

**Let us Hold Fast the Confession of Our Hope
Hebrews 10:23**

On mother's day over the years I have very frequently done a message focused on mothers or on parenting. And I will do the same today but I will not be leaving the Book of Hebrews to do it.

As you remember the Book of Hebrews was written to a group of struggling Hebrew believers, living in Rome, who under a great persecution, were in danger of turning away from Christ and returning back to Judaism.

And how did the author of this book counter this danger? The author countered this danger by focusing on Christ's superiority.

He first of all focused on Christ's superiority to prophets, then to Moses, then to angels and finally he focused on the superiority of Christ's priesthood over all other priesthoods, which concluded with a section that emphasized Christ's superior sacrifice.

So now having just completed this section what did the author do next? The author based on Christ's superior priesthood as well as His superior sacrifice began to string together in **Hebrews 10:19-25** three different exhortations. These three exhortations not only served as a capstone for what he had just said about Christ's superior priesthood and His superior sacrifice but also, as a point of transition, from the former doctrinal emphasis of this epistle to a more practical emphasis.

So what was the first of these three exhortations? The first of these three exhortations was this: Let us draw near (Hebrews 10:19-22). So now let me read for you **Hebrews 10:19-22** and see if this is not so: **“Therefore brethren since we (In light of everything that was said to you in Hebrews 5:1-10:18 about Christ's superior priesthood and sacrifice) 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 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.”**

So what was the point of this exhortation? These readers were in danger of falling away from Christ and returning back to Judaism but this possibility did not have to become their reality. And why was this? It was because Christ the superior high priest, who had offered up His superior sacrifice, had made it possible for all those who had exercised faith in Christ to continuously draw near to God and to His throne of grace, to receive grace to help in the time of their need, based on a parallel passage in **Hebrews 4:16**.

MESSAGE

So assuming that these struggling Hebrews believers, who had just been exhorted to draw near to God, were now seeking to do that very thing, what would this author have specifically wanted them to seek God's grace for, in light of their current struggles?

The answer to this question can be found in the second exhortation. And this brings us to our message this morning. So what was the second exhortation? It was this:

Let us **hold fast** the confession of our hope (Hebrews 10:23). So let me now read for you **Hebrews 10:23** and see if this is not so. And what does it say? It says this, "**Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful...**" So what was the second exhortation? The second exhortation was this, "**Let us hold fast the confession of our hope.**"

So based on this exhortation, what would this author have wanted his readers to be seeking God's grace for, in light of their current struggles? He would have specifically wanted them to seek God's grace so that they, through God's grace, would be able to continue to hold fast to their confession, which he described in **verse 23** as the confession of their hope.

So let us now take a closer look at this exhortation and what is my hope for our study this morning as we do this? My hope is this: that before we leave this room this morning, that we will not only have a greater understanding of this exhortation but that we would also have a greater appreciation for why it would be so important for us to heed this exhortation as well.

So let us begin by considering the very first words of this **verse 23**. And what were the very first words? “**Let us hold fast...**” Obviously these readers, by these words, as well as ourselves by extension as the followers of Christ, are being exhorted “**to hold fast.**” But what does it mean, “**to hold fast?**”

The word translated "to hold fast" (KATECHO) means to **retain** by avoiding the relinquishing of something.

If I am holding this bible fast and I am purposing to hold it fast, it will not be pried from my hands easily, in fact I will be doing all that I can to keep it in my possession.

But this verse is not talking about "**holding fast**" an object, such as this bible, but rather it is talking about holding fast "**the confession of our hope.**" So what is this "**confession of our hope?**"

The word "confession" (HOMOLOGIA) literally means, "to say the same thing." So based on this understanding of the word as well as the context of Hebrews, I believe we can now determine what this author meant when he referred "**to the confession of our hope.**"

When people come to the place where they understand what God has said in His word about salvation, and when they are willing and able to confess their agreement with God about what He has said in His word about salvation, that confession becomes their confession of hope.

