

## Heb. 10:19-25 – When a Relationship Changes Everything – Lesson Summary

As a parent of 4 young children I have experienced the terror of introducing a new babysitter more times than I'd like to remember. There's usually screaming, crying, hiding, and then the inevitable death grip cling. Despite your best efforts to reassure them that this individual is a friend who cares about them and is here to take care of them, they need to experience it first. Surprisingly, the process is similar every time. What begins with apprehension leads to curiosity. That curiosity leads to acceptance. And in the best of times, acceptance leads to introduction. This happens when the babysitter relationship has become so strong that they want to introduce others to their new friend. The author of Hebrews presents a similar process when encouraging his church. He's spent the majority of this letter reminding them of their introduction to the person of Jesus. He reassures them of Christ's character. He has shown that Jesus is our Great High Priest. He is the greater covenant. He is our Savior. And, He is trustworthy. His audience has been introduced to Christ, their curiosity peeked, and now the author's challenge is for them to accept all that Christ has accomplished.

The middle verses of Ch. 10 focus intensely on relationships. As the author pleads with his audience to "draw near to God" we find that Christ's work has restored our relationship with our Heavenly Father. He is safe. The idea that we can draw near to a perfect, holy, powerful, and inexhaustible God is crazy. The God who created everything and put it into order by speaking it into existence calls us to draw near to Him. God, who's character is perfect and holy, desires to be with broken sinners restored by grace. The relationship that we lost with our Father when we sinned in the Garden is now restored. We can draw near to Him. We cry out to Heaven, He hears our cries, and through Christ He says, draw near to me.

For those of us who understand the depths of our sin it can be hard to believe that drawing near is an option. We consider our continual struggles with lust, envy, slander, malice, covetousness, and still the list goes on. We know that to try and overcome these sins on our own is impossible. It's not our ability to earn God's favor that allows us to draw near. We don't find hope in our behavior, our performance, our Biblical understanding, or righteousness. Instead, we are called to find hope in Christ. Our relationship with God has been restored because of His faithfulness in spite of our faithlessness. The author calls us to "hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering." Why don't we waver? Because, "He who promised is faithful". Our relationship with God is not dependent upon anything we bring to the table. It is established and secured by Christ's faithfulness on our behalf. The Gospel really is Jesus plus nothing. This is our hope. This is why we have hope to draw near to God.

I love the pastoral heart of the author of Hebrews. I am humbled by His understanding of God's truth and his pastoral care for his people. His bold declarations of truth are always followed by a call to action. In this instance the author connects our vertical relationship with God to our horizontal relationship with people. He concludes this section by commanding us to "stir up one another to love and good works", to "not neglect meeting together", and to "encourage one another". We need to continually be reintroducing each other to Christ. In order for these things to happen we must be pursuing relationships with others. Satan wants us to isolate. He wants us to feel too guilty or shameful to gather with others that we believe are more holy. He certainly does not want us to draw near to the Living God through a Risen Savior. That is why it is so essential that we find hope in Christ. Despite our sin, the blood of Christ assures us that we are free to draw near, that we can stand firm in our hope, and that we can draw near to one another. When our standing with God changes through Christ, and our relationship with our Heavenly Father is restored, it changes everything.

### Discussion Questions:

- 1) Do you feel like you are free to draw near to God? What are some of the things that prevent you from approaching God?
- 2) The author says we are to hope in Christ. What do you think that means? What does it look like to hope in Christ? What are some other things you put your hope in?
- 3) We are called to come together in order to encourage each other. Do you feel safe to come together with other believers to be encouraged in your struggles? What would prevent you from doing that?