

#15 Hebrews chapter 10b

Tom Tillman

Remember, this is written to a group of Hebrews who have the gospel. Some have believed unto salvation, some have understood and even believed but have not gone all the way to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation... and others have simply not believed.

When one hears the Gospel and believes it... there are only 2 responses... either they choose to come in faith, all the way to salvation, or they reject what they know to be true and turn from the truth, into apostasy.

The first ones that the writer is addressing here in the 2nd half of chapter 10 are those who have come to true faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. So far, throughout the entire book, he has been presenting Jesus Christ as superior to all other men, superior to all angels, superior as a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, superior as the perfect sacrifice, the Lamb of God and as the Mediator of the superior New Covenant. All throughout his presentation of Jesus Christ as the true Messiah, he has been giving warnings about rejecting the truth, about denying the truth which the Holy Spirit has been planting within their hearts. In Chapter 2 he said, ' "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" Later he warned, ' If we know these things and we fall away, it's impossible to be renewed to repentance.' So he says, 'therefore...' on the basis of what I've been telling you for the past 9 1/2 chapters... it's time to respond... now is the time... don't say tomorrow... tomorrow may never come. Paul said the same thing in 2 Cor 6: 'We then, *as workers together with Him* also plead with *you* not to receive the grace of God in vain. ² For He says:

"In an acceptable time I have heard you,
And in the day of salvation I have helped you."

Behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.'

The writer has spent all this time clearly laying out the truth of the Gospel on a foundation of doctrinal truth. There is no reliance on emotion.

Now it's time for his readers and listeners to respond. Everyone who hears the Gospel must respond. Either we receive the truth planted in our hearts or we reject the truth and trample underfoot the blood of Jesus Christ, as said down in verse 29.

He will base his invitation on three things... faith, hope and love... the same foundation on which should rest every presentation of the Gospel... faith in Jesus Christ and His finished work on the Cross, His work that was accomplished for me. Hope in what He has promised... Eternal Life... His return to take me to the place He has been preparing for me and hope in His assurance that my life in Him, my salvation, is secure and eternal... and also in His love for me, that He loves me so much, He was willing to die for me to pay the full penalty for all my sin... a love which creates in us a love for Him and for each other.

He gives three invitations which are really three commands showing what is necessary for true salvation, all three of which begin with, 'Let us!' or, in other words... do it!

He says, 'Let us draw near to God in **faith**. Let us hold fast in **hope**. Let us **love** one another.' True salvation consists of coming to God in **faith**, holding on in **hope**... continuing in the faith and **loving** one another... loving other believers.

That is the proof of salvation for the first group of Hebrews whom we've referenced throughout our study... those who have heard the Gospel, believed the Gospel and have gone all the way to true saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work on the Cross.

If one hears the Gospel and draws near for awhile but never holds fast to God in faith... that is proof of our second group... the ones who have heard and even believed but have never truly come to salvation by faith.

If someone hears and believes, says he loves God and even stays around but doesn't love his fellow believers, John says in 1 John that he's a liar and not really born again.

So the writer is saying to his Hebrew readers and listeners, 'It's time to respond to the Gospel... now.'

Verse 19: 'Therefore, brethren, (in view of all I've told you) having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus,²⁰ by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh,²¹ and *having* a High Priest over the house of God...'

He is saying, *since Jesus Christ has opened the way for us to come to God, since He Himself removed the veil which separated us from God... since He removed our sin with His broken body and shed blood... now, because of what Jesus Christ has done, because of the New Covenant, now that He has removed our sin and made us perfect... we can come to God in full assurance... we can come boldly to the Throne of Grace. Now we are invited into the Holy of Holies where no Hebrew could ever go, except the High Priest, once a year on the Day of Atonement. Now Jesus Christ, as our Great High Priest has torn the veil which separated us from God and He has thrown open the way... He is the open door so that we now have free access to God forever. He is the door and His flesh was the Veil. As long as He was alive... there was still no access to God because our sin had separated us from God. When He died, when His flesh was torn apart on the Cross... the barrier of our sin was removed and He became our New and Living Way, He became our one and only access to God the Father.*

Many believe they have access to God because of the wonderful things they do or have done... Jews and Gentiles alike... they don't need to place their whole faith in Jesus Christ and what He has done in His finished work on the Cross. They are the ones of whom Jesus said, 'Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me...' Matt 7:22

Some of those will have great Jewish or Christian pedigrees. Some will have had great television ministries or been pastors of mega churches... many will be just regular people who thought they were good enough. They believe that 'justice' will prevail... God will weigh their good deeds against their bad deeds and He will be forced to invite them into Heaven since Christianity is all about justice... well isn't it?

