

## The Epistle to the Hebrews

September 19, 2021

Hebrews 10:19-25

**Reading:** Hebrews 10:19-25

### Living In “*Full Assurance of Faith*” (v. 22)

#### The New and Living Way (v.20)

God placed into people a need for truth. As one seeks truth, they have to decide what to use as the foundation for truth. The world, influenced by the evil one seeks truth based on the falsehoods Satan has placed; lies sprinkled with a little truth, feelings, emotions, opinions, self-interest, self-seeking power and pleasure. As Christians we are to leave the corruption of the world behind and base seeking truth on the Word of God that is eternally true. Christians are called to live and be obedient to the scriptures. The Word of God is not based on mankind’s logic, emotions, opinions and desire for power, but the Word is the truth of God; revealing who He is and who we are to be.

God inspired the writers of the Bible and gave the writers of the epistles of the New Testament doctrinal truths to be laid out in the beginning of each letter and then build upon by giving truth upon truth. Doctrine is critically important and unites or separates churches and believers. Without right or true doctrine God’s truth is not breathed into us. This is why verse 20 tells us, “**by the new and living way that ~~he~~ Jesus opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh.**” Without the true doctrine of God, the half-truths, which are lies, of the evil one creep into both individuals and churches. God’s doctrinal truths are like spiritual air that breathes life into the soul and mind of a believer – without God’s spiritual air we will spiritually die. Hebrews is no exception; God gave the writer doctrine to build upon and we either accept God at His Word or we through disobedience

try to adjust or change His Word to meet our desires. There is a growing separation among churches; the remnant church working hard to hold fast to God's Word and live it, and the Broad-Church adjusting God's Word to meet their opinions, emotions, feelings and desiring to be accepted by the world. The churches and people who do not accept God at His Word live not in God's absolute truth but in propositional truth that changes with circumstance or time or the desires of people. Satan has the world believing that individual situational need and opinion is a valid foundation for truth. It is easy to observe the result of how the evil one has convinced the world that evil is good and good is evil and how destructive this path is as the world tears itself apart.

In a discussion about God and who He is; a person commented, "I just cannot think of God as loving and righteous and at the same time judging and condemning – it does not work for me." What the person was saying, because of the influences of family or peers or the world at large or false teaching they were raised with in a corrupted church, is the God the Bible reveals did not line up with their perception of God. They would rather worship a man-made image or concept than bring themselves to accept God for who He reveals Himself to be. Often the truth is they do not want to be obedient to the precepts found in the Bible or be held accountable for their sins. This brings to the forefront, the question, if a person or church adjusts or changes the Bible to what they desire, are they saved? My beloved, there is no man-made god and the true God is offended when people worship a false god. So, it is my desire that we know and worship the One true God and to know the true God from the only foundational and inerrant source of spiritual truth, which is the Bible.

Let us recognize, that we live in a time in history where people, in general, do not like doctrine. There are 2 basic problems. First, people have grown up in a

world that teaches it is all about us as unique individuals and therefore, things need to adapt to us instead of us adapting to a Holy God. Secondly, in our fast-paced and digitally downloading society many people do not want to take the time to study and dig out the truth. But the truth is - truth is critically important. This is why reading the scriptures and beyond reading, meditating on them and praying to know God's will is so important. Time is required to be invested for any relationship to grow deeper; marriage, friendships and especially a relationship with God.

Let me go to God in prayer and then we will begin taking time to seek God's truth.

### **Seek Truth Boldly** (vs. 19-22)

Let me ask, "Why is it that most the epistles or letters begin by teaching sound doctrine? Why do they not just simply explain what we are to do or not do and how to behave?" The answer is that proper belief must precede proper behavior. The unsaved are unable to live as the saved because of their corrupted world view. You see, my beloved, a person must first be changed from the inside before they can demonstrate change on the outside.

