

## Hebrews: Surging Forward

Aaron Brockett | Hebrews 10:1-39

---

Well if you would, go ahead and grab your Bible and get to Hebrews 10. That's where we are. You guys doing okay today? It's good to see you. I know it's really cold outside, but I'm glad you could all make it out to this service. It looks pretty full in here, so if you see someone looking for a seat, just say, "Hey, I've got a seat right here!" Uh, don't do that because it would interrupt me. But if you could, just kind of point it out and let people know there is a seat available.

We are in Hebrews 10. If you have been here over this whole season, then you know we have been working our way through this book that is actually a letter that reads like a sermon to a Hebrew congregation. We've just been working our way through it, chapter by chapter, verse by verse, because we believe God's Word is sufficient on its own to convict and bring us to the knowledge of the truth. In the end, I want to teach you how to read your Bible. The best way to do that is just to walk straight through it. To know only tell you what it says, but then to show us what the implication of what it says is. That's what we are trying to do in this 45-50 minute period of time together.

The author of Hebrews is writing a letter to a congregation of people that grew up very, very religious; specifically, they were Jewish. That's the context in which they lived. That wasn't a bad thing; in fact, it was a good thing by many accounts. The only snag in this was that because they grew up with all this Jewish tradition and ritual, they thought that all of this external, good, religious behavior could actually get them to God. In reality, that really good, religious behavior was just keeping them from Him. At one point, they get exposed; they hear the Gospel message, the new Covenant of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. They no longer have to trust in their own external works to get to God. That actually, they can just trust in Jesus finished work on their behalf.

Here is the deal. Some of them in that church heard this, they had a-- because we are going to see this in the text -- they had a knowledge of the truth. They heard it, they understood it, and they were able to comprehend it. But then another part of them not only had a knowledge, but they were enlightened, they were converted. They gave their hearts to Jesus Christ. Those two things are different. Having a knowledge of the truth, with your mind, and then submitting with your heart to Jesus Christ are very, very different. One is externally religious; the other is the Gospel message that changes your heart.

So this Hebrew congregation had a knowledge of the truth, many of them converted, but it was not a popular decision with their families or with the culture in which they lived. Some of you know exactly what that is like. So they were growing discouraged and showing signs of wavering. They were tempted to drift away. In fact, throughout the series if you have been here, we said there are five warnings in the 13 chapters of Hebrews. All five of them deal with drifting away. All five of them deal with, you had it and now you are losing it.

Over the past three or four weekends as we have been working through chapters 7, 8 and 9, we have been in the deepest end of a very deep book. It's been complex to walk through. I don't know if you have noticed this or not but the author of Hebrews, over the last two or three chapters, has been repeating himself over and over and over again, in a variety of ways, but he is saying the same thing.

What is it called when you repeat yourself over and over again? The word for that I'm looking for is 'repetition'. That's what the author of Hebrews is doing through chapters 7, 8 and 9. If you just go back and review it again, he is saying the same thing, over and over again. Repetition. Repetition.

Now, why do we repeat things? Well, three reasons as near as I can tell. Either the person that I'm saying this to isn't getting it, so I feel like I need to say it again. The second thing is that they are getting it, but they aren't doing anything with it. The third reason is that they got, maybe at one time they did something with it, but now they are either growing discouraged or indifferent towards it.

Man, as a father of four kids under the age of 11, I'm very familiar with repetition! Any parents in the house? That's like your whole job, is just to repeat yourself over and over again all day long. If I just had a sound byte, I would sound like a lunatic. Get up, get up, get up! Time to get out of the door! We're going to be late! Stop hitting your brother! Stop pestering your sister! All right, did you do your homework? Go to bed! Go to bed! I thought I put you to bed! Kids are like weeds! You put them down, they pop back up. What are you doing in the hallway? You were snoring a minute ago! I'm thirsty!

Not only is it in the corrective but I need to, as a parent, repeat myself and practice repetition for the affirmative, right? I need to say affirmative things to them over and over and over again. My middle daughter, Kennedy, is really sweet. She is such a cute little girl and she is a little small for her age and she knows it. She came home from school three or four weeks ago and on a pumpkin, she had written a description of herself (not on a real pumpkin, a paper pumpkin). So she came into my office at home and she walked up to me and said, hey Daddy, look what I did at school today. I opened it up and I started reading it. It was a description of who she is. So it had her favorite foods on there, which happened to be mashed potatoes and chocolate, not together, but separate! And then she says she has blonde hair and blue eyes. And then she said this, 'I'm medium sized'.

I read that out loud and she stopped me. She said, Daddy, Daddy, I know I'm small-sized, I just didn't want to hurt my own feelings. You just think, whatever you want sweetheart, just name it, right now, just name it! I love you, I love you, I love you! Man, if people aren't getting it; they get it but aren't doing anything with it; they got it, at one time they were doing something with it, but now they are growing bored, indifferent, discouraged from it, you repeat yourself. That's what the author of Hebrews has been doing. This is so important and it is so heady and deep and complex that he knew that saying it once wouldn't get the job done.

So in chapters 7, 8 and 9, he is just saying the same thing, just over and over and over again in a variety of ways.