He says that we are to come into God's presence with boldness because we know that our access is based on Jesus Christ and not on our own works of righteousness. We understand what the truth is... when we stand before God ***we will not receive Justice***... and therein lies our only hope... because Justice would demand that every one of us is condemned to eternity in Hell.

God's Justice was satisfied but it was not satisfied on us or by us... His Justice was satisfied on the Lord Jesus Christ as He was scourged and then hung on the Cross to die in our place. God's Wrath, which we deserved, was poured out on Him. Therefore, we are free... our debt has been fully paid... not cancelled... paid in full. Because Jesus Christ received our Justice, God can pour out on us His Love, Mercy and Grace.

'Therefore, having boldness, let us draw near in faith.'

Our access to God is now a new and living way... our only way is through Jesus Christ Who is our living High Priest Who was dead and is now alive forevermore. He will never die and we will never die. We have been given Eternal Life.

The old way was a way of death. Adam and Eve died... all the Old Testament Saints died... Jesus Christ kept the Old Way and He died for us that we wouldn't have to.

The day that Adam and Eve sinned, they died spiritually and began to die physically. God expelled them from the Garden so that they couldn't eat of the Tree of Life and live forever in their sinful state. Access to the Tree of Life was blocked by an angel with a flaming sword. Jesus Christ paid our debt of sin, opened the way for us and gave us Eternal Life. We don't need the God's Garden; we have become His gardens where He has planted His Holy Spirit and our Eternal Life. We don't need the Tree of Life and we don't need an angel's permission. We are Children of God, adopted sons and daughters of God Most High who will live forever, ruling and reigning with the Lord Jesus Christ throughout all eternity.

There will be no Justice for us... ever! Only Gods' Love, Grace and Mercy poured out on us forevermore.

Verse 22: 'let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith', having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Now that we have a new and living access to God, he says, let's go for it! Respond to the Gospel! You can be washed clean, completely forgiven forever.

He tells us to come with a true heart. This is the same as when God said, 'And you will seek Me and find *Me*, when you search for Me with your whole heart.' Jer 29:13 and, 'But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find *Him* if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.' Deut 4:29

This means coming to God while holding nothing back in our hearts... with full confidence when we understand that Jesus Christ really did pay the full penalty for all our sin, past, present and future... we are commanded to bring our whole heart... that means even when we are trying to hide sin in our hearts... God says, 'Come to Me, anytime, all the time... especially when you have sinned.' And when we do come to Him, especially when we've sinned, He puts within us the desire to not sin, to not have to come to Him in that way.

Verse 23: 'Let us hold fast the confession of our hope' without wavering, for He who promised *is* faithful.'

Our hope is built on Jesus Christ; He is faithful. We don't have to waver or fall back.

Our hope is in Jesus Christ and His righteousness... not in our own works.

Here's the mistake we so often make. We think we have to be good enough to be worthy of His Righteousness. Think about it... isn't that true? We think that if we have sinned, we can't come to Him until we 'get right.' We are never 'right' in our own right... are we silly enough to think that since we didn't commit an overt sin in the last 3 hours that we are somehow a little more worthy to come into God's presence? We're only right in Jesus' righteousness and then we're right all the time... no matter what... whether we sinned 5 seconds ago or we sinned 5 days ago.

Now... here's God's secret plan... the fact that He loves and accepts His children all the time causes us to then love Him because He loves us just as we are, even when we are sinning... which then causes us to want to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which we've been called, worthy of Him... in a manner that is pleasing to Him... to leave sin behind.

Paul wrote, 'For the love of Christ constrains us... that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.' 2 Cor 5:14 God loves us so much that we now feel compelled to want to live 'unto Him' and not 'unto ourselves.'

What did Jesus say of the woman who was washing His feet and drying them with her hair? He said that those who recognize how much they have been forgiven love much whereas those who believe they have little to be forgiven love little.