So if this confession or this agreement with God is based on what God has said about salvation in His word, what would we expect that every professing believer's confession of hope would consist of? I believe we would expect it to consist of the following:

They would be agreeing with God that they are sinners and in need of salvation. They would be agreeing with God that they are not in a position to save themselves. They would be agreeing with God that the only way for them to acquire salvation is through faith in His Son the Lord Jesus Christ, who through the efficaciousness of His atoning death or in other words through the effectiveness of His atoning death, has made it possible for them

to be saved by grace through faith, both in respect to time and eternity. So what is interesting about this list of various matters of agreement?

Now what is interesting about this list of the various matters of agreement is this: All of these matters of agreement, that I have just listed, that we would expect every professing believer's confession of hope to consist of, are all matters related to what we commonly refer to as the "**gospel of Christ.**" Therefore another way for us to look at this "**confession of hope**" would be this:

When the author referred "to the confession of our hope" he was referring to a believers profession of faith in the **Gospel of Christ.**

But now let me ask this question. Why would this author here in this verse have described a believers profession of faith in the Gospel of Christ as "**the confession of our hope**" rather than simply referring to it simply as "**our confession**" as he had already done in **Hebrews 3:1**? The answer is very simple.

He described a believer's profession of faith in the gospel of Christ as "the confession of our hope" rather than just simply as "our confession" because he wanted his readers to turn their **focus** from their sufferings to their future glory (Romans 8:18-25). So why would this author have encouraged them to do that? This is why:

If these readers would have chosen, in the midst of their present sufferings to hold fast to their confession of faith in this particular way or in other words if they had chosen in the midst of their present sufferings to focus on their future hope rather than on their sufferings, then their focus on their future hope would have acted like an anchor, anchoring them to their confession of faith in the gospel of Christ. Even if they had their property seized? Yes! Even if they were put in jail? Yes! Even in the most severe trials? Yes!

So can we be anchored to our confession in this very same way? Yes! Whatever our sufferings when we are in the midst of those sufferings, it will be important for us to focus not on our trials but on our future hope of one day entering the heavenly tabernacle and into the presence of Christ where we will remain with Him forever.

So why was it so important from this author's standpoint for his readers to be anchored to their confession of hope or in other words, their confession of faith in the gospel of Christ throughout the rest of their lives?

This is why it was so extremely important. For from the author's perspective, if these professing but struggling Hebrews believers did not continue to hold fast to their confession of hope or in other words their confession of faith in the gospel of Christ until the end, it would have meant that the faith they had confessed had never been truly genuine nor saving, for if it had been genuine and saving, this author believed that they would have continued to hold fast to their confession of hope in the gospel of Christ until the end.

So how do we know this would have been his perspective? Let me read for you **Hebrews 3:6**. And what does it say? It says this, "**But Christ was faithful as a Son over His house - whose we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.**"

And what does **Hebrews 3:14** say? It says this, "**For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end.**"

Clearly from this author's perspective if we have exercised genuine saving faith in the gospel of Christ we will continue to hold fast our confession to the very end of our lives. We will not let it go, no matter how greatly we suffer, no matter how long we suffer, for whatever reason. We will continue to hold fast. How could we not, for in respect to a true believer our faith in the gospel trumps all other things in respect to all other things that this world offers us.

So does this mean that we are responsible for our salvation? No! God is totally responsible for our salvation for though we may have been exhorted to hold fast to our confession, it is God who is holding fast to us.

Holding fast our confession firm until the end is the human side of eternal security. The Reformers called it "**the perseverance of the saints.**" Or in other words, holding fast our confession of faith firm until the end is not something that believers do to keep themselves saved, but it is evidence from the human perspective that one is saved.

So if sufferings come to us is that a bad thing? No, it is a good thing for it provides us the opportunity to demonstrate the genuineness of our faith for if we continue **"to hold fast to the confession of our hope"** even in the midst of our sufferings then what does it assure us and others as well? It assures us as well others that our professed faith is indeed genuine and saving thus assuring us that our future involves glory rather than judgment.

