drawing near. It is our job to spot those who have gone "AWOL" and prod them to get back to church.

We are positionally justified and sanctified by faith in Jesus Christ, but we are also practically sanctified in connection with God's people at church. As the Church Age nears its conclusion, we need the church more and more. We gain knowledge and strength from the church; as someone once said, "Union is strength."

Let me give eleven Biblical reasons why believers need to faithfully go to church:

- 1) Because when you go to church you go into the presence of Jesus Christ in a very special way (Revelations 2-3; Matthew 18:17, 20).
- 2) Because when you go to church you are actually involved in acceptable worship to God (Philippians 3:3).
- 3) Because when you go to church you go into the presence of God's holy angels (I Timothy 5:21).
- 4) Because when you go to church God will speak to you through His Word (II Timothy 4:2).
- 5) Because when you go to church you are in a special powerful presence of the Holy Spirit who lives in every believer (John 14:17).
- 6) Because when you go to church you are actually obeying God (**Hebrews 10:25**).
- 7) Because when you go to church you actually help develop a sound and transformed mind (Romans 12:2).
- 8) Because when you go to church you actually are drawing near to God (**Hebrews 10:22, 25**).
- 9) Because when you go to church you put yourself on the path of one who will earn rewards (Hebrews 10:35).
- 10) Because when you see Jesus Christ you will be ashamed if you didn't go to church (I John 2:28).
- 11) Because when you go to church you show the world whose side you're on.

As the day draws near for the Rapture, we need to be people who consistently come to church and hear the Word so we may be built up in our faith and have great access to God. We need the strength that comes from this focus. That will help stimulate others to the right kind of love and the right kind of works.

Do you see what church is supposed to be? Do you understand what the Christian life is supposed to be? We are to be people who live our lives in close access to God because of Jesus Christ. May God help us all to do just that.