

July 18, 2010 by Steve Brandon



## Draw Near

### Hebrews 10:19-22

#### 1. Why? (verses 19-21)

#### 2. How? (verse 22)

Hear the cries of the Psalm writers, ...

Psalm 63:1

O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly; my soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

Psalm 27:4

One thing I have asked from the LORD, that I shall seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the day of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD and to meditate in His temple.

Psalm 42:1-2

As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.

Psalm 119:10

With all my heart I have sought You; do not let me wander from Your commandments.

Psalm 119:31

I cling to Your testimonies; O LORD, do not put me to shame!.

Psalm 84:1-2, 10

How lovely are Your dwelling places, O LORD of hosts! My soul longed and even yearned for the courts of the LORD. ... For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand outside. I would rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

Psalm 28:1

To You, O LORD, I call; my rock, do not be deaf to me, for if You are silent to me, I will become like those who go down to the pit.

Psalm 16:5

The LORD is the portion of my inheritance and my cup; You support my lot.

Psalm 18:1-2

I love You, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, in whom I take refuge; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

Psalm 73:25

Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth.

Do you hear the passion? Do you see their longing after God? Do you see how they are seeking to draw near to Him? Do you see how they are pursuing the Lord and depending upon Him? This is the heart of our text this morning. We are called to have such a yearning as we draw near to God.

Our text is Hebrews 10:19-22. For the sake of completeness, I'll include the text all the way through verse 25, ...

Hebrews 10:19-25

Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

In many ways, this is the turning point of the book. Until this point, the majority of the book of Hebrews has been focused upon proving a

point: Jesus is better than anything that the Old Testament had to offer. At this point, it's as if the argument is finished. The prosecuting attorney has presented his evidence. In one sense, he can sit down. There is no more need to put forth Jesus as better than the prophets or the angels or Moses or Joshua or Aaron or Abraham or any of the high priests. Jesus has brought in a better covenant, which has cleansed a better tabernacle with better blood. The case has been made.

Now, it's time to turn the corner into application. You can sense the turning by how verse 19 begins: "Therefore." At times, this word merely draws a simple conclusion. At other times, depending upon the context of the book, it is a giant hinge in the flow of the book. This is what we have here. It's the hinge of the book.

After this point, no longer do we see the writer demonstrating why Jesus is better. Instead, he turns his focus toward application. He turns his attention toward warnings. The two most severe warning passages of the book are found in chapters 10 and 12. He turns his attention toward persuading his hearers to believe in Christ and to follow hard after Him. Chapter 11 is a call to imitate the faith of those who have gone before. Chapter 12 urges believers to press on, even in the midst of difficult times. Chapter 13 is all application.

There is a lesson to be learned here. Don't ever think that Christianity is a merely a matter of "do's and don't's." Before we do, we must know why we do. Before duty must come doctrine. Before practice must come precept. Before application must come apprehension. We must know why we obey before we know what to obey. See, it will be the why that fuels the what. Furthermore, the why will also keep us from moralism, which is deadly in God's eyes.

You do know that the greatest moralists of all time that have ever walked the planet were the Pharisees. And, you do know that the greatest rebuke that Jesus ever gave was to the Pharisees. They lived to obey the Scriptures. But, they missed the heart of the matter. They put the donkey before the cart. They were so interested in what to do that they missed the "why." And for 9½ chapters, the writer of the book of Hebrews has sought to give us a clear picture of how much better Jesus is than anything that the Jewish religion had to offer. Now comes an emphasis upon application.

It's not that he hasn't given any application before. He has. There have been several points of application given along the way, especially in the warning passages (2:1-4; 3:7-4:14; 6:1-8). But, it's that now we see an emphasis upon application for the remaining portion of the epistle.

What we see here in Hebrews is the Biblical pattern. In Romans, Paul spends 11 chapters of doctrine before turning the corner in chapter 12 to focus upon application. In Ephesians, it's 3 chapters of the blessings we have in Christ, then, in chapter 4, it's the application of it all. In Colossians, it's 2 chapters of the supremacy of Christ, followed by 2 chapters of applying it to our lives. The same can be said of Galatians. It's 2 chapters of testimony, followed by 2 chapters of doctrine, followed by 2 chapters of application.

