



Grace and Determination – Part 2

July 24, 2022

Hebrews 10:19-25

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¹⁹ Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² 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. ²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ 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.

(Pastor prays)

There are two stages to learning to drive a car. There is the Drivers Ed class where you learn the rules of the road. You learn how to recognize the signs and lights and what they mean; the stop sign, stop lights, turn signals, and necessity of following distance. The most important thing you learn is that the left hand lane is for passing, not for going slow and bottlenecking traffic. In Drivers Ed you learn all the necessary information but it can never take the place of real application; of actual driving. Keep that in mind as I seek to explain the passage in front of us. The preacher has been explaining the true excellencies of Christ and just how great he is. The preacher even gives us two foundational truths in this very text. The first one is in verse 19.

¹⁹ Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by

the blood of Jesus, And the second one in verse 21. ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, Remember the four S's; Sovereignty, Salvation, Sanctification and Security. That is wonderful, soul satisfying information. You can drink that up and have healing and hope, strength and joy. That is great information to be able to draw strength from God. But at some point you have to get into the car and drive. Now come the commands telling us to do something for God.

True Grace Creates an Intentional Christian Life

The rest of this passage from verses 22-25 contain three commands and that gives us the structure of our sermon. Draw near. Don't waffle. Don't quit.

Draw near – to God

Isn't this the sum total of the Christian faith? This is what the whole book is about, our inability to draw near to God. We were cast out of the garden of Eden because of sin and the entire purpose of God is paving the way for us to be able to draw near to him. Do you want to draw nearer to God? How? Verse 22 gives us four ways to draw near to God. You can tell this writer is a preacher. ²² *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.* Draw near with a true heart. Draw near with a heart flooded with grace and forgiveness and hope and determination. A new heart is a true heart. It is a true heart as opposed to a doubting heart, a distracted heart, a distrustful heart, a hateful heart, an angry heart, an indifferent heart, a bored heart, a fickle heart, and sometimes a convenient heart. Drawing near to God with a true heart means having a converted heart. God gives you that when you are born again.

Draw near with full assurance of faith. Draw near without doubt, unshaken and unwavering. Now I want to be helpful here because all of us have our faith tested from time to time. The burden is not placed on the strength of your faith as much as it is placed on the strength of what it is you are believing in. It's more than your determination. We are holding onto something. Here are

some absolutes that have been helpful to me as I've thought it through myself.

The absolute goodness of God.

My absolute sinfulness.

The absolute sufficiency of Christ on the cross.

The absolute grace of forgiveness.

The absolute sovereignty of God.

The absolute authority of the Bible.

The absolute safety of being in God's will.

Draw near with a true heart and full assurance of faith.

Draw near with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience. He uses the Old Testament language of being sprinkled clean from Leviticus rituals. He brings it internal and calls our hearts cleaned. What does that mean? It is our conscience, our inner man, knowing right and wrong. It is the real inner being of who you are being submitted to the spiritual washing that comes from being converted. It is a real change, a fundamental reworking of all of your inner being. It's what makes you, you. This is the transforming nature of God's work when you become a Christian. Are you far from God? Are you drawing nearer to God? Draw nearer with a true heart, with full assurance of forgiveness and with a clean conscience.

Draw near, our bodies are washed with pure water. There is a lot of debate on what this could be, maybe following through with baptism. John the Baptist, Jesus, Paul, and the apostles are baptized before the Great Commission. It is a physical act of surrender, obedience and identification. It is being converted, joining this congregation and then being baptized. True grace creates an intentional Christian life. Draw near.

