

## Let Us Draw Near (Hebrews 10:22)

The passage that is to be before us this morning is Hebrews 10. We'll read together verses 19–25. It's a little bit of the context of what we're going to be looking at in Hebrews 10. Beginning at verse 19,

19 Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus,

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

21 and since we have a great high priest over the house of God,

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.

23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;

24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,

25 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.  
(Heb. 10:19–25 NASB)

The end goal of Christ's coming to die was in order to bring us to God. In fact, this is how 1 Peter 3 describes it when Peter writes, “For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God” (1 Pet. 3:18). That is the goal, the end of His work for us. “Having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit,” Peter says (1 Pet. 3:18). And in order to bring us to God, there needed to be a reconciliation that would take place. Sometimes Scripture describes us being brought to God in terms of reconciliation. And where reconciliation is necessary, it is necessary because two parties are at enmity or hostility one with another, and we would not be able to be reconciled to God if the enmity or the hostility were not removed from between God and us. He is the offended party and we are the offending party. And so there is between everyone born in Adam as a sinful creature—there is between that person and God a heap of guilt and transgression, a sinfulness, a hostility, and an enmity

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that must be dealt with and taken out of the way before reconciliation between God and man is even possible.

And so Scripture describes us and our hostile state against God in Ephesians 2:3 when Paul says, “Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.” “Children of wrath” describes children deserving of wrath or children under wrath, children characterized by wrath. Now why would God be angry with us or wrathful toward us? It's only because we are born in sin and hostility. It's not that God is just angry with all of humanity for no reason whatsoever and we are born into this situation where God is angry with us or He has wrath toward us and it is entirely without cause. It is entirely *with* cause and entirely justified because of our sin. Paul says we lived in the lust of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind. That's why we were by nature known as children under His wrath.

James 4:4 says that to make yourself a friend of the world is to make yourself an enemy of God. We become enemies of God when we become friends of the world and part of the world system. Well, we're born into the world and we're born as friends of the world and we continue to make ourselves friends of the world. And of course the one who makes himself a friend of the world is an enemy of God. So that enmity must be removed; the hostility must be removed. Paul writes in Colossians 1:21–22, “And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, yet He [that is, Christ, or God in Christ] has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach.” Once you were alienated and hostile and now through His death He has reconciled you to God.

Romans 5:10: “For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

2 Corinthians 5:18: “All these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.”

And this reconciliation has one glorious and eternal result. Jesus described it in John 17 in His high priestly prayer. Jesus said,

22 The glory which You have given Me [He's praying to the Father] I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one;

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23 I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.

24 Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. (John 17:22–24, NASB)

That is the eternal and glorious result of the work of the Son. Having removed the hostility, He has reconciled us to God, and now we are one with God. Christ is in the Father, the Father is in Christ, Christ is in us, we are in Him. There is now this glorious unity that we as part of a humanity that was once deserving of His eternal wrath—now that hostility and enmity and wrath has been removed by the death of Christ, and now we have been reconciled to God. We are a purchased people. And as a purchased people, we are now—having been reconciled—we are regenerated, we are sanctified by the work of the Spirit, we are redeemed, we are adopted into His family, and our glorification is absolutely certain because of the work that He has done. He has done all of this. All of that is part of the reconciling work. And so the ultimate goal of that is a people who have been chosen in eternity past by the Father, purchased in time by the Son, regenerated by the work of the Holy Spirit, and then glorified by the triune God to live and to dwell with Him forever and ever as a reconciled, redeemed, and regenerated humanity in eternal bodies. That is the glorious result of our redemption, our reconciliation. It's a glorious picture, but the hostility and the enmity has to be removed before any of that can take place. Once we were a sinful people, and now we have been reconciled to God through the death of His Son.

So if the purpose of Christ dying in the flesh, the just for the unjust, is to bring us to God, to bring reconciliation between man and God, then it should not surprise us that after this long section in the middle of the book of Hebrews that the author would then begin to describe this closeness and this intimacy that we have with God, or that we can have with God. It's not surprising if the purpose of the death of Christ is to bring us to God that after describing the death of Christ and its benefits in Hebrews, the author would say to us, therefore draw near. If the purpose of reconciliation is to bring you to Him, then having been brought to Him, draw near to Him.

