

April 29, 2007

## “Living Out the Gospel” Hebrews 10:19-25

FCF: Not realizing what we have.

**PROPOSITION:** (anchor) We have been given these “definite possessions.”

(magnet) And so our lives should take a whole other form – living out the gospel.

### **SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION:**

The story is told of a former slave who received an inheritance after his master died. The executor of the estate sat him down and explained the situation – the great wealth now his. Weeks went by with no withdrawals made on the account. The executor went to visit the former slave in the shack in which he still lived. “You can buy anything you want,” he told him. “Do you think I have enough for a bag of corn meal?” he asked.

It’s a charming story. And sad. He had been made so very rich yet was living so very poor. Could that be us? Think with me. In the last few weeks, we’ve given focused attention to some very real historical events – Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Ascension, Pentecost. Very real historical events that should have very real historical effects upon our lives. Are they? Or are we, like the slave, made so very rich yet living so very poor?

**SCRIPTURE READING:** [Hebrews 10:19-25](#)

### **PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

### **SERMON INTRODUCTION:**

There’s a lot of doctrine in this letter – some of the highest Christology in the Bible. “The supremacy of Christ” is the theme. And “the steadfastness of the Christian” is its goal. Doctrine is never given for its own sake, as an end of itself. The mind is to be informed. And the life is to be then reformed as well. This high Christology, the exalted status of Jesus, wondrous as it is, is presented with a goal, a purpose in mind. In this case, urging the readers, likely Jewish Christians, not to turn back to their old ways, likely Judaism. For, after all, consider what’s been done, what we’ve been given ([READ Hebrews 10:19-20](#)). This summary of the letter thus far, this summary of the Gospel message assures us of two things, presenting us with two “definitive possessions.” First, the confidence to enter God’s presence. Believers in Christ have an open door before them. A “new way” that was not there before. A “living way” that will be there forever. Then, secondly, with that great confidence is our great high priest. Jesus, the One who has opened and secured the way for us to the throne of God is there Himself, ushering us into God’s very presence, assuring us that, because of Him, we actually belong there.

Now that’s worth considering. But again, the author’s main concern is his audience. How should we then live? “Since this is true, you should live this way. This is why you should press on, persevere, stay true to Christ. And even more, this is how. We have been given such great privileges. And our lives can and should take a whole new form. This is the good news of the gospel. And this is how you are to live it out.”

### **I. DRAWING NEAR TO GOD**

Starting with simply that, in view of all this, we can and must draw near to God.

#### *A) What It Means*

([READ Hebrews 10:22a](#)) What does this mean? Well, just what it says.

#### 1. Draw near

We are to approach, to go to, to draw near. In this letter, this expression refers not to a moving of the body but a directing of the heart. Now that might have sounded puzzling.

#### 2. To God

If not shocking – especially if you consider who it is we are to draw near to. To God – the holy and awesome Creator and Judge before whom mountains and sinners quake.

*Illustration:*

This past week was the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant accident – the disaster that occurred when a Soviet reactor test went bad releasing 50 tons of radioactive material into the air, eventually killing up to 8,000 people. Now knowing how dangerous that area was, can you imagine being told, “Draw near to Chernobyl”?

Well, that’s what we’re talking about here in terms of the shock value.

*B) What It Looks Like*

How can this be? Having these “definitive possessions” (**READ Hebrews 10:22**).

1. Settled in what He has done

We don’t need any protective suits or equipment here. We can come to God settled in what He has done, knowing it’s enough, resting in His finished work for us.

2. Continuously living under it

We can come settled in what He has done and come daily, continuously. With “a true heart” – real, honest, and open before the Lord. With “full assurance of faith” – unafraid, unhindered, unencumbered, resting by faith in the finished work of Christ.

*Application:*

Because He has given us these “definitive possessions” – this great confidence in coming and this great high priest who ushers us in – we can and must draw near to God. This is the why and the how of our persevering, pressing on, and staying true to Christ. The holy God of the universe is your Father. He made, knows, and loves you with a perfect knowledge and love. And so we can and must draw near to Him.