So what is he saying? He is basically saying this. External, religious behavior (behavioral management if you will) doesn't work! And, the only thing that works is putting your trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ on your behalf. You have heard this and a number of you have received it, but not all of you are doing anything with it. Some of you are showing signs of wavering from it. Some of you are drifting away from it. He (the author) is waving his hands saying, man, you don't want to travel down that road any further. Man, I love the book of Hebrews, as complex as it is, because it is so crystal clear and it just bears down.

So many of the Epistles are so short, but Hebrews is 13 chapters long. He wants us to get this. If you have ever found yourself saying, man, I just don't understand all this, I don't get Christianity; I don't understand the Cross; I don't understand why God had to send His Son; I don't understand why it's

important Jesus died. If you've ever found yourself asking those questions, Hebrews is your book! Because in order for Grace to be really good news, you've got to understand why you need it.

What he does throughout the middle part of this book is, he unpacks why we need it. How many of you didn't start eating right until you had that health scare? How many of you didn't start buckling your seatbelts until you got into the accident? How many of you didn't start saving responsibly until you had that stretch, that season in your life where you were unemployed? And it was actually in those moments of great pain and inconvenience that actually brought you to something that was actually good news for you. Now this is what he has been doing throughout the middle part of this book, is he has been laying out our condition before God. It is much more serious than maybe any of us think. But then, he is also laying out for us the way that God loves us and what He has done for us, which is way better than most of us give Him credit for.

So throughout this whole letter, what he is saying to this Hebrew congregation, some of them genuine believers, some of them having just heard it, but hadn't responded to it yet-- much like everyone in this room. There are some of you today that have a knowledge of the truth but you haven't responded to it yet. Some of you have responded, but maybe you are drifting from it. This is so applicable to us today because religious activity (you showing up today, driving through the cold weather) doesn't put you any closer to God than if you had stayed home in bed. Some of you are like, why are you telling me that now? I should have stayed home in bed! But there are four things we've got to understand here, is that you are here, not to gain God's favor, but because you have God's faith and you can't wait to get here. That's a very different mentality. If you are just showing up thinking God is in Heaven with an attendance chart and He is going to put a gold star on my chart that says, 'I was here, that covers over a multitude of wrong doing throughout the week!', then you are still living under the Old Covenant. Man, the New Covenant is so much better!

The only thing the Law can do effectively is make you feel sinful, that's all it can do. **The Law points out the problem, but it doesn't offer any solution.** Now we come to Chapter 10, this is the transition in the book. Verse 19 specifically is a hinge verse. In fact, find Verse 19 in your Bible and write the word 'hinge' right next to Verse 19. That verse is the hinge this whole book swings on. So up to this point if you have been hanging with us through this series-- first of all I just want to thank you because this is a heady book to preach through. If you have been putting in the groundwork, you have been putting in the effort-- we've been moving through a lot of **information** and now this is going to swing towards **implication** throughout the rest of the letter.

We've been in a lot of **truth**, now we are going to swing into **transformation**. We are going to go from, this is what the Bible says, to, this is what it means for my life. So let's get into Chapter 10, starting in Verse 1, he says (he's just going to repeat himself one more time), so if you've been here, everything he is going to say for these first 19 verses is simply review. But actually, this should just reinforce some things in your mind of what we have already covered. I will go through it quickly. The first four verses: "For since the law has but a **shadow** (we talked about this a couple of weeks ago.) of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? But in these sacrifices there is a **reminder of sins** (*Reminder of sins, not a removal.*) every year. For it is **impossible** for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins."

What he has just said in those four verses is that you've got a lot of behavior that is being done over and over again, but is not producing the results that they thought it would bring about. Man, that is so frustrating in life, isn't it? Have any of you ever done everything you know to do; you've followed the steps to the letter and then you get done and you think, man, that didn't produced what was promised. Every single summer I always forget how to string my weed-eater. You didn't see that one coming did you? Every single year I will come down, I'm weed-eating and, Pow! The string breaks! There's no string left in there and I'm trying to figure this thing out. I weave it all up and I snap it in and start it up... and the whole thing just comes apart! Then I get on YouTube and follow-- that's how I do things now, I just get on YouTube and follow all the steps. Then it comes down through and you don't get the results that you were looking for.

How many of you have ever gone through a diet? You are serious about it. You are going to change the way you eat, you are going to change your exercise patterns. You go through it for several months, you step up on the scales, and you *gained* ten pounds! It's frustrating, isn't it? Right now you are thinking, Aaron, don't even bring that up, I don't even want to talk about it! This is what the Old Covenant did. They were going through all of these procedures, but they were not getting the results they desired. To which we might say, well why? Why is this even here? Why did God even have them do this in the first place if it wasn't going to achieve the needed results? The answer is right here in the passage.

God never intended for this to be the 'end all'. It was the shadow of the realities to come and there is always a shadow of the object that is coming your way. **Shadows never make sense until you see the object of the shadow**, do they? Well, you might see my shadow coming down the road before you see me coming, but would you be able to describe the features of my face? Would you be able to describe my hair color, what I'm wearing? No, you wouldn't, it's actually a really dimly lit image of who I really am. Then once the object appears, all of a sudden the shadow makes more sense.

Another way to look at this is the reason why we will teach through the Old Testament is because it is so important not to neglect the Old Covenant because the New Covenant isn't as good of news without really understanding the Old. Once you understand what they used to be under, now you understand why Jesus coming-- now you understand why He went to a Cross; that he did it once, for all. Aren't you glad we don't have to keep sacrificing the blood of bulls and goats? Man, I am! I don't even know where to get that stuff!