And not only does this happen on the macro level, it also happens on the micro level. "We love, because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19). God's love for us is the reason why we love others. To fail in grasping God's love will leave your love for others empty. "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul" (1 Peter 2:11). Our standing as aliens and strangers in this world is what compels us to avoid the worldly lusts of this world. **The indicative is the ground for the imperative. What is true is the reason for what we are to do.**

Getting back to Hebrews, we see three applications in our text. They are all prefaced by "Let us." "*Let us* draw near" to God (10:22). "*Let us* hold fast" to God (10:23). "*Let us* consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds" (10:24-25). We "draw near" to Christ, because He is precious to us. We "hold fast" to Christ, because He is our only hope. We love the brethren, because we all need encouragement.

This morning, we are only going to look at the first of these commands, "draw near." You can see it there in verse 22, "Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith." My message this morning is entitled, "Draw Near." My message this morning has two points, and each of them come from the text. I trust that you will see them.

My first point is simply this:

1. Why? (verses 19-21)

Why should we draw near? The text gives us two answers. Each of them are identified with the word, "Since." Verse 19, ...

Hebrews 10:19-20

Therefore, brethren, **since** we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, ... [let us draw near].

The second reason why we should draw near is given in verse 21, ...

Hebrews 10:21

...**since** we have a great priest over the house of God, ...

Notice, once again, how important the reasons for our obedience are. They are the grounds of our obedience. "Since" this is true, we should draw near. Let's look closely at the first reason why we should draw near is ...

**a. Because we can.**

"Since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus" (Heb 10:19)

One of the things that we lack, as Christians is the whole concept of exclusion from God. From our standpoint, it seems as if we have always been able to come to God. Churches are all over the place. There has been every opportunity to come to God. But, this is not the case for the Jews of the first century, to whom this is written (verse 19, "brethren" is a reference to the Jews). For them, it was totally different. They had many, many reminders around them of how they were excluded from God.

The physical barriers were obvious. As a worshiper of God, they could only come so far. There was the holy place that they could not enter, unless they were a priest. There was the holy of holies that they could not enter, unless they were a high priest. Even if they were a high priest, they would only be able to enter once a year. Those who tried to enter apart from these restrictions were killed! All of this communicated how exclusive their access to God was.

The sacrifices made their distance from God apparent as well. Whenever they sinned, they were obligated to bring a sacrifice to the Lord to atone for their sins. Apart from the sacrifices, they weren't allowed to enter into worship. But now, in Jesus, it has all changed. Instead of being kept away, "We have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus."

So hear these words as it came to the original hearers! To us, it's nothing, but to the Jews, it was shocking! What? We have access to God through Jesus? Are you kidding me? For years, the message was "Do not enter!" And now, the message has changed to, "Come on in! Make yourself at home!" Rather than a stop sign, we are now greeted with an open hand of welcome. Yes, you can now come through the blood of Jesus! This is what verse 19 says, "Since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus."

A few weeks ago, we looked at the importance of the blood of Jesus. When God forgives, blood needs to be shed. When the Old Covenant was inaugurated, it was inaugurated with blood (Heb. 9:18). Remember how Moses sprinkled the blood over everything? In the same way, the blood of Jesus inaugurated the New Covenant with His blood. It is through His blood, we may enter the holy place! It's almost as if His blood becomes our security badge to let us in!

I trust that you know what it's like to enter a high security area. You can't enter unless you have the proper credentials. As you drive into the parking lot, there is a guard in the shack at the entrance. You need to stop and identify yourself before proceeding on. To enter the building, you need to swipe your security badge to open the door. As you pass through the corridors of the building, you are required show your badge at all times! Without the badge, you have no access and can only sneak around if you ever get into the building. But with a badge, you boldly go wherever you want! You know that you are supposed to be there. You know that you won't be questioned! So also with the blood of Jesus. We can enter boldly into the holy place. We can enter boldly into God's presence! It is where we are supposed to be! We will never come into God's presence, only to be denied! Through the blood of Jesus, we can come boldly!

And, notice where we can go. We can go "into the holy place!" In other words, we can go into the very presence of God! We can go where no Jew was ever permitted to go! We can go where those who have gone before us have been broken.