Drawing near to Him in worship – joining as one together and on our own. Drawing near to Him in prayer – for all things at all times. Drawing near to Him in trust and dependence. We have these “definitive possessions” – a great high confidence in His presence and a great high priest ushering us in. The door stands open. Draw near.

## **II. HOLDING FAST TO TRUTH**

With that in mind, draw near to God. And hold fast to truth.

*A) What It Means*

(**READ Hebrews 10:23a**) What does this mean? Just what it says.

1. Hold fast

We are to hold fast – to retain it, keep it secure, keep firm possession of it.

2. To the truth

But hold what fast? “The confession of our hope” – our hope not being wishful thinking or longing for the impossible but confidence God will do what He has said He will do – in life and in death and in every imaginable arena of our lives. We are to hold fast here.

*B) What It Looks Like*

Again, look with me at the text (**READ Hebrews 10:23**).

1. Staying faithful

Holding fast without wavering, knowing our weaknesses, standing firm, staying faithful.

2. Because He is faithful

Knowing His strength to be greater than our weaknesses, standing firm, for He is faithful.

*Application:*

And holding to that, we then hold fast “the confession of our hope” against the crushing pressures and the burning temptations. He is faithful to us and so we are able to

be faithful to Him. We have these “definitive possessions.” And with them, we can press on, persevere, and stay true to Christ. Even when it’s unpopular or costly. This is both the why we should and the how we can – relying on His faithfulness, remembering what He’s done in the present, counting on what He’s promised for the future, relying on Him now in the present. Holding fast to truth – the confession of our hope.

### III. STIRRING UP ONE ANOTHER

Living out the gospel means holding fast to truth. And stirring up one another.

#### A) *What It Means*

(**READ Hebrews 10:24**) What does this mean? Again, just what it says.

##### 1. Consider

To consider, to think of, be aware of, give attention to, cast our eyes upon.

##### 2. How to stir up one another

On what? How to incite, provoke, even irritate one another. Seriously!

#### B) *What It Looks Like*

Ah, but what does that look like? (**READ Hebrews 10:24-25**)

##### 1. Towards what end

Towards what end is this stirring directed? Towards love and good works. Here again, we see faith lived out – theology and ethics, profession and practice all linked together.

##### 2. For what reason

But why? Why do we have to give such attention to this? Because of our need for one another – despite what we may think about ourselves or others. Because of our tendency to draw back when hurting. And because of Jesus’ return and the eternal stakes.

#### *Application:*

Some of us believe this – in theory. But we’re pretty thin on applying it. Ours is meant to be a shared life together. Sharing what God is doing in our lives, where we are struggling and striving, what we are learning and what we need to learn. And as we do this, real en-couragement takes place. And we need that – every one of us.

Funny thing about these commands. They reflect the triad of faith, hope, and love. The first two can be lived out in isolation. You can have faith and hope on your own. But you can’t love and you can’t be loved on your own. We need this.

### CONCLUSION:

Back to the core and heart of it all – these “definitive possessions.” Another story from the Civil War era. The funeral for a great Confederate general was a time of great mourning for the South. With loss of such a leader, thousands came to pay their respects. The time came to turn the people out, to shut the doors to the Capitol building. But there was one grizzled old veteran who would not be turned away. When told he could not come inside, he raised the stub that was once his arm and cried out, “I will not be denied this one last look! I have earned it with this wound and with my blood!”

Again, a touching story. But there are some contrasts we must draw. It is not a dead hero we’ve come to see but the living God who bids us to come. And we are welcomed into His presence, not because of our sacrifices and sufferings, our works and wounds. But His. What is it we’ve been given? Think of it. Confidence in coming and Jesus, our high priest, present with us. And what is left for us to do? What response should blaze forth from hearts set aflame? Drawing near, holding fast, and stirring up.

**PROPOSITION:** (anchor) We have been given these “definite possessions.”

(magnet) And so our lives should take a whole other form – living out the gospel.