Here's the image-- that those who were living under the Old Covenant were walking on egg shells with God. These people are thinking, "God, do you love me; here is my sacrifice, is it good enough; God I know I messed up again, will You receive me again?" Everything about the temple said, 'Stay away!' God is a holy God, he desires to be near you, but sin has separated you. So those who were living under the Old Covenant were uncertain, they were confused. They were walking on eggshells, not exactly certain how this was going to turn out.

Unbelievers today, who read the Old Testament are often just as uncertain and confused, if not outright angry at what they read, because they are looking at the shadow, not the object of the shadow. Jesus is all over the Old Testament. If you have heard that phrase, looking back in reverse, you have 20/20 vision in reverse? But in the time of, it just looks so confusing? Have any of you ever been in the season of your life, maybe you are there right now, and you are confused and uncertain. You don't know what God wants from you, what is God's will? (You are thinking) I'm afraid of making a mistake; I'm afraid of making the wrong decision?

Any of you emerged out of that season and you look back on the season of uncertainty and you kind of laugh about it now? Like, oh man, I see it perfectly now! It's kind of like my dating days. You know, Lindsay and I have been married for 15 years, but I remember when we were dating. When I came to the realization that, 'this is the one'; she is the one that I want to spend the rest of my life with-- and I came to the realization before she did, all right? So there was a significant amount of time where I felt very uncertain about our relationship and where it was going. I can remember we never 'broke up' in the whole time we were dating, but there was one season where we came really close. It was about a three day period of time of great uncertainty. It may as well have been three years in my mind.

I don't know what exactly happened. I think maybe it was something about she was intimidated about my looks, or something. I'm not exactly sure. I don't know why you are laughing about that. I'm probably remembering it wrong. I would like to think that was it, but there was something going on. I just remember this phone call where she said she just needed a little bit of space; she just needed to figure this thing out. Man, those three days, I was so uncertain. I was walking on egg shells. I was thinking, should I call her today, should I give her space, should I write her a letter? Should I stalk her? I don't know, I don't know!

Now that we have entered into the covenant of marriage, we've been at that for 15 years now, I look back on that season and I'm not worried about it. I'm not uncertain about it. In fact, I look back on it and think, oh, that's so cute. I can laugh about it now. Why? Because I've got a certainty of a New Covenant that we've made in marriage. This is the Old Testament and you should read the Old Testament with great rejoicing, not confusion. To remember how uncertain that was, but now in Jesus Christ the full revelation of this, we can have certainty. That's what he is saying here. The whole religious system was futile, it wasn't getting them anywhere.

As we go on in our passage in Verse 5, it says, "consequently," so here are the consequences of what we just said, and they are good, "when Christ came into the world", this is Christmas; this is incarnation. Jesus is fully God; He came to us. You will notice in your Bibles there; look with me in your Bibles. I hope you have them open. Here in Verse 5, the next sentence is in quotations. This is Jesus speaking. Jesus is fully God and fully man. He is an equal part of the Trinity, but He is speaking to God, the Father. Jesus speaks to God and listens to what He says.

"He said, 'Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired.'" God never wanted this. He never wanted the Old Testament sacrificial system, the Temple, the blood of bulls and goats. That was not what He wanted. Well, why did it get instituted? Well because sin messed everything up. It broke our communion with God. Something had to be done. "And He said, 'but a body have You prepared for Me;'" so Jesus is fully God in a human, flesh and blood body, so that he can sacrifice it for us. Verse 6: "'in burnt offerings and sin offerings You have taken no pleasure.'" There it is again. Verse 7: "Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God, as it is written of Me in the scroll of the book.'"

That's an amazing sentence right there. Do you know what Jesus just said? He said that I'm spending my quiet time in the Old Testament, that's what He said. And he said, I'm all over the Old Testament. Jesus is all over the Old Testament. If you are reading the Old Testament without seeing Jesus Christ, you are reading it wrong. If you are reading the story of David and Goliath and you don't see Jesus, you are reading it wrong. If you are reading the story of Jonah being swallowed by the great fish for three days without seeing Jesus in it, you are reading it wrong. Because Jesus is all over the scroll of the Old Testament and He just said it Himself. How wild would that be? He came down and says, hey, I was doing my devotions this morning and I was reading about myself, in the Old Testament.

Verse 8: “When He said above, ‘You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices.’” Is He repeating himself? Yes, He is doing it right here in this passage. “‘And offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings.’” These are offerings according to the law. Then He added, “‘Behold, I have come to do Your will.’ He does away with the first (the Old Covenant) in order to establish the second. And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ (Not *continuing*, look at your Bibles.) once for all.” Once. He just did away with it.

God’s son came to do what the blood of bulls and goats could never do. The literal reading of that passage in the original languages (I love this), says Jesus sacrificed the sacrificial system. He came down and he just offed it. We are done with you. We don’t need you anymore, because He came to be the sacrifice once and for all. The work of Christ is finished. All through the Old Testament God keeps saying, I don’t want your sacrifices, I don’t want your sacrifices, I don’t want your sacrifices. If you will read the Old Testament you will see it.

Let me just go through a few of these passages with you. In Psalms 51:17 it says, “The sacrifices of God are (not bulls and goats, but) a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart.” Contrite means repentant, to turn around, a humble heart. “O God, You will not despise.” Right there in the Old Testament God says, man, I didn’t want your sacrifices, I wanted your heart, and he always.

