

Hebrews 10:23

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[0 : 00] Turn your copy of God's Word to Hebrews chapter 10. I'm really thankful that I get to preach following music like that.

! We've been talking about the vision of Christ's family church.

And our official vision statement is that Christ's family church exists to experience, proclaim, and display the supremacy of Jesus Christ in all things. I hope that's a phrase that's beginning to build itself both into your consciousness and your subconsciousness.

But we've been talking more specifically about how it is that that works itself out. And we've been working our way through the last two weeks we spent in verse 22. And today we're going to begin in verse 23.

But I think it's first always important that we talk about verse 19, 20, and 21. Because in them we find great privileges granted to us by Christ.

[1 : 18] Two, to be certain, here in this text. And they are, number one, unlimited accessibility to God. We see that in verse 19 and 20.

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he has opened for us through the curtain that is through his flesh. So we have been granted full access to God through Christ's death on our behalf.

And number two, a great advocacy with God. The second privilege, a great advocacy with God. We see in verse 21 that we have a great priest over the house of God.

So even now, Jesus Christ sits at the right hand of the Father, making intercession for us, meaning that he is praying for us. He stands between us and God, cloaking us in his righteousness so that we can, in fact, approach God.

So we have unlimited accessibility and great advocacy as a result. And in light of that truth, the writer of Hebrews gives us three exhortations.

[2 : 28] Three exhortations. And these things are to be practiced by God's church. The Puritans called them, called it improving upon our privileges, which isn't to say that the privileges aren't themselves enough, but that they're not being used if they're not being practiced.

So they said we would improve upon these privileges granted to us by Christ. And we see three of those. And the first way that we improve upon these privileges is to draw near to God together. And we spoke over the last two weeks about Christian worship and what that ought to look like. Our gatherings together, not just music, but our study of the word of God and our prayers together. And I drew out for you six truths from verse 22. And I want to quickly go over those with you.

Number one, Christian worship is corporate in emphasis.

Number two, frequent in occurrence. Number three, entirely preoccupied with God. Number four, includes all of who we are, meaning head and heart.

[3 : 38] Number five, it is confident. And number six, it is preceded by purification. You must be a Christian to participate in Christian worship. And so we come today in verse 23 to the second way we improve upon these privileges bought for us by Christ.

And that's the focus of this morning's sermon is verse 23. The sermon should be, I think, short in length. I'm going to surprise myself sometimes. And it will be, I hope, simply profound.

Let's read verse 23 together. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering. For he who promised is faithful.

And I want to give to you three points to help us break down verse 23. And in order to do so, I've rewarded it. I've taken some liberty and made my own translation of verse 23 to say, We have a confession that we should not be moved from because we have a promise from one who cannot lie.

Let me repeat that for you. We have a confession that we should not be moved from because we have a promise from one who cannot lie.

[4 : 55] So number one, we have a confession. That ought to be, ought to be an amazing phrase to us.

As Christians, we have a confession. And you see that in this phrase, the confession of our hope. We should hold fast the confession of our hope. It ought to be shocking to us.

It ought to be precious because we live in a world with the most radical expression of free thought. Post-modernism. If you're not aware, the age we live in is called the post-modern age.

Modernism being what most of your parents would be, would be modernist. And that they measure the success of something by the visible things they can measure. The scientific method is a modernistic way of thinking.

Not wrong in any measure. Now, most of us, though, in this room are what we would call post-moderns. And what that means is that there is no truth except the truth we decide is ours.

[5 : 58] The truth we decide to own. Our own perception of what truth is. And a great example of this is always if we all walked out in the parking lot together and suddenly there was a car accident.

Somebody was going to the parking lot quickly and somebody backed out. We would all have a different perception of what happened. If the police showed up and interviewed each of us individually, we would tell a slightly different story. Right?

Maybe I was looking at the ground. And so I heard what happened. And maybe I smelled the screech of the tires. But I didn't actually see the collision. So I would tell a much different story from someone who was looking at it.

And the post-modernist says, well, that truth is your truth. And that truth is your truth. And therefore, you define truth for yourself. But the fact remains that there is still something that happened.

Right? An object truth of something that happened, whether we experienced it to be true or not. And we find now in our culture that we've gone a step further, the most radical expression of free thought.

[6 : 57] We've gone a step further to say, not only do I define truth for myself, but I wouldn't be so audacious to say that it's true. So I experience something, say, in our example, the car accident.

I hear what happens in the collision. And I say, well, I heard it, but I can't say for sure what I heard was right. And that's the world that we live in.