And that brings us to Hebrews 10 in this passage that we just read. We find this in verse 22 of our passage. This is the first of the “let us” statements. “Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith.” And verse 23: “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope.” In verse 24: “And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and

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good deeds.” Now those three “let us” statements are exhortations to a believing community based upon the implications of the death of Christ. Because Christ has died, because He has given us this free and confident access to the throne of God, to Heaven itself, and because we have Him as a priest over the household of God, let us therefore draw near to Him, hold fast to Him, and find ways to encourage other people to do the same. Those are the three exhortations here in our passage.

And we're just today looking at verse 22 in this first “let us” exhortation. “Let us draw near” (v. 22). What does that mean? What does it mean to draw near? That's what we're going to look at today. These three exhortations all have several things in common. I want to give you—before we jump into verse 22—I want to give you a couple of observations about all three of them. I want you to notice first of all that these three things are connected. Let us draw near, let us hold fast, and let us encourage others to do the same. Let us draw near and let us hold fast. Now there is nothing to hold fast to unless you draw near to it, correct? You have to draw near to something in order to hold fast to it. And in fact, there is something in the drawing near to Him that gives us the strength and the certainty to hold fast to Him. But if we do not draw near to Him, whatever that means, we're not going to have the strength or the certainty to hold fast to that which it is that we were supposed to draw near to. So all three of these things are connected to one another. And of course they're connected to the context. Because we have a high priest over the house of God, because He has given us this access to the throne room of God, therefore draw near to it. It's all connected in the context.

Second, I want you to notice that these are individual actions as well as corporate actions, individual as well as corporate. Drawing near, holding fast, and encouraging others to do the same are things which we do personally, privately, individually, as individual Christians. They're also things that we do together as a body. And we'll tie all of this together later on when we get down into verses 24 and 25, the exhortation, “Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together.” The author has in mind things which we do together as a body of believers. It's not just what we do in drawing near and holding fast that we do individually, personally. The single exhortation to you, it's not just that that is in view. These are things that we do personally as well as corporately. We do these individually, and we do this together as a body, all three of these.

We draw near individually, do we not? We draw near to salvation, for salvation. We have to draw near unto God for salvation. That's an individual thing. That's not a

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corporate thing. Just because you're here today among other people who are saved doesn't mean that you're saved. Other people have drawn near to God individually for salvation. We also draw near to God personally and individually for worship, do we not? We do. In our own private worship, the ways that we worship, the things that we do in worship, we are drawing near to God in worship and in prayer. These are things that we do individually, but they're also corporate. We gather here together and we sing "Behold Our God" or "O Lord, My Rock and My Redeemer" or "Rock of Ages." We sing those songs and we worship together. We lift our voices together and we, in the meditation of our hearts hopefully, and in the attitude and affection of our hearts and our minds, we are bringing ourselves to the Lord. We are drawing near to Him in song. That is something that we do corporately. So it's individual and corporate.

The holding fast is the same, by the way. You individually, you personally, must hold fast to your confession of faith and to the truth and not let go of it. That is a personal exhortation to you. But we do this together as a body, do we not? We have to do this together as a body corporately. When we see people who are not holding fast very well, that are starting to fall away or that are struggling, we want to come alongside them, encourage them to love and good deeds, encourage them to draw near and to hold fast. So this is an individual thing that we do. It is also a corporate thing that we do as a body. And we don't want to lose sight of that as we go through this because the author obviously has in mind our corporate gathering together and the importance of that when he says in verse 25, "Not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some." It's almost as if the drawing near, the holding fast, and the encouraging of one another are things which can only be done in some sense as a corporate body of people. That is what makes what we do here so significant, so important, and so precious to the child of God each and every week. So they are individual and corporate.