1Samuel 15:22, “Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord?” He is saying here, if you want to offer me a sacrifice; then just obey my voice. “Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams.”

Hosea 6:6, “For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.”

And one more, Amos 5:21-24, God says, “I hate,” hate, that’s a strong word. Does God hate anything? Yes, he does hate something and He tells us what it is right here. Basically, let me just summarize it, He hates empty worship, He hates it. “I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.” What that means is, ‘look at us, God; look at how religious we are; look how traditional we are, God; look how seriously we are taking this external religion, God.’ That’s what it is saying. “Even though you offer Me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them;”

So you go and offer these things to God and He says, ‘No thanks, I really don’t want it. I’m much more interested in the conviction of your heart.’ Amos 5:21-24 continues: “and the peace offerings of your fattened animals, I will not look upon them. Take away from me the noise of your songs;” Man as I was studying this, this last week it was just so convicting for me; that in a worship service, if my heart-- if I’m in Christ, those of you that are in Christ, if my heart is carnal, if my heart is far from God; if I’m here for my glory, my preferences; if I am reviewing my ‘to do’ list in my mind during the music; if I’m thinking about something else but I’m mouthing the words... God says, man, that is not worship, that’s noise, and it greatly offends me. “To the melody of your harps I will not listen.”

Go ahead, knock yourself out. No, no, no, no, no, no, not listening. Your heart is not right and it burdens me that we would have maybe churches of people-- people *in* Christ, I’m not talking about if you are *not* in Christ; I’m talking about if you have given your life to Jesus Christ, that you would come in here and act ho-hum, like this is no big deal. You are coming into the presence of the living God. You might say, well Aaron, I’m just not very expressive in worship. I’m not asking you to be expressive in worship. I’m just asking you to look like you are stepping into the presence of God, instead of casually dismissing it



like this is no big deal. Well I just don't like to get fired up. Well I've seen you at the ballgames, all right, you get fired up. We get fired up about a ball, but-- I mean, this is the living God that made a sacrifice once and for all and you are just going to stand there with a cup of coffee in your hand and be unengaged? God says, that's noise to me. Go, go ahead, knock yourself out. I'm not going to listen to any of that.

Then He say (Amos 5:21-24): "But let justice roll down (that's bad news) like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." God desires that our heart would be turned towards Him, rather than external sacrifices of praise that just cover up our disobedience and apathy. If you have ever said, I've been really, really bad this week; I better get to church and worship extra hard; God's like, "nice try; just give me your heart, that's all I want, just give Me your heart." This is why you should prepare ahead of time before you get here. What I mean by 'prepare ahead of time' is not, you know, get down on the ground and stretch. I'm not talking about putting on headphones, listen to worship tunes and get fired up. No, it's a softened, repentant, humble heart. God, speak to me through this time.

It goes on in (Hebrews) Verse 11, "And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins." Man, what a pathetic picture that is. The priests are going every single day; they are getting up, their alarms going off at 5 in the morning; time to make the doughnuts; shuffling out the door, clocking in. I've got to make this same sacrifice daily and it's not doing any good. Over and over again. "But when Christ had offered for all time (Notice the difference there between those sentences) a single sacrifice (not repeatedly.) for sins, He sat down at the right hand of God." This is review, we've covered this already. When Jesus sits down, that means the work is done; why are you trying to work for it), "waiting..."

I asked you this questions a couple weekends ago. What's Jesus doing right now; what's He doing *right* now? Is he playing golf; is He retired; is He out of commission? Is He just kicking back with a cup of iced tea on the other side of the planet somewhere? No, I said, Jesus, right now, is sitting down at the right hand of God the Father, interceding for those in Christ. He is mediating on your behalf. It is such an awesome image. He is saying, God I know that she just messed up but my blood has covered her. God, I know right now he is arrogant and filled with pride, but My blood has covered him. The Spirit is going to convict him, bring him to repentance. He is interceding for you. Not only that, Verse 13 here says that the other thing that He is doing, is He is waiting. So what is Jesus doing? He is mediating and He is waiting. "...from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for His feet.

I don't know about you, but I didn't hear that lesson growing up in Sunday school. Any of you old enough to remember the Sunday school flannel-graphs; weren't they awesome? Here's a little flannel-graph, we are going to tell the story about Jesus; and Jesus healing people; and Jesus feeding the 5,000 with the boy's Lunchable™. Today boys and girls we are going to talk about one day God's going to make Jesus' enemies a footstool for His feet. Take this lesson home to Mom and Dad. I don't remember that one, do you? And yet, it's here. What in the world does that mean? Does Jesus really have enemies? You bet He does! Who are Jesus' enemies? Satan, his demons, and sinners who actively or passively reject His grace. That's what it means when Jesus says, "You are either for me or against me.:

This is why, in Revelation 2 and 3, Jesus would speak so strongly to the churches about lukewarm-ness. You can't ride the fence on this. Riding the fence is just external religious behavior. You think that you've got a relationship with me (Jesus) through that and you actually really don't, you are actually my enemy. Not because God doesn't love you, but because you have sided with sin and sin is an affront to the

holiness of God. God says one day-- right now it's everywhere; people mock Jesus, are indifferent toward Jesus; they dismiss Jesus. Who are the people right now in your life that can hurt you the most?