Don't waffle

Let's read the command and then dismantle it a bit and find the meaning in verse 23.²³ *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.* The command is to hold fast. It is to grip as tight as you can to something. During the Napoleonic wars in the pre-industrial navy, the British deckhands on a frigate, Man of War or ship of the line would have tattooed across their knuckles the words, Hold fast. H O L D F A S T. Not because they were biblical scholars but because they were superstitious and believed that would help their hands hold fast during the typhoons and hurricanes at sea. You get the idea. But hold fast to what? To the confession of our hope, the hopeful confession. The confession is our statement of faith, the substance of our faith. The puritans would call it the body of divinity. It's the essence and essentials of the Christian Religion. The very first confession is Jesus is Lord. The church realized that it had to expand the circles around what it means to be a Christian. How do you explain Christianity? About the 4th century they added the Apostle's Creed and a little later the Nicene Creed. The Reformation came and the Presbyterians had the Westminster Confession of faith; a summary of the Christian faith. The Baptist said we need to baptize people so they added the London Baptist confession. Or more recently the New Hampshire Baptist confession. Or for us, the Baptist Faith and Message. It is not our creed; the Bible is our authority, but it is a summary of what our confession is. We need that so we have clarity. So that we have clarity on things like gender; the goodness of masculinity and femininity. How God created us like that and it was good. He did that for human flourishing. It's the understanding of our responsibility to Christ as Lord. It's the call to be joyful as we think about the confession. The command is to hold fast to the confession of the hopefulness of knowing Christ. So how do we hold fast? We hold fast without waffling, without compromising or being silent or diminishing or being ashamed of or apologetic. This will be costly. It's why we do things like Camp Paradise, we want to put strength into our students. The culture we live in will shame you. Our views will put us in the margins. If you have a career you may not be promoted because you are a

Christian who believes in the bible. Friends may distance themselves from you and maybe even family. It could change your standing in society. It could be very difficult for a born again Christian who believes the Bible to actually be elected for high office in our nation. But don't forget the why. Why do we hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering? Let's look at the end of verse 23, ²³ *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.* Why do we hold fast to what we believe? It's because of the mountain of God's goodness to us, his faithfulness. Think on God's grace and how it is saving and sustaining us. Think on God's providence, all that he has brought you through. Trust in his sovereignty and be faithful. True grace creates an intentional Christian life. Draw near. Don't waffle and hold fast.

Don't quit

Let's look at the third command. Let us consider, diligently bear in mind, to constantly have it in your view, to intentionally think about, what? ²⁴ *And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,* To consider how to stir up one another to *agape*' and *ergon*. This is the conscientious care and concern for the spiritual estate and welfare of other believers. "Stir up", to provoke, agitate toward love and good works, brothers and sisters in Christ. Consider their trials and temptations, needs and situations; their pains and struggles and seek ways to be of help and service and blessings. Consider how to stir up one another to love and good deeds. Consider how to stir up commitment and strength and growth and inflame affections for God. Press them to godly living through genuine care, suitable exhortation, acts of kindness, humble conversations and real concern. The command is to think about how to do that, how to care for people in your orbit. Verse 25 gives us a couple of warnings on not quitting. ²⁵ *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.* Do not neglect the public gathering on the Lord's day. This is a caution against not coming to church. This word neglect is not passive, it is translated elsewhere as the active word forsake. This is Jesus on

the cross saying my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? This is 2 Timothy 4:10 where Paul said Demas has forsaken me. And in Hebrews 13:5, the preacher will say, ⁵ *Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."* Active. This is not, "I just got out of the habit." Biting your nails is a habit. Worshipping on Sunday with the Lord's people is a completely different thing. As I prepared this, I thought of the multiplied hundreds of people on the role at Hickory Grove that are in danger either because they are not actually born again or they are living in rebellion. The command the preacher is giving his people is a warning. Don't forsake. Don't stop gathering together in corporate worship and caring for your community and being in close discipleship with one another.

With the eye on the end we see the spirited motivation at the end of the verse. ²⁵ *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.*

We keep our eye on the truth that there is a consummation that is the end. That Christ will return as King to receive his church and look forward to an eternal judgment. Anytime you see the *Day* in the Bible, it's talking about judgment day. And the preachers says, with my eye on the end I need to warn you, don't stop. Don't quit. This morning I want to call you to strengthen what God has given you.

The foundation of the gospel is this. God has created you in his image but many of you here are living without Christ. He sent Jesus to redeem us. He died on the cross, God raised him from the dead and the offer to you is that you need to receive Christ. Maybe you need to respond today. Others of you would say, I am already a Christian, but maybe there has been some drifting and you just need to draw near. Possibly you need to be baptized. Maybe you heard the command to hold fast but you have been tempted. Ask God to give you clarity and strength. Maybe you thought of someone in your orbit that you need to stir up to love and good works. Maybe you need to rejoice in the fact that you are here and trust God to help you to not forsake the assembly.

There is some intentionality to Christianity. True Grace creates an intentional Christian.

(Pastor prays)