And third, I want you to notice something about these three things: drawing near, holding fast, and encouraging others. These three things are preventions for apostasy. Down in verse 26—I want you to notice it in your Bible—"If we go on sinning [that begins the warning passage to apostates] willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries." Verse 31: "It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Verse 39: "We are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul." What does he have in mind in verses 26–39? It is a warning against walking away and turning away from this. All three of these things are preventions for apostasy: draw

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near, don't pull away; hold fast, don't let go; and be part of a body of believers who will encourage you to persevere all the way to the end. And in doing those three things, those are preventions for apostasy. He's addressing believers in verses 19–25. He is addressing apostates in verses 26–31. And three of the preventions for apostasy is drawing near and holding fast and doing so with a body of people who are helping you to draw near and to hold fast. That will keep you from falling away.

And if you will not draw near and you will not hold fast and you will not do so with others who can encourage you to do the same, you are in a very, very dangerous place. Because if you neglect those three things, you have a terrifying expectation of judgment. According to the text, you're going to fall into the hands of the living God, and you're in danger of shrinking back to destruction. You want to avoid that? Draw near, hold fast, encourage others to do the same. Do this with a body of believers. That's why these were important instructions. So those are the three things here; the antidote to apostasy is drawing near, holding fast, and encouraging others.

Let's look first of all now at verse 22, this first command, this first exhortation. Verse 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." I want you to notice the exhortation is simple: let us draw near. Very simple exhortation. The explanation of how we do that, the attitude in which we do it, the manner in which we do it, what must happen for us and in us in order for this to happen, that's the rest of verse 22. We do this with a sincere heart. We do this drawing near in full assurance of faith. We do this drawing near, having had our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and having had our bodies washed with pure water. You say, What does bathing have to do with drawing near to God? Is this a physical bathing? Is this a baptism? We'll get into that in due time. But the rest of verse 22 describes the attitude or the posture with which we are doing this, drawing near.

So let's look at this exhortation. I want you to notice that the exhortation of the command to draw near is the most natural command, given the context of what he's just said immediately previously, is it not? Since you have unfettered and free access, not to an earthly tabernacle and not to an earthly holy of holies and not to stand before an ark of the covenant and a mercy seat and a representation of the Shechinah glory of God—you don't have access to that. Since you have access to the very holy of holies and Heaven itself, the throne room of God, because of your High Priest who has gone before you as a forerunner—He has paved that new and living way. And you're not treading

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upon stone, you're not treading upon rocks on your way up to the temple. Instead, you are coming in the way that has been given to you through Jesus Christ. It is the new, the freshly slaughtered and yet living way that He has inaugurated for you through His blood. Having removed that hostility, you can walk right into the throne room of Heaven itself. And since you have a High Priest over the household of God, One who intercedes for you, always able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, a High Priest who always lives and never dies and is never disqualified and never stops His ministry, faithful, powerful, infinite, true—since you have those two things, what is the most natural response of a Christian who understands those two concepts? Stay home and watch football on Sunday morning? It better not be. What is the most natural response? Draw near. Draw near. The way is wide open; walk in. The door has been opened, the veil has been torn, the wall has been broken down, the enmity has been removed. We're no longer threatened with death by walking behind the veil; now we can come into Heaven itself. What is the most natural command that would come on the heels of all of this instruction that we have received? It's in verse 22: Therefore, "let us draw near."

What does it mean to draw near? What is the author describing there? This word, *drawing near*, is a favorite in the Book of Hebrews. The author of Hebrews uses this seven times in the book. And I'm going to describe to you how he uses this word *draw near* or *come near*. It is not used exclusively in a religious sense of approaching God because the word simply is used elsewhere to describe approaching someone, seeking an association with someone, to draw near to someone. It's used of people walking up to Jesus physically. It's used of just approaching somebody out of the blue. It's used of coming next to a mountain or drawing near to something. It just describes one person approaching somebody else. That's how it's used most of the time in Scripture. But in the Book of Hebrews it is used exclusively in terms of worship and fellowship, preaching—or sorry—prayer, and praise and worship, and of salvation, and the author uses it seven different times. I'm going to describe to you here how he uses it.