Coming back from O'Charley's this week for lunch, I accidentally cut in front of a guy. Man, he tore into me, honking; I'm pretty sure he was probably cursing me out. I was trying to put the words together-- I actually didn't want to know-- as I was driving by. It didn't bother me that much; I don't know him. I'm afraid for him, man; that guy's got a bad day. If I went home and my wife did that to me-- undone! My dad, my biological dad, if he calls me up, screams, yells at me like that-- melted! Because, the people that you love the most have the potential to hurt you the most. This is what God is saying here. When you spit in the face of Jesus, when you reject the grace that He has given to you, it wounds Him deeply.

This is why even right now today, if you are not certain about where you stand with Jesus, don't walk out of here without it. Under the New Covenant, you can have certainty. You can say, man, Jesus, I'm fully yours; not by anything that I do, but by what You have done for me. This passage right here in Verse 14 will either anger you or it will humble you. I pray it humbles you. Get low or be made low.

"For by a single offering," There it is again, single, single, single; not over and over again, but a single offering. "He has perfected (notice the past-tense of that) for all time those who are being sanctified (that's present-tense). And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, 'This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord; I will put My laws on their hearts (We've read that before; God wants to change you from the inside out, not the outside in), and write them on their minds,' then He adds, 'I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.'"

(Hebrews 10) Verse 19, this will go much quicker now; this is the 'hinge' verse of the whole book. "Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin." Basically, here is the big idea that I want you to catch. There is so much more that God wants you to have in Christ, than just your salvation. Do you get that? I see a few of you nodding, and I see a few of you kind of confused by it. That's okay. Let me try to unpack it for you. God wants so much more for you than you just to go to Heaven. Some of you are treating you like your fire insurance. 'Let me just go ahead and get that stamped so that way I'm good to go.' You are neglecting your sanctification, your maturity, your growth in Christ, and this is a joy, not a burden!

God wants so much more for you in Christ than just a one-time momentary salvation, but a journey with Him. How many of you have ever bought a car with a bunch of extra bells and whistles, you didn't necessarily want, it just came with it and you have no idea how to use it? There are a few of you that are very honest about that. Me; that would be me. It looks like you are sitting in front of the starship, Enterprise! Drive and go. That's all I know how to do. How many of you have bought a fully decked out computer, the salesman talked you into? You take it home and this thing can cure cancer; this thing can produce reports; this thing can pay your bills; it can make you a cup of coffee! You are just checking email and playing Solitaire on it. We've all been in that situation.

Those of you that are just merely going through religious behavior, that's all you are doing with Christ. Some of you are like, well, I believe-- I believe in God. I've always believed in God; I grew up in a Christian home. I was baptized when I was young. I remember going to camp and professing Jesus as my savior. Man, I don't want to take away any of those memories or discount any of that in your life, but are you doing more with it? Or are you just sitting there checking email, playing Solitaire with it? There is so much more God wants for you in Jesus Christ. It's a joy, not a burden. Throw off the shackles of



religion and enter into a real relationship with Jesus Christ. Get past your own mind and get with your heart and allow Jesus Christ to fully capture that.

Look what it says in Verse 19, therefore, that's a transitional word: "Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence (pastor interjection: Confidence, Confidence, Confidence, circle that; that's huge.) to enter (pastor interjection: Confidence to enter; enter where? Just say it out loud with me.) the holy places." Now, if we would have started in Chapter 10, that wouldn't mean as much to you, if we hadn't done all the ground work of 7, 8 and 9. Right? Just say 'Right', so I feel better about myself! All right, thank you. I've done such a good job teaching this to you! I can see it in your faces, right?

So basically what he is saying is that we have confidence to enter the holy places. How? "By the blood of Jesus; by the new and living way that He opened for us through the curtain, that is, through His flesh..." I believe Matt talked about that last week. We've mentioned it before. The curtain was split, giving us access, but many of us try to stitch that curtain up with our own religious behavior. Now this is the idea, that through the blood of Jesus, you have confidence to enter the place that nobody could ever go for all those years.

There was only one person that could go into the Holy of Holies was the high priest. It was where the presence of God resided. I mean, God had to have a place to reside here on Earth among us. It was in the Temple in the Old Testament; it's the Church in the New Testament. We'll get to that in a minute. But in the Temple, God resided in the Holy of Holies through His Shekinah Glory. Only one guy could go in there once a year to make atonement for sins. If he died, they wrapped a rope around his ankle to drag his body out because nobody could go in after him, because if you did, you died.

Here in this passage it says through the blood of Jesus, 'hey, you all, come on in. Come on in to the Holy of Holies! What? No. Yeah. And you can not only come into the Holy of Holies, you can do it confidently. What does that look like? What does it look like to be timid and what does it look like to be confident? Very different things, right? Timidity is religion. Is God pleased with me? Is God angry with me? Have I done enough? I'm not quite sure; I think I'm good enough to get into Heaven, but what if I'm one act short? Confidence is: no, this is a done deal through Jesus Christ!

Any of you ever walked up to an airport and you are on standby to get on the plane? You don't have a boarding pass? Do you walk confidently up to the terminal, or do you walk with great timidity? Like, hey, I was just kind of wondering, did somebody not show up so I can get on the plane? No! The plane is full! Uh, okay, that's what I thought. I'm sorry, if you could just call me back later. But if you have a boarding pass, you walk up there like, "Hey get me on the plane right now. I'm in seat 4D, right?" And you just walk on the plane because you have a spot. You are confident. It says, "in Christ, you can confidently come into the holy places."

