

THE WAY TO SECURE THE NEW AND LIVING FAITH HEBREWS 10:22–25

Introduction

This great passage tells us the most wonderful thing. We can now know God, really know Him. We can commune and fellowship with Him and have His presence and power operating in our lives. God's presence and power can conquer all the problems, trials and temptations of life that attack us. The living God can be a living reality in our lives. His presence and power can conquer all the enemies of life, including the last great enemy, death. How? How can we lay hold of such a new and living faith — lay hold of the living God in our lives? This great passage tells us.

- I. Let us draw near God (v. 22).
- II. Let us hold firmly to our hope (v. 23).
- III. Let us stir up one another: to love and to do good deeds (v. 24).
- IV. Let us not neglect worshipping together (v. 25).

I. *Hebrews 10:22 Draw Near to God*

The first duty is to draw near God. Jesus Christ has opened up the way into God's presence for us. He has taken our sins upon Himself and bore the guilt and judgment of them for us. He has freed us from sin, removed all sin *off of us*. He is now ready to present us to God as being sinless and righteous. Jesus Christ has made us acceptable to God. He has provided a *new and living way into the holiest place of all*, into the very presence of God Himself. We can now know God, know Him personally and intimately; we can now commune and fellowship with God, have His presence and power in our lives as we walk day by day. Therefore, *let us draw near to God*. But note: how we approach God is important. He has to be approached in a particular way; some preparation is necessary in order to approach Him.

1. We must have a "sincere heart." This means genuine, true, honest, meaningful and without hypocrisy. A sincere heart involves an attitude of gladness, freedom and enthusiasm (Marvin Vincent. *Word Studies In The New Testament*, Vol. 4, p. 501). The true believer knows that Jesus Christ has opened the door into God's presence; therefore...
 - he is thankful and appreciative
 - he is glad and joyful
 - he feels free and at liberty to enter God's presence
 - he is enthusiastic and excited about entering God's presence
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There is no hypocrisy or insincerity, no dishonesty whatsoever in a true heart. A true heart knows what Jesus Christ has done — the great impact and meaning of what He has done. A true heart knows that it can really draw near God — that it can know God and commune and fellowship with Him. It knows that it can walk in praise and thanksgiving to God all day — that it can have the presence and power of God looking after and caring for it all day — that God will deliver from all trials and temptations and give victory and triumph over all. The true heart knows what it is to draw near God — what it is to live in an unbroken communion and fellowship with Him.

Thought 1. Too many of us are so wrapped up in the world that we forget to “draw near to God.” We forget the wonderful thing Jesus Christ has done for us — that He has actually opened up a new and living way into the very presence of God Himself.

Too few of us have true, sincere hearts — hearts that continually draw near God. We must awaken and heed this charge. It is our duty, a duty that is *absolutely necessary*: “Let us draw near to God with a sincere [true, genuine, honest] heart.”

2. We must have “*full assurance of faith*.” Full assurance means unqualified assurance in Christ, that He is the One Person who can and does give us access into God’s presence — that Christ and Christ alone makes us acceptable to God. It means to be absolutely convinced that the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ is the only perfect sacrifice — that His sacrificial death is the only sacrifice that God accepts.

Thought 1. Too many people have divided loyalties. They do not have the *full assurance of faith* — full assurance that Jesus Christ is absolutely sufficient to present them perfect before God. Too many think that they are acceptable to God...

- because they are good persons and do a great deal of good works.
- because they belong to and attend church.
- because they have been baptised and confirmed.
- because they have never done anything considered really bad.

All of these are good things, and everyone of us should live good and decent, moral and just lives. But these are not what makes us acceptable to God. Jesus Christ alone can bring us into the presence of God and present us to God. When we approach God, we *must have full assurance of faith* in Jesus Christ — absolute assurance that Jesus Christ is the sacrifice for our sins, the perfect High Priest who can present us to God.

3. We must have hearts and bodies perfectly cleansed and washed. This is a picture of the High Priest cleansing and washing himself before he entered God’s presence in the Holy of Holies, the inner sanctuary of the Jewish tabernacle. He sprinkled himself with the blood of the sacrificial animal and washed himself. This symbolized that his own sins were being forgiven. His own guilty conscience was being cleansed and the sins of his body were being washed away.

