

## A Greater Way

Jesus is Greater #17 - Pastor Gary Combs - November 17, 2024 - Hebrews 10:19-25

**INTRO:** Good morning church! We are continuing our series entitled, “JESUS IS GREATER: An Exposition of Hebrews.” Remember our theme verse is:

Hebrews 1:4 (NLT) This shows that the Son is far greater than the angels, just as the name God gave him is greater than their names.

Today, we're in part #17 of our series in a message entitled, “A Greater Way.” Because of Jesus, we can be assured of salvation and confident of 24/7 access to the Father. We can come boldly into the presence of God as His children through faith in Jesus Christ, who has provided a greater way to the Father. Oh yes, Jesus is greater!

**ILL:** For years, humanity dreamed of reaching the moon. There were countless studies, tests, and even failed attempts to send rockets into space. But it wasn't until the Apollo 11 mission in 1969 that astronauts finally succeeded in landing on the moon. For the first time, a way was opened for human beings to step foot on another celestial body, a journey that had been previously impossible in all of human history.

July 20, 1969 was the day that Neil Armstrong first stepped on the moon. It was also my grandfather's birthday. As we watched his old B&W TV, we heard Armstrong say, "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." And then I heard my Papaw say, "I don't believe it. He's not really there. This is just some fake Hollywood stuff." I don't think he ever did believe it.

**Trans:** That's how the Jews must've felt about Jesus. Many of them didn't believe He had opened up a “new and living way” to God. For them only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies and then only on the Day of Atonement. God was holy and apart. Humanity is sinful. Who could approach Him? Yet, Christ says...

John 14:6 (ESV) Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

**Need:** How have you responded to Christ's claim to be not only the greatest way, but the only way to come to God? To come to the Father? Many in our world today struggle with this claim. They try to reach God, or their idea of God, through human means, through religion or rule-following or some other way. But they all fall short. Others believe that Christ has opened the way to God, but they don't feel assured that they are worthy of it or that they can be sure of it. While others are confident of their new position in Christ, but they aren't taking full advantage of what Christ has accomplished in opening this new and living way to the Father.

**Trans:** Perhaps the author of Hebrews had all these responses to Christ in mind as he shifted from 10 chapters of propositional truth to prescription, from doctrine to deeds. Many of the epistles follow the same pattern. The NT never divorces doctrine from deeds. Although a few times the author has interrupted his doctrinal themes to apply it, most of the book has been doctrinal. In the first 4 chapters, he demonstrated how Jesus Christ is greater in His person. From chapter 5 through 10:18, he shows how Christ is greater in His priesthood. But beginning at 10:19 to the end of the book he shows how Christ's superiority should spur us on to enduring faith, even in the face of trials.

**BODY:** In Hebrews 10:19-25, the author told the Hebrew believers that they could confidently respond to the new and living way that Christ had opened up for them to God. We can confidently respond to the new and living way Christ has opened to God. How can we confidently respond to the new and living way Christ has opened to God? The text gives **three ways** we can confidently respond to the new and living way Christ has opened to God.

**Read text:** Hebrews 10:19-25 (ESV) <sup>19</sup> Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, <sup>20</sup> by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, <sup>21</sup> and since we have a great priest over the house of God, <sup>22</sup> let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. <sup>23</sup> Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. <sup>24</sup> And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, <sup>25</sup> not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

### SINCE CHRIST HAS OPENED THE WAY TO GOD...

#### 1. Let us draw near to God in full assurance.

**EXP:** (19-22) The 1st way we can confidently respond to the new and living way Christ has opened is found in v.22: "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith..."

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“**Since we have**” (19, 21) - the word “since” is implied. The two major doctrines, which are the basis for Christ’s superior way to God are here summarized: Jesus’ blood and body and Jesus as Great Priest.

“**Confidence**” (19) (παρρησία, *parrēsia*) - free and fearless confidence, boldness, assurance.

“**Enter the holy places**” (19) (ἅγιον, *hagion*) - Better translated, “the Holiest” (NKJV).