So for us to have a confession is a pretty major deal. I love this little quote G.K. Chesterton wrote in his book, *Orthodoxy*. Do not go about as a demagogue.

A demagogue is a person who rises to power by not appealing to people's rationality, but appealing to their emotions, their prejudices. A good example of a demagogue would be Hitler.

Okay? Do not go about as a demagogue and encouraging triangles to break out of the prison of their three sides. If a triangle breaks out of its three sides, its life comes to a lamentable end.

[8 : 00] And you was trying to say there are absolutes in our world. There are object truths that exist in our world. Don't go around trying to tell a triangle to quit being a triangle because that's so confining to it.

Because as soon as it decides not to be a triangle, it ceases to be a triangle when it comes to a lamentable end. So we have a confession.

A confession, the word simply means what one professes to be true. But the original language, the Greek, carries a little more meaning with it and can actually be rendered whom we profess to be true or whom we profess to be ours.

So you could say the one we profess who is our hope. Isn't that neat? The one we profess who is our hope.

And of course, when we talk here about hope, we're not talking about the kind of hope that we've kind of adapted in our English language. The cross your fingers. I hope I get a bicycle for Christmas.

[9 : 00] That kind of hope. It's an eager expectation of the good things that have been promised to us. To hold fast the confession of our hope. The one whom we profess who is our hope.

So I'd like for you to turn with me to Titus chapter 3. This is one of my favorite expressions of our hope.

This common confession that we hold as Christians. I find this to be such a beautiful gospel presentation by Paul as he writes a pastoral letter to Titus.

So Titus chapter 3. We'll read verses 3 through 7 together. Paul wrote,
What a blessing that is.

[11:12] Nothing. Nothing. Nothing. God is entirely sovereign in our salvation and deserves all the honor and glory and praise for it. If you don't share with us this confession this morning.

If you don't recognize that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he is the only way. Not a way. But the way. The truth. And the life.

You have no hope. That's what the scriptures are teaching us here. You have no hope at all. Your soul is in a desperate state. And you can fix that now.

repent and believe in Christ. Repent and believe in Christ. And go to many gatherings of God's people and you would feel that you would have to wait until the end of the service for that to be a possibility for you.

That I must give some holy calling to the altar. I'm not your intermediary. I'm not your intermediary. Who is? We just talked about it.

[12:15] Jesus Christ. He's the one that stands between you and God. Run to him. And even now. That you might be saved. So we have a confession.

That we should not be moved from. Point two. We have a confession. That we should not. Be moved from. Beginning.

Verse 23 says. Let us hold fast. And. Very much like the beginning of verse 22. Let us. Draw near. This is one Greek verb. Rather fascinating in its form.

It is. An active. Volative. Subjunctive. Verb. Very fancy. Active. Volative. Subjunctive.

Which means simply this. Because it's in the active form. We are to continually hold fast. He's saying. Hold fast now. And. On. And on.

[13:15] And on. Continue to hold. Fast. It's. In the volative form. Which expresses the speaker's will. Specifically. As a.

First person. Plural. Command. To join him in something. That he's already committed to doing himself. Right. First person. Plural command. Let. Us.

He even includes himself. In the command. Let. Us. As those. Who have been called out by God. To worship him. Hold. Fast. To the confession. Of our hope.

And. It's. Subjunctive. Which indicates. An idea. Or. An abstraction. It's. Something. Without. Certain. Reality.

One. Greek scholar. Explained. The verb. This way. I've said. Most of this. But he said. The active. Auto. Subjunctive. Verb. Is meant. To. Urge. Someone. To unite. With the speaker. In a course.

[14:10] Of action. Upon. Which. He. Has. Already. Decided. Let us. Hold. Fast. Without. Wavering. John Calvin.

Once wrote. A perfect faith. Is nowhere. To be found. So it follows. That all of us. Are partly. Unbelievers. A perfect faith. Is nowhere.

To be found. So it follows. That all of us. Are partly. Unbelievers. It's. Subjunctive. It's not. Sure. Is it.

That we'll. Hold fast. The confession. Of our hope. Is it. We. We. We. Waver a lot. Don't we. Without. Wavering. I feel like.

We often. Drift. To and fro. We're. Blown. As the future. For say. Back and forth. By every wind. Of doctrine. By every. Form of. Free thought. Many of you.

[15:05] Are students. At North Georgia. And. You experience. An. Onslaught. Of poor. Philosophy. You. You. You wrestle. With things. And I don't know.

That we always come out. The other side of that. Healthier for it. I pray that you do. Without. Wavering. Is a negative. Participle.

It means. Not. Inclining. Or not. Deviating. From. It means. Firm. Unmoved. Let us. Hold. Fast.

