

# 1. Faith Calls for Perseverance

Hebrews 10:19–31

## Daily Bible Meditations

Dale Rood

### Sunday

### Matthew 8:5–13

It was a non-Israelite—a person outside the people of God—who Jesus declared to have extraordinary faith. Of what did his faith consist? It was not a matter of trying hard to believe, nor of being in the right people group. But it did consist of an understanding of being in a position of authority, of recognizing the One who is in authority, and of what His authority consists. Notice that the centurion’s humility consisted not so much in recognizing his own unworthiness, but of recognizing his own standing under God’s authority. What is your understanding of God’s authority at work in your life?

### Monday

### Romans 10:8–17

The focus of faith here is our salvation from sin and death through Jesus Christ. There are two ways God’s Word works in our lives, planting that saving faith: First, it works by our hearing the Word of God and allowing it to take root in our lives (v.14-17). Second, it works by our using our mouths to declare our faith in Jesus Christ (v.9). The first plants God’s Word in our hearts; the second seals it there for it to take root and grow. Have you put your faith where your mouth is?

### Tuesday

### Galatians 2:15–21

It is important here to understand the difference between *imputed* righteousness and *imparted* righteousness. When we are justified by faith, we are not automatically made to live a righteous life. If we were, then we would no longer sin. Rather when we are justified by faith, the righteousness of Jesus Christ is imputed (given) to us—written to our account. Imputed righteousness happens in an instant, the moment one trusts in Jesus Christ for salvation. Imparted righteousness is a process by which we actually become righteous as we grow in Christ. This is the process known as sanctification or, we could say, Christian growth.

### Wednesday

### 2 Corinthians 13:5–10

Paul says here, “Test yourselves,” (v.5). He does not identify specifically how we must test ourselves in this passage. The rest

of the books of First and Second Corinthians outline the concerns that must be tested and can be summed up in this: it is not the one who can flaunt the most spectacular gifts that is saved, but rather the one who demonstrates the power of God in the fruit of the Spirit. Notice 1 Corinthians 13 in particular. The key point that faith examination seeks is whether “Jesus Christ is in you” (v.5). How would you identify Christ Jesus in your life?

### **Thursday**

### **Romans 5:1–5**

One of the key aspects of faith is learning to rest in the Lord and allow His power to work through us. Peace, joy, and love are matters that are not produced by our own effort, but rather are produced by allowing the Holy Spirit to pour them out into our hearts by faith (v.5). This is the point where faith settles down for the long run. It is neither the excitement of something new nor the anticipation of something spectacular. It is, rather, steadiness in the Lord that demonstrates to others that He is working in and through our lives. How would others see faith operating in your life?

### **Friday**

### **1 Thessalonians 1:2–10**

Consider the marks given here of a dynamic faith within the believers at Thessalonica: 1) full conviction coming from the Word of God together with the demonstration of the power of God in the Holy Spirit (v.5), 2) willingness to learn from and imitate mature Christians they had come to trust (v.6), 3) joy in the Holy Spirit (v.6), 4) their new Christian life was abundantly evident to others (v.7-9), and 5) radically changed lives (v.9-10). What evidence for faith do you see in those around you? What about in your own life?

### **Sabbath**

### **Hebrews 10:19–31**

Here are two possible responses of faith. The first, in verses 19-25, is the confident living out of faith. It is characterized by good understanding of what happens when we receive the gift of salvation by faith, and by living boldly in that new dimension. A key to this bold living is the regular connecting with other believers to draw strength from each other. The second response, in verses 26-31, is presumption. It is characterized by presuming upon the grace of God to save us even though we keep on sinning like we did before we were saved. The result here can only be a terrifying encounter with a just God.

<b>Study</b>	<b>Background</b>	<b>Devotional</b>
Hebrews 10:19–31	Hebrews 10:19–31	Romans 5:1–5

### **Key Verse**

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful (Hebrews 10:23).

### **Heart of the Lesson**

People wonder about, may even envy, others who feel secure about their spiritual lives. What security is available? The writer of Hebrews told us that our sins can be forgiven because of the blood of Jesus and that we can experience the presence of God in a new and life-giving way through faith.

### **Questions for Studying the Text**

1. Upon what is our confidence (v.19) in being able to access God based (look to earlier parts of Hebrews for answers)? What is the significance of the opening to us of “the veil” (v.20)? What roles of the priesthood (v.21) does Jesus now fulfill for us?
2. Take a closer look at the three exhortations given in verses 19-25 (marked by the words “let us”). To whom are we to “draw near” and how can we accomplish this? How can we “hold fast the confession”? In what ways can we “stimulate one another to love and good deeds”? What evidences can you see in your own life that you have heeded these exhortations?
3. What is meant by “sinning deliberately” (v.26)? Is there a way to sin that is not deliberate? Is this verse saying that believers who have chosen to sin cannot be forgiven? What are the alternatives to understanding this verse?
4. What three signs of apostasy are listed in verse 29? How are we to understand this warning? Does “by which he was sanctified” indicate this is addressed to those who have made a genuine commitment of faith? Is there any other way to understand this phrase? Is it possible for a true believer to fall away? How will you respond this warning?

