

Respond rightly to having a great priest (Hebrews 10:19–25)

Having established the truths of Christ's sacrifice and His priesthood, the author exhorts the readers (and himself) to specific action. God wants us to respond rightly to what we have in Christ.

I. The believer's "possessions" in Christ (10:19–21):

1. A "confidence": The believer's confidence is the freedom to enter into God's presence by the blood of Jesus. He has opened a new and living way, because He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. The incarnate Christ by His perfect obedience until death opened that way.
2. A "great priest": Jesus Christ, our high priest, represents believers before the Father. He is also over the house of God as Son (cf. 3:5), having divine, royal authority.

II. The believer's logical response (10:22–25):

1. *Draw near in faith (10:22).*
 - a. *The action required:* draw near to God. Access to God has been opened to find mercy and grace (cf. 4:16) and a refuge (Psalm 73), to pray making requests and offering praise, learning from His Word.
 - b. *The proper manner:* with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, that is, having a heart transformed and conformed to the spiritual reality by God as we trust Him and what He has done in Christ.
 - c. *The high-priestly connection:* having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. This is best understood as following the imagery of the Old Testament and the promises of God as expressed in Ezekiel 36:25–27. By His death Christ has cleansed us and given us a heart which wants to obey and can obey.
2. *Hold firm the confession of hope (10:23).*
 - a. *The action required:* hold to the hope we profess. There is still more for believers in the future than the full forgiveness we have now. Our hope is an anchor for the soul (6:19). It is a hope to which we have an allegiance, a hope including new bodies, no more tears, eternity in the presence of God, and more.
 - b. *The proper manner:* unswervingly, without wavering. Taking our sight off the future hope can cause us to waver and weaken our hold on that hope. Instead, don't get distracted by earthly preoccupations.
 - c. *The high-priestly connection:* He who promises is faithful. The blessings of the new covenant have been bought with the precious blood of Christ. He surely will graciously give us all other things (cf. Romans 8:32).
3. *Consider one another to provoke to love (10:24–25).*
 - a. *The action required:* consider one another in order to stir up love and good works. One main verb ("consider") governs verses 24–25 and obligates believers to get to know each other in a way that enables us to spur one another to love expressed in good deeds.
 - b. *The proper manner:* meeting together and encouraging one another. Expressed negatively, believers should not abandon interaction with other believers, as some do, but use their contact and knowledge of one another to properly comfort, encourage, exhort and counsel one another.
 - c. *The high-priestly connection:* the Day is approaching, that is, the time when the One who is over the house of God (v. 21) is coming. Encourage as difficulties increase, rehearse the hope that we have, and act wisely in light of the judgment even of believers before the judgment seat of Christ.

The blessings and the exhortations are addressed to those who are members of the family of God, a position which only is received by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Together, brothers and sisters in Christ are obligated to respond rightly to all which they have in Christ.

Questions for further thought and discussion:

- To what extent is the objective "confidence" of freedom to enter God's presence a subjective "confidence" which you have? How can it be strengthened?
- In what specific, practical ways can you draw near to God? How can you improve? What appears to be the concern of the author that we should keep in mind as we draw near to God?
- Evaluate the hopes which occupy your mind. Are they eternal or temporal, spiritual or earthly? What would help you strengthen hope, this anchor for the soul?
- Where would you place yourself on that continuum between the negative of not assembling with other believers and the positive of giving significant, relation-based encouragement to love expressed in good deeds? What would help you improve? What will you do about it?