The confession. Of our hope. Without wavering. Plant. Ourselves. Firmly. In. Christ. Whom. Is our hope. With these two. Phrases.

The writer of Hebrews. Brings together. In verse 23. Of chapter 10. Language. Used in chapter 3.

Of Hebrews. I'm going to ask you to flip. Back a couple of pages for me. To chapter 3 of Hebrews. I want to show you two verses.

[15:59] That he's now. Tying together for us. In chapter 10. I want to note. As you're doing that. That I just pointed out.

That the verb is subjunctive. It's not sure. Okay. Hebrews chapter 3. Verse 6. Reads. Christ. Is faithful. Over God's house. As a son. And we are his house.

If indeed. We hold fast. Our confidence. And our boasting. And our hope. Right. We are part of God's house. If. We hold fast. And that phrase. Hold fast.

Same Greek word. Hold fast. Our confidence. And our boasting. And our hope. And in Hebrews. 3. 14. For we have come to. Share in Christ. We have come to share in Christ.

If indeed. We hold. Our original confidence. Firm. To the end. If indeed. We hold. Our original confidence.

[16:54] Firm. To the end. So what seems to be. Expressed to me here. Is that. If we. If we. Don't. Hold. To the confession. Of our hope. If we don't. Remain. On that course.

Then we're not in Christ. We're not part. Of the house of God. So. Can we lose our salvation? Feels that way. A little bit. Doesn't it?

What part. Exactly. Do we play. In this. Go back. To Hebrews. Chapter 10. How extensive. Exactly. Is our role. In our sanctification. Read with me. Verse 11. Through 14. Every priest. Stands daily. At his service. Offering. Repeatedly. The same. Sacrifices. Which can never. Take away. Sins. Recall. The writer of Hebrews. Is writing to a Jewish audience.

[17:50] They understood. Sacrificial. System. If you don't. The temple. Or the tabernacle. When God established that. Was a place. Of activity. Constant.

Sacrifice. Being made. Over. And over. And over. And over again. They were busy men. The priests. In fact. In the. Carefully. Laid out. Plan. For the tabernacle.

And the temple. There. Were no seats. There was no need. For them. God gave them. Every piece of furniture. To arrange in there. There was nowhere. To sit down.

Because. They never had time. They constantly. Made the same sacrifices. Which can never. Take away sins. Verse 12. But when Christ. Had offered. For all time. A single sacrifice.

For sins. Himself. He sat down. At the right hand. Of God. Sat down. This would have been. Very significant. In their minds. A priest who sits. That's crazy. It is.

[18:45] Finished. Verse 13. Waiting from that time. Until his enemy. Should made a footstool. For his feet. For by a single offering. He has perfected. For all. Time.

Those. Who are being. Sanctified. Sanctified. Kind of interesting. Turn of phrase there. For by a single offering. He has perfected.

Present tense. For all time. Those who are being. Sanctified. Or. Perfected. Fascinating. So. What part do we play. In this. In this activity. What. How does this play out for us. Paul says in Philippians 1. 6. And I am sure of this. Or confident of this.

That he who began. A good work in you. Will bring it to completion. At the day. Of Jesus Christ. The end. Which is what we. Saw here. In this last verse.

[19:41] But he also said. In 2 Corinthians 11. 28. That there is daily pressure on me. Of anxiety. For all of the churches. Does this.

Confuse you. At all. This. This reality. That. That the two exist. At the same time. That God is fully. Sovereign. Has in fact. Accomplished. Our perfection. Has. In Christ.

Sealed. What will happen. To his church. That she will be presented. Holy. And blameless. Before God. But. Yet. That we play a part in that. That we have responsibility.

In that. To hold. Fast. The confession of our faith. To pursue. Holiness. With all. That we are. Does it confuse you?

Because it should. It's okay. Take a big deep breath. It's alright. The two truths. Coexist. All throughout the scriptures. Work out your salvation.

[20:37] With fear and trembling. For it is God. Who works. In you. To accomplish his good pleasure. We are called. To strain. To labor.

For holiness. This activity. This activity. Of holding fast. Without wavering. Takes effort. On our part. We don't just. Pray.

God. Give me the ability. To hold fast. And then wait. Watching TV. And reading philosophy books. We go.

After him. In his word. And the amazing thing. About that. Although it doesn't always. Play itself out. In our experience. And what we feel. Is that God answers our prayers.

In our activity. Hey God. I want to love my wife more. And I open my eyes. And I wait. I wait. For him to equip me.

