Judgment You Cannot Escape — Delivery Transcript

Hebrews 10:26–39 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, April 6, 2025 · *Neglecting Salvation*

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If you have your Bible, you can open it to the book of Hebrews. We're going to be in Hebrews chapter 10 this morning. And as you're turning there, a lot of the things that we talked about during our worship through song about the Lord Jesus and about better life that he creates and things of that nature reminded me of those times in my life where I had committed myself disciplined myself to be really wise in what I put into my body in terms of the food that I ate really disciplined to go to the gym to work out lift weights run cardio and those things and the incredible feeling that it created in my body and in my mind.

It just felt like everything is awesome, you know, when you're doing things the right way. Has anybody ever kind of felt that feeling when you're doing what you're supposed to be doing? If you haven't... A couple of you have, okay, thank you for those of you. The rest of you don't have any idea what you're missing. But here's what happens to me. Over a period of time, it's not always weeks or anything like that. Sometimes I can go for a good year or so living in that way. But over a period of time.

Because of life, struggles, suffering, good things, bad things, you just kind of check out and you begin to drift and you stop. Being so careful in what you eat, you stop being so disciplined and going to the gym, you start to put things in your body that are, you know, just poisonous and you know better but it just tastes so good. And then your palate changes, your gut biome transforms, and then you find yourself doing the things that you used to do and feeling miserable. Does anybody know what that is like?

Way more hands going up in the air, that's what I thought. Well, what happens physically is similar to what's happening spiritually in the book of Hebrews. We've been looking at these warning passages in Hebrews over the last four or five weeks. And these warning passages are basically aimed to a group of Christians who had been doing really well in terms of their

growth in the Lord in terms of their theology and what they believed was necessary to be right in their relationship with God and to grow.

In the thing that God was wanting to do in and through their life. And they had begun to drift back into old ways of thinking, old patterns of living and worshiping and these old lifestyle habits were going to end up destroying them spiritually and inviting God's discipline and judgment on their life. And so he basically writes to them and says, stop it. Cut it out. Now Hebrews is essentially a written sermon and like any good sermon there's a little teaching time and then there's some encouragement or exhortation time. Our church has been looking at the warning passages, which is the encouragement time, but it all builds on or rests on this teaching portion in the book of Hebrews.

And the teaching portion, whether it's at the beginning, middle, or end, is basically making one big argument, which is Jesus is better. Jesus is better than what came before. You are drifting. He would say y'all are drifting back into what was before. You're drifting back into the shadow when you have the substance that is in Jesus. You're drifting back to an inferior solution when you have a superior solution in Jesus. Therefore, keep believing. Now chapter one was about Jesus speaking a better word, chapter three was about Jesus doing a better work, creating a better freedom.

Chapter four was about Jesus giving a better rest. Chapter six was about Jesus doing a... I can't remember what chapter six is about. Basically the same thing as chapter two they work as a kind of a chiasm. But when you get to Hebrews chapter seven, eight, and nine, he has this extended, long, kind of confusing, theologically dense section about Jesus as a greater priest. Now, Skylar read it at the beginning of our worship service, and I was just kind of wondering if and for those of you who don't read the Bible very often or maybe you're totally new to Christianity, a lot of the things that he says in those verses can go right over your head because we're not steeped in Old Testament Judaism.

And for some of us we're not steeped in a biblical background whatsoever. But that is essentially what he's talking about in Hebrews chapter 10, and you've got to kind of understand that if you're going to understand. So I want to read those verses again starting in verse 19. Therefore brothers and sisters, since we have boldness to enter the sanctuary through the blood of Jesus, he's inaugurated for us a new and living way through the curtain, that is through his flesh. And since we have a great high priest over the house of God.

Now anytime you see like parentheses like this in the Bible, actually it's like a dash in a parentheses, that's a double, double, double. It's usually pretty important. And again, if you're not used to the Old Testament language, a lot of this just goes right over your head. When he says enter the sanctuary, he's not talking about like what we're in right now. A sanctuary with a stage and projectors. The word sanctuary for them would have created an

image in their mind of what's called the Old Testament tabernacle. This was what the tabernacle looked like when they were walking around in the wilderness.