It goes on in Verse 21: "and since we have a great priest over the house of God (that's Jesus), let us *draw near*." Draw near. Notice the implications here. It says you've got confidence; now that you have confidence, draw near. How do we draw near? With a true heart. "with a true heart (that's sincerity of motives) in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."

This could maybe have a dotted line towards baptism; this is what baptism symbolizes; that you can be cleansed in Jesus Christ. Baptism doesn't save you, but it does show you how you are saved. You become a new creation in Jesus; you are cleansed. You are made pure. And now, because of that, you

can draw near. How sad if God showed you, hey, here is the bridge to me, and you didn't cross it. How sad if the door was opened up and you didn't go in. Maybe many of you haven't. He says, now that you have the confidence, you can actually draw near.

Then in Verse 23, "Let us *hold fast*." So there is another one. You might circle those words, 'hold fast'. So we've got confidence; we can draw near; now let's hold fast. "The confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful." So now that we've entered in through the blood of Jesus Christ (and this goes back to the whole theme of Hebrews), hold onto what Jesus is giving you and don't let it go! That's what the Hebrew congregation was showing signs of doing. They were showing signs of letting go of this incredible thing, for a couple of reasons.

One, they hadn't truly been converted yet, they just had the knowledge of the Gospel. Or two, they had been converted, but they were slowly drifting and starting to let go. This is the idea of wavering. I love to water ski and snow ski. Put a couple sticks on my feet and I'm happy. Any of you that have ever done those activities before, it doesn't matter if it's water or snow, when you start to waver and wobble, what's about to happen? You are going to fall on your face, alright? You had better get that thing righted real quick, or its lights out. Any of you ever been in a boat before and you are pulling somebody on some water skis and they start to waver? You are like, oh check this out, check this out, they are going to bite it! Because those are signs that they are getting ready to fall, they are getting ready to collapse.

Here's what the author of Hebrews is saying, 'I'm watching you waver! I'm watching you wobble! God gives you confidence to enter in and you've got this amazing thing in the New Covenant, and why are you wavering?!' In this room right now, there are some of you wavering and wobbling. Maybe you just have mis-ordered priorities, you're busy, you're stressed, or you're distracted. Maybe it's a financial thing. Maybe it's a pride thing. Maybe it's a sin thing. You are like under the conviction even right now. You are thinking, my walk with Christ hasn't really been strong. In fact, if I were to be really honest, I would have to describe it as wavering. If that's the case, man, receive this and say, how do I get righted again? How do I stand strong through this; how do I stay with it?

Look at verse 24. He's going to tell us how. "And let us consider how to *stir up* one another to love and good works..." So he says that the key to standing strong when you are wavering is let us "stir one another up". This is why the Bible knows nothing of solo Christianity. We need one another. This is the importance of the function of the church, where you need other people around you, and other people need you. I love those words 'stir up'. Actually the literal rendering of that is translated 'provoke'. Let's provoke one another towards love and good works. That's actually a little stronger word. It's the idea that I'm kind of going to get your attention. I may raise my voice. I may sound a little bit aggressive.

Not to belittle you, not to pump up my pride, but to get your attention. If my kids were standing out in the middle of oncoming traffic, I wouldn't gently encourage them to get out of the way. I would provoke them. I would 'stir it up'. I would get their attention. A major element in effective Biblical preaching is that preaching needs to be grounded in God's Word; walk through it to help you understand what it says; and then provoke you to do something with it. That's why every now and then, I get kind of excited and get kind of -- kind of raise my voice and kind of yell. I'm trying to provoke you. I'm trying to get a response out of you. And by the looks on some of your faces sometimes, sometimes it works!

Man, I need it, and I know you do too. I know there are going to be times we are all going to waver. We need one another to stir each other up. Notice Verse 25 with me, look at your Bibles. How do we do this; how do we stir each other up? By "...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." The Day, the Day, the Day. Notice that the Day is capitalized. Why? Because that is Judgment Day. That's the return of Jesus. He says let's not neglect meeting together and then he tells us how that happens. Most of the time when neglecting gathering together with the church, you fall out of the habit. Most of the time that's what it is. Have you ever been in that situation in your life, where maybe somebody gets sick, you travel, you go on vacation and you are like, man, I kind of like this. I kind of like staying at home. I think I'm okay. Then you slip into a season where you get into a habit of neglecting the gathering.

I'm not saying that you have to be here to 'earn' your salvation. That's not what I'm saying at all. But I am saying it's important for you not to neglect the gathering, because of what he says here. A major part of this element here is to stir up and to encourage one another to stay strong in Christ. Now if this isn't the church for you, that's okay. Find one where it is, but don't neglect the gathering. Why? Well in the Old Testament, the Old Covenant, God's presence kind of circled around the Temple. In the New Covenant, God's presence, through His Spirit, implanted through His regenerated people, hovers around the Church. There is nothing special about the institution of the Church. There is nothing special about this building. In fact this building is *not* the Church. I hope you know that. The Church just comes to this building.

God does not hang out here during the middle of the week, I've checked, all right? Not in here, kicking His feet up, like oh man, how much more time until they all get here. No, the Church comes to a building. Coming to church is not what it means to be the Church. This is just the gathering. So being here right now doesn't put you any more in Christ than sitting in garage makes you a car. Some of you will get that later this afternoon. But at the same time, don't overstate it. You need the gathering, to come together, to lift up, to encourage one another in Jesus Christ.