The point is this: before we approach God, we must be cleansed of sin and its guilt — *cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ*. We have to approach God *through Jesus Christ*. Jesus Christ alone is the perfect sacrifice for sins; He alone has made the perfect sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, the only way we can be cleansed of sin is to trust Jesus Christ. If we really trust His sacrifice, then God accepts His sacrifice for us. God cleanses us of sin. He gives us a clean conscience and washed body — a conscience cleansed of guilt and a body washed from sin.

John 10:9 *“I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture.”*

Acts 17:27 *God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.*

Rom 5:1-2 *Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.*

Eph 2:18 *For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.*

Eph 3:12 *In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.*

Heb 7:19 *(For the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God.*

Heb 10:19, 22 *Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.*

James 4:8 *Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*

Psa 34:18 *The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.*

Psa 73:28 *But as for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Sovereign Lord my refuge; I will tell of all your deeds.*

Psa 145:18 *The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.*

II. Hebrews 10:23 Hold Firmly to Our Faith

The second duty is to hold fast our profession without wavering. A person who makes a true profession in Christ believes two things:

⇒ that Jesus Christ is his Saviour from sin and death — that Jesus Christ is the perfect sacrifice for his sins — that Jesus Christ and His sacrifice covers his sins and makes it possible for God to forgive his sins.

=> that Jesus Christ is the risen Lord — that Jesus Christ is his High Priest who is seated at the right hand of God — that Jesus Christ is the perfect Mediator and Intercessor who makes him acceptable to God and presents him as perfect and sinless before God.

When a person professes Christ to be his Saviour and Lord, he is to hold his profession fast and he is to do it without wavering.

=> The believer is not to listen to the voices of the world and return to worldliness and materialism.

=> The believer is not to doubt that Jesus Christ died for him.

=> The believer is not to doubt that Jesus Christ arose for him.

=> The believer is not to listen to the voices of doubt and false teaching.

=> The believer is not to let circumstances, trials or temptations shake his faith in Christ.

Note: there is one strong reason for holding our profession fast. What is it?

=> “[God] who promised is faithful.”

God keeps His Word. And He is the One who has promised to let the sacrifice of Christ count as the sacrifice for our sins. God is the One who has promised to accept us in Christ — to accept us in His perfection and righteousness. God will do exactly what He has said. He is faithful. Therefore, “let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess.” We have been saved and will inherit eternal life — given the glorious privilege of living with God forever and ever in the new heavens and earth.

1 Cor 15:58 Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.

Gal 5:1 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

1 Th 5:21 Test everything. Hold on to the good.

Heb 3:6 But Christ is faithful as a son over God’s house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.

Heb 4:14-16 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Heb 10:23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

James 1:12 *Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.*

1 Pet 1:13 *Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.*

1 Pet 5:8-9 *Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.*

2 Pet 3:17 *Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position.*

Rev 3:3 *Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.*

III. Hebrews 10:24 Believer's Duty: Love and Service

The third duty is to stir up one another to love and to do good deeds. Note the word “consider” (katanoomen). It means to give attention to; to fix our attention upon; to give continuous care; to watch over. What an exhortation to believers!

=> Give attention to one another.

=> Fix your attention upon one another.

=> Give continuous care to one another.

=> Watch over one another.

How different the church would be — how much stronger we would be in Christ and in life — if we heeded this exhortation! And note what it is that we are to give attention to: to make sure that we are stirred up and living for Christ — that we are loving one another and doing good deeds. This simply means...

- that we are considerate of one another.
- that we show concern for one another.
- that we meet one another's needs.
- that we strengthen one another's weaknesses.
- that we help one another through every trial and temptation.

It means that we love — love in act and not in word — that we...

- feed the poor
- visit the sick and shutins

- look after the orphans and the children of broken homes and single parents
- become a friend to the lonely
- give direction to the empty and those without purpose.

Note the exhortation again: we give attention to one another. Why? To make sure none of us are slacking up — to stir one another to love and to do good deeds. This is the duty of the new, living faith Jesus Christ has wrought for us. It is not a dead faith. It is a faith that stirs us to action — that stirs us to live, truly live, live in love and good deeds — for the sake of a needful and sick world.