The writer is saying to his Hebrew readers... 'Hold on to the truth! Don't turn back to Judaism! Don't be dissuaded by persecution or trials... time is short. Either Jesus Christ will return soon or we will die physical death, but very soon each of us will stand before God. Don't give up! Hold fast the confession of your hope, in your eternal salvation from God. Never give up! Never turn back! Never let go! God loves you with an everlasting love. Therefore, since He has loved us so much...

Verse 24: And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, ²⁵ not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.'

The proof of our salvation is that we love each other, that we love other Christians. We have a responsibility to each other to encourage, strengthen, exhort and admonish one another but we can only do that as we are faithful to continue meeting together and being involved in each other's lives. One of the first signs of someone 'falling away,' of someone who has just been coming around but has not placed their full faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for Salvation, is that they don't have a continuing desire to be around other Christians... they decide they don't like coming to Church or they start finding more important things to do... sleeping, shopping, football... camping, fishing, skiing... Don't misunderstand... there is nothing wrong with family

vacations or getting away for the weekend... but when that happens, there should be a feeling inside that 'something isn't quite right... the weekend doesn't seem to have ended the way it should... something's missing... even if we don't always like coming to Church... it feels right to 'be at Church' and feels *not so right*, not to.'

We've all watched it happen, whether in our families or others... parents stop going to Church; eventually the children stop going to Church and finally the grandchildren have no experience at all regarding Church.

He's not talking about someone who occasionally has something they have to do... we are not bound to attending Church in a legal sense but we are bound by God's command to love each other and to purposefully enter into each other's lives however necessary, just as we would any other member of our family... especially as we recognize how short the time is... how soon the return of Jesus Christ really is.

Now he comes to his sternest warning yet to his Hebrew readers and listeners who have been straddling the fence... those who have heard the truth and even believed the truth of the Gospel but have not gone all the way to saving faith; they have not trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Messiah, believing that His death on the Cross paid the full penalty for all their sin, that they no longer needed the rituals and symbols of Judaism which are no longer of any effect, that now they can have full access to God Himself and be born again to Eternal Life. These are the ones who are in danger of turning back to Judaism because of persecution and rejection... and if they turn back after having heard, understood and even believed the truth... they are the ones who will have turned to apostasy. And it's not just Hebrews he is talking about; it's not just these Hebrews he is warning... anyone who turns away from the truth of the Gospel after they have heard, understood and even believed... and when that happens, the word says there is no more hope for that person. It's not that God refuses to accept them if they return, it's that they will never return; their hearts will have been hardened and their consciences will have been seared. Once they have fully rejected the truth, they will never return to the truth. They may continue coming to Church; as a matter of fact, Churches today are filled with genuine apostates; it was predicted to happen in these last days before the Rapture and the Tribulation.

Again... these are not people who have been born again and then lost their salvation. They had never truly placed their faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work on the Cross.

Here he is warning against forsaking the assembling together... it can lead to apostasy. When that happens...

Verse 26: 'For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷ but a *certain* fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.'

The sin he is talking about is the sin of turning away from the truth once it has been revealed to us... willfully turning from the truth. He is warning his readers about the danger of apostasy. Apostasy is the most serious sin in all of Scripture. Judas was an apostate. Apostasy is what he described back in chapter 2 when he wrote: 'Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away... how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?' Also in chapter 6 where he wrote: 'For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, ⁵ and have tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put *Him* to an open shame.'

He is warning of the willful turning of one's back on the truth... what one has known to be the truth... this is apostasy. An apostate doesn't necessarily stop going to Church. In fact, many either stay in Church or, more often, gravitate to a Church with false teachers where Paul says they gather around someone who will tickle their itching ears. Again, just like in chapters 2 and 6, he is not describing a true believer losing his salvation. He is describing the one who has heard the truth, understood the truth, even believed the truth but has never taken the final step of truly trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, in His finished work on the Cross, trusting that His sacrifice on the Cross paid the full penalty for all their sin... past, present and future, that nothing he could do or not do could ever accomplish his salvation. Salvation is not believing who Jesus is or

even believing what He has done... the Bible says that the demons believe. It is believing IN Jesus Christ... trusting IN Jesus Christ... that His sacrifice could be for ME and that it was for me. Judas is the best example of apostasy. He walked and talked with Jesus Christ for 3 1/2 years. He saw the miracles, he heard the truth but when it finally came down to real persecution, when Jesus Christ was going to be killed and possibly Judas and the others also... it was too much... he didn't trust Jesus Christ and what He had said... and he turned away... apostasy.