A version of this got created in the actual temple of Solomon or Herod, depending. If you'll go back to that tabernacle for just a second. When he says sanctuary, that's what he means. And when he says we have confidence to enter the sanctuary, he's talking about this particular part right here. Which was separated by this curtain, number three, it would go all the way across, and it would separate what was called the Holy of Holies from everywhere else in the church service. And the only person who could ever go into that room was the high priest, and that only once a year, after a lot of rigmarole trying to make himself holy and righteous, so that he could be in the presence of God.

And what the author of Hebrews is saying is that Jesus has torn that curtain down through this new thing that he has done. And he has done it through his flesh. Back in the Old Testament, they would come out here and they would offer sacrifices on this little altar. They'd offer sacrifices right here on the mercy seat. They would sprinkle the blood of the sacrificed animal on the offering. And he's saying Jesus has replaced those old sacrifices. And because Jesus is a better priest, and because Jesus has made a better offering.

We have a new and living way in him that is superior to what came before. And so he says, in light of those things, here's what I want you to do. Three things. Number one, I want you to draw near. With a true heart and full assurance of faith, in other words, you don't have to be scared of God consuming you in his wrath because Jesus has reconciled you to him. So come with assurance, draw near and worship, your hearts are sprinkled clean from an evil conscience.

That used to happen through the blood of the sacrifice on the seat of atonement. Now Jesus has sprinkled you clean through his death on the cross. Your bodies are washed in pure water, unlike the ritual washings in the temple that had like water basins. You can have a new relationship with God. You can have courage and boldness in your worship of God. And so hold on to that confession of hope. Hold on without wavering. Don't slip back. Don't get tempted because of the pressure of your friends and family who say they're not going to invite you to Christmas, probably not Christmas.

They're not going to invite you to the day of atonement celebration anymore or any of those things. Don't let that pressure you to go back into Judaism. Hold on without wavering and consider one another in order to provoke love and good works, stop neglecting the gathering. Because you had Christians there who were stopped. They had stopped going to church. They had stopped worshiping the Lord through the Lord Jesus Christ because they were getting persecuted. They were feeling the pressure of their Christian convictions, and they were essentially saying I can't take it anymore, so maybe I'm just going to go back to what I used to believe.

I won't even fully reject what Jesus has done. I'll do a little bit of Jesus and a little bit of what came before so that I can just get rid of all of this pressure and heat. And the author of Hebrews is saying, don't do that. Draw near, don't stop drawing near, don't stop meeting together, and don't let go of your confession. If you do, he says, there is a punishment, there is a judgment. That's what the warning is, and that's our text this morning. If, verse 26, if we deliberately go on sinning, in other words, it's high-handed, it's continual.

After receiving the knowledge of the truth, then there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins. But instead, there remains a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire about to consume the adversaries. Anyone, he appeals to the Old Testament now, Leviticus 17, or Deuteronomy 17, said that anyone who disregarded the law of Moses, they died without mercy, based on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment do you think one will deserve who's trampled the Son of God, who's regarded as profane or common the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and who has insulted the spirit of grace.

For we know the one who has said, vengeance belongs to me, I will repay, talking about the Lord. And again the Lord says the Lord will judge his people. It is a terrifying thing, therefore, to fall into the hands of the living God. Have any of you guys ever heard of Jonathan Edwards, old-school Puritan back in the 1700s? Believe it was 1741, July 8th, 1741. That he preached a sermon that was a spark of a match that lit the First Great Awakening in the United States of America and the sermon's title was Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.

Anybody ever heard of that sermon before? A couple of you had. The reason I think that sermon was so effective is because there was a cultural religion that had become established in America at that time. That was pretty much characterized by Calvinistic Puritanism, which nothing wrong with Calvinistic Puritanism per se. But it had become a cultural religion where people professed faith in Jesus, but didn't actually possess a relationship with Jesus. And so their lives were not characterized by genuine trust in the Lord. It was just kind of characterized by this verbal saying of that, but not living it in their day-to-day life.