Mat 5:16 *“In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”*

John 13:34-35 *“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*

John 15:12 *“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.”*

Rom 12:9 *Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.*

Rom 13:9-10 *The commandments, “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not covet,” and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbour as yourself.” Love does no harm to its neighbour. Therefore love is the fulfilment of the law.*

1 Th 3:12 *May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you.*

1 Tim 6:18 *Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.*

Titus 2:7 *In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness.*

Heb 10:24 *And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.*

James 2:17-18 *In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.*

1 Pet 1:22 *Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.*

1 Pet 2:12 *Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.*

IV. *Hebrews 10:25 Worship Together*

The fourth duty is to assemble together and never to neglect our assembling, not even to neglect it for a brief time. This is the meaning of this exhortation. Believers are to assemble together...

- for worship
- for prayer
- for the study of God's Word
- for ministry and witnessing

Read the verse closely and it is clearly seen that the idea is often: we are to assemble together often and never to neglect our coming together. Genuine believers need each other — the presence, fellowship, strength, encouragement, care and love of each other.

But note: some had given up on the church even in the day of the early church. How like some in every generation. The need is just what this verse says: exhort one another, and so much the more, as you see the day approaching. What day? The day of the Lord's return. His return is immediately upon us. Therefore, we must exhort those who have fallen away, lest they miss the salvation of His coming and have to face His judgment.

Thought 1. William Barclay has an excellent application on this point that merits our attention as we minister this verse to our people. He takes the three points from Moffatt in the International Critical Commentary. He says there are three reasons which keep a person from worshipping with other Christian believers.

- 1) *“He may not go to Church because of fear. He may be ashamed to show his loyalty by being seen going to church. He may live or work among people who laugh at those who go to Church. He may have friends who have no use for that kind of thing, and he may fear their criticism and their contempt. He may try to be a secret disciple; but it has been well said that to be a secret disciple is impossible because either ‘the discipleship kills the secrecy, or the secrecy kills the discipleship.’ It would be well if we remembered that, apart from anything else, to go to Church is to demonstrate where our loyalty lies. Even if the sermon be poor and the worship tawdry, the Church still gives us the chance to show to men what side we are on.*
- 2) *“He may not go because of fastidiousness. He may dislike the common people; he may shrink from contact with people who are ‘not like himself.’ There are churches, even in this country, which are as much clubs as they are churches. They may be in neighbourhoods where the social status has come down; and the members who have remained faithful to them would be as much embarrassed as delighted if the poor people and the slum dwellers in the area came flooding in. We must never forget that there is no such thing as a ‘common’ man in the sight of God. It was for all men, not only for the respectable classes, that Christ died.*

3) *“He may not go because of conceit. Frankly, he may believe and state that he does not need the Church; that he is intellectually beyond the standard of preaching there. Social snobbery may be bad, spiritual and intellectual snobbery is worse. The wisest man is a fool in the sight of God; and the strongest man is weak in the moment of temptation. There is no man who can live the Christian life and neglect the fellowship of the church. If any man feels that he can do so let him remember that he comes to Church, not only to get, but to give. He ought to come not only to receive, but to make his own contribution to the life of the church. If he feels that the Church has faults, it is his duty to come in and to help to mend them”* (The Letter to the Hebrews, p. 136f)

Luke 2:36-37 *There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped night and day, fasting and praying.*

Luke 4:16 *He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read.*

Luke 24:52-53 *Then they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.*

John 4:24 *“God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth.”*

Acts 2:46 *Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.*

Acts 3:1 *One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer — at three in the afternoon.*

Acts 13:14 *From Perga they went on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue and sat down.*

Deu 12:5 *But you are to seek the place the Lord your God will choose from among all your tribes to put his Name there for his dwelling. To that place you must go.*

Psa 23:6 *Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

Psa 26:8 *I love the house where you live, O Lord, the place where your glory dwells.*

Psa 27:4 *One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.*

Psa 65:4 *Blessed are those you choose and bring near to live in your courts! We are filled with the good things of your house, of your holy temple.*

Psa 84:2, 4 *My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you.*

Psa 84:10 *Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.*

Psa 122:1 *I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord." ■*