

Faith Calls for Perseverance

Bible Background • Hebrews 10:19–31

Printed Text • Hebrews 10:19–31 | Devotional Reading • Romans 5:1–5

Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will: **KNOW** Jesus' sacrificial death opens the way to the presence of God; **FEEL** the importance of holding on to faith in Jesus; and **SHARE** our faith with others.

In Focus

Anthony and Angie dated for one year and had been friends for eight. One Saturday, Anthony met with Mr. Williams, Angie's father. Anthony said to him,

"May I have your permission to ask Angie to marry me? I love and respect your daughter and I want to make her my partner for life. She is my blessing from God. I can't imagine life without her."

Mr. Williams thought for a moment then smiled. "You have my permission, Anthony," he said. "Let's pray for your lives together."

One evening as Anthony and Angie walked through the park, Anthony knelt on one knee and proposed. Angie was speechless. As tears ran down her cheeks, she said, "I have made too many mistakes in my life. You can't truly love me, because I have not forgiven myself. I don't deserve a life with you. I love you, but I can't marry you!"

As Angie started to leave, Anthony said, "We all make mistakes, but God forgives us when we sincerely come to Him."

Through faith in Christ, our sins are forgiven and we have a new life. In today's lesson, we can develop a personal relationship with Jesus by faith and enter into the presence of God.

Keep In Mind

"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering;" (Hebrews 10:23, KJV)

Words You Should Know

A. Boldness (Hebrews 10:19) *parrhesia* (Gk.)—To have openness, frankness in speaking.

B. Faith (vv. 22, 23) *pistis* (Gk.)—Assurance; belief; a strong and welcome conviction or trust that Jesus is the Messiah.

Say It Correctly

Abihu. uh-BAHY-hyoo

Nadab. NAY-dab

KJV

Hebrews 10:19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,
20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;
21 And having an high priest over the house of God;
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.
23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)
24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:
25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.
26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,
27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.
28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:
29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?
30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.
31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

NLT

Hebrews 10:19 And so, dear brothers and sisters, we can boldly enter heaven's Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus.
20 By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place.
21 And since we have a great High Priest who rules over God's house,
22 let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ's blood to make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water.
23 Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise.
24 Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.
25 And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.
26 Dear friends, if we deliberately continue sinning after we have received knowledge of the truth, there is no longer any sacrifice that will cover these sins.
27 There is only the terrible expectation of God's judgment and the raging fire that will consume his enemies.
28 For anyone who refused to obey the law of Moses was put to death without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.
29 Just think how much worse the punishment will be for those who have trampled on the Son of God, and have treated the blood of the covenant, which made us holy, as if it were common and unholy, and have insulted and disdained the Holy Spirit who brings God's mercy to us.
30 For we know the one who said, "I will take revenge. I will pay them back." He also said, "The Lord will judge his own people."
31 It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

The People, Places, and Times

Holy of Holies. It was located in the innermost sanctuary of the temple. Separated from the other parts of the temple by a thick curtain, the Holy of Holies was specially associated with the presence of Yahweh, God. In the early years of the existence of the temple, the Holy of Holies contained the Ark of the Covenant, which represented God's presence with the people of Israel.

High Priest. He was the one in charge of the temple worship. It was a hereditary position based upon descent from Aaron. Normally, the high priest served for life. Only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies and only on the Day of Atonement.

Hebrews. Because there are references to religious sacrifices and ceremonies, the book of Hebrews was probably written before the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The name of the author is not given, but the person is a "brother" of Timothy (Hebrews 13:23). The setting for the book is a period when Jewish Christians underwent severe persecution from the Romans and Jews, both socially and physically. It's clear that the author was knowledgeable of the Old Testament because there are direct quotations from it as he argues the superiority of Jesus Christ and faith.

Background

Sacrifices were practiced from the earliest of times in the Old Testament. Sacrifices from the produce of the land and firstborn of the flock were offered by Cain and Abel; Noah built an altar and offered sacrifices after he left the ark. The Mosaic sacrifices were prior to Christ's ultimate sacrifice on the Cross. Animals were imperfect sacrifices that could not completely purify and atone for the sins of the people. If they could, they would have ceased. The annual sacrifice on the Day of Atonement was a visible reminder of the sins of humanity.