Let me just say a couple of things here about this. This is not what it means to be the Church in the sense that religious ritual can't save you and discipleship doesn't mean come and sit. Discipleship does not mean come and sit. So if you are just coming here every weekend and sitting and getting the message, but not really doing anything with it, that's not discipleship. Discipleship, I want you to think about it this way. Many of you may go home today and watch the Colts play. One of the things you will notice periodically between plays is that they will huddle up. They will huddle up, and what do you think they are doing in the huddle? They are calling a play, they are drawing stuff out-- hey, are you guys okay-- encouraging one another. Hey, you dropped that pass, that's okay, keep your head up. But then they go out and they run the play.

You are not going to be too infatuated with the huddle. The huddle isn't even actually what wins the game. But the huddle is vitally important for it. I want you to think about this in the sense, not the 'holy huddle'; not like you are trying to insulate yourself from the world. That's not what I'm saying. I am saying, this is the huddle where we gather together. For what? For God's glory, to participate in the sacraments, to hear the Word of God and be in prayer, so that we can stir one another up to be the Church in our community, our neighborhoods and the schools. So don't neglect the gathering.

Well, the remainder of this chapter is a stern warning, and it's the fourth warning in the book of Hebrews. You will find it in Verse 26, and it's a stern warning for our good. So look with me at what it says in Verse 26. "For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the

one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which He was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, 'Vengeance is Mine; I will repay.' And again, 'The Lord will judge His people.' It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

I want to draw your attention back up to Verse 26 again, where he says, "if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth". This is just my opinion on this. But receiving the knowledge of the truth, is not conversion. Receiving the knowledge of the truth is hearing the Gospel message and understanding it, but it's not true conversion. And so he says, if you go on sinning deliberately after you know the truth, there is no longer a sacrifice for sins to be made. This is amplifying this message. Sin is way more serious than you think that it is. It's not cute. So don't tolerate it, don't compromise it, but make a bold move to deal with it.

Going on, to sin deliberately after receiving a knowledge of the truth-- there is a word for that, the Biblical word for this is apostasy. This is what the Hebrew congregation was in danger of falling into. If they continued to drift, they would become 'apostate'. Apostate is this idea that you have a knowledge of the truth, but you haven't fully given your heart to God yet, and then you walk away from it. Let me give you a definition of apostasy. This isn't original for me, I've read it before. I like this definition. You might write it down so that way you can review it later with your life groups. Apostasy: a conscious (meaning, you are aware of it; Jake talked about that a few weeks ago. There is no such thing as losing your salvation; like, I don't know what I did-- what did I do with that? I lost my keys, my credit cards, my cell phone and my salvation. That's not a Biblical idea at all.) He says here, this is a conscious, so you are aware of it, a continued rejection of the truth, after knowing it, but prior to embracing it. A conscious, continued rejection of the truth, after knowing it, but prior to embracing it with your heart (that would be true conversion), from which there is no recovery.

Well is there any other place in the Bible where we see that definition backed up? Well, Jesus one time told the parable in Matthew 13, the parable of the sower. Where the seeds represent the gospel message and the seeds go out on four different types of ground. Do you remember what the grounds were? You had a hardened path where the seed couldn't penetrate into the soil; you had thorns that rose up and choked the seeds out; and then the rocks, in which they could never take root. Only one seed found itself in solid soil where it bore fruit.

So you've got four professions of faith, but only one true conversion. The other three would be-- I guess you could put into the category of apostasy. You know the truth; you have a knowledge of the truth, but then you choose to reject it. One of my major concerns as your pastor, in a room with all kinds of people in here, in a church that is growing like this, is the fear of apostasy. What I mean by that is if we try to lower the bar to try to get as many people in here as possible, it's a recipe for apostasy. Because what you win people with, is what you win them to.

If I just kind of gave a flowery message, but I didn't really unpack the gospel to you, and you responded to a false gospel, I'm just setting you up for apostasy. I'm afraid that there are a lot of people that have responded to something called 'hyper-grace'. Do you know what hyper-grace is? Hyper-grace is this idea that God loves me just no matter what. No matter what, it doesn't matter. I can repent; I may not repent. I can profess faith in Jesus, but I don't have to, I can just be good. The only requirement to get into Heaven is just to die. Hyper-grace-- that's not the Gospel.

The Gospel is, yes God loves you, but it requires humility and belief and faith and brokenness and repentance to enter into a relationship with Jesus Christ that changes your heart. That's the Gospel that makes you a brand new person. I don't want you to confuse apostasy with genuine believers who just struggle with sin, okay? That's a different thing. Because you probably this past week, did something you are not proud of. I don't want you walking out of here, thinking oh man, I slipped this last week. I said a cuss word. Am I apostate? No. Or if you are thinking, oh I had a lustful thought this last week, Aaron, am I in danger of committing apostasy? No, that's not what I'm talking about. That's just normal, wrestling through our sinful disposition.

What will happen-- here's the test. Let me try to make this as simple as possible. How do you know if you are apostate? If you care right now, you are not! How's that for simplicity? If you are pierced through the heart by what I just said; if you are humbled by it, not proud; if you are examining your own motives, not thinking about your neighbor (not thinking, hey, I need to get this sermon to a friend of mine, they really need to hear this); if you are thinking, God, what are you seeing in me right now, those are not the marks of apostasy.