He uses it in terms of one who approaches God in worship. It's used this way in chapter 10, at the beginning of this chapter, verse 1: "For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near." He's describing there the one who would come to God with an animal sacrifice, and he's likening that to the old covenant. Under the old covenant you took the animal sacrifice and you would approach God with that and give that to the priest and you would offer

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that to the Lord in worship. And that was what drawing near looked like under the old covenant. But those animal sacrifices could never take away sin. And so the author describes those animal sacrifices as being unable to perfect the one who drew near to God in worship on the day of atonement or offering any other sacrifice. So it's used in terms of sacrifice.

And by the way, that was the point of failure of the old covenant, wasn't it? It was where the old covenant failed to actually perfect us, to actually give us that access to God. It was pictured in the coming to the priest with the sacrifice. It was pictured in the sacrifice being offered, but it never actually did those things. It just pictured those things.

Second, this word *draw near* is used of one who was saved in the drawing near. I already quoted this verse earlier, Hebrews 7:25: “[Christ] is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.” And there the idea is drawing nigh unto God for salvation, for this reconciliation. Christ, our High Priest who never dies, is able to save forever those who draw near to God for salvation. He's a perfect High Priest, always living, able to save.

Third, the word *drawing near* is used in the book of Hebrews of drawing near in prayer. So worship, salvation, prayer. Hebrews 4:16: “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.” And there the idea is intercession, drawing near unto our High Priest, approaching the throne of grace with petitions and prayer so that we may find grace to help in a time of need. That's what it means to draw near in prayer.

And then it is used a few times to describe all of the blessings that we have been brought near to that are part of the new covenant. So Hebrews 12:18 says, “You have not come [or you have not drawn near] to a mountain that can be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind.” And there the author in Hebrews 12 is describing Old Testament Israel at the base of Mount Sinai when Moses roped off the bottom of the mountain lest the people come up, and the people could draw near but only so close. And there, when God gave the covenant with the law, was the fire and the smoke and the darkness and the gloom and the whirlwind and all that accompanied that supernatural manifestation of God's presence with the nation of Israel. Well, the author says in chapter 12, verse 18 that you have not drawn near to that, not to that mountain. But listen to what you have drawn near to. Chapter 12, verses 22–24:

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22 But you have come [you have drawn near] to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels,

23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,

24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel. (NASB)

What have you drawn near to? Not a physical mountain. You've drawn near to God and you have enjoyed now the assembly of the firstborn, the church, the myriads of angels, the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God, to Mount Zion, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood which sprinkled speaks better than the blood of Abel. We've drawn near to all of those new covenant blessings, all of those new covenant realities, those new covenant fulfillments of the Old Testament pictures; we have drawn near to that.

So that's how the word is used in the book of Hebrews. It's used in terms of our worship, in terms of salvation, in terms of prayer, and in terms of being brought near or drawing near to all that is accompanied in the new covenant when we draw near to God through Jesus Christ. In Hebrews 11:6, and this is the last Scripture that I'll give you where it's used in Hebrews—this is a familiar one. Hebrews 11:6: “Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God [or draws near to God] must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.” And there it is just simply describing us coming to God in any one of these fashions. Whether we come to Him for salvation, whether we come to Him in prayer, whether we come to Him in worship, whether we come to Him in service, in fellowship, in thanksgiving, in repentance, in confession, whenever we draw near to God, it must be done in genuine faith. It must be done believing that God is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. So faith is the prerequisite for that.

So though Hebrews uses the term *draw near* seven different times here to describe our worship, our prayer, salvation, and all of the new covenant blessings that we've been brought near to, the book of Hebrews—the author of Hebrews—also describes being brought near to God or reconciled to God using a different term that we've looked at before, and it is that word *perfected*. Remember chapter 10, verse 14: He has perfected forever those who are sanctified through the death of His Son. That death of Christ has

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perfected us or made us perfect. It has accomplished that reconciliation, that redemption. That idea of perfection is itself another way of describing this being brought near and this reconciliation taking place. The Old Testament law, the sacrifices, the Old Testament priesthood, these things were unable to perfect the worshiper, unable to accomplish that reconciliation and redemption and unable to bring us near to God. But God in Christ through the death of His Son, through a better blood, through a better covenant, through better promises, through a better sacrifice and a better priest and a better priesthood has accomplished what all the Old Testament pictures could never do—namely, the perfection, the forever-complete perfection of bringing near His people. Remember that word *perfect* means to bring to the goal. What is the goal of Christ coming? It is to bring us to God. He has done this by perfecting us.