The writer expressed the importance and superiority of Christ's priesthood and the New Covenant to the Levitical priesthood and the Mosaic covenant. The Levitical high priest could only enter the Holy of Holies, which was the most holy place (inner sanctuary of the temple) one day a year, the Day of Atonement, the 10th day of the seventh month of the Jewish calendar (September-October). On the Day of Atonement, the high priest made reconciling sacrifices for the sins of the entire nation. The images that the writer revealed about the Day of Atonement emphasize the superiority of the priesthood of Christ.

In Chapter 9 of Hebrews, the writer explained that the diatheke—the Greek word for agreement, covenant, or arrangement—was placed into effect when Christ died (Hebrews 9:11–12, 24–28). The new covenant, which was initiated when Christ died, frees believers from the bondage of the first covenant. God took away the Levitical sacrificial system, which was the first arrangement when He established the perfect sacrifice—Jesus Christ.

At-A-Glance

1. The Priesthood of Christ Is Superior (Hebrews 10:19–21)
2. The Priesthood of Christ and Our Profession of Faith (vv. 22–25)
3. The Priesthood of Christ and Knowledge of the Truth (vv. 26–27)
4. The Priesthood of Christ and How God Will Judge His People (vv. 28–31)

In Depth

1. The Priesthood of Christ Is Superior (Hebrews 10:19–21)

In chapters 5 through 10 of the book of Hebrews, the writer has explained that the priesthood of Christ is superior to the Levitical priesthood, which was made at Mount Sinai. The Levitical priesthood could not bring the people to perfection. There was no permanent reconciliation between the people and God through the temporary animal sacrifices. The people needed the perfect sacrifice, Jesus Christ, who gave His life once to restore the people to a relationship with God. The Levitical high priests atoned for all sins of the people on the Day of Atonement. Every year, the high priest entered the Holy of Holies where he made a sacrifice for the nation's sins. A curtain prevented anyone from seeing the inner sanctuary. When Jesus died for the sins of humanity, the curtain was torn open, permitting anyone to enter the holiest of all—God's presence. The high priest was no longer required for believers to be forgiven. By a "new and living way" (Hebrews 10:20), believers can go directly to God through faith in Christ.

During biblical times, the high priest passed through a veil to enter the inner sanctuary where God's presence existed. Because of Christ's sacrificial death on the Cross, believers can now personally come before God. Christ shed His blood to give humanity the ability to come before God's presence by faith. Our High Priest is Jesus Christ, who experienced the pain, temptations, and trials that we experience as believers. By the righteousness of Christ, the Superior Priest, we can approach God with "boldness ... by the blood of Jesus" (Hebrews 10:19). Through the shed blood of Christ, we can come before our Creator by faith. Have you accepted Christ by faith and experienced a relationship with God that is only available through Christ, the Superior Priest?

2. The Priesthood of Christ and Our Profession of Faith (vv. 22–25)

Through Christ, we can freely enter into the presence of God. Through faith in Christ's work on our behalf, we have "full assurance," or certainty, that our sins are forgiven. There is an allusion to Christian baptism when the writer refers to "our hearts sprinkled" and "bodies washed with pure water" (Hebrews 10:22). Because of the eternal efficacy of the blood of Christ, our consciences are cleansed. When the high priest entered the "holy place . . . He shall put on the holy linen coat ... the linen breeches ... a linen girdle ... these are holy garments" and he must be cleansed; therefore "shall he wash his flesh in water" (Leviticus 16:3-4). Likewise, the believer must be cleansed before he or she can come before the Holy One. While we are declared "not guilty" because of the work of Christ, we need to cleanse ourselves daily by turning away from sin and turning to God to experience the fullness of relationship with Him. We must give ourselves completely to God and maintain a personal relationship with Jesus.