Do you remember when Isaiah entered into the holy place? "[He] saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple" (Isaiah 6:1). "The Seraphim were calling out to one another, ... 'Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory.' The foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke" (Isaiah 6:3-4). Do you remember this? Isaiah then said, "Woe is me, for I am ruined!" (Isaiah 6:5). The King James Version says it nicely: "I am undone!" He saw his sin before a holy God and was completely exposed!

To come into God's presence will ruin the holiest and most righteous of men. But, "we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus," (verse 19). How can this be? Verse 20 holds the key.

Hebrews 10:20

by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh,

Now, it's not new to us. The way to God through Jesus has been around for 2,000 years. Many of us have heard it from our youth. But, it was new to those in the first century. It was new to the Jews. They never dreamed of entering into God's presence boldly. Sure, there were those who followed hard after God; sure, there were those who sought the Lord earnestly, but never like this. The Jews would have been terrified of such a proposition - to come into the very presence of God. But, Jesus has brought in a new way to God. It's through Him, and not through the sacrifices.

Through Jesus, we can come to God in such a way that is entirely new. Verse 20 describes this way in using the picture of the temple veil. The veil separated the holy place from the holy of holies. To pass through the veil was to pass into the holy of holies. Only the high priest would enter through the veil once a year. But, when Jesus died, God signaled an end to those ways. When Jesus died upon the cross, this veil was torn from top to bottom (Matt. 27:51). This was a miraculous event that demonstrated that the way into the holy place has now been opened up through Jesus.

As we learn from this text, the body of Jesus was like the veil. As Jesus was ripped apart upon the cross, it was the opening of the way to God. It was through His death and shed blood that we now can come to God.

So, why should we draw near? Because we can! We have access to the very throne room of God, so let's draw near! That's the point of verses 19-20. In verse 21, we see a second reason why we should draw near. It begins with the word, "since."

Hebrews 10:21

since we have a great priest over the house of God.

Not only should we draw because we can. But, also, ...

**b. Because we have a great priest.**

For the past several months, we have been over this again and again and again and again. This has been the writer's main point since chapter 5. This has been the point of many, many of my messages in the past few months: we have a great priest.

His priesthood is perfect (7:11-12). His priesthood is a royal priesthood (7:13-14). His priesthood is a worthy priesthood (7:15-17). His priesthood offers a better hope (7:18-19). His priesthood has been grounded upon a oath (7:20-22). His priesthood is forever (7:23-25) He is a pure priest (7:26). He is our final priest (7:27). He is our perfect priest (7:28).

As we read in chapter 8, verse 1, "Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." And now comes that great implication from this. Jesus, our great priest, is a great reason for drawing near.

When we draw near, we have a friend, who is on our side. When we draw near, we aren't drawing near to an enemy. We aren't drawing near to someone who is going to attack us or stab us in the back. We aren't drawing near to someone who is seeking our harm. Nor are we drawing near to someone who might reject us. No, when we draw near, we are coming to someone who is seeking our good! Our great high priest, Jesus Christ! We are coming to someone who is ready and willing and able to help us. Consider the same application in Hebrews 4:14-16, ...

**Hebrews 4:14-16**

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Jesus can sympathize with our weaknesses. Jesus has been tempted like we are. He can help. He can extend mercy. He can extend grace.

I love the emphasis in these verses upon grace and mercy. Jesus is a living person, waiting to receive you, waiting to extend His grace and mercy to you. He is like your loving, gracious grandmother who has prepared a Thanksgiving dinner for you. When you come to the door, she embraces you and welcomes you and sits you down to the feast and feeds you. She asks all about you. It seems as if you can do no wrong in her eyes. So is Christ to those who draw near. He is ready and willing to receive you. He is ready to extend His kindness to you.

Look at how eager Jesus is. Turn over to Hebrews 7:25, "Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them." Jesus lives to make intercession for us who believe in Him. It consumes His heart and His mind full-time! So, draw near to Him!

Note here that this is more than a mere call to prayer. The call of the text isn't merely a call for you to be on your knees for an hour each morning. Now, it certainly may include that. But, drawing near to Jesus is a call to come close to Jesus. Married couples draw near to each other as they live together and talk together and share their lives with each other, every moment of every day. Such is the call of our text as well. Spend time with Jesus. Rely upon Jesus. Seek Him. Call upon Him in trouble. Cling to Him. Abide in Him. Rest in Him. Dwell with Him. Pant for Him. Thirst for Him. Much of this comes through prayer. But much of it is an attitude as well.