Paul warned the Thessalonians that in the last days apostasy would be widespread: 'Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, ² not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. ³ Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away (apostasy) comes first...' He is saying that the Day of the Rapture will not come until the 'falling away,' the **Great Apostasy**, comes first. The Great Apostasy is happening now all around us.

In chapter 6 he said that it was 'impossible' to renew to repentance one who has apostatized. Here he says that there no longer remains a sacrifice for their sins. He means if they have rejected the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross, which is the only sacrifice that is acceptable to God for our sin... then there is nothing left. If they go back to Judaism and the sacrifices of the old system... there is nothing there... once the New Covenant had come, once the perfect sacrifice had been made, once our Eternal High Priest had been installed into His Heavenly ministry in the true Tabernacle, the Throne Room of God in Heaven... there is nothing left for that person except **certain** fiery judgment and eternity in Hell. They are, like Judas, enemies of God... here he says, 'adversaries.' In fact, that is what Satan means... adversary.

The same is true today of those who have tried to come out of false Christian religious systems but then return: Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses and Catholics, among others. The persecution from friends, family and employers can be just too much; they decide that the cost is just too great, not realizing that the cost of apostasy is beyond anything they could ever imagine.

No one just falls into apostasy by mistake. It is the willful turning from the truth... perhaps because of persecution, perhaps because of sinful desires, perhaps from following after false teachers. We see apostasy all around us. People who grew up in the Church who have become too intelligent, they've decided, to fall for such fables any longer.

The writer told us there are three parts to our salvation: **Faith, Hope and Love**. **Faith**, 'Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith.' **Hope**, 'Let us hold fast the profession of our hope.' And **Love**, 'Let us consider one another to provoke unto love.' All three must be present for true conversion and salvation. If any is missing, it will lead to apostasy.

Verse 28: Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on *the testimony of two or three witnesses*. ²⁹ Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? ³⁰ For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The LORD will judge His people." ³¹ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Apostasy is the most serious sin in the Bible; it is the only unforgivable sin, it is blaspheming the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, all sins and blasphemes will be forgiven for the sons of men. But whoever blasphemes against the **Holy Spirit** will never be forgiven, but is guilty of an eternal sin. **He said this because they [the Pharisees] were saying, 'He has an evil spirit'.**" Mark 3:28

It wasn't that someone said, 'He has an evil spirit.' It was that the **Pharisees** had said it. They knew the truth of who Jesus Christ was but they chose to reject the truth. They knew all the prophecies and they knew exactly who He was but they chose to turn away from the truth. They made themselves enemies of God. Every apostate makes himself an enemy of God; he has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant a common thing and insulted God's Spirit of Grace.

Verse 32: 'But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: ³³ partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; ³⁴ for **you had compassion on me in my chains**, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven.'

Those whom the writer is warning had been in this assembly for some time; they had even stood with the believers through some form of persecution. Probably, the true believers in this group didn't even know that some in their gathering were not born again. They looked right and said the right things, they even did the right things but they had held back from truly coming to Jesus Christ in faith. They had never really **drawn near with a true heart**. They seemed to have held fast the confession of their hope and they had even been faithful to consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of themselves together; they kept coming around and they had stood with the believers in some persecution but they had never drawn near with a true heart in full assurance of faith and they were now in danger of going into full apostasy.

By the way, that line in verse 34, 'for you had compassion on me in my chains...' It sounds a lot like Paul, doesn't it. That's one of the clues that cause some to believe this letter was written by Paul but really, we don't know who wrote it and that's how God planned it.

Verse 35: 'Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. ³⁶ For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:

Hang in there... hardships and persecution here and now will not last forever; this part of life, here on Earth is only a moment. The promise is for eternity. The will of God is that you stand firm, that you hold on and persevere until He comes.

Verse 37: "For yet a little while,
And He who is coming will come and will not tarry.

³⁸ Now the just shall live by faith;
But if *anyone* draws back,
My soul has no pleasure in him."

³⁹ But we are not of those who **draw back to perdition**, but of those who **believe to the saving of the soul**.

The Lord Jesus Christ will return soon. This is written for us. Hold on, by faith; keep on waiting and expecting His return. But if anyone draws back... if anyone goes into apostasy, it will be an indication that he was never really born again in the first place and he will go to Hell. Those who hang on... it will be proof of the eternal life which God birthed within them at the moment they placed their faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for Salvation.