And there was a lot of preaching on God's love and God's kindness and the grace of God and the gospel. And those are good messages. They're biblical truths. Wonderful to say. But when Edwards came along and said, the God that we worship that is full of love and mercy and grace is also necessarily a God of wrath and a God of judgment. And if you keep swinging back and forth over his wrath and judgment without a care in the world because you don't care how you live your life. You are taking your life in your own hands, and should you fall into the hands of that angry God, you would be consumed by his judgment because the life you live is not characterized by a life of true saving faith.

And that warning woke a lot of people up who were just kind of coasting in their relationship with God, and it sparked a revival in the United States of America. And we you know praise God for that. I think there's a similar dynamic at work in the culture today. There is a cultural religion, especially in Abilene, Texas, the Bible Belt of America. There are many people who profess faith in Jesus Christ. Anytime I'll go door to door and talk to people and I say, yeah, I'm a pastor of Broadview Baptist Church in Abilene, Texas.

Almost everybody has an uncle, a brother, or a father who's a Baptist preacher and they like claim that as like their ticket to heaven. And or they go to Beltway, they're members of Beltway Park, every other person I've ever met in Abilene is a member of Beltway Park, no trash on Beltway at all. But there is just this "I have that. I've taken care of that." The reality is, though, there is a lifestyle for many people that though they profess faith in Jesus, they live as though they don't have a genuine relationship with Jesus or a life that is characterized by genuine surrender to Jesus and his demands on their life.

And when you preach the love of God, it's a wonderful thing. You should preach the love of God. God is steadfast in his love. He is abounding in mercy and grace. But my point this morning is, and the point of the author of Hebrews, is you cannot have a God of love without a God of... You cannot have a God of love and that love not necessarily make him into a God of vengeance because love and wrath are just two sides of the same coin. That's why God gets angry. God's anger is just love in motion.

That's my favorite definition of anger. Anger is love in motion. And what happens. Is that love expresses itself in anger when it needs to protect the beloved from a threat to its welfare? The best example of this is mama bear. Anybody ever met a mama bear? I'm not talking about a literal bear. I'm talking about a lady who seems nice and sweet and kind and then boom turns into a monster vampire who can tear your head off and not apologize, type of motherly love. Motherly love sometimes expresses itself in mama bear mode, and when mama bear comes out, you better get out of the way because you are threatening the beloved.

And if you threaten my beloved, I will destroy you. It's not because she's an angry person necessarily, it's because she's characterized by deep, deep love for her child. And when you threaten the welfare of that child, you will see her wrath. And the same is true of God, except God is unlike mama bears because mama bears are all sinful, because we're all sinful and our expression of anger is not always perfect. God is holy. He is perfect in all of his ways. And he's also a unity, so God doesn't have mood swings where he gets angry and not angry.

No, he's always loving and always full of wrath at the same time simultaneously, and he expresses that wrath. So if you find yourself on the other side of that love, in other words, you're not the object of his love, but you are threatening the thing that he loves, then you will experience his wrath. And they will consume you like a furious fire is the language of

Hebrews. Fire is interesting because fire can warm you up and be a blessing in your life if you're far enough away and you can benefit from the heat.

But if you get too close to the fire or if you're in the wrong position, then the fire will consume you and destroy your life. And he's saying that's how the Lord is. Lord is like a fire. And you can be the object of his love and benefit from it and be healed and restored, or you can be consumed by it, and it depends on where you stand. So the question we need to ask ourselves this morning is when does God's love become vengeance? Because I don't want to experience that expression of his love.

And the answer to that question, according to Hebrews 10, is when no sacrifice for sin remains. Let's read it again in verse 27. If we deliberately go on sinning after receiving the knowledge of the truth, then there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins. Instead, you got the fire, terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of fire about to consume the enemies. So if you're taking notes, God's love becomes vengeance when no sacrifice for sin remains. And the word vengeance, we think of it like getting revenge on someone else who hurts you.