So there's two words that are used here in Hebrews to describe something very similar, us being perfected and us being brought near. He has perfected forever, brought us to completion in that final state. Now you might be thinking or asking yourself the question, Well, hold on a second; if Christ has already perfected me, past tense, if He has already brought me near, then why am I commanded to draw near? If He's already accomplished this, if He's done this, why am I commanded to draw near? Am I near or am I not near? And if I am near because Christ has brought me near, then what does it mean then to draw near if I've already been brought near? [*A baby makes a noise in the audience*] Somebody had a suggestion; it was indiscernible [*laughs*]. What does it mean to be brought near and then to be commanded to draw near? If Christ has already brought me near, then why am I commanded to draw near to Him? Have I already been brought near? I have. Do I need to draw near? I do. It is the same thing with repentance and faith. Repentance and faith are commanded of the sinner for salvation. You must turn from your sin. You must believe on Christ for salvation. And yet Scripture describes repentance and faith as a gift that God grants to His people.

So if you are brought near, it is because Christ has brought you near, and if you draw near, it's because you have drawn near, but you only draw near because you have been brought near. And you're only able to draw near because you have been brought near. So yes, you draw near, and yes, Christ brings you near. Yes, you repent, and yes, God grants you the gift of repentance. Yes, you believe, and yes, God has granted you the gift of faith. These two things are both true. It is the two sides of this coin of God's working: divine sovereignty and human responsibility. These two things are both true.

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Christ has forever removed the barrier between you and the Father, Christian. No more wrath, no more condemnation you need to fear, ever. Never the frown of God. That enmity has been entirely removed, and in terms of your position and in terms of your justification and your standing before God, He has brought you as near as you can be, forever. But in terms of your own security, in terms of your own willingness to obey and your own experience, you must draw near to Him.

So there is the command to draw near, and there is the provision that He has brought us near. There is the command to repent, and there is the provision of His gift of repentance. These two things go together. So they're not one or the other, they do go together. If you have been brought near, you have been brought near by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. And if you draw near, it is because you draw near through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Positionally, you've been brought near; experientially, you must draw near. And you must draw near and you must hold fast. And He will not lose you, I promise you that. He will lose none of His. But you'd better hold on. He's not a bridge over troubled waters, but He will pull you through the troubled waters if you can stand the tow. You have to hold on; He will not lose you. Both of those things are true. And because He will not lose you, He has promised that He will give you strength to hold on. You only hold on because He has promised not to lose you. You only draw near because He has brought you near. You have to have room in your theology for both of those things. And if you don't, your theology is deficient. You have to be able to affirm both of them.

Now there's two aspects of drawing near—I should say two audiences to which we might address this command to draw near. There is the unbeliever and there is the believer. Now both of these were part of the original audience for the book of Hebrews. So we have to address this command to both of these groups. The author of Hebrews, knowing that he was speaking to people who were fence-sitters—they were sitting on the fence and they had lots of slivers from spending a lot of time sitting on the fence. They were considering going back to the old covenant and back to the old sacrifices. They were considering turning around and going back to what was familiar to them. And the author all along has been encouraging them not to do that but instead to press on, to look forward, to persevere with Christ, and to persevere all the way to the end. So he is addressing people who are undecided. They were unbelievers. They are the apostates described in verses 26–31. That warning that is given, is given to those who are considering drawing back or shrinking back to destruction. Verse 39 describes them that way: shrinking back to destruction. So I want to address this drawing near to both the unbeliever and to the believer.

