

## While You're Waiting

Much of the New Testament is written to encourage the Church to remain steady in her faith and practice. And so it is with the text before us today, which is especially helpful to those of us at Second Presbyterian Church as we enter a season of transition in senior minister. Hebrews was written to relatively new Jewish Christians who were tempted for several reasons to abandon the Christian faith and return to Judaism. For the first 10.5 chapters the author of Hebrews reminds these Christians why the Christian faith is far superior to what they had known in Judaism. He summarizes his 10.5 chapters of teaching in the first three verses of our text, and then he begins his series of exhortations based upon the profound foundation that has been laid by the Lord Jesus Christ for our faith.

### Hebrews 10:19-25

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.

#### I. We have received a mighty salvation (vv. 19-21)

In these verses we can see what Christ has done for us. He died for us (which no pastor ever did) and He was raised from the dead and has given us eternal life. Because of what He has done, we, unlike the believers in the Old Testament, can all approach Him intimately on any occasion. In the Old Testament only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies and that only once per year, with fear and trembling for his life. Now we boldly, confidently enter His sanctuary because of what the body and blood of Christ have accomplished for us.

#### II. We must respond rightly (vv. 22-25)

Notice in these verses that there are three exhortations that begin with "let us..." .

##### A. Draw near to God (v. 22)

We are to draw near to Him because the way has been made clear for us, and we are to do so with full assurance and with clean consciences because of the definitive sacrificial and substitutionary work of Jesus Christ.

##### B. Hold on to your confession (v. 23)

There are many good things going on in our lives as individuals and as a church, but if we abandon our confession of faith and hope, these all become worthless. We must hold fast "without wavering" because God Himself has made promises to us, and He is faithful.

##### C. Stir up one another (v. 24)

We all need to be stirred up! We have individual struggles and challenges, and we as a church have many areas that need serious growth and development. You can name them. We must constantly be seeking revival and revitalization, including periods of transition (like no senior minister or new senior minister). The author of Hebrews shows us how best to stir up one another:

##### 1. Don't wander off (v.25a)

We cannot stir one another up if we're not with each other. John Wesley once said: "The

Bible knows nothing of solitary religion.” In his commentary on Hebrews, Tom Schreiner says, “Refusing to meet with other believers in this context signifies apostasy, the renunciation of the Christian faith. If believers renounce meeting with other Christians, especially because they fear discrimination and mistreatment, they are in effect turning against Christ.”

These words remind us clearly that we must remain active and engaged in each others' lives, especially in corporate worship.

## 2. Encourage each other (v.25b)

As we come together, we are eagerly looking for ways to encourage each other. Here's how we do that:

- a. Set a godly example.
- b. Pursue your spiritual siblings.
- c. Ask, listen, and help.
- d. Remind of the past, present, and future grace of God.

## Discussion Questions

1. The author is clearly addressing newly converted Jewish Christians, encouraging them to not abandon the faith. In verses 19-21 what comparisons does he draw between Judaism and Christianity?
2. How can we develop the fullness of assurance in our faith and a clean conscience (see verse 22) as we draw near to God?
3. How can we “hold fast...without wavering” to the things we believe? What are the biggest challenges that cause us at times to waver?
4. How do we stir one another up to love and good deeds?
5. Why is worship attendance and regular fellowship essential to our spiritual well-being?
6. Describe how someone has encouraged you to love and good works.

## Going Deeper

1. What in this lesson has challenged you the most?
2. What response will you make to this spiritual challenge?