So is this exhortation **"to hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering"** an exhortation that we should be taking seriously? Absolutely! We had better. It was given to us for a reason. So if we are going to take this exhortation seriously how would we go about doing that?

If we are going to take this exhortation seriously, we must be seriously committed to nurturing and growing our faith for it is through faith that we are saved, that we are being saved, and will be saved (Ephesians 2:8-9).

What does what does **Ephesians 2:8-9** tell us? It tell us this, **"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God not works, so that no one may boast."** Salvation, whether that is past, present or future, is by grace through faith.

Therefore if we are going to take the exhortation of **Hebrews 10:23** seriously we must seriously commit ourselves to the nurturing and the growing of our faith.

And if we are seriously committed to nurturing and growing our faith then we must be committed to God's **word** for it is through our positive interaction with God's word that we are enabled to grow in our faith (Romans 10:17).

What does **Romans 10:17** tell us? It tells us this, **"Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God."** So if faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God and we are serious about nurturing and growing faith, what would this require of us? It would require us being committed to God's word for it is through our positive interaction with God's word that we are enabled to grow in our faith.

So if we are not willing to commit ourselves to positively interacting with God's word or in other words reading it, studying it, meditating on it and actively seeking to conform our lives to it. Then what else do we know to be true? If we are not willing to commit ourselves to this kind of positive interaction with God's word then we can also know that we are not committed to nurturing and growing our faith. And if we are not willing to nurture and grow our faith, then what else do we know is not true?

If we are not willing to commit ourselves to this kind of positive interaction with God's word then we can also know that we are not committed to holding fast the confession of our hope. And this would of course be very dangerous.

Not only for ourselves but also for are children. For if we as a parent are a professing believer, and if we fail to do what would be required for us in holding fast our so-called confession, it will be seen by our children.

And what could they very easily conclude? They could very easily conclude that our confession of hope in the Gospel of Christ is not all that important.

And what could be even worse than this would be that one day, under the onslaught of the world, the flesh, and the devil they might have the unfortunate experience of having to witness the complete falling away of their parent or parents.

This is not the way it should be for the children of professing believers. This is not what they should be witnessing.

Our children hopefully would rather be witnessing us as their parents doing everything they can **"to hold fast to their confession of hope."** Or in other words, that our children would be witnessing us as their parents doing everything we can to nurture and grow our faith through our constant striving to be positively interacting with God's word.

This is obviously a lot of pressure but let us not panic. And why is this? Let us continue on reading **verse 23** and what does it say? It says this, **"For He who promised is faithful."**

So why should we not panic? **"For He who promised is faithful."** God has promised that if we have exercised faith in Him, we will one day enter into God's heavenly tabernacle where we will forever from that day forward fellowship with Christ. This is God's promise to us. Wasn't this the point of the entire section of Hebrews from **Hebrews 5:1-10:18** concerning the superior priesthood and sacrifice of Christ? Yes, absolutely!

So can we count on God's promise to us? Yes! Let me read for you **Philippians 1:6, "For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus."**

Therefore if we have exercised faith in Christ would we expect God to make sure that we will continue to hold fast our confession of hope by the nurturing and the growing of our faith through our positive interaction with the word? Absolutely!

Why? Because as **Hebrews 10:23** tells us, **"For God is faithful"** and what does this mean? It means this,

Because God is faithful this means that once God starts His work in us He will not stop His work in us until His work in us is **completed** (Philippians 1:6). And this of course means that He will continually be stirring us up to nurture and grow our faith through our ongoing and positive interactions with His word.

CONCLUSION

So if our faith is genuine, this is exactly what are children will see and they will be blessed by that but if our faith is not genuine, this is not what they will see. And this of course would be terribly tragic.

So let us on this mother's day commit anew by the grace of God **"to hold fast to the confession of our hope"** no matter how great are sufferings might be, not only for our sake but also for our children's sake. So...

May God give us the grace to hold fast our confession so that when difficulties come into our lives we will not be tempted to **turn away** from Christ to someone or something other than Christ.