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First to the unbeliever. If you're an unbeliever sitting here, you might be an almost Christian. You've been raised in a Christian family or you've attended church as a young child or you are familiar with the things of the Lord because you have attended Adventure Club here or Awana here. Or you are blessed to grow up in a family where your parents have taught you the things of the Lord. But you've never been regenerated; you've never actually repented of your sin and trusted Christ for salvation. You can say the right words. You can mouth the right sentiments. You know how to sing all the songs that we do and even make it look alive and like you mean it. You're able to do that. And you're able to serve in various capacities within the church and do so while people recognize you and think that you're a great Christian person, whatever your age may be. But you're an almost Christian. You're not actually a believer. You put on a good show. It's a convincing show, a convincing show to a lot of people. But you and the Lord know the true condition of your heart.

You were commanded to draw near. And here's what that means: you know the truth, you have heard the truth; do not turn away from it. If you turn away from the truth, you will face nothing but the certainty of a terrifying expectation of the judgment that is to come. You will fall into the hands of the living God, and I promise you, I promise you, you do not want to have that happen. You will shrink away to destruction, and He will destroy you. And you will deserve it. And on that day, you will recognize that you deserve it. And you will confess that you deserve it.

If you turn away from this truth, there is no other sacrifice for sin. There remains nothing else. There is no other atonement. There's no other way to have your sins removed. There's no other way to receive forgiveness. You cannot be made righteous through any other means. You cannot have your sinfulness atoned for and paid for through any other venue, any other sacrifice. There remains—in the words of verse 26, if you go on sinning and turn from this truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sin. You have nothing else. The only thing you can expect is justice for your sin, never atonement for your sin. If you turn away from the only means that God has provided for atonement, you face His fiery judgment and expectation.

Only in Christ can your sins be removed. Only in Christ can your sins be forgiven. And only in Christ can you receive a new heart with new desires and a new life. Christ can provide all of that. You turn away from that, you forfeit all of that. And if you turn away from that willingly, you willingly choose to abandon the truth for a lie, and you willingly choose destruction over eternal life. I've warned you. Others have warned you. You've

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heard it from this pulpit a hundred times, thousands of times. You've heard it in Sunday school, Adventure Club, hundreds of times, thousands of times. You have nothing else. There is no other option for you. Come to Christ; do not turn from Him.

Here is the good news: in Him there is sufficient sacrifice for your sin. No matter how deep your depravity, no matter how wicked your desires, no matter how high and high-handed your sin is, no matter the darkness of your sin, no matter how much you have sinned, no matter how frequently you have sinned, no matter the weight of your sin, there is sufficient atonement and there is sufficient payment in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. But it is in Him and it is in Him alone. And if you turn away from the One who is able to save forever those who come to God through Him, you are turning away from the *only* One able to save forever those who come to God through Him. You turn away from Him, you have nothing else. That is your only option; that is your only recourse. There remains no sacrifice for sin, and you will fall into the hands of the living God.

So draw near. Do not turn away. Draw near. The way has been made open. Heaven is waiting; it is there. You have now—there is a High Priest over the house of God. You have freedom to enter into Heaven itself. It is through Christ and it is through Christ alone. Draw near or, in the words of verse 39, shrink back to destruction. Those are your two options. Those are your two courses. Draw near or shrink back to destruction. Draw near or fall away and perish everlastingly. And if you do not draw near for salvation, you will not be able to draw near for worship, for fellowship, for prayer, for service in thanksgiving. You will never approach the heavenly city. You will never stand on the streets of the New Jerusalem. You will never see God face-to-face, other than at the judgment seat. Draw near or shrink back to destruction. To the almost Christian, to the unbeliever, those are your options. Draw near. You have access to the throne room of God, and there remains a High Priest there who is able to save forever those who come to God through Him. Draw near. Don't turn away.

Now to the believer, a little bit of a different tone. You say, whew, thankfully! To the believer, there's a little bit of a different tone because the access that we have in Jesus Christ affords us the great privilege of drawing near in so many other ways, not *through* other ways, but we draw near to God *in* so many ways. We draw near to God in worship, not by bringing an animal sacrifice but by coming to the One who was sacrificed on our behalf. We come to God or draw near to God in prayer to worship Him and to describe to God His worthiness, His “worthship.” That's what worship is. It is describing to God

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His worthiness, His worship, that He is worthy of this, He is valuable. And so we ascribe to God that, and we draw near in our worship with one another and individually.