“**Blood of Jesus**” (19) (αἷμα, *haima*) - Christ’s blood sprinkled on the mercy seat of heaven. “By” shows instrumental means. Jesus paid for our access with His own blood.

“**By the new and living way**” (20) (πρόσφατον καὶ ζῶσαν, *prosfaton kai zosan*) – “New” (Lit., “freshly killed”) has the idea of a newly accomplished sacrifice. “Living” – In that Christ is the ever-living High Priest.

“**And since we have a great priest**” (21) – The present basis for our confidence, Jesus lives as our Advocate before the Father as our Great High Priest. “House of God” - the people of God, the Church

“**Let us draw near**” (22) (προσέρχομαι, *proserchomai*) (PresMidSubj) - to come, approach, draw near to. The implied command is followed by 3 statements. One which express the manner in which we draw near and two which convey the grounds on which we are allowed to draw near to God:

“**With a true heart**” (22) – Not lip service, but from a true and sincere heart. And in ...

“**Full assurance of faith**” (22) (πληροφορία, *plērophoria*) – full assurance, most certain confidence.

“**Hearts sprinkled clean**” (22) – OT language again. Metaphorically our hearts have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus just as Aaron was command to sprinkle the altar and the veil for cleansing (Lev. 4:6, 17, 5:9)

“**Evil conscience**” (22) (πονηρός, *ponēros*) - full of labors, hardships. “A consciousness of evil, or oppressed with sin; that is, a conscience that accuses of guilt.” (Barnes) “A guilty conscience” (NIV).

“**Bodies washed**” (22) (λούω, *louō*) - to bathe, wash. Both an allusion to the OT and perhaps to baptism.

“**Pure water**” (22) (καθαρός, *katharos*) - clean, pure. Perhaps an allusion to the Spirit (Calvin).

**ARG:** **We can confidently draw near because of Christ’s sympathy, mercy, grace and help.**

Hebrews 4:15-16 (ESV) <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup> Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

**We can confidently draw near because Christ is able to save and lives to make intercession for us.**

Hebrews 7:25 (ESV) Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

**ILL:** When the prodigal son came to his senses and said, “I will arise and go to my father” (Luke 15:18); how did his father respond? “... But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him” (Luke 15:20). Jesus told this story to illustrate how to draw near.

**APP:** Will you draw near to God? He has already provided the past and ongoing basis for you to draw near to Him through Jesus. Will you continually draw near to Him, seeking to know and follow Him more and more?

## 2. Let us hold fast to our confession of hope.

**EXP:** (23) The 2nd way we can confidently respond is: “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope...”

“**Let us hold fast**” (23) (κατέχω, *katechō*) - to hold fast, keep firm possession of; to hold a ship’s headway

“**Confession of our hope**” (23) (ὁμολογίαν, *homologian*) – Lit., “to say the same word.” To confess, to agree with. The hope of our salvation is in Christ, therefore we confess Jesus is Lord.

“**Without wavering**” (23) (ἀκλινής, *aklinēs*) – not moving, firm, unwavering, unmoving.

“**For he who promised is faithful**” (23) – The reason we can “hold fast without wavering” is because of God’s faithfulness to keep His promise to save those who confess Christ as Lord.

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**ARG:** Our confession: Jesus is Lord. While simultaneously believing the gospel.

Romans 10:9-11 (NLT) For if you **confess** with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by **confessing** with your mouth that you are saved.

**As Son of God and Great High Priest, Jesus enables us to hold fast our confession**

Hebrews 4:14 (ESV) Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

**ILL:** When we baptize we ask, “Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?” To which they reply, “I do.” And we say, “Then on the basis of that confession, I now baptize you...”

**APP:** When your belief in God is unsure, you can be sure that your fear of death will remain. You can tell a lot about what a person really believes about God and His Word by how much fear they have in their life. Will you decide to fully believe, fully trust in God’s Son and His Word? Be faithful because He is faithful!

