



## Sermon, Sunday November 24, 2024

# "Let us draw near to God with a true heart and full faith"

**SCRIPTURE: Hebrews 10:19-25** <sup>19</sup>Therefore, my brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary 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 approach 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 to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. <sup>24</sup>And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, <sup>25</sup>not neglecting to meet another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

### Introduction: The Most Holy Place

Today's text, Hebrews 10:19, begins with the words, **'Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus.'** But what does the Most Holy Place in this verse refer to?

The ancient Jewish temple in Jerusalem had a place called the Most Holy Place. The place was blocked off with a curtain to prevent anyone from entering. Only the high priest could enter the Day of Atonement only once a year. The Most Holy Place contained the Ark of the Covenant, which contained the stone tablets of Moses' Ten Commandments, the jar of manna, and Aaron's staff. The Most Holy Place was the most secret and sacred place in the temple.

However, the Holy Place in today's text does not refer to the Most Holy Place of the Jerusalem Temple but refers to the event of salvation that occurred through Jesus Christ. We can see that the Hebrew writer mentioned in Hebrews 10:11-14 that the sacrifices performed in the temple no longer make people holy, but through the eternal sacrifice of Jesus Christ, those who believe in Jesus have been made holy. Therefore, the right hand of God, where Jesus Christ is seated, as mentioned in Hebrews 10:12, is the Most Holy Place.

The Greek word **'hagios' (ἅγιος; holy)**, translated as 'Holy Place' or 'The Most Holy Place' in the Bible, means set apart or consecrated from the world. Places, events, and things that go beyond the logic of the world are **'hagios.'** To put it in a more familiar concept to us, it is the kingdom of heaven where the resurrected Jesus sits.

### Body: The blood of Jesus and our confidence

However, verse 19 of today's text says that Christians have gained confidence to enter the Most Holy Place. The Greek word **'Parrhesia (παρρησία)**' translated as confidence in this verse means **confidence, openness, and boldness.** But why do Christians need the confidence to enter the Most Holy Place?

This is because the Most Holy Place that Christians must reach is a place completely different from the order of this world. Some people may think that when we die, in the heaven we reach, there will be a lot to eat, a lot to do, a lot of good people, and a golden crown. Of course, there are expressions in the Bible where people eat well and live well in heaven, but that is a metaphor.



Even if difficult situations arise in our real lives, we can predict the future, albeit imperfectly, based on our current lives. However, we cannot know exactly about our ultimate future and fate after death. Therefore, you need confidence to enter the Most Holy Place.

However, the people of the world will not consider the Bible's words about confidence to enter the Most Holy Place. That's because they think that it's better to just have fun here and now and then die, rather than an ultimate future that we can't know even if we want to know.

However, Christians do not consider achieving a successful life to be our primary goal in life. In other words, it is important to live meaningfully here and now, but to live such a life, we must not lose sight of the spiritual perspective toward the ultimate future.

However, according to verse 19 of today's text, Christians say that they gained confidence through the **'blood of Jesus.'** In this verse, the blood of Jesus refers to Jesus' death on the cross. However, is it true that the Hebrew writer said that the death of Jesus is the basis of our confidence to enter the Most Holy Place?

To understand this verse, please think about our lives. All kinds of things happen in our lives. Among them, there are some things that make us difficult and some that make us comfortable. Also, some people live in poverty their whole lives, while others are born rich. Furthermore, some people die at a young age, while others live healthy lives until they are old and then die.

However, no matter how we live our lives, we all face death. Perhaps in this process, some people die with the thought, **'It's all in vain.'** However, Christians face death with the thought of being embraced by God. If we were to express it in a sentence from today's Bible text, it would be **'entering the Most Holy Place.'** Do you think this is too far from our lives?

However, in verse 20 of today's text, the Hebrew writer says that with the death of Jesus, the curtain that blocked the Most Holy Place was lifted, creating a way for us to enter there. Furthermore, verse 22 says, **'Let us approach 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.'**

As we live our lives, we live with the thought that if we do not follow the standards presented by the world, our lives will collapse. Or we live with the thought that if our lives are not perfect according to the law, we will not be approved by God. These thoughts of ours are guilt and an evil conscience. This is the most powerful force in the world we live in. In verse 22 of today's text, saying that we are freed from guilt through the blood of Jesus means that we are freed from the pressure of having to be recognized in the world's ways.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ!

The Christian faith begins with the fact that Jesus, who was called the Son of God, was executed on the most cursed cross. This means that pain and misfortune in life happens even to good, just, and wise people. Some people may be born weak, may have poor family circumstances, or may have accidents. Also, some people may be deceived by others, and some may be lonely. Even the Son of God could not escape this pain and misfortune.

But there is something we really must not forget. That is no matter how difficult our lives are, Jesus who died on the cross is with us. People who know and believe in this fact do not despair in the face of any unfortunate fate, such as death.

However, people are not sure that Jesus, who is currently sitting at the right hand of God and will return at the end of time, is with us.



## **Conclusion: The Hebrew writer's advice**

These religious issues also often appeared among early Christians. This is the reason why Book of Hebrews was written. So words of encouragement to those who are wavering in their religious life appear in verses 22-25 of today's text. Verse 25 of today's text says, **'Not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.'**

In this verse, the expression **'all the more as you see the Day approaching.'** That Day is the Day we enter the Most Holy Place. In our religious life, if we do not focus on **'the Day we will enter the Most Holy Place'**, we cannot escape from a helpless religious life.

If we can experience and feel the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ even in a small way in our lives, we will be able to be freer from the worldly order that money, fame, and power can only be possessed by winning competition with others. Today, Thanksgiving Sunday, I hope we can give thanks and praise to the Lord who gave us the confidence to enter the Most Holy Place through the blood of Jesus Christ. **Amen!**