And I guess that's a fine definition of the term vengeance, but that's not what the word technically means. The word vengeance comes from the Latin word vindicare, which is where we get the English word vindicate or vindication. And when God exercises vengeance, he does it in that way because his love is a holy love. So he vindicates, or another way to say it is, he makes it right. He takes things that are wrong and he makes them right. Because he's a God of love. And sometimes in making things just and right, he has to consume an adversary.

He has to burn them up. He has to judge them. And that happens when a person is no longer benefiting from the sacrifice for sin. When there is no sacrifice for sin that remains, then God's judgment will burn that person up. And consume them in vengeance. Which raises another question. When does there remain no sacrifice for sin? A lot of people read Hebrews 10 and they just really wig out. They're like, wow, can I sin so bad that God says that's it? You know. Can there be a lapse of immorality where I succumb to temptation and I've done it so often that the Lord finally says, Jesus, the death of Jesus no longer applies to you?

I know it's tempting to read Hebrews 10 in that way, but remember last week I said when you're dealing with a tough text, you want to interpret the text in light of its context. Through the eyes of the original author and the ears of the original audience. And if you look at the context of Hebrews 10, the phrase no sacrifice for sin remains is actually used previously to verse 27. And it shows up in verse 18. I'll show you that in just a second. But in chapter 10, really from chapter 10, verse 1 all the way to verse 18, he's making this argument that Jesus is the better priest.

And he appeals to those priests in the Old Testament who would, like clockwork, every single year on the day of atonement, make an offering for sin for the people. He would go into the Holy of Holies. He would offer up the sinless, spotless sacrifice. God would consume that sacrifice, burn it up, and the smoke would be pleasing in his nostrils. And then he would confess the sins of the people over the scapegoat, and then that scapegoat would walk away, symbolizing the forgiveness of God for his people for that year. But it's only for a year, and it really wasn't forgiveness, it was God withholding his judgment until the next twelve months where they do the same thing again.

And again and again and again and again. And the author of Hebrews is saying Jesus is so much better than that, because Jesus does not offer a sacrifice for sin again and again and again. He offers it once. And Jesus is unlike the priest of the Old Testament. He is like them in that he is human. He sympathizes with you. He intercedes for you. But he is unlike them in that he is holy. He is perfect and righteous in all of his ways. He doesn't need to do the washings and the cleansings and all of the different things to make himself right because he is a sinless, spotless.

He is the sinless, spotless Son of God, lived a sinless life of love and obedience before his Heavenly Father, and because his life was a perfect life, the offering he makes is a better offering. It's way better than just an animal. I mean the blood of bulls and goats can't take away sin. But it's even better than what any of you or I could ever offer because it is a sinless life of love and obedience. And he makes not just a better offering, but he does it as a better priest.

And because of that, God is doing something new through Jesus that he did not do before. And this is what the Bible describes as the new covenant. In the old covenant, you would adhere to God's law given through Moses and the Ten Commandments, and when you would obey the law you would be blessed, and when you would disobey the law, you would be cursed. But you were characterized as God's people by circumcision and living to the law by faith. But in the New Testament or in the I'm sorry, in the book of Jeremiah, the prophet Jeremiah talked about a new covenant.

Where God's law would not be written on tablets of stone, but that it would be written on the hearts of people, and that God's forgiveness of his people wouldn't just be every twelve months, but he would have an act of forgiveness that would last forever and ever. And that's what Hebrews 10 quotes there in verses 15 to 19. And this is where our phrase shows up: there is no longer an offering for sin. Quoting Jeremiah 31, this is the covenant I will make with them after those days, the Lord says, after the old covenant.

I will put my laws on their hearts. And I will write them on their minds, not the tablets of stone. And here's the phrase, I will never again remember their sins and lawless acts. In other words, even though 12 months pass by, I still won't remember. Even though 17 years

pass by, I still won't remember. And the conclusion is where there is that kind of forgiveness of our lawless acts and sins, then there is no longer an offering for sin. There's no longer an offering for sin because the offering for sin that Jesus made is once and for all.