### 3. Let us consider how to stir up one another.

**EXP:** (24-25) Now we turn to the third “let us” response: “Let us consider how to stir up one another” (24).

“**Consider**” (24) (κατανοῶμεν, *katanoomen*) – to consider attentively, fix one’s mind upon. Conveys careful consideration, thoughtful attention, and deep concern for one another.

“**Stir up one another**” (24) (παροξυσμός, *paroxysmos*) – to provoke, incite, irritate, spur, stir up. Usually a negative word, as in “to stir up trouble or wrath.” But here used in the positive (Also 1 Pet. 1:13, 2 Pet. 3:1).

Proverbs 27:17 (NIV) As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.

“**To love and good works**” (24) (ἀγάπης καὶ καλῶν ἔργων, *agapes kai kalon ergon*) – The action above is for the purpose of stirring up these two results. “Love is the internal attitude and spiritual disposition that expresses itself in outward tangible good works” (Allen, p. 518).

The command to stir up is modified by two present tense participles: (How not to and how to stir up)

“**Not neglecting to meet together**” (25) (μὴ ἐγκαταλείποντες, *mē egkataleipontes*) – Not forsaking, neglecting, deserting the assembling/meeting together with other believers in fellowship. (Don’t develop the bad habit of neglecting the fellowship of believers).

**ILL:** Surveys show a significant decline in church attendance among those who consider themselves members. In the 1990s, a typical churchgoer attended services about 3 out of 4 Sundays a month. However, more recent data suggests that this has shifted to 1.7 times a month or roughly 2 out of 4 Sundays per month. This trend reflects broader cultural changes and increased competition for time on weekends, with factors like youth sports, and other extracurricular activities playing a significant role. Additionally, the rise of digital worship options post-COVID-19 has contributed to the reduced frequency of physical attendance, even among those who still identify strongly with their church. (Lifeway survey)

“**Encouraging one another**” (25) (παρακαλοῦντες, *parakalountes*) – to beseech, exhort, comfort, encourage. With careful consideration, think of ways to encourage one another.

“**All the more**” (25) – Modifies both participles. Be meeting and encouraging all the more!

“**The Day**” (25) – an eschatological day pointing to the Day of Christ’s return. Adds a sense of urgency.

**ARG:** Loving one another is evidence that we belong to Christ.

John 13:34-35 (ESV) <sup>34</sup> A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

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**Encourage and build one another up to confidence and maturity in our faith.**

1 Thessalonians 5:11 (ESV) Therefore encourage one another and build one another up...

**ILL:** Do you remember the parable that Jesus told about the Kingdom of God?

Luke 14:16-24 (ESV) <sup>16</sup> But he said to him, "A man once gave a great banquet and invited many. <sup>17</sup> And at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.' <sup>18</sup> But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. Please have me excused.' <sup>19</sup> And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them. Please have me excused.' <sup>20</sup> And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' <sup>21</sup> So the servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house became angry and said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.' <sup>22</sup> And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.' <sup>23</sup> And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. <sup>24</sup> For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.'"

**APP:** Will you give careful consideration to how you might stir up other believers to love and good works? Will make this a habit in your life? Faithfully being present on Sundays and in your Community group to stir up others and to be stirred up by others? Remember, you can't do the "one anothers" without one another!

**CONCLUSION:** Can you imagine anyone who has understood how Christ came and gave His body and blood as a sacrifice for our sins, how He was raised from the dead and became our Great High Priest before God, making intercession for us continually... can you imagine anyone who wouldn't want to fully and confidently respond to this new and living way He has opened for us to God?

Have you been feeling distant from God, not drawing near to Him as you should in regular times of prayer? Maybe you've been feeling doubtful lately about your faith, feeling hopeless? Have you gotten out of the habit of regularly and faithfully attending Sunday worship services and your Community Group? It's funny how all three of these are connected, isn't it?

Since Christ has accomplished this great and only way to the Father for you, will you respond by...

1. Drawing near to God?
2. Holding fast your confession?
3. Considering how to stir one another up?

And if you're not a believer, would you like to be born again into God's family? To be adopted into His family through faith in Jesus? You can do that right now by confessing Christ as Lord.

Let's pray.