We draw near to God in our service as we serve one another. We encourage one another to love and good deeds. That was just described later in verses 24–25. That's a way that we draw near to God. We draw near to God not only individually but also corporately in our giving of thanks, in our service to one another, in our sacrifices, in our giving, in our thinking of other people, encouraging one another, and fulfilling all of the “one anothers” of Scripture. Pray for one another, love one another, encourage one another, serve one another, do good to one another—all of these are ways that we draw near to God in worship.

And for the Christian, whenever we do anything, whether in word or deed, for the glory of God in Jesus Christ and we do this for God, giving thanks to God through Christ, it is drawing near to God. Even the small things. Even a cup of cold water offered in Christ's name is an act of drawing near to God in worship and service because of what He has done for us. So it's not just a matter of corporate worship. It's not just a matter of private worship. We draw near to God when we approach Him in a quick prayer as you're driving down the highway and you say, “Lord, forgive me for what I just said about that person that pulled out in front of me,” or “Lord, forgive me for what I said to my wife this morning before I left.” That's drawing near to God.

But, Christian, you and I are only able to do this because Christ has removed the barrier of our hostility and our enmity and He has brought us near to His Father and He has granted us this free and unfettered access to Heaven itself and only because we have a High Priest over the house of God who now as our forerunner sits in Heaven itself and beckons us to come. Now we can draw near, having come near to Him for salvation and found that He ever lives to make intercession for us, and thus He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him. Since we have come near to Him in salvation, now we draw near in worship and fellowship and praise, in preaching, in hearing His Word, in reading His Word, in meditating on His Word, in memorizing His Word, in loving His Word, in living and walking in the power of the Holy Spirit and obeying His moral commands. All of those things we do now; we draw near to God in all of those ways.

And there's no limit on the availability of God in us drawing near to Him. I want you to think about something. Under the old covenant, the high priest could go on one day a year. There was only one day he could draw near. One day—the Day of Atonement. And

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only one person could draw near on that one day of the year. You and I can draw near any day. In fact, we can draw near in the middle of the night if we want. We can draw near in the morning, in the afternoon, at lunch, on our lunch break, in the car. There's no limit to the availability. We don't have to approach an earthly tabernacle. We can do this on a boat, we can do this on a mountaintop, we can do this here. We can do it in our car, we can do it in our garden. We can draw near to God. There's no limit to the availability at all.

And there's no limit on our time. The Old Testament priest had to—when he would go into the holy of holies behind the veil and he would step back there, he didn't linger there. He sprinkled the blood and he got out of there quickly. He didn't stand back there and meditate and think on God's goodness. He didn't stand back there and recite all of the ways that God had been good to him and to the nation of Israel. He didn't stand back there and gaze upon the Shechinah glory and then think to himself, “I wonder what Heaven is really like.” He didn't go back there to admire the ark in any way, to look at its craftsmanship or to admire its beauty or to appraise its value. He didn't spend time behind the veil doing any of those things. He stepped behind the veil, he applied the blood, and he got out of the veil as fast as he could. There is no limit on the amount of time that you get to spend when you draw near to God. None whatsoever. Thirty seconds? Thirty minutes? Two hours? It's up to you. Nobody is rushing you out of there. There is no threat upon your life for spending too long in the presence of God. So there is no limit on the availability or your time and there is no sin that limits you from coming in terms of you have to bring an offering or a sacrifice for sin, because that sacrifice has already been made.

So none of those limitations that were under the old covenant exist for you, Christian. The only limitation on you and I drawing near to God in any fashion is with us. We don't want to. We don't enjoy it, or we don't think we have the time to do it. And so we rush in and we rush out. You have confident access to the throne room of Heaven. All of us do in Jesus Christ, having drawn near for salvation. There's no limits. We get as much as we want, really. Now you say, well, I really don't get to spend very much time with the Lord. You get to spend all the time you want. Really, you should rephrase that: I don't *want* to spend very much time with the Lord. Because that's really the limitation. Let's be honest; you get all you want, I get all I want. So really the issue is with how much do I want? How much do I enjoy? What is my priority? That's a heart issue. And this is a corporate function, not just an individual function. We gather together. We approach God or draw near to Him, not just individually, but we do this as a body of believers too.

