

## Fighting the Drift

### Hebrews 10:19–25 (ESV)

**CONTEXT: Hebrews 10:19** is a hinge on which the letter to the Hebrews turns. We see this sort of thing in all of Paul's letters - Romans for example... he spends the first 11 chapters developing his doctrine, then in Romans 12:1 he turns to application and implication. Typically, you know you've come to the hinge verse when you see a, "therefore".

Throughout the first 10 chapters we see that Christ is a better Priest, a better Sacrifice, a better mediator of a better covenant... then in verse 19 we see a THEREFORE... that's like saying... so now what? OR what difference does it make. The remainder of the book will be more practical in nature.

Remember up to this point, the writer to the Hebrews is very much concerned that his readers don't approach their faith casually and drift slowly but surely into unbelief or worse yet that they begin to trust a system void of the Gospel for their salvation.

This is hard for those who have been for some time in a baptistic context to grasp. You see the bible very clearly teaches that God saves you and God keeps you saved. *But that is not to say that God accomplishes that end without means.*

I have been walking with Christ for over 20 years... and I can tell you there is a major undercurrent that seeks to carry us away individually and corporately.

**ILLUSTRATION:** A few years ago our family took a trip to the beach Julie and I sat down on a couple of lounge chairs and the kids went out to play in the waves. I was reading a book then maybe 15 minutes later I look up and I don't see the kids. I began scanning the water and finally I noticed that they were all playing in the same formation about 100 yards down the beach. Why? Because of something called the **undercurrent**.

Well the Hebrews that were reading this letter had been caught up in a similar undercurrent. They were drifting - and they probably didn't even know it. Spiritual drifting is almost imperceptible. But listen, after 20 years of walking with Christ I've lived long enough to see men who used to powerfully preach the word now doubting it and questioning it. What happened? They drifted.

Well the Christian life is much like being in the ocean of the world with a constant perpetual undercurrent pulling you away... but you must stay with Christ. AND LISTEN TO ME: This doesn't just happen... ***you have to fight the drift.***

Hebrews 10:19-25 the author is teaching us **HOW to fight the Drift**. As we read the text, I want to draw you attention to 3 imperative statements - commands that will enable us to fight the drift.

**TEXT: Hebrews 10:19–25 (ESV)**

<sup>19</sup> Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, <sup>20</sup> by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, <sup>21</sup> and since we have a great priest over the house of God, <sup>22</sup> let us **draw near** with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. <sup>23</sup> Let us **hold fast** the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. <sup>24</sup> And let us **consider how to stir up** one another to love and good works, <sup>25</sup> not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Three things he said that we are to do in that passage, to fight the undercurrent of the world...

## **1. Draw Near**

<sup>22</sup> let us **draw near** with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

The concept of simply drawing near to God was shocking to the Hebrews.

- When Adam sinned, had not God put him out of the Garden and placed the angels and the flaming sword to guard the entrance?
- All but the High Priest were forbidden, on pain of death, to enter into His presence in the Holy of Holies?
- When God was going to reveal himself and his commandments to Moses on Sinai, the people were instructed, in no uncertain terms, that they were NOT to draw near to God. There were not to even touch the mountain of God.
- In Revelation when the shekinah glory of the Lord is revealed - the bible says Earth and all the planets flee from his presence.

So now we are being told to boldly approach God as a man would approach a friend or a loving father.

**NOW - practically how do we do that?** How do we draw near to God and enter into His presence. Well, there will be certain aspects are the common to all of us - for example it will always involve the word and prayer.

- The word is God's voice to us
- Prayer is our voice to God

So those are common to all of God's children, but then there are aspects that are unique to each person. It can be very helpful to, in this season as the year draws to a close to analyze yourself a bit and discern - how do you best draw near to God?

**Throughout your journey - when have really felt His presence most?**

Take some time to identify the times, events, habits, practices that best stir up your passion for the Lord and weave them into the routine of your life.

Don't just copy someone else's pattern - **figure out what works best for you.**

Also, note those things that hinder your desire to be in God's presence and avoid them.

- For some of you - you will feel closer to God in nature.... on a walk, fishing or hunting.
- Others will feel closer to God in a very private prayer chamber of some sort.
- Some will feel closer to God when you pray with others...
- Some will find it very difficult to draw near to God in a group.

Retreats and Conferences really help some of you - for others it's like youth camp for adults.

Worship music may cause you to feel closer to God

Beyond that at times there are certain genre of songs that cause you to feel close to the Lord. Please understand that those songs don't have the same effect on everyone.

For some, getting involved in world change, fighting for the unborn, effecting political change - makes them feel closer to the Lord. You see a political post on Facebook and start praying... others see a political post and unfollow that person.

I have found that I draw near to God through intense study, thinking, reading. To be honest, music doesn't make me feel close to the Lord. For some of you, you evaluate the entire Sunday by the worship set. That's your language.

Shine Jesus Shine almost makes me backslide. I've never liked it. But for some of you that sort of song just strikes a chord, it was the soundtrack for a time when you were very close to God.