It's the attitude of the business man, who hates it when his job pulls him away. He would rather be home with his wife and family. So, as often as he is away, he calls home every opportunity that he can. "Honey, I love you. I miss you. How are things at home? How are the children? Can I do anything for you? I'm coming home in a few days. I can't wait to see you. Bye, bye." Such is the call of this text. It's a call of irresistibility.

The business man can't help but to call home and check in on everybody. His heart is at home! Nobody's forcing him to call home. Nobody's compelling him to catch the earlier flight, if at all possible. Nobody's teaching him how his heart aches when he's gone. It comes to him because of his love for his home. This is a bit like the way in which our text is summoning us. The call is one of irresistibility!

We can go to the holy place. There, we will find a sympathizing Savior. We haven't been called to come to Him out of duty. "You need to pray more!" That's not it at all. Rather, the call has been, "Look at Jesus. He's so great! He has brought us into the holy of holies! He's going to be our help!" What more can you do, but come?

You know, there is something about the word, "Free," which compels us to indulge. You enter a buffet restaurant, and once you pay, everything is free! You don't leave the restaurant feeling slightly hungry, do you? You leave with your stomachs exploding! Why? It's all free! You want to eat it all up!

About a month ago, we were at the Riverhawks game. Arby's was running a promotion. If a certain designated player had a run batted in during a certain at bat, then the tickets to the game could be redeemed for a free Arby's roast beef sandwich the next day. Well, on that night, the ball player got a RBI. Where do you think the Brandon's had dinner the next night? We went to Arby's. Free dinner is difficult to turn down.

When things are free, we are quick to indulge. We indulge not because we have to, but because we are able to. And that's a bit of the sense here in Hebrews. Jesus Christ and his offer of access to His throne ought to be so compelling to us, that we can do nothing else, but draw near.

Well, let's move onto my second point. We saw Why? (verses 19-21) And now, let's look at verse 22, ...

2. How? (verse 22)

Hebrews 10:22

let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

The writer to the Hebrews gives us counsel on how we are to draw near. There are four characteristics. I trust that you can see them in the text.

First, we see that we need to draw near, ...

**a. With sincerity**

"Let us draw near with a sincere heart" (Heb 10:22).

Other translations say, "with a true heart" (KJV, ESV), which is a literal translation of the text. It means that the heart is not double minded, not "wishy-washy." The idea here is that our heart is fully engaged with our coming. There's nothing deceitful about what we are doing. See, God doesn't want us to play games. He wants us to draw near because we want to draw near. There ought to be no deceit in our drawing near.

Lest you think that this doesn't happen much, may I remind you of how often it does? The Pharisees came to God with a false heart. Jesus blasted them for standing and praying in the synagogues and on the street corners only so that they could be seen by men (Matt. 6:5). There was great deceit in their heart. Judas came with a false heart to Jesus. He wanted the money bag. Simon, the magician, came with a false heart. He thought that he could get the Holy Spirit for money (Acts 8:20). And there are many across our land, who are drawing near to God with a deceitful heart. On the outside, they look sincere, but God looks not on the outside, but upon the inside, upon the heart (1 Sam. 16:7).

How's your heart this morning? Are you coming to God with a sincere heart? God can detect if you are coming falsely.

The key is God's work in you. Remember back in chapter 8, when the writer poured out the blessings of the New Covenant? The LORD promised, "I will put My laws into their minds, and I will write them on their hearts." And when God writes His word upon your heart, your heart will be true. Your heart will be sincere. So draw near to Him with a sincere heart.

The second way in which we should draw near, ...

**b. With faith**

Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith," (Heb 10:22).

In drawing near to the Lord, faith is crucial. Hebrews 11:6 says, "Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him." "Coming to God" is another synonym for "drawing near." And here we see that without faith, it's impossible to come. "He who comes must believe that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him." God has made the world in such a way that faith is required in coming to Him.