The writer encourages believers to "hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering" (Hebrews 10:23). God reveals His promises and truths through His Word; thus, we must embrace God's Word and resist temptation and opposition. His promises are our treasures that we believe with a confident expectation. The foundation of our faith, therefore, is based upon the integrity and righteousness of Christ. We have hope because "God is faithful" (1 Corinthians 1:9). Although the Jewish Christians were experiencing persecution, the writer urges the believers to resist the temptation to apostasy. He wants to reassure the believers by calling them to remember, "He (God) is faithful that promised"; God will do what He has promised (Hebrews 10:23).

The writer instructs the believers to "consider"—which means to observe or contemplate—each other (Hebrews 10:24). Believers must provoke or stir up the qualities of love and good works toward each

other (Hebrews 10:24). The writer knew believers could have an impact on one another by loving and doing good deeds for each other.

Because of the fear of persecution, some of the believers had stopped attending worship services; therefore, the writer encourages believers to pull together to stir up loving and active faith. The fellowship of believers is a source of encouragement; it is an opportunity to share faith and grow stronger. The writer urged the believers to get involved in encouraging or “exhorting one another” with the truth (Hebrews 10:25). The fellowship of believers promotes accountability; it is the opportunity to worship and pray with others. As you fellowship with the body of believers, encourage someone today!

3. The Priesthood of Christ and Knowledge of the Truth (vv. 26–27)

The writer of Hebrews reminds believers that if they “sin willfully” they deliberately reject Christ (Hebrews 10:26). It is a conscious rejection of God after receiving the truth and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The writer does not refer to an occasional act of sin. God sent Jesus to die for our sins; “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). Believers should not willfully rebel against God’s provisions after receiving and fully understanding the “knowledge of the truth,” which is Christ’s offer of salvation (Hebrews 10:26).

The consequences of rejecting God are “judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries,” and there is no hope of forgiveness (Hebrews 10:27). Thus, those who reject Christ and disobey God are His adversaries. There is one certain judgment, death and destruction, for obstinate apostates. The apostates will experience the wrath of God because there is no other help for sinners who reject their only remedy—salvation through accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

4. The Priesthood of Christ and How God Will Judge His People (vv. 28–31)

The Old Testament refers to the sin of idolatry that requires “two witnesses, or three witnesses ... (to) be put to death” (Deuteronomy 17:6). The judgment for idolatry was death by stoning, but there is a worse punishment for someone who rejects the word of Christ. If someone considers the “blood of the covenant ... an unholy thing,” the person grieves the “Spirit of grace,” the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 10:29). The person that rejects the Spirit of God will receive a punishment greater than a physical death.

Judgment belongs to God for “the LORD shall judge his people” (Deuteronomy 32:36). There is no other sacrifice for sin except Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross. If someone rejects God’s mercy, he or she will receive God’s judgment. The writer of Hebrews states, “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:31). The apostate will experience an eternal punishment from God’s hands. Believers, who have received the mercy of God through Christ, are saved and have nothing to fear.

Search the Scriptures

1. What is the “Holy of Holies” (Hebrews 10:19)?
2. What is the “new and living way” that Jesus has prepared for believers to come into the presence of God (Hebrews 10:20)?
3. Explain the difference between a “willful sin” and an “occasional sin.” (Refer to the “knowledge of the truth” and the effects of deliberately rejecting “the truth” that are discussed in Hebrews 10:26.)?

Discuss the Meaning

1. How can we draw near and remain in the presence of God each day? How can we truly experience God's presence?
2. When we accept Christ, He responds, "henceforth, I call you not servants ... I have called you friends" (John 15:15). What should be our response to Christ as believers? Does your relationship with Christ reveal that He is your friend?

Liberating Lesson

Faith is effective when we depend on God and rest in what Christ has done on the Cross. The writer of Hebrews urged believers to recognize the superiority of our faith and live in obedience to God each day. Through Christ, we have an eternal reward and significant privileges that we can experience through our new life in Christ. Through Christ, we can experience God's presence and develop a relationship with Him. We can grow in faith and experience a deeper relationship with God when we trust and believe without doubts and concerns that the world presents. The world is temporary, but our life with God is eternal. Each day we must trust God and hold on to our faith and then share our faith with others. When we share our love for God, we can encourage others and introduce them to a new life through Christ.