If I have any music at all playing when I study it's classical - something I can zone out.

*But you identify ways that you **draw near** to God and intentionally weave them into your routine.*

## 2. Hold Fast

<sup>23</sup> Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.



Hold fast is a *nautical* term - it refers to holding a line and securing it well so that the sail stays where it is supposed to. You may have seen it tattooed on a sailor's 8 fingers across his fist.

Here we are told to HOLD FAST to the confession of our hope without wavering.

Now think with me - the confession of our hope is the Gospel. Now there are two ways to think of the Gospel biblically -

Meta-narrative and Micro-narrative:

- In the **Micro-Narrative** - the Gospel is the truths that pertain to the person and work of Christ, in particular his work on the cross on our behalf. It is us saying that we believe Christ was sent to redeem us through the cross and God raised him from the dead with our debt fully paid. That's what you must understand in order to be saved.
- The **Meta-Narrative** of the Gospel - is the unfolding of God's plan of redemption throughout the whole bible.

We are to hold fast to the story of how God has provided our redemption.

**ILLUSTRATION:** My son and I are involved in martial arts. In order to belt up (move from white belt to yellow belt, then from yellow to green...) you have to learn certain forms or katas. They have been developed over hundreds of years... if you go back to the old Chinese masters they were doing very similar kata to what we have to learn today. One thing I have found helpful is that they are progressive... so for example to move from white to yellow you have to learn about 7 moves. But then when you move from yellow to green you have to show that you have further mastered those 7 moves and added 7 more to them. With each progression to add new moves while developing greater mastery of the previous movements.

Christianity is like that - the Gospel gets you in... it's how you are born into the Kingdom... but you don't abandon it once you are in the Kingdom. Neither is it like a passport that you keep with you in case you need it. It's something that you get out and study every day.

You meditate on it, you rehearse it to yourself, you remind yourself of its implications. In doing so you are HOLDING FAST your confession of hope.

You begin to see how the Gospel has implications for your marriage, your parenting, your job, your friends, your love life - everything is touched by the truth of the Gospel.

***Draw near, hold fast...***

### **3. Stir Up**

<sup>24</sup> And let us consider how to **stir up** one another to love and good works, (then he mentions a specific way that happens) <sup>25</sup> not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

If we are going to avoid the undercurrent of the world and stay with Christ... we have to lock arms and help one another.

<sup>24</sup> And let us consider how to **stir up** one another

That is, get creative... look for ways... develop methods.... that will stir us your brother and sisters in Christ.

Stir them up to what? love and good works!

In other words, what can I do that will stir you up to love God and people and serve God and people?

Think of the people around you in church today...

- Men - what have you done to stir up your wife to love God? Is she doing more good works because you have stirred her up?
- What about your small group? How did you stir them up today?
- What about the family get togethers this week? Does your family love God more because you stirred them up to do so?

You say, "well how on earth do I do that?", you have to answer that question. But consider ways. Think through, try things that might not work, improvise and try something else.

It's probably different for everyone in your life, so you have to experiment a little. What motivates your son may not stir up your daughter.

Then he mentions a couple of aspects that may help you:

<sup>25</sup> not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, -

So stirring up people to love and good deeds will involve meeting together. That means being at church of course, but I think it means more than that. It means get in

their life. Walk in their world so that you can see what's working and what's not.

That is why we push small groups so much around here. Only about 5% to 10% of what a church is to be about takes place in this room on Sunday mornings. 90% of what the church is about happens the other 6 days a week. If this is all you get - you are robbing yourself of major good that other people could deposit into your life and you are robbing others of good you could bring to them.

...but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.  
So our driving attitude that we come to this gathering with is encouragement.

You don't primarily come to small group to learn - if you do you will constantly be evaluating your teachers job performance... you should come to small group to encourage... that's it.

**Let me give you some ideas of how you can encourage others.**

- Observe positive character qualities in others - are they punctual? are they kind? Do they serve? Do they work hard? Are they brave? Are they thoughtful?

Then simply tell them what you see. Say, "thank you!"

EXAMPLES:

Praise team works hours each week rehearsing, learning parts, practicing their instrument, then taking a major risk by standing up and boldly leading us week after week. Have you ever said, "Thank you" to them? I haven't and I want to correct that. I encourage Chris all the time and that is good - but what about the team?

When is the last time you sat down with pen and paper and wrote someone an old fashion note? Everyone likes to get mail - give it a try.

You can't imagine the good that could come for a missionary if you simply write them a card. Doesn't have to be long... just remind them that you remember their service, you are praying for them.

Leave enough margin in your budget to be able to buy someone's lunch, get a gift card occasionally.

**YOU WERE NEVER MEANT TO LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE ALONE**

50 different times in 24 different contexts the bible gives a ONE ANOTHER command.

**CONCLUSION:** There is a massive undercurrent that seeks to sweep us away from Christ. If we are going to stay by the stuff... we must... draw near to God, hold fast to the Gospel... and intentionally stir each other up to love and good deeds.