It is always and forever, and it is the only offering that is now acceptable to God. Because all of the other offerings that God used to accept were pointing to that one thing. They were the shadows, Jesus is the substance, and therefore the offering that matters and the only offering available is the offering that Jesus made through his death on the cross. Is this making sense? Again, deep Old Testament imagery, I get all that, but that's what he means by there is no longer an offering for sin. Why is there no longer an offering for sin?

Because Jesus took care of it. There doesn't need to be an offering for sin because Jesus did through his offering once and forever, everything that needs to be done. Well then how do you receive that offering into your life? You receive that offering into your life by faith. We don't have time to go through the New Testament, but the basic message of the gospel is that Jesus has done for you what you cannot do for yourself, and that when you repent and believe on the Lord Jesus, what he has done for you on the cross, then you will be saved.

In other words, Jesus' life will be credited to you, even though you didn't live it. And your penalty for sin will be credited to him. In other words, he died for your sins and through his atoning death he clothed you with his righteousness. How do you get that? By working really hard? The Bible says no, you could never work hard enough. It's a gift of grace you don't deserve and you receive it by faith. You're saved by grace alone through faith alone. So here's what the author of Hebrews is saying.

When we continue in sin, what kind of sin? Unbelief. If you continue not believing in the greater atonement that Jesus has made, then there will not be any sacrifice remaining for you, because the only sacrifice that does exist was accomplished by Jesus, and that sacrifice is only applied by grace through faith. So if there is no faith, there is no sacrifice, and if there is no sacrifice, then you get vengeance. Do you see how the logic is working here? So if you're taking notes, atonement for sin is accomplished in Christ alone. It's applied by faith alone.

And if you don't keep believing, there is no atonement for you. Now you can try to make atonement. You can try to live a good righteous life. You can try to go back to those Old Testament washings and sacrifices and all those things, but those were never meant to do what you think they were meant to do. They were only meant to point to Jesus and the only one that matters is Jesus. So don't stop believing in Jesus. That's his point. If you stop believing in Jesus, you're going to be judged by the Lord.

Now he appeals to the Old Testament as a way to explain this idea in verse 28. Anyone who disregarded the law of Moses died without mercy, based on the testimony of two or three witnesses. I said that's a quotation of Deuteronomy 17. The context of Deuteronomy 17 is

idolatry. In Deuteronomy seventeen, when one of God's people would become guilty of worshiping the sun, moon, or stars or some other false god, and someone else saw that or not just one person but two to three other people saw that then they were to accuse that person of idolatry and if the person accused of idolatry was found to be guilty he would be punished with the death penalty. You guys think church discipline is severe.

Just imagine. Old Testament church discipline was was super legit. And by legit I mean terrible and would not want to do that. Deuteronomy 17, if the report turns out of idolatry, that's a detestable act. And I want you to stone them to death. And the one condemned to die is to be executed on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Now there is a little grace, right? It's not just an angry ex-girlfriend who accuses you of idolatry. That won't work. She has to get two or three of her friends to accuse you.

And even then the two or three of her friends, if they're lying, they have to throw the first stones. So if you're going to lie about them, you better be ready to kill them. So there is a certain level of mercy in this, but the reality is two or three witnesses under the old covenant, if you weren't a true believer, if your faith was false faith, then you died through stoning. How much more so, he would say, is this true in the New Covenant? So if you're taking notes, ongoing, continual, or willful unbelief invites a judgment without mercy.

Just like in the Old Testament, deliberate ongoing unbelief invited a judgment without mercy. How much more so will there be a merciless judgment from God for ongoing willful unbelief under the new covenant? Now, why is it so much greater under the new covenant? Well, as you just think about it, for one, it's willful and it's ongoing. Under the old covenant. If it happened once, you would get the death penalty, but it had to be super high-handed and there were all kinds of provisions. But in the new covenant, it's not just something, again, where you momentarily lapse in an act of immorality.