If you are here right now and are annoyed, indifferent, irritated, growing harder and harder towards this, that's a bad sign. Hey, maybe I will respond to this, maybe I won't. Maybe I will do this on my terms, maybe I won't. those are all marks of apostasy and there is no recovery. This is the whole danger of the book of Hebrews. He is basically saying, hey don't keep traveling down this road because you might slip into apostasy and it's impossible to come back because your heart is no longer receptive to the spirit.

Now look with me as we finish out Chapter 10:32. I know this is sobering stuff, but this last part here is a part to really celebrate. Look at Verse 32. He says, "recall the former days when, after you were enlightened," I would underline that, and say 'receiving the knowledge of the truth' and 'enlightened' are two different things. Receiving the knowledge of the truth is understanding the Gospel; enlightened is conversion. So he is saying, some of you have been enlightened; some of you have been converted. "You endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated." Life was very difficult for them. "For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one."

Man, that's amazing. Those of us who are taking great pride in our earthly possessions, maybe to the cost of losing our salvation over it because we are guarding our 'treasure' more than submitting to Jesus Christ. He just said here, the mark of a true believer is like, 'man, go ahead take it, have it; I've got a better and an abiding possession in Heaven. Verse 35: "Therefore do not throw away your confidence (That's boiling down Chapter 10 in a nutshell, don't throw away your confidence.) which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, (Not a suggestion, not 'a good idea', but 'need.' Need of endurance) so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what is promised. For, yet for a little while the coming one will come and will not delay (Jesus is rapidly approaching); but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls."

The whole point is, stay faithful, especially as you see the day drawing near. I wrote this down in my notes; it might be helpful for you. Certainty and stability grounded in the reliability of Christ's finished work; that's how you stay faithful. Certainty and stability grounded in the reliability of Christ's finished work; and all the more as you see the day approaching.

Hebrews 9 says it's appointed once for a man to die and then to face judgment. Then maybe today, maybe this week you will breathe your last. I don't say that to scare you; it's just a reality. You will breathe your last and you will be ushered into the very presence of Jesus; and you will either be his enemy or his friend. He has said right now, you can be my friend, through the blood, the finished work. All you do is, you are pierced to the heart; get rid of your pride and humble yourself before the Lord as the day approaches.

Over Thanksgiving I was talking with my wife's grandfather. He is 85 years old and since we have been married, he has become like another grandfather to me. I genuinely love him as if he was my own grandfather. He is such a great man, such a wise man. We always make it a point to get together over Thanksgiving and Christmas and just kind of talk and see how things are going. Because of his health, he can't travel much anymore, so he has never been here, but he loves this church. He asks about you all the time. He has financially given to this church, even though he has never been here. He just believes in our mission; he's excited about it. So every time we get together he asks, hey, what's going on with the church? What's happening, Aaron? What challenges are you facing? How can I pray for you?

I just love talking to him. So we are sitting down over Thanksgiving talking and he was asking me where I was traveling next and what's on the agenda and what's going on. And then, I think you already know this, but things around the world are not getting better, they seem to be getting worse. It kind of reminds me of the whole groaning as in the pains of childbirth thing that we see in the Scriptures. It shouldn't surprise us that we have tsunamis and earthquakes and tornadoes and wars. It's not going to get any better as the Day is drawing near, so don't waver, stay together.

As I was getting ready to walk away, I said, "Hollis, it's good to see you." He said, "Well, I'm getting to the age that this might be our last time to talk." I never know how to respond to him when he says that. He says, "Aaron, I'm 85 and you are 37. I'm just betting that you and I are going to meet Jesus a little differently. I think I'm probably going to go to Him; He very likely will probably come to you, as the Day is drawing near."

This is so serious, not in the sense of trying to belittle you, it is serious in the sense that all good news is serious because it matters. You will walk out of here-- that's what I love about Hebrews. It forces you to do something with it. So you can walk out of here a little bit miffed. You can walk out of here indifferent, or you can walk out of here humbled, pierced to the heart. If you are outside of a relationship with Jesus Christ, you can respond right now-- right now! And give your life to Him.

Let me pray for you as we respond to the giving and receiving of our tithes and offerings and through communion. This is the most important part of our gathering today, is this moment right here so don't check out. Let me pray for you today.

*Father, we come to you and we thank you for the New Covenant; the fact that one and for all you paid the price for our sins. God, if there is somebody here right now, this is the first time that they are being exposed to any of this teaching, I pray that they would be pierced to the heart and not indifferent. I pray that where I maybe made it a little more complicated than what it should be, that your Spirit would clarify it. If there is anybody here that felt themselves maybe getting a little resistant to what has been said, I pray that your Spirit would allow them to be humbled; that their spiritual blindness would be lifted so they could see it. God, I thank you for this church. I pray that we wouldn't just grow larger but that we would grow larger with more disciples, people that are committed to You; people who are committed to one another. We want a healthy church that understands your word; that takes it seriously; that loves*



*people who are far from you. and it begins when we are grounded in understand what your Word says and the implications for every single one of us here today. God, it is a joy to serve with this church. May you be at the center of our affections as we chase after You; not for our salvation, not to earn our approval in your eyes, but because we already have it. In Jesus' name. Amen.*