Application for Activation

The world focuses on tangible rewards, promotions, and recognition with financial bonuses. The world encourages the pursuit of tangible endeavors and earthly wealth with retirement plans focused on life in the world. Retirement plans can be important, but as Christians, our focus is greater. Because we have accepted Christ by faith, we are friends of Christ with a purpose to share our love for Christ through faith. Consider local ministries that allow you to share your faith in God. Volunteer your time to share your love for God with people who do not know Him or share your faith and encourage believers who are homebound or sick. Help others to remain faithful and experience the presence of God each day. Make a daily affirmation to share your faith. Finally, ask God for boldness to share your faith with others. God will give you the opportunity and bless your desire to be faithful.

Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

More Light on the Text

Hebrews 10:19–31

**19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,
20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;**

The writer of Hebrews has now concluded the doctrinal section of his epistle and has fully shown the superiority of Christ in all areas. He is superior to all men and angels; His priesthood is superior to that of Aaron and his successors. His blood, unlike that of the animal sacrifices, is efficacious in reconciliation of humankind to God. In the following verses, the writer of the epistle proceeds to show the practical implications of his teachings. This is an allusion to the case of the high priest going into the Holy of Holies. He went with fear and trembling, because, if he had neglected the smallest item prescribed by the Law, he could expect nothing but death. Nadab and Abihu died while offering incense (Leviticus 10:2), and it had become the custom for the High Priest not to linger in the Most Holy Place on the Day of Atonement, lest people be terrified. But Christians can approach God confidently, completely at home in the situation created by Christ's saving work. We now enter "the Most Holy Place" (Hebrews 10:19, NLT), which is no physical sanctuary but is, in truth, the presence of God "by the blood of Jesus" (v. 19, KJV), that is, on the basis of His saving death. We can come even to the throne of God with confidence, as we carry into the divine presence the infinitely meritorious blood of the atonement.

"By a new and living way" (v. 20): It is a new way because the death of Jesus on the Cross has created a completely new situation. The way by the old covenant neither gave life nor removed the liability to death. The way to peace and reconciliation, under the Old Covenant, was through the dead bodies of the animals slain; but Christ is living, and ever lives, to make intercession for us. Therefore, He is a new and living way.

"Through the veil" (v. 20): The High Priest lifted up or drew aside the veil that separated the holy from the Most Holy Place that he might have access to the Divine Majesty, and the veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom at the crucifixion of Christ to show that the way to the holiest was then laid open. Likewise, we must approach the throne through the mediation of Christ and through His sacrificial death. His pierced side is the way to the holiest. Here, the veil—His humanity—is rent, and the kingdom of heaven opened to all believers.

21 And having an high priest over the house of God; The function of the priest was to build a bridge between humanity and God. This means that Jesus not only shows us the way to God, but also when we get there, He introduces us to His very presence. The house or family of God is the Christian Church, or all true believers in the Lord Jesus.

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.

The consideration of what Christ has done should move Christians into action. First, we are to draw near to God "with a true heart." The word "true" suggests what is genuine, sincere, and faithful. The heart stands for the whole of the inner life of humanity, and it is important that as God's people approach Him, they be right inwardly. It is the "pure in heart" that see God (Matthew 5:8). All hypocrisy must go; this includes pretending to be what we are not or using Christian vocabulary when we are actually in a place of defeat. In view of what Christ has done for us, we should approach God in deep sincerity. The "full assurance of faith" stresses that it is only by trust in Christ, who has performed for us the high priestly work that gives access to God, that we can draw near at all (Hebrews 10:22).

The references to the sprinkled hearts and the washed bodies should be taken together. The washing of the body with pure water is a reference to baptism. Baptism is the outward sign of an inward cleansing, and it was the latter that was the more important. So here it is mentioned first. The sprinkling of the hearts signifies the effect of the blood of Christ on the innermost being. His shed blood cleanses believers within (see the sprinkling of the priests, Exodus 29:21; Leviticus 8:30).

