

Week 19: FORMED Series

Practicing Faith Together

Hebrews 10:19-25

¹⁹ Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. ²³ Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

From this week's sermon:

In the message this week, Rod shared three key points from the text.

1. Let us draw near...
2. Let us hold unswervingly...
3. Let us consider one another...

Scholarly Insight:

Cockerill's Introduction:¹

It is important to recognize both the unity and the transitional character of this section. There is no hard break between the full sufficiency of Christ described in 4:14–10:18 and the life of faith and endurance exemplified by the people of God throughout history, as narrated in 11:1–12:29. The pastor forges the closest bond between the two. He passionately desires his hearers to take their place as part of God's faithful people through appropriating the high-priestly work of Christ (12:1–3). He assures them that even those who lived before Christ will enter God's eternal blessing only by the Jesus who suffered and is now enthroned as High Priest at God's right hand (11:39–40). The pastor forges three links in the chain that joins the people of faith (11:1–12:29) to Christ their High Priest (4:14–10:18)—link one, vv. 19–25; link two, vv. 26–31; and link three, vv. 32–39.1 The first two “links” have close ties with the preceding description of Christ's high priesthood; the third introduces the history of the faithful that follows.2 In 10:19–25 the pastor urges his hearers to draw near to God through Christ's high-priestly provision in order to persevere in faithfulness.

Guthrie's Comment:²

With 10:19–25, therefore, the author of Hebrews once again demonstrates the important connection between the truths concerning Christ and the implications of those truths for the Christian life. Theologizing alone is not sufficient for a holistic vision of the Christian life. We are called to action. Therefore, the author gives us clear statements of what we should do to put

¹ Gareth Lee Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, (Eerdmans, 2012), p. 461.

² George Guthrie, *Hebrews*, (Zondervan Academic, 2009), p. 347.

our faith into action. We too are called to (1) draw near to God, seeking intimacy with him, (2) to hold unswervingly to our hope, and (3) to encourage one another consistently—all on the basis of a sound and vibrant Christology. Our Christianity, in order to be in line with the author's view of the Christian life, must be both doctrinally grounded and energetically acted upon. To neglect doctrine robs our practice of its motivation and means. To neglect acting upon our faith truncates God's twin goals for us of our maturation and perseverance.

For Reflection:

- What am I being drawn into?
 - *What is drawing me closer to God, and what is pulling me away?*
- What am I holding onto?
 - *Where does my hope rest, especially when life gets hard?*
- Who am I walking with?
 - *Who is helping me follow Jesus, and who am I helping?*

For Discussion:

1. Read Hebrews 10:19-25 aloud together. Did the Holy Spirit draw your attention to any particular part of it?
2. *Let us draw near (verse 22).* Verse 22 indirectly refers to three obstacles to drawing near: an insincere heart, a wavering faith, a guilty conscience. Which of these three most often hinders people in their relationship with God? Is there one that has hindered you in the past (or presently)?
3. *Let us hold unswervingly (verse 23).* The author grounds our endurance in God's character ("he who promised is faithful"), not in our own strength. Does this change the way you approach your own *perseverance* in faith? Does this change the way you may encourage someone who feels like their situation is hopeless?
4. *Let us consider how we many spur one another on (verse 24).* Guthrie notes that neglecting to act on our faith "truncates God's twin goals for us of our maturation and perseverance." How has someone else's encouragement been part of your own perseverance, and who might you be able to encourage this week (in maturity and perseverance)?

Pray for each other:

Father, thank You that through Jesus we can draw near to You with confidence. Help us to hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, trusting that You are faithful to every promise. Give us eyes to see the people around us who need encouragement, and we ask you to help us to spur one another on toward love and good deeds. May our church community be a place where we encourage one another to keep following Jesus, especially when faith feels difficult. Help us not to give up meeting together, but to grow together in faith, hope, love, and perseverance. Amen.

Formation Practice:

As we exploring being Formed by Jesus this series; we want to encourage you to do this simple exercise every day for the next 2 months. It can take 5 minutes or more, whatever you are able to achieve (and as you do it more and more, you'll likely find it easier to spend longer listening and reflecting).

"Draw Near Daily" Rhythm (5-10 minutes)

- ***Come:*** *Quiet yourself before God.*
- ***Confess:*** *Be honest about sin/struggle.*
- ***Receive:*** *Remember what Christ has done.*
- ***Respond:*** *Take one step of obedience.*