This concern for what is true and false and living God's truth is evident in the epistles, for example, the Apostle Peter wrote, "**But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.**" <sup>2</sup> **And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed.** <sup>3</sup> **And in their greed they will exploit you with false words.**" (2 Peter 2:1-3) It is not hard to observe this happening in what is labeled as Christian on TV or the internet or in

churches. However, to observe these falsehoods one must know the truth of God from the Bible in order to recognize the true and false teachings. Paul wrote to Titus, the need for the shepherd of Christ's Church to know God's truth. "For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain,<sup>8</sup> but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined.<sup>9</sup> **He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.**" (Titus 1:7-9) Beloved, let me ask, how do you know if what I preach and teach is God's truth or not if you do not know God's Word?

The writer of Hebrews has been teaching us true and proper doctrine. I know this is correct because it is consistent with the whole of God's Word, which I believe is inspired by God. The writer is teaching us what God inspired and I hope we are coming to understand things about Jesus and the New Covenant that we may not have fully understood before. All teaching and doctrine have as its purpose to affect us and change us and conform us, as Paul wrote, "For those whom he (*God*) foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son" (Romans 8:29) So, what is the change that the writer of Hebrews and Paul are telling believers, telling us, that needs to be made? As believers, the Word of God teaches us that we need to live based on truth – **not** our feelings or emotions or opinions of others or what the broken world under the influence of the evil one says is true. We need to change our lives to live the truth of God found only in the Bible.

Faith in Christ and the Word of God leads one to **Orthodoxy**; the belief in the truth of the Bible or "right belief". Orthodoxy leads to **Orthopraxy**, which is right conduct or behavior. This is why the writer begins this section of God's Word

at verse 19 with “Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus.” The human need the author is going to address is the need people have to live based on the truth of God rather than based on the way they were raised or what the world has placed into the minds.

Open your Bibles to Hebrews chapter 10 -- I love hearing the rustling of pages as you open your Bibles to God’s truth, beginning at verse 19, “Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus,<sup>20</sup> by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,<sup>21</sup> and since we have a great priest over the house of God,<sup>22</sup> 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.” I can hear these early church Jews converted to Christianity responding; “I am not going into the Holy of Holies; it is a scary place that only the high priest can enter once a year!” I know if the high priest had not properly prepared; repenting of his sins, offering the proper sacrifice and cleansing himself – God would strike him dead. If I had been a first century Jew converted to Christianity the thought of going behind the veil into the Holy of Holies where the “shekinah” (She-chi-nah) glory of God would confront my sins would not have been something I would even imagine doing.

Something I should have addressed in the prior couple of weeks is the Holy of Holies, some of you may have heard how the **high priest wore an ephod with bells sewn on the hem of his robe** to make noise as he moved around the Holy of Holies and of a **rope tied around the ankle of the high priest**, in case, he was struck dead at which the bells would become silent and they could drag the body out of the Holy of Holies. Who has heard of this intriguing story? Let me ask, is it accurate? Is it true? If something is repeated often enough and long enough -

people believe it as true. Here in lies the problem and why one needs to study the Word of God to know the truth. Dr. W. E. Nunnally, professor of Hebrew and early Judaism at Central Bible College wrote, “The rope on the high priest legend is just that: a legend. It has obscure beginnings in the Middle Ages and keeps getting repeated. It cannot be found anywhere in the Bible, Apocrypha (ə-’pä-krə-fə), the Dead Sea Scrolls, Josephus, the Pseudepigrapha (sü-di-’pi-grə-fə) [*anonymous Jewish religious writings of the period 200 b.c. to a.d. 200*], the Talmud (the authoritative body of Jewish tradition comprising the Mishnah and Gemara), Mishna or any other Jewish source. It just is not there.” This conclusion has been validated by historical studies conducted by a number of colleges and seminaries. Through the scriptures one understands Aaron wore a blue ephod (’e-,fäd) with bells sown on its hem as found in Exodus chapter 28, verses 31 to 35, he wore this colorful robe and ephod when he entered the **Holy Place**, which is **NOT** the **Holy of Holies** as defined in Leviticus chapter 16, verses 2 to 4. When the high priest enters the Holy of Holies, he washes and wears special, yet **simple linen robe**, not the ephod with bells. So, if there are no bells to hear, then there is no need for a rope either. Great story but simply not true. As it is with many things the world promotes – stories and false truths that are simply not true.