23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)

The second exhortation is to hold fast to the profession of faith. The verb translated here as “hold fast” (Gk. *katecho*, *kat-EKH-o*) has been previously used by the author for the readers to “hold fast” to their confidence and their glorying in hope (Hebrews 3:6) and the beginning of their confidence (3:14). Now, he wants them to retain a firm grasp on “the confession of our hope” (10:23, NKJV). Christians can hold fast to their hope in this way because behind it is a God in whom they can have full confidence. As Luke Timothy Johnson states, “Holding to the confession is not a matter of grim determination, but of active and mutual commitment and up-building” (Johnson, 259). God is thoroughly dependable. When He makes a promise, it will infallibly be kept. He has taken the initiative in making the promise, and He will fulfill His purposes in making it. He who cannot lie promises the eternal life to you that is the object of your hope. As He who has given you this promise then is faithful, hold fast the profession of your hope.

24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

This is the only place where the author uses the expression “one another” (Gk. *allelon*, *al-LAY-lone*), though it is frequently found elsewhere in the New Testament. He is speaking of a mutual activity, one in which believers encourage one another, not one where leaders direct the rest as to what they are to do. Our danger is that we become so involved in this world that we forget the other. The word “provoke” is actually a noun (Gk. *paroxusmos*, *par-ox-oos-MOS*) that is often used negatively as causing “irritation” or “exasperation.” It is used here in a positive sense to suggest “urging” or “stimulation.” Christians are to provoke one another to “love” (*agape*), and to do good works. Corporate worship is important. We must worship together with other believers. There were some among those in the audience of the author of Hebrews who had abandoned the habit of meeting together. There may be some who think it is still possible to live the Christian life while abandoning the habit of worshiping with God’s people. This should not be the case. Donald Guthrie notes, “The New Testament lends no support to the idea of lone Christians. Close and regular fellowship with other believers is not just a nice idea but also an absolute necessity for the encouragement of Christian values” (Guthrie, 216). The exhortation takes on a sense of urgency “as ye see the day approaching” (v. 25). The “day” here has eschatological overtones that derive from the Old Testament prophetic tradition that spoke of a day in which God would judge (Joel 1:15; 3:14; Amos 5:18–20), a tradition that is maintained in the New Testament (1 Corinthians 1:8; 5:5; 1 Thessalonians 5:2). The day of the Second Coming is approaching; when things as we know them will end. The early Christians lived in that expectation. So must we. In the time we have, it is our duty to do all the good we can to all the people we can in all the ways we can.

26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

It is clear that the writer has apostasy in mind. He is referring to people who “have received the knowledge of the truth” (Hebrews 10:26), where “truth” (Gk. *aletheia*, al-AY- thi-a) stands for “the content of Christianity as the absolute truth” as it frequently does in the New Testament. Receiving the knowledge of truth means entering into the community that is defined by the true God; in Hebrews, the comparison is often with the people of Israel where we find those in the community who turn away from the covenant through unbelief or idolatry. The people to whom the epistle was written, then, know what God has done in Christ. Their acquaintance with Christian teaching is more than superficial. Israel was well acquainted with God and His covenant. If, knowing this, they revert to an attitude of rejection—of “sin(ning)” or continual sin (Gk. *hamartano*, ham-ar-TAN-o, meaning “keep on sinning”)— then there remains no sacrifice for sins. An important word here is “willfully” (Gk. *hekousios*, hek-oo-SEE-ose), which can be translated as deliberately. It suggests that their action is voluntary. Such people have rejected the sacrifice of Christ.

The sin that is freely chosen couldn't be considered as a minor transgression, but apostasy, a deliberate turning away. “Only a fearful expectation of judgment” awaits such people (v. 27, NIV). The nature of this expectation is not defined, and the fact that the fate of these evil persons is left indefinite makes the warning all the more impressive. The Greek adjective *phoberos* (fob-er-OS), meaning “fearful” is unusual; it occurs elsewhere only in verse 31 and 12:21 and conveys the idea of “frightening.”