This is not, I love Jesus, I go to church, I believe in him for salvation, but I can't seem to stop. You know, overeating or, you know, I felt terrible, I gossiped about this person the other day, and therefore am I really saved. That is not what's going on in the book of Hebrews. It's willful, it's continual, and it's unbelief. It's saying Jesus is not enough. Jesus is not sufficient. That's one reason it's greater. The other reason it's greater is because the testimony given against you is coming from a greater witness.

It's coming from witnesses who give a greater testimony. And that's what verse 29 is all about. He says, how much more so will the judgment or the punishment be? On the one. How much worse punishment do you think one will deserve who has trampled the Son of God, who has regarded as profane the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? I don't know if you pick up on this, but you see a reference to three members of the Trinity here. God the Father, God the Son, who shed his blood on the cross, and God the Holy Spirit, who convicts the world of sin.

In the Old Testament, it was a jury of your peers who would accuse you of unbelief before the court. But in the new covenant, it's not a jury of your peers, it's the divine council. It's Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who have provided even greater testimony. The Spirit has proven through the resurrection of Jesus that he is who he said he is. He proved through signs and wonders that the gospel that Jesus preached was a genuine gospel. God the Father sent a dove that went over Jesus and said, this is my son whom I love, with him I'm well pleased.

He gave his testimony over and over and over again. And even though you got the testimony from that witness, you still rejected it even though you have the testimony of the blood that Jesus loved you so much that he laid his life down on the cross, even in light of all of that historical evidence and that world-changing redemption, even in light of all of that, you still say, yeah, but no thanks. Yeah, but it's not sufficient. It's coming from a greater witness, and you still reject it, therefore your rejection is a greater insult to the God of the covenant, and therefore you'll receive a greater punishment.

A greater punishment because the witnesses provide a better testimony. Also, because the rejection of the new covenant is not a rejection of law, it's a rejection of grace. You notice this phrase here, it's the spirit of grace. So the judgment is greater on the basis of a greater covenant that gives greater grace. The old covenant was a covenant of law in some ways. It was God saying, You are my people. And the way that the world will know that you're my people is because my law is given to you and you're going to live according to my law.

And Israel was distinct, they were separate, and a lot of God's law was gracious and that it kept them from you know bad health and some other things that are interesting to talk about. But at the end of the day, it was characterized by the law. The new covenant is not characterized by law, it's characterized by grace. It's not something that you do so that you can prove you love me. It's something I do to prove how much I love you and even though you are not worthy, and even though you could never earn it or deserve it, I'm going to give it to you freely as a gift of grace.

And when you take that gift and insult it's a greater punishment because it's a greater form of insult. It's a greater form of contempt. You're treating as common or profane the blood of a better covenant, a covenant of grace that God saved you by His grace through the death of His Son. It's not just that you show contempt for God's law, you show contempt for His Son, through whom salvation alone is possible. Or through whom alone salvation is possible. That's a greater form of contempt invites a greater judgment. It's a greater covenant of grace, it's a greater testimony from greater witnesses.

And then lastly You do this even after you've had an experience that provides you with greater knowledge. It's the blood of the covenant which has sanctified you. In other words, you experience salvation. You experience God changing you from who you used to be to who

you now can be in Jesus. And even though you experience that grace, you still say it's not really enough for me. This gets back to the question are these genuine believers or false believers? We talked about this last week. It's a big thorny question in the warning passages of Hebrews.

Are they really Christians who lose their salvation or are they fake Christians who experience hell because they never had faith? Or are they real Christians who experience something other than hell and don't lose their salvation? I don't have time to go back through all of that discussion. If you want to look at it, you can go to last week's message. But I don't know how you read this and think they're not true believers. Go back to verse 26. If we deliberately go on sinning after receiving the knowledge of the truth.