Back to Hebrews chapter 10, if I am going to live based on truth rather than experience or some personal belief, as the world does; then I must change. What has changed in this world is Jesus has entered the equation and I must conform to Him. Now I can obey - because of what I know about the Lord through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and from studying the Bible. Religious liberty is liberty from the world and conforming to Christ. This is not blind faith, but faith based on a great amount of evidence. As the Apostle Peter wrote, <sup>8</sup>“**Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in**

him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, <sup>9</sup> obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.” (1 Peter 1:8-9) With a relationship with God, with believing in God, truth is given and experienced through Christ and the Holy Spirit and God’s Word.

This why the author begins with verse 19, “Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus,” we do not enter the “holy places” based on our righteousness but on the righteousness of Jesus, a righteousness He paid for with His blood. With the arrival of Jesus everything changed; for those who believe and trust in Christ, God’s wrath is satisfied and He becomes our Father and Christ our brother and by relationship with God, He aids us in living godly lives. Hebrews chapter 4 showed Jesus as the Great High Priest who makes this possible, turn you Bibles to chapter 4 as I begin reading at verse 14, “Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup> **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.**” Now New Covenant worshippers go into the throne room of the King with boldness because by faith, we believe that Jesus has made a new way for us to enter. When we enter, we do not experience God’s displeasure because of our sin, Jesus paid for that, we experience mercy and are treated as adopted beloved children of royalty.

The writer is dealing with the problem of these 1<sup>st</sup> century believers were having in overcoming their previous understanding of God they were raised with in the Jewish tradition. They needed to let go and accept Christ and the New Covenant in order to enter into a relationship with God in boldness. Like these 1<sup>st</sup>

century converts we too have to let go of how the world has shaped us, we need to recognize our sin and repent, but then let go knowing Christ paid our debt and enjoy a relationship with God as His children. As we grow in our relationship with God we should be changed from the inside out. This is what is expressed in 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.” We are to be unlike the world; for an accurate understanding of Christ and His work will enable us to live based of God’s eternal truth and not on feelings, emotions or the false truths presented by a broken world.

So, our charge given to us, is as Paul wrote to his spiritual son, Timothy, <sup>13</sup>“I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, <sup>14</sup> to **keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,** <sup>15</sup> which he will display at the proper time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, <sup>16</sup> who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.” (1 Timothy 6:13-16) One cannot keep one foot in the world and the other in the kingdom of God. We are called to live with boldness for the kingdom, proclaiming Christ in every aspect of how we live. We enter <sup>20</sup>“**the new and living way that he (Christ) opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,** <sup>21</sup> and since we have a great priest **over the house of God.**” The death of Jesus allows us to enter into God’s presence with confidence. The writer compares the tearing of the veil to the tearing of Jesus flesh as He was scourged. Thank the Lord that He suffered for His people. He has opened up an entrance into God’s presence for us. Now, we must enter. We must enter with complete confidence because of the death of Jesus. Verse 21 continues



to 22, “since we have a great priest over the house of God,<sup>22</sup> 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.” We draw near with confidence and assurance because the High Priest’s work was accepted by God. We are washed with pure water. Our boldness is founded in being a submitted believer in Christ and confidence comes from true doctrine and right behavior founded on true doctrine.

So, if God’s true doctrine is not taught people end up with a skewed view of God reducing Him to what people desire so they can live as their sin-nature directs. The opposite is coming boldly into God’s presence showing the world that we have confidence in what He’s done for us. Faith is what God looks for. Faith shows that we trust Him. Faith shows the world the value of Christ.