## Understanding and Living

Ken Burdick

### *No Admittance*

Have you ever been in a place where you have absolutely no right to be? (No, I am not talking about being in your older brother's or sister's room when you were little!) I was once confronted by an irate railroad official in the cab of a historic diesel locomotive at the head end of a parked excursion train. He quite rightly wanted to know what I thought I was doing there. A man with an official-looking name badge had invited me, but he apparently had no authority to do so! The cab of an operating passenger train is sacrosanct and inviolable. Trespass there and you could be arrested. Thankfully I was not!

The "Most Holy Place" in the Jewish Temple was the most truly sacrosanct place that ever existed. The Ark of the Covenant stood there, representing the immediate presence of God. Only the High Priest could enter this place, and only once a year. Even then, he could not enter without sprinkling the blood of animal sacrifices—to cleanse from sin—himself, Israel and the Most Holy Place itself. The people drew near outside in solemn assembly,

but not *very* near. They remained separated from God's presence, because the blood of animal sacrifices offered only a temporary, ceremonial cleansing from sins. It could not take away sins (Hebrews 10:3-4).

That changed for believers when Christ came. Hebrews 5:1-10:18 speaks of Christ entering the Most Holy Place as a greater High Priest, offering the blood of a better sacrifice, and inaugurating a better covenant with God. This temple imagery is used to teach that Christ's sacrifice of Himself on the Cross accomplished what the animal sacrifices could not. It has taken away our sins as the cause of separation between us and God. Therefore, "we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place" (Hebrews 10:19, NIV). This is an awesome truth! (See Dave Browning's praise song, "Take Me In" ©1987 Dayspring Music, LLC.)

In Hebrews 10:19-25, we are called to live out what this means to us. First, we have confidence (or "authorization") to enter the presence of God by Christ's sacrifice (v.19-20). Second, we have Christ as our High Priest (v.21). The

word “since” comes before each of these and gives the basis for the three “let us” clauses that follow. They urge us to be continually doing three things in our Christian lives.

### ***Draw Near to God***

Do you live in a way that is close to God? “I would have to be a really saintly and holy person to do that,” you say. No. You would just have to keep drawing near to God. In God’s sight, believers are already cleansed and made pure by Christ’s sacrifice (Hebrews 10:22b). We need only two things to draw near to God: a heart that is sincere and loyal to Him and the faith to trust fully in the way Jesus has made for us into His presence (Hebrews 10:22a, 20). So let us draw near to God continually and in every way. What good is it to be a Christian and not draw near to God!?

### ***Hold Fast the Confession of our Hope***

We should hold fast to both our hope (objective truth of the Gospel) and our confession of it (our readiness to speak about it). In the original language of Hebrews 10:23, the “hold fast” is in the present tense to show this is something to keep on doing. Doing it “without wavering” does not

mean making ourselves a nuisance to others by blundering on in unwanted testimonies. It means not letting anything unsettle us in our hope in what God has promised through Christ (Hebrews 10:23) and in our talking about this to others.

### ***Consider how to stir up one another to love and good works***

The above heading is from the English Standard Version of Hebrews 10:24. If we were more dedicated to stirring up people in the church in the right way, that would eliminate our doing so because of jealousy, bitterness, or wounded pride. Ask yourself which way you, personally, tend to choose. This is the third “let us” in our passage and is the third call to action based on a foundational grace of God. We are called to live out the graces of faith, hope, and (now) love.

### ***Persevere in the faith***

At Hebrews 10:25, perseverance becomes the major focus of the rest of the book. We can persevere in love (v.24) with a little help from our friends (v.25), so we should not give up meeting together in the church. That will also help us persevere in the faith as “the Day” draws

near (v.25b, the day of Christ's return and of judgment). It is not that anyone with genuine faith can fall away from Christ (the faith of those who truly belong to Christ will persevere, Hebrews 3:14).

However, even secure faith needs encouragement to stand up against false teaching and persecution. Also, not all who attend the meetings of believers have come to genuine faith themselves. The stern warning that follows (v.26-29) is directed toward those who not only take step one (giving up meeting together), but also step two (apostasy—rejecting the Son of God and repudiating the faith formerly placed in him). The deliberate sin in Hebrews 10:26 is specifically this sin of rejecting Christ (which is compared to rejecting the Law of Moses).

Let us persevere. We did it in the past, and we can do it now (v.32-35). Then comes the theme of today's lesson: "You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised" (v.36, NIV). Doing the will of God does not mean avoiding sin (in general) in our lives, but persevering in faith. It is those who have faith that are saved (v.38-39, NIV).

## Hints for Teaching

### *Lesson Goals*

1. Help the learners gain knowledge about the power of faith in Jesus.
2. Help the learners reflect on their security in Jesus Christ.
3. Help the learners increase their confidence in sharing Jesus Christ with others.

### *Teaching Activity*

Choose one or two hymns that focus on perseverance and have volunteers read them to the group. List and discuss the words or phrases that are especially encouraging in these hymns. Have participants reflect on their security in their faith and discuss how this impacts the ways in which we live out our faith. Give participants time to write out a brief statement which explains to unbelievers the benefits of this faith and security. Have participants pair off and practice sharing these statements with each other.

### **Looking Forward**

From an exhortation to persevere in our faith, the author of Hebrews moves to a discussion of things that assure us our faith will make a difference in our lives.