In drawing near, we need to believe that we are coming into the holy of holies. In drawing near, we need to believe that the blood of Jesus is what enables us to come. In drawing near, we need to believe that Jesus is the great priest that Hebrews sets Him out to be. In drawing near, we need to believe that the new way that Jesus brought us is the only way. Or, you might say it this way, "we are called to believe that Jesus is so far our best option, that He is our only option in coming to God." Jesus, Himself, said, "I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the father, but through Me" (John 14:6). That's the essence of faith. Our trust and our dependence are entirely upon Jesus.

There will certainly be failures in our lives. But, coming in full assurance of faith means coming, not trusting in our own merits, but believing that in Christ, all our sins have been wiped away, and that we do indeed have clear access to the Father through His blood.

"Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to the cross I cling." We need to draw near in faith, believing that Jesus He is able to do "far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think." We need to draw near in faith, believing that He has our good in mind when He answers our prayers and when He doesn't answer our prayers.

Let's look at a third way in which we should draw near, ...

**c. With purity of heart.**

"Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience" (Heb 10:22).

One of the great failures of the Old Covenant was that it dealt only on the exterior. It focused its attention upon the cleansing of the flesh, not the cleansing of the heart and conscience (Heb. 10:2). But, the New Covenant is so much better. Jesus cleanses us deep within, even to the conscience. Nowhere is this contrast more clear than in 9:13-14, ...

Hebrews 9:13-14

For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

The Old Covenant dealt externally. But, the New Covenant deals with our consciences, our awareness of our sin. Notice carefully how these verses speak about our conscience. It's not that we have a clean conscience by ourselves. Rather, it's that our guilty consciences are washed clean.

Hebrews 10:22 says, "Having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience." Do you see what's going on here? We see our sin. Our conscience continually reminds us of our sin (which is a good thing). And by God's grace, it will continue to do so until the sin is dealt with. But, when we know that our sins are forgiven in Christ, our conscience can be clear once again.

Here's how we need to draw near. We need to draw near believing that our sins have been forgiven through the death of Christ. And so, as your conscience brings your sins into remembrance, confess them and cast them upon the cross and know the blessing of a clean conscience. And draw near to Christ.

Finally, the fourth way in which we should draw near is, ...

**d. With purity of life.**

"Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb 10:22).

The glories of the New Covenant is that it reaches deep into our hearts. But, it doesn't end there. The blessings of the New Covenant extend to a newness of life as well. And that's the focus of verse 22: not only clean hearts, but clean lives. And as we draw near to God, it's important for us to be walking in purity before Him.

Psalm 24:3-4

Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD?

And who may stand in His holy place?

He who has clean hands and a pure heart,

Who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood

And has not sworn deceitfully.

Now, in reality, none of us can come with clean hands and a pure heart, which has never been engaged in falsehood or deceit. There is only one who can come like that, and He's the Lord Jesus Christ. But, we can still come clean, after we have been washed. The picture given here in verse 22 is a picture, not of a perfect life, but of a cleansed life: "bodies washed with pure water."

Now, the picture here of having our bodies washed with pure water has led many to believe that this is a reference to baptism, when we profess our faith in Christ and are symbolically cleansed from our sins. Now, baptism certainly pictures the cleansing of a life. But, that event isn't the key to drawing near. If verse 22 were talking of baptism, I would be compelled to look back 20 years ago when I was baptized, but, that can't be healthy. We ought not to find comfort today in something that took place in our lives 20 years ago. Rather, we ought to find comfort today in God's work in us today!

Sadly, many look to past events to help them today. Their life is a wreck today, but they remember the day when they prayed to receive Jesus. They seek to find comfort from such a prayer. But, such comfort is false and fleeting.

But, verse 22 speaks of a purity of life, and this is key to drawing near to Christ. When your life isn't right, you won't have a desire to draw near to the Lord. You show me someone who draws near to the Lord on a consistent basis, and I'll show you someone who lives a pure life.

I have often heard it said of the Bible. "This book will keep you from sin. And sin will keep you from this book." The same is true regarding drawing near to God. "Drawing near to God will keep you from sin. Sin will keep you from drawing near."

James 4:8 says, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded." So, let us draw near with sincerity, with faith, with purity of heart, and with purity of life.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on July 18, 2010 by Steve Brandon.  
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