[21 : 31] To love her. No. I go love my wife. And I have been equipped. To do it. Father. I want to weep. For the lost. I want. To have my desires.

Change. I want to love. You. More. And love the things. Of this world. Less. Do you realize. The fact. That you even pray. Such things. As God work. In your life. You don't naturally. Incline yourself. To the things of God. When you even desire. Things like that. That's God at work. In your life. Too many of us.

Sit around. And wait. We sit around. And we. And we. Hope. That someday. We'll be a little holier. Than we are now. We whine.

About the fact. That we're not. Get to work. Beloved. Get to work. Holding fast. The confession. Of your hope. And I promise.

[22 : 25] That you won't be disappointed. Little encouragement. To you. As this. These two truths. Seem to collide. Paul wrote. In 1 Timothy 3.16.

Great is the mystery. Of godliness. Great is the mystery. Of godliness. So we have a confession. That we should. Not be moved from. Number three.

Because we have a promise. From one. Who cannot. Lie. We have a confession. That we should not be moved from. Because we have a promise. From one. Who cannot.

Lie. The very end of the. Verse 23 there. For he who promised. Is faithful. We ought to. Hold fast. The confession of our hope. Without wavering. Because. For. He who promised.

Is faithful. God. Will. Do. Has. Done. Exactly. What he said he would do. And that is something we can place. Our confidence in.

[23 : 22] God would. In fact. Cease to be God. If he were even. Capable of lying. Excuse me. Titus 1.2. Paul claims that God never lies. I take that for fact.

So what is the promise to which the writer of Hebrews is referring. He who promised. What is it that he has promised. God certainly has promised us many things. But I believe that the writer of Hebrews is referencing particularly.

A promise. In chapter 10. Verse 15 through 18. So look. Look up the page a little bit with me. Where. He quotes Jeremiah. Lest you think that I'm not sure who wrote Hebrews.

No one knows who wrote Hebrews. I know I keep saying the writer of Hebrews. We're not positive who wrote Hebrews. And that's why I keep saying that. But verse 15. And the Holy Spirit also bear 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. And write them on their minds. Then he adds.

[24 : 24] This is the. This is the Holy Spirit bearing witness. Then he adds. I will remember their sins. And their lawless deeds. No more. Where there is forgiveness of these.

There is no longer any offering. For sin. That completes that idea for us. I will remember their sins. And their lawless needs. No more.

God can not lie. If you have placed your faith. In Christ. If you believe. He is the Son of God. And the only way. To have your relationship with him reconciled.

Reconciled. He has made a promise. That your lawless deeds. Will be remembered. No more. We can have confidence. In that.

We can hold. Fast. To that. But let me. Speak to you in. Simple practicality. Up to this point. You might say. That's great. I'm with you Nathan.

[25 : 20] I totally agree. That is what verse. 23 means. But how then does that. Play out. In our daily living. If we're going to hold fast.

If we're going to do so. Without wavering. We should. Know the one. Who is promised. Who is faithful. We should know him. Right. You don't just.

Really nearly. Place your trust in people. But if we. Know the God. We see. The fulfillment. Of his promises. In scripture. We. We. Experience that.

Together. To affirm. Our. Faith. Beloved. You need the church. Whether you think you do or not. I read that.

Rather long passage. To you this morning. To emphasize that. We need one another. If we're going to. Stand firm. If we're going to hold fast.

[26 : 14] We need. One another. It's not enough. To come and hear preaching. Preaching is important. I would never. Discard it. From our services.

There are. Churches who are. Replacing preaching now. With more music. Or. Skits. Or. Multimedia. Presentations. Preaching of the word of God. Is powerful. And important. But it's not all you need. We labor. To preach well. And I know that Chris and I. Are not the best communicators. We're working on it.

We really want to be the best possible communicators. Of God's truth. That we can be. We've already resigned ourselves. Not to be. John Piper. Or. D.A. Carson.

Or. My guy. Art. Art. We just. We're not going to be those men. But we're going to do the best we can. I've said on a number of occasions. Cautiously. I'd rather be. True.

[27 : 07] Than consistent. Ideally. I'm both. I'd like to be consistently true. But if I ever teach you something. And it can be shown to me. That I have erred. I will fix it.

Because the truth. Is important. The facts about the one. Who has promised. And cannot lie. Matter. Deeply. To us.

But good sermons aren't enough. You need to be getting together with people. And working through. The word of God to people. You certainly need to be studying it on your own.

We do a lot of things together here. If you only come on Sunday morning. This is all you do. This is your. Your spiritual fill up for the week. I know you're running on empty.