### **Hold Fast With Confidence** (v. 23)

The first call the writer gives is founded in faith. Reading verse 23, “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is **faithful**.” Jesus is forever faithful, so as believers we are able as verse 22 says, “let us draw near with a true heart in **full assurance of faith**.” Hope and faith; hope is knowing the future will come about just as God has planned. Hope means we live with anticipation and expectation for the fulfilling of God’s plan. Paul wrote of this to the church in Colossae, “To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the **hope of glory**.” (Colossians 1:27) Hope is founded on faith. Remember as Jesus walked 2 blind men began following and crying out “Have mercy on us, Son of David.” Jesus responded, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” They said to him, “Yes, Lord.” Jesus turned and touched their eyes and said, “According to your

**faith be it done to you.”** <sup>30</sup> **And their eyes were opened.”** (Matthew 1:27-30) As believers we can rest in total confidence that God will fulfill all that He says in Christ. The world may be going crazy but our future is secure in heaven. We are called to **“hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering.”** Without wavering means to live aggressively persevering in our faith. As Jesus told Peter and He tells us this morning, **“I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”** (Matthew 16:18b) My beloved we are the church, though we may be persecuted as we journey through this mortal life our future is secure with Christ for eternity.

### **Consider One Another** (vs. 24-25)

In this passage we have been called to live with faith in Christ, **“let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.”** (v.22) Assurance of faith is the foundation of hope eternal, **“hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering.”** (v.23) Now the writer finishes by calling for us to live with love. Reading at verse 24, **“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,** <sup>25</sup> **not neglecting to meet together,** as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” Through love for Christ, we gain love for each other and are to seek ways to help each other use the gifts God has given to each person for the sharing of the Gospel of Good News.

So, this makes it clear that a Christian cannot be what God has called them to be if they are not in community with believers, if they are not in church. We are called to be a spiritual family of God, caring for each other, encouraging each other and holding each other accountable, in love, to the standards of Scripture. If each of us thinks more highly of the others here and works to care for the needs of the others; the result is each person will be loved and no need will go unmet. Becoming involved in each other’s lives is the key to stirring up one another to love.

A good example of showing love to others is when we gather together on the Lord's Day. Another time we can show love is when we gather for small groups and inviting others both within and without the church to come. Both show others that we care and are interested in them. If we truly love our brothers and sisters in Christ, we will as verse 25 directs, **“not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”**

As a shepherd of Christ's Church, let me admonish by clearly stating, self-centered people come to church when it's convenient for them. When nothing better is going on, they show up. When there is no conflict with things of this world they come to church. Folks who love Jesus and each other come to be an encouragement to others. Church is a priority in their life. When believers gather Christ is there; as Jesus said, **“For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”** (Matthew 18:20) Gathering as church commanded by God is encouraging to the elders and deacons, **“Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.”** And as the writer continues a few verses later we need to live in obedience, **“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.”** (Hebrews 13:7 & 17) This is a great responsibility for the leaders taken as joy. When we gather as church it spiritually strengthens each of us, **“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”** (Colossians 3:16) Coming together as church nourishes our souls, **“And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.**

<sup>43</sup> And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. <sup>44</sup> And **all who believed were together and had all things in common.**” (Acts 2:42-44) Living as church proclaims the gospel to the outside world, <sup>46</sup> “And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:46-47) Gathering together heightens our awareness of eternity. If we neglect the coming together, we will very quickly fall into walking by sight and not by faith. Worldliness begins to set in as we neglect the awesome privilege to join together consistently for worship and fellowship every Lord’s Day, every time your small group meets and when we join with each other for good works.

My beloved, we, you and me, are called to “**stir up one another to love**”. (v. 24) When we live in this manner, we “**seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.**” (Matthew 6:33) this fulfills an important command of Christ. This is why we gather each Lord’s Day because we need to be constantly reminded of all these things, to keep separated from the world because feelings and emotions and opinions and the influences of this world are always trying to creep into our lives.

Faith, hope, and agape love grow out of the rich soil of proper doctrine lived out in church community. I pray we run away from easy fluffy teachings that are meant to manipulate some feeling within us and run deeply into Christ-centered doctrine that is food for a starving soul. I pray that Canyon Bible is a church that honors God and serves His kingdom and expresses great love for each other. Amen and amen!