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And this is the expression of it, when we are gathered here. Let's not forget that. We gather here. The importance of this is that this is the time of the week when we as God's people get to draw near to Him corporately. We don't get this on Mondays. Well, maybe. I don't know, do you attend a church on Monday? Maybe some of you do. I don't get this on Mondays. I don't get this on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, or Saturdays. The only time I get this precious time that we have together is on Sunday mornings, and it's a very limited amount of time.

You say, Jim, the problem is with you. You don't preach long enough or we don't sing long enough; it could be more. Jim, you're getting all that you want, but I would want more. OK, well, maybe that's the case. This is a precious time because this is when we gather together as God's people and we get to do something we cannot do in our own homes and that is to lift our voices with hundreds of other people who also love the same God and worship Him and to do so in unison. That's what makes this so special.

This is why the author's third exhortation is do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together (Heb. 10:25), because there are things that are done here that cannot be done individually. There are ways that we draw near to God that cannot happen at home. It cannot happen at home. It's impossible. You ought not to be observing communion in your own home. You ought not to be baptizing people in your own home. Those are functions of the corporate body of Christ.

And the evidence of the wickedness of the world in which we live is the fact that those who oversee us want to shut that down. They want it to stop. They want this to stop. All over this country, they want this to stop. And the church has to say, no, we're commanded to draw near. This is what we must do; this is what we will do. And we will do this even if it's the last thing we do. Some Sunday, it might be the last thing you do. As precious as our worship time is here together with each other, week after week—and it is precious. Those six, seven weeks that we stopped in March, back when we didn't know what we know now, those six or seven weeks—oh, I tell you, if your heart wasn't breaking by the end of that, something's wrong with your heart. We ought to have been longing for that. There was so much joy, so much love, so much affection when we came back and we got to enjoy that. And comparatively speaking to other Christians throughout the ages and around the world, this, what we get to enjoy here, this costs us nothing. This costs us nothing. This is virtually free. I know you got gas, wear and tear on your vehicle, time out of your weekend. This is one of your two days off. I get that. But really, this costs us nothing. This is drawing near.

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One last thing before I close. Under the old covenant—about drawing near, one final observation—under the old covenant, people were prohibited from drawing near. Remember that? Moses put a barrier around the base of the mountain lest the people come up and see God's glory and perish. Uzzah extended his hand to touch the ark of the covenant, wanting to preserve the ark from tipping over and hitting the dirt, and God struck him dead. People were destroyed for drawing near. People were kept out of the tabernacle. No man could stand behind the curtain. Nobody could see God and live. Nobody dared to approach God on His own terms. Nobody dared to approach God with the type of freedom that you and I enjoy. If you drew near to God under the old covenant and just wanted to pursue Him on your own terms, you would be struck dead. You would be struck down. To approach God was to presume that you had no sin, no hostility, no barrier, that there was nothing, that He was just your chum. And to approach Him in that way, you would be destroyed.

Under the new covenant, if you don't draw near to God, you will be destroyed. Under the old covenant, you draw near, you're destroyed. Under the new covenant, don't draw near and you will be destroyed. Under the new covenant, you must draw near. Drawing near is your salvation. Drawing near is your preservation. Drawing near is the very thing that makes you secure. Drawing near is what is necessary for you to be saved. Under the old covenant, drawing near would cost you your life.

Why the difference? Because in Christ, the barrier has been removed. Now, the command is draw near. It's not a prohibition—"Do not come near to Me or you will die." Now it's a command—"Draw near to Me and you will live." That's the promise. That's a radical difference.

Now, does that mean that we just approach God arrogantly, brazenly, without any considerations? Oh no, there's a way in which we have to draw near to God. There are considerations. There is the rest of verse 22. We "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." That's how we draw near. It's the manner of it, it's the means of it. It describes the attitude and the heart condition for drawing near. And we will look at that next week. Let's pray together.

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