They received the knowledge of the truth, by which he was sanctified, verse 29. The Lord will judge his people, verse 30. This word sanctification I talked about use the context to determine the meaning of a word. The same word sanctification is used in chapter 10, same chapter. Verse 10 and verse 14. In verse 10, by this will, the will of God, or the will of Christ to obey the will of God, we have been sanctified. Through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all time. Notice the phrase all time, so you don't lose your salvation, but he's talking about genuine Christians getting genuine conversion, genuine salvation.

And then in verse 14, by this one offering, he has perfected forever. Notice the language, not for 10 days or 10 years, so long as you don't sin. No. He's perfected forever those who are being sanctified. Present tense. So it's a perfect tense verb like past action with continuing abiding results that last forever and ever and ever. And it's a continual ongoing process that perfects you but it goes on forever and ever and ever. So these are genuine believers who've experienced genuine conversion. I don't know how you read it any other way.

Some would say that the word sanctified here and here means something different than what it means here. I just don't know how that's possible. Now, what is the judgment? Again, you can go back to last week to see what the judgment is, but the reality is these are people who experienced conversion. These are people who didn't just walk an aisle and get dunked. They tasted the good word of God. They experienced the transforming grace of the Holy Spirit in their life. They genuinely believed, and even though they had that greater knowledge that only the Spirit of God can grant, still they were drifting and falling away.

And he says, You think you can do that and escape? You think you can live that way and there be no consequences? Do you think that God's grace has no concern whatsoever for the type of life you live and that you can just check out you can just stop believing and there will be no consequences? That is not the way God works. He's a God of holy love. And because of his holy love, he must be a God of vengeance. And so don't stop believing. If it was true in the Old Testament that God responded in that way to unbelief, how much more so will it be true in the New Covenant?

And so for those of us here this morning who would say, you know, I'm pretty sure I'm a Christian, but you are living your life in a way that demonstrates you're no longer trusting in Jesus alone for salvation. Maybe you're leaning on your own good works, maybe you're leaning on some church attendance, or you know, keeping your quiet time going really well, or you're resting on someone other than Jesus, your bank account, your spouse, your children being good. Or you begin to live a life characterized by habitual, ongoing, unrepentant sin.

Sin that would essentially communicate the death of Jesus can't atone for this. The death of Jesus has no power to conquer the sin in my life. That is unbelief. And if you persist in that kind of unbelief, there will be judgment. Because God is a God of holy love, and a holy love results in vengeance. And so don't stop believing. I mean, don't continue living in that way. Instead, as he says, remember what it used to be like. Same thing he says in the book of Revelation to the church of Ephesus.

Remember, remember, look at verse 32. Remember the earlier days. When after you had been enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings. Sometimes you were publicly exposed to taunts and afflictions, and then at other times you were companions of those who were treated that way. You had like a genuine confidence in Jesus, and then you were committed to the other people who had confidence in Jesus. For you sympathized with the prisoners. You accepted with joy the confiscation of your possessions. Why? Because you really believed you yourselves had a better and enduring possessions.

Notice he doesn't say past tense believed. Because you know. You know this. You have this faith in your heart. So don't throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you need endurance, so that after you've done God's will, you may receive what was promised. For yet in a very little while the coming one will come and not delay, but my righteous one will live by faith. And if he draws back I have no pleasure in him. But we are not those who draw back and are destroyed, but those who have faith and are saved.

So continual ongoing sin invites a greater judgment, a judgment without mercy. The just, however, will live by faith. In other words, those who live by faith are pleasing to God, and because through faith they are pleasing to God, they will receive what God has promised. So what do you need to do? He says you need to do two things. You need to remember and endure. You need to remember and endure. What does that look like? It looks like not shrinking back. But holding on. The two things that they were shrinking back from are in the text.

They're not explicit in what we read, but they are before the warning. The one thing they were shrinking back from is worship through faith in Jesus. They were still going to worship the Lord, but they were going to worship the Lord under the old covenant through temple sacrifices and offerings and ritual washings. And he's saying, don't throw away your

confidence. Don't rely on what you do and your works to give you confidence before God. Rely on what Jesus has done to make you confident before God and draw near to God in worship based on what Jesus Christ alone can do.