By next Sunday. I know it for a fact. Come debate it with me. I know for a fact. You're running on empty. Next week. We ought to meet together frequently.

[28 : 05] We learned from verse 22. In the previous weeks. And study the word of God together. On Sunday evenings. The men and the women meet separately. And I love it.

We're studying through 1 Timothy right now. My goal is always to get to the. The ultimate meaning of the text together. But also to. Kind of show the guys. How to arrive. At the meaning of the text. Secrets out of the bag fellas. I'm always kind of. Spurring you to. Think through things. And kind of push you in that way. I learned so much though. I'm supposed to be prepared. I'm supposed to know it all.

Already when I get there. I learned so much. Sitting with those guys. And having them. Them. Question things. And filter things through other biblical texts. And. And wrestle together with original language.

It is a real joy. To me. I learned things from the guys. In their. Shared experience. And. The affirmation. Of what. The Bible teaches.

[29 : 02] Sid is here this morning. And. Forgive me if I get your age wrong. Sid. I believe 83. When Sid says. Sitting at the table. God is faithful. To provide for me.

He always has been. Myself at 31. That lifts my heart. The testimony of a man who says. My whole life. God has cared for me. He is faithful. You can believe him. It's an encouragement to me. It's an incredible encouragement to me. We need to meet together.

In that way. If we are to be. Disciple making disciples. Which. Is ultimately. The thrust of the great commission. That's. Who we are.

What defines us. As followers of Christ. Disciple making. Disciples. Those who are pursuing Christ. And. Bringing others along. With us. In that journey. Gospel ministry.

[29 : 57] Must be. On our lips. All. The time. Preach the gospel. To one another. There is no greater way. For you to encourage me. Than to tell me. What God is accomplishing. In your life.

Because it is an expression. Of the gospel. I love coming together. And meeting with you guys. Because you are. An expression. Of the gospel. People who have been redeemed.

Who were formerly. Foolish. Enslaved. To their passions. And their lust. Hating one another. Now. Loving each other. What we do together here.

Would be really bizarre. If we weren't Christians. Boring even. I'd be. Rock climbing this morning. Instead. But I love this. Because I love Christ.

We need. One another. Next week. Is. Halloween. A week from tomorrow. October 31st.

[30 : 54] Which was. Also the day that. Martin Luther. Hammered the 95 theses. On the door of the. Church at. Wittenberg. He picked that day. Intentionally. I always thought.

It was kind of just. Happenstance. It just happened to be the day. That he went and did that. But he. He particularly did so. Because it was. All Hallows Eve. It was supposed to be this. Holiday. When the veil.

Between the physical world. And the spiritual world. Was particularly thin. According to. Paganism. And he saw. What was happening. In the church. In the Catholic church.

As so. Evil. He was making a statement. That the word of God. Prevails. Against that. While he went. To the door. Church building. And hammered it. On to the door. At the word of God. 95 reasons. Why the selling. Of indulgences. Was wrong. Totally. Unbiblical. And you know.

[31 : 47] How he arrived. At that. He was kind of a. Unrested soul. He entered into. Monastic life. And just couldn't. Find peace. With God.

He was of the. Augustinian order. Which is a tad ironic. And they put him. To the work. Of translating. The New Testament. Into. German. They said. There's unrest in your soul. Go work on the scriptures. And God. Used that labor. For him. To realize. That salvation. Does not come. Through a priest. Salvation. Doesn't come. Through the purchasing. Of an indulgence. Or by. Visiting. Holy relics. Salvation. Comes. Through Christ. Alone. By grace. Alone. Through faith. Alone. Radical. For his time. Absolutely. Radical. So he nailed.

[32 : 42] The 95 theses. Up. On that day. What was happening. To the church. Was the people. Were lacking. Access. To the word of God. It was in Latin. So the guy.

Who got up. To preach. Held all. The knowledge. Could say. Whatever he wanted. To say. And the people. Believed. When he said. They had given them. That trust.

After. The reformation. Began. You know. I hope you know. The Bible. Began. Be printed. In German. And the word of God. Was put into people's hands. And we have. Protestantism. We exist. As a church. As a result. Of that action. And Martin Luther. Pinned in a hymn. And though this world. With devils filled. Should threaten.

To undo us. We will not fear. For God has willed. His truth. To triumph. Through us. The prince of darkness. Grim. We tremble. Not for him. His rage.

[33 : 39] We can't endure. For lo. His doom. Is sure. One little word. Shall fell him. I believe he meant. Jesus. So beloved.

Be encouraged this morning. Because. We have a confession. That we should. Not be moved from. Because we have a promise. From one. Who cannot. Lie.