

DRAW NEAR TO GOD AND CLING TO HIM

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The tendency of modern teachers: Ignore the doctrines and focus on practicalities.

The discipline of New Testament authors: First, establish the doctrine and then bring practical applications. For example, in the book of Romans, Paul wrote 11 doctrinal chapters before bringing practical applications in chapters 12-16.

Similarly, from chapters 5 through 10:18, the author of Hebrews shows how Christ is superior to OT priests and OT covenant. From 10:19 to the end of the book, he brings practical applications based on doctrinal truths.

1. STEADFAST CHRISTIANS ALWAYS DRAW NEAR TO GOD

Hebrews 7:18-19, For on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness (for the law made nothing perfect); but on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God.

OT covenant system: Only the high priest could enter into the Most Holy Place, only once a year, and a thick curtain separated the Most Holy Place from the Holy Place.

Hebrews 10:19-22, Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Hebrews 10:19-22,

- ❖ Therefore, brothers, [**a concluding word in light of all he said in the previous chapters**]
- ❖ since we have confidence to enter the holy places [**no need to have fear or unbelief but draw confidently <boldly> to God.**]

Hebrews 4:16, Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

But what is the basis of our confidence to draw near to the holy God? Not our works

- ❖ by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, [**through the work of Christ on**

the cross [blood and flesh]. That's the only confidence we have to draw near to God—past, present and future]

- ▶ **The Lord's Supper:** This is my body offered for you. This is my blood shed for your sins.

Unbelievers: Invitation to repent and believe in the Gospel of Christ.

- ❖ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, **[Christ has purified us from our sins as our great high priest over the house of God <people of God>....Why? The following]**
- ❖ let us draw near **[throughout the book of Hebrews, the author used encouragement and warnings to woo people to draw near to God]**

How to draw near to God?

- i) with a true heart in full assurance of faith **[sincerely with full assurance of faith],**
 - ❖ **Hebrews 11:6,** And 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.
- ii) with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water **[I take this as one point: purification of ourselves by the blood of Christ]**

Consecration of priests in Exodus 29:4, You shall bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the tent of meeting and wash them with water...**29:21,** Then you shall take part of the blood that is on the altar, and of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it on Aaron and his garments, and on his sons and his sons' garments with him. He and his garments shall be holy, and his sons and his sons' garments with him.

- ❖ **1 John 1:7,** the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

Applications:

1) The work of Christ: Christ shed His blood and offered His body as our great high priest to make a way for us to draw near to God the Father.

- ❖ **1 Peter 3:18,** For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might **bring us to God...**

2) Believers' responsibility: Draw near to God with true heart, with full assurance of faith, and with hearts cleansed by the blood of Christ.

- ▶ Do we draw near to God in our afflictions?

- ▶ Do we draw near to God in our sins?
- ▶ Do we draw near to God in our comforts?
- ▶ Do we draw near to God in our conflicts?

2. STEADFAST CHRISTIANS UNWAVERINGLY HOLD FAST TO HOPE

Hebrews 3:6, but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And we are his house, if indeed we **hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope**.

Hebrews 3:14, For we have come to share in Christ, **if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end**.

Hebrews 6:11-12, And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to **have the full assurance of hope until the end**, so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

- ❖ **Hebrews 10:19-23**, Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.

Let us hold fast **[what]** the confession **[what]** of our hope **[how]** without wavering, **[why]** for he who promised is faithful.

Why hold fast to hope? The Christian life is hard surrounded with trials and temptations and false teachings.

What hope? Hebrews 11:13-16, 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. For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

The following fearful warning passage is to exhort believers to have the full assurance of hope until the end:

Hebrews 10:²⁶ For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

Comment: A controversial passage after Hebrews 6. **The context doesn't seem to speak about believers committing sins normally. It seems to speak strongly about refusing to persevere in their faith in Christ after receiving the knowledge of the truth** [the author gives overwhelming evidence of Christ's supremacy throughout the book]. It speaks about apostasy. The context of the recipients is that they were tempted to leave Christ and return to Judaism.

John Calvin explains: The apostle describes as sinners not those who fall in any kind of sin, but those who forsake the Church and separate themselves from Christ. . . . There is a great difference between individual lapses and universal desertion of the kind which makes for a total falling away from the grace of Christ.

Hebrews 10:²⁶ For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷ but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. ²⁸ Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. ²⁹ How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? ³⁰ For we know him who said, “**Vengeance is mine; I will repay.**”[cited Deut. 32:3] And again, “**The Lord will judge his people.**”[cited Deut. 32:36] ³¹ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

❖ **John 3:36**, Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

Hebrews 10:³² But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, ³³ sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. ³⁴ For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one. ³⁵ **Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. ³⁶ For you have need of endurance [you need to persevere], so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.** ³⁷ For, [cited from Habakkuk 2:3–4 wherein Habakkuk saw the rise of injustice and suffering of the righteous]

“Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; ³⁸ but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.”

³⁹ **But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed (*sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth*), but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.**