In Hebrews 10:27, the NIV text describes it as “raging fire,” an echo of Isaiah 26:11, which is a vivid expression for the fire of judgment that is intent on devouring God's adversaries. In Hebrews 10:27, the word “adversaries” (Gk. *hupenantios*, hoop-en-an-TEE-oos) shows that the apostates were not regarded as neutral. They have become the enemies of God.

28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:

29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

Jews held the Law of Moses to be divinely given: Anyone who rejected it also rejected God's direction and was killed without compassion. There was no place for mercy. They must be executed (Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15). The author of Hebrews invites the audience to work out for themselves the worst punishment someone would deserve for rejecting the gift of God in Christ. Because Jesus is greater than Moses, it must be more severe than the old way (Hebrews 3:1–3); the new covenant is better than the old, founded on better promises (8:6) and established by a better sacrifice (9:23).

The grievousness we experience when we “deliberately continue sinning” (10:26, NLT) is elaborated in three ways of 10:29. First, such a person has “trampled underfoot the Son of God” (NASB). The verb “trampled” is found in the NASB (Gk. *katapateo*, ka-ta-pa-TEH-o), used with a personal object. “Trampled underfoot” is a strong expression for disdain. It implies not only rejecting Christ but also despising Him. This is more than falling from grace; it is a mockery of the giver of grace.

Another characterization of the apostate is that the person takes the shedding of covenant blood lightly. “The blood of the covenant” is an expression used for the blood that established the old covenant (Exodus 24:8; see Hebrews 9:20) and also of the blood of Jesus that established the new covenant (Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24; see also Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25). The apostate states that blood is “a common thing” (Hebrews 10:29, NKJV). That is to say he treats the death of Jesus just like the death of any other man. The word “common” can also be understood as against the holy or “unhallowed.” This stands out more sharply with the understanding that this blood has “sanctified”

him. To go back on this decisive act is to deny the significance of the blood, to see it as a common thing.

The third indictment of the apostate is that he or she has done this spitefully or has “insulted the Spirit of grace” (v. 29, NIV). In the Greek, the writer’s word for “insulted” is enubrizo (en-oo-BRID-zo), an intensified form of hubris (HOO-bris), which means to reduce the honor that is due to another person. Willful sin is an insult to the Spirit, who brings the grace of God to humanity.

30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.

The author calls God “him that hath said.” He uses the Greek word for “said” (epo, EP-o) six times, four with quotations from Scripture. He is sure that God speaks to people. The author’s first quotation here is from Deuteronomy 32:35. Vengeance is a divine prerogative. The emphasis here is on the certainty that the Lord will act. The wrongdoer cannot hope to go unpunished because avenging wrong is in the hands of God. The second quotation from Deuteronomy 32:36 leaves no doubt about the Lord’s intervention, for He is named and so is His activity. The word “judge” in Hebrews 10:30 may mean “give a favorable judgment” as well as “condemn.” The latter is intended here. Claiming to be one of God’s people does not exempt a person from judgment. God judges all. Let not the apostates think that they, of all people, can escape.

31 It’s a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

A simple statement carries a chilling effect. “Falling into the hands” of someone means to come under their power (Judges 15:18). Usually “falling into (God’s) hands” means reassurance, but not in this context. To fall into the hands of God is to fall under His displeasure, and He who lives forever can punish forever. How dreadful to have the displeasure of an eternal, Almighty God to rest on the soul forever! Apostates and all the persecutors and enemies of God’s cause and people may expect the heaviest judgments of an incensed deity; and these are not for a time but through eternity.

Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY

A Great Faith
(Matthew 8:5–13)

TUESDAY

A Saving Faith
(Romans 10:8–17)

WEDNESDAY

A Justifying Faith
(Galatians 2:15–21)

THURSDAY

An Examined Faith
(2 Corinthians 13:5–10)

FRIDAY

An Enduring Faith
(Romans 5:1–5)

SATURDAY

An Exemplary Faith
(1 Thessalonians 1:2–10)

SUNDAY

The Full Assurance of Faith
(Hebrews 10:19–31)