So don't shrink back from worship. Look at verses 22 to 23. We read it earlier. Let us draw near with a true heart and full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and bodies washed in pure water based on what Jesus has done. Let us hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering, since he who promised is faithful. Here's what happens. When you are struggling in your faith, the first thing to go in your life will typically be worshiping the Lord. You will shrink back from worship.

You will and a lot of times it's gathered worship. You find something better to do with Sunday morning. You stop having your quiet time. You stop pursuing the Lord in personal times of prayer. And for a lot of you, if you're anything like me, some of the reason you stop doing that is because you feel bad because of your sin. You know you're sinning. You don't really feel like stopping because of what it would cost you. So you keep on sinning, but because you keep on sinning, you shrink back from worship.

Does this ring a bell for anybody? And he's saying, you can't do that. Because worship is one of the means of grace that God uses in your life to keep you believing. And the way to unlock the promise is to just keep believing. But you won't keep believing if you shrink back from worship. So don't shrink back. Hold on. Don't shrink back. Draw near. And I would say that to those of you this morning who find yourself in a position where you're struggling to believe or you're persisting in sin. I would say is as tempting as it is to check out of worship or to figure out something to do with your morning or to drift away from sincere love for the Lord in your private worship life, don't shrink back, but to hold on, to press on.

The second thing they were shrinking back from was community. He says, you know, when you first became a believer, you were there for one another, you visited one another, you suffered together. He says in verses 24 and 25, the same thing. He says, don't forsake. Let us consider one another in order to provoke love and good works, not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other and all the more as you see the day approaching. In other words, don't shrink back from Christian community.

And yet, am I not wrong? Is that not exactly what you do when you struggle in your faith? Do you not find a new reason to check out of the small group, to isolate yourself from your Christian brothers and sisters? You're struggling to believe, and when the thing you need the most is to confess that difficulty. I got to confess this sin I can't overcome. I need my brothers and sisters in my small group or in my church family to encourage me, to speak life into me, to confront me, to challenge me. And because I don't want that I'm checking out and I'm drifting and he would say if you keep drifting.

And you keep neglecting that means of God's grace to you, you will not do that without consequences. So don't. That's not who you are. You need endurance. In other words, you need to keep believing. And how do you keep believing? By drawing near and provoking each other. Draw near, provoke each other. You need to endure. And you can endure through worship and community. And so as we enter into this time of response, I just want to leave you with this last little verse and this last little comment. You need endurance.

Verse 36. You need endurance so that after you have done God's will, you may receive what was promised. I'm not saying this morning you lose your salvation. I am saying this morning. That one of the ways you know you're genuinely saved is that you keep on believing. It's like the Finding Nemo movie. You guys remember Finding Nemo? Just keep swimming. The book of Hebrews is saying just keep believing. Just keep believing. He doesn't need you to do anything other than believe in what Jesus Christ has done. And if you have lost your affection, if you have lost your mental and emotional gratitude for what Jesus Christ has done, in making atonement for sin, then maybe this morning you need to be reminded of those things as we draw near to God in worship.

This morning the warning that no sacrifice for sin remains for those who've stopped believing may be what you need to hear to wake up and stop living the life that you're living. A life of continual unrepentant sin. And this morning, if the Lord's calling you to repent of that sin and to start trusting in Christ alone for salvation. To trust in what He has done for you as the enabling power, enabling grace to overcome the sin in your life. The altar will be open. I'd be happy to pray with you.

You can just come and lay your burdens down, your sins down at the foot of the cross. But as the Lord leads, you respond. If you're here this morning and you're not a Christian, this morning the invitation is clear. Those who put their faith in Jesus shall be saved not because of what you do, but because of what Jesus Christ has done. And if you're tired of trusting in other things to reconcile you to God, this morning the invitation is open for you to find grace in Jesus Christ. And if you've never made that decision, I'll be happy to walk you through it.

As the band leads us, you just come down and grab me by the hand and we can talk about it.