

## Closer to God

Hebrews 10:19-25

1/07/07

### Intro

The book of Hebrews is an encouragement to stay steady in faith. They were tempted to go back to their old ways because of some of the difficulties they were going through.

But the writer of this book is showing them that what they have in Christ is superior in every way to everything they had come from. Why would you go back when you what you have in Christ is superior to anything else? There is nothing better than Christ, there is no truth greater than the One who is the Truth and there is no better salvation than the gift of forgiveness He gave because of the cross of Christ.

Here in these verses, we are told how we should live, how we should respond to the Lord because of what He has done for us.

**These are principles and insights of living closer to God as a response to all He has done for us.**

### **I. Draw Nearer to God**

- In the Old Testament, they were afraid to come to God for fear of what He would do because they knew they were sinners.
- But Jesus showed us a different way. He was the One who referred to God as Abba, or papa.

#### A. Because we have confidence

- On our own, we would have, and should never have anything but fear before God.
- This is because we know we are sinners and God is holy.

**Illus – In the holy of holies, the center of the tabernacle, there was the Ark of the Covenant. In that was a copy of the Ten Commandments, which we have broken, Aaron’s rod which budded as a sign to a rebellious people and a jar of manna, God’s provision to a grumbling people. But above the Ark was the “mercy seat.”**

- So Hebrews says we can have confidence to enter the “holy place.”

**II Corinthians 3:4-5, Such confidence we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God,**

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

**Illus – Have you ever felt unworthy? I received an invitation to attend the inauguration of George W. Bush, but who am I to be with such high people?**

- **But God not only invites us, He makes us part of the family!!**

B. By a new and living way

- We can come near to God by a “new and living way.” That is through the blood of Christ, through the veil, which is His body.
- When Christ died on the cross, the scripture tells us that the veil in the temple was torn from the top to the bottom.

**Matthew 27:50-52, And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split. The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised;**

- **Up to that time, only the High Priest was allowed to enter the Most Holy Place and that only once a year and carrying blood.**
- But through Christ’s body and blood, anyone can enter in to the most intimate place. It represented the very throne room of God, and you are invited.

**App – We stay back from God because of our shame. We feel so unworthy; but if could only accept the fact that we are made worthy by His doing.**

**II. Draw Near with a Sincere Heart**

- The condition of our heart is very important to God.
- What does sincere mean? It means a true heart...

**Illus – Sincere literally means, “no wax.” It comes from the Greek culture where sculptures would mix marble with wax to repair mistakes in their work.**

- **Instead of wax—we have Jesus.** He’s not saying that we have to have a pure heart, or a clean life before we can draw near.
- He’s saying we need a true heart--- honest about who we are. We’re sinners; but this we know ---
- I’m saved because Jesus’ gift to me was sufficient.

A. In full assurance of faith

- Full assurance of faith is a sincere heart that believes in what God has done. **It’s not about me and what I’ve done...**

**Habakkuk 2:4, Behold, as for the proud one, his soul is not right within him; but the righteous will live by his faith.**

- Faith comes from drawing closer to God...

**Romans 10:17, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of Christ.**

- Hold fast without wavering – for He who promised is faithful – His promises are sure.

**Illus – The famous Nordstrom unconditional-return policy, We have faith that they will do what they say. One man waited ten years... “For heaven's sake,” the clerk said, “what took you so long?”**

**James 1:6-8, But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.**

B. Having your heart sprinkled clean

- We can draw near with a true heart – because our hearts have been sprinkled clean from an evil conscience.

**Illus – This is a reference to how the OT priests would perform their spiritual duties; by sprinkling things with blood.**

- Hebrews refers to this in another place.

**Hebrews 9:18-23 The OT sprinkling of blood – the picture of Christ.**

- In Hebrews 10:22 we see that we have been sprinkled clean from an evil conscience.

**App – Our conscience is a real issue. We know how much we’ve sinned and fallen short of God’s holiness.**

**The picture here is of God sprinkling Christ’s blood over our conscience. In other words, we are completely aware of what we’ve done, but the blood of Christ has been sprinkled on it, therefore we are clean.**

**If God has done it, who are we to doubt it? Our conscience is often what keeps us away from God...**

**App- But you can come to God and bring your problems with you.**

**Hebrews 9:14, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?**

**III. Consider How to Provoke**

- The word “stimulate” here means to provoke. Most people think of the word “provoke” as a negative word and it certainly can be, but here it is used in a good sense.

A. Provoke others to love and do right

**Illus – We’ve all experienced being provoked to do something worldly. I had a friend in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade that tried to get me to drink.**

**Illus – Many people remember the “I dare you” pressure when they were young. Then there was the “double dare you,” and the terrible, “I D-double you!!”**

- But here we're told to provoke others to do good and godly things. "Go ahead, share your faith, I dare ya!" "Go on a mission trip, I D-double dare you!!"

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

#### B. Church is a good thing

- The very next thing he writes is that we should not forsake our own assembling together, as is the habit of some.
- What he is saying is that church is a very important part of our lives. Spiritually, God uses our time at church as an important part of growing together in our relationship to God and to each other.

**Illus – Have you ever sat down and ate half a chocolate cake? Or half a gallon of ice cream? Or watched something on TV you knew you shouldn't? The feeling that comes is regret.**

**It's just the opposite with church – you might not feel like going to church, but you're glad you did. You might not feel like praying, but you're glad you did. You might not feel like reading your bible, but you're glad you did.**

**You might not feel like worshipping...**

**Acts 2:42, They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.**

#### C. Encourage one another

- We need each other, and we called to encourage each other.
- It means to come alongside each other to encourage each other.

**Illus – Jordi's friend decided to run a marathon, one of the most difficult things she had ever done in her life. When she was just over a mile from the finish line, her dad jumped over the rope alongside the road and ran along with her in his dress shoes. She finished with tears running down her face.**

- Especially, the writer says, as you see the day drawing near.

**I Thessalonians 5:11, Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.**

**Ephesians 4:29-30, Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God,**

Conclusion
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**These are things we do because we have confidence to draw near to God with a sincere heart.**