

Text: Hebrews 10:19-22

Title: You Must Draw Near to God

Truth: As a result of what we have in Christ, we should draw near to God.

Date/Location: Sunday June 5, 2011 at FBC

Introduction

Throughout the book of Hebrews there have been lots of points where the truth that has been taught is applied to the readers. But now we are reaching the application section of the entire book. Our focus shifts almost entirely to the “so what” idea—so what do we do about all the great truths about Jesus Christ? A lot of the answer can be summed up this way: Believe in God through Christ, and keep on believing!

Remember that in the immediately preceding section, the author reached a theological high point where he taught that there is no more an offering for sin since the one-time work of Christ was finished.

I. The Overall Structure of the Passage

To grasp the meaning of these four verses, it is important to understand the overall structure of them. The following compressed diagram will help:

19 Therefore, brethren,
 because we have
 [1] boldness to enter the Holiest...
21 and because we *have*
 [2] a High Priest over the house of God,
22 let us draw near...

II. What Believers Have: Boldness and a High Priest

The opening words of verse 19 build on the conclusion in 10:11-18 about the single and final offering for sin that Jesus did in offering Himself. “Therefore” tell us, in effect, that we are about to see the answer to the question “so what?”

Our author is not content, however, to draw only on that last bit of information in 10:11-18. Instead, he draws together chapters 3 through 10 in a sweeping conclusion to the arguments he has been making about the greatness of Christ, His self-sacrifice, and the New Covenant.

A. Boldness to Enter the Sanctuary

Here through verse 20 reflects the teaching of Hebrews 8:6 (or so) through 10:18 on the new covenant ministry of Christ.

Boldness means confidence, courage, or fearlessness in relation to God. This is unlike the fear and trepidation that would accompany someone entering into the Most Holy Place in the OT.

1. This verse and the next mention the blood and body of Christ, which may remind you of the Lord's Table (bread and juice) representing the Lord's body and blood.
2. Blood refers to Christ's sacrificial death.
3. The new way mentioned in v. 20 is opposite of the old covenant way (see 2 Cor. 3:6ff).
4. The way is living (Christ) as opposed to dead (animal sacrifices).
5. His body is pictured in a metaphor as the veil of the tabernacle through which the high priest went once a year.

All this reflects what Christ has done. Thus we can approach God on this basis. This is the opposite of throwing our confidence away, 10:35.

B. A High Priest, v. 21

This verse reflects the teaching of Hebrews 2:17 through 8:5. Note key verses in that section that talk about Christ as high priest: 2:17, 3:1, 4:14-15, 5:1, 5:5, many verses in chapter 7 like 7:17, 7:26, and 8:1.

In the OT, there was the priest who officiated at the ritual, there was the animal sacrifice, and there was a veil to pass through on the way into the Most Holy Place. This passage points out that Jesus is the high priest and the sacrifice and the veil, all in One person. In other words, each of those OT items points to Christ.

1. Christ is over his house, as in 3:1-6. That house is the household of faith, true believers. Christ is the head over that house, as in it belongs to and exists under him (Eph. 1:22, 5:23, Col. 1:18).
2. Christ is also the mediator or way of access to God.

C. In sum, we have a perfect sacrifice that took our just due for sin, and we have a perfect representative before God.

III. What Believers Must Therefore Do: Draw Near

The idea of drawing near is basically the same as the idea of “entering” in v. 19. It means to approach or enter into God’s presence, like in 4:16, 7:25, 10:1, and 11:6. These verses teach us that we must approach God through Christ by faith and with confidence.

These verses reflect the OT language of drawing near to God’s presence, often for worship, but sometimes falsely (Exodus 3:5, Eccl. 5:1, Isaiah 29:13 // Matt 15:8, Heb. 7:19). This has to be accompanied with holiness on the part of the worshipper (Psalm 15, 24:3-5). James 4:8 connects the thoughts of drawing near and holiness.

A. Approach God with a True Heart

God wants (demands) a genuine, sincere, authentic heart. He sees on the inside. Mere externals do not impress God. Rather, they sicken Him.

B. Approach God with Full Assurance

This speaks about a state of full assurance, that is, complete certainty. This is when you look at all that is written before about Christ and you can with complete certainty know that it is true. This is related to our assurance of salvation. This certainty is not a phantom state that is, after all is said and done, unreachable. Rather, it is real because what Jesus did and what Hebrews has been teaching about is real, true, historical, fact. It is Christian teaching at the core.

In my view, this offers an argument against Pascal’s wager. The wager states that “even if the existence of God cannot be determined through reason, a rational person should wager as though God exists, because living life accordingly has everything to gain, and nothing to lose” (Wikipedia). I’ve heard a variant of this recently around here. The point is there is no wager. There is no guesswork—it is completely and utterly certain that Christ is the high priest and that through His blood we can have boldness to enter into God’s presence.

C. Approach God on the Basis of Regeneration

The final phrases of verse 22 have to do with regeneration. They reflect the language of Ezekiel 36:25-27 that speaks about New Covenant cleansing from sin.

Both verbs are perfect tense and passive voice. The passive voice refers to the fact that the work (hearts cleansed and bodies washed) was done by God, not ourselves.

The perfect tense refers to the fact that this work was done once at a point in the past, it is done, and it has an ongoing effect.

In regeneration, we have been cleansed of sin and a conscience that was full of evil. See Titus 3:5 for more on this.

Conclusion

For Christians, this passage inspires confidence and reminds us of how we received access to God. It reminds us that Christ is still our way of access—we never leave Him behind!

Perhaps you are a doubter. Please consider this: what we have discussed today, and for the past 11 months in our study of Hebrews—these are the FACTS. They are also the exclusive facts. If there were other ways to God, Hebrews would not look at all like it does. Jesus is the way.

When you decide to believe that these things are true about Jesus and what He did through His death for sin, then you too will be regenerated and thus cleansed from sin. You will be fit to draw near to God and enjoy the blessings of boldness and a high priest.

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