

June 21, 2026 Hebrews 10:19-25 “The House of God” By, Mark Broadus

In just a few moments we have the privilege of commissioning a new deacon, Olivier Van Wijngaarden, for service in this church. My remarks in this sermon have that very much in mind, and so are directed generally at all of you and specifically at our deacons.

Before I read our text, which is from chapter 10 of the Epistle to the Hebrews, I would like to refer you just to some thoughts back in chapter 3:1-6, where the writer introduces our topic of today which is the house of God. We read back in chapter 3 that “the builder of all things is God.” That’s a good thing to remember in our lives as we build stuff that the builder of all things is God. We participate with God in that. And God has been building a house for thousands of years. Moses, we’re told in chapter three, was a good and faithful servant in all of God’s house, which was the fledgling nation of Israel which he led out of Egypt; Jesus is said to be in that passage in Hebrews 3 faithful in God’s house, but faithful as a son, not like Moses as a servant. As the divine builder of that house, Jesus is worthy of greater honour than Moses. And we, as followers of Jesus, “are God’s house.”

It is very important to the writer that the readers, including us, know that we are a divine house, built by God, with the son of God as our faithful head. And so what we will be talking about today is building up the house of God.

The writer then dives into the main body of his letter in chapter 3 which stretches all the way from 3:7 through 10:18, seven full chapters of marvelous and detailed study of the glorious supremacy of Jesus Christ and the salvation which he brings. By rights I should have been preaching seven different weeks on that. But in the interest of time, we’re going to use the summary of them, which is where we are today in chapter 10:19-25. But this chapter three and chapter ten form bookends to that great passage, that great sermon about the supremacy of Christ. The verses today will show us why that should be important to us.

The great and unique contribution of the Epistle to the Hebrews to our Christian thought and theology is this: that the religious system established in the OT is an earthly parallel to that which exists in heaven. There was a Temple in Jerusalem because there is a Temple in heaven. There is a holy place that is a sanctuary that means holy place. There was a sanctuary in that temple in Jerusalem because there is a holy place in heaven. There was an altar in that holy place because there is an altar in heaven. Priests serve at that earthly altar because there’s a great priest that serves in heaven. Blood sacrifices were offered on that altar in Jerusalem because a blood sacrifice had to be made in heaven.

Furthermore, the Epistle to the Hebrews is anticipating a time when, in the not very distant future after the book was written, by the very words of the Lord Jesus, that earthly temple in Jerusalem would be destroyed. The altar would be smashed. The entire sacrificial system would be ended. And for the writer of this Epistle, this was all a very necessary thing because God had already prepared and provided for that fact.

How had God prepared and provided for the destruction of the Jerusalem temple? The answer to that is our text for today. There are two things that the book of Hebrews wants to tell us about what Jesus had done and does for us. First, we are told, Jesus is our direct access God. Jesus gives us direct access to the true and heavenly sanctuary, the true holy of holies, the place where God is. Jesus himself had said, "I am the way, the truth and the life" and here that living way is shown to be the way into God's sanctuary, the place where God dwells. How are we enter that most holy place? By groveling? Do we enter crawling on our knees? No, we enter confidently! We are told to enter confidently. How can we enter confidently before God, before our great and awesome God? Only because our living Lord and Savior initiated the way with his own blood.

You will recall that in the earthly temple in Jerusalem, a curtain blocked the way from the holy place to the Most Holy place. Common people like you and I would never see behind that curtain; in fact, only the high priest went in there, and that only once per year. You will also recall that at the moment that Jesus died on the cross, that curtain was ripped from top to bottom; God was removing that barrier to access, opening it up for people like you and me. The Epistle here tells us that in the true, heavenly sanctuary there is also a curtain, but that curtain is the crucified body of Jesus, which is now the means of access to the place where God dwells, for all who have faith in Jesus and salvation in Jesus' name. Now, by faith in Jesus, we have direct access to God in the heavenly sanctuary. This is not something to be taken for granted, for people all over the globe are regularly engaged in religious acts and activities, trying to reach God.

Then the writer goes on with the second point which is necessary because we in our humanity do not really know how to approach our great and awesome God. We need help, and we have that help in the form of a Great High Priest. As with every priest, Jesus, our great high priest represents us before God to us and presents us to God. That is the work of a priest. Without the ongoing work of our Great High Priest, we would never be able to realize the benefit of the fact that Jesus has opened for us a living way of access to God.

These, then, are the two great things that Jesus has accomplished and does accomplish for us: direct, confident access to God, and ongoing, priestly help for you and I, so that we may realize the benefits of that full access.

And then notice that here we are told in chapter 10 that Jesus' priestly work is "over the house of God." And, as we saw in chapter 3, "we are that house." We know of course that the house of God is not a physical structure. We may refer to this room as "the sanctuary," but we could just as well meet on the front lawn or in a park or in your living room. This building is not a copy of the heavenly sanctuary, but God sanctifies whatever space we meet in as we come together, as individual bricks, built one by one into a spiritual house where God's Spirit is pleased to dwell and we rely on that fact every time we gather.

So how according to our text are we expected to be in that house, the house we call Fellowship Church? There are three parts to that answer that the writer wants us to hear. The three-part answer is given in the verses that follow.

Before we look in detail at those next verses, let me diverge for a moment. You may know that the Epistle of Hebrews is very often referred to as a salad bowl. It is referred to as a salad bowl because the good eating, the stuff that we can take in to good nutritious benefit for our spiritual lives, is found in the lettuce. In fact, there are 13 "lettuce" statements in the book:

Hebrews 4:1 Let us be careful to not fall short of entering God's rest.

Hebrews 4:11 Let us make every effort to enter that rest.

Hebrews 4:14 Let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.

Hebrews 4:16 Let us approach God's throne of grace with confidence.

Hebrews 6:1 Let us be taken forward to maturity.

Hebrews 12:1 Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles.

Hebrews 12:1 Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

Hebrews 12:28 Let us be thankful, and worship God acceptably with reverence and awe.

Hebrews 13:13 Let us, then, go to Jesus outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore.

Hebrews 13:15 Let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name.

Now, I apologize if you do not read the Bible in English. That analogy only works in English. Why do I tell you that? I tell you that in hopes that you will read the book of

Hebrews on your own time. That's why I tell you that about the structure of the book of Hebrews and the bookending of the words of the House of God and those seven chapters in the middle.

These, "Let us" passages are the meat of the book of Hebrews. They are the place you go for the application of these things. I hope that you will notice those things as you read the book of Hebrews and you will find your way to understanding in the book of Hebrews on your own time.

And of course, in addition, to those ten, today's text has three additional "Let us" statements. Let's read those again from chapter 10.

Hebrews 10:22 Let us approach with a true heart and full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Hebrews 10:23 Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful.

Hebrews 10:24 And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds.

Here is a concise way to looking at these three things may be to look at them as: one points up; one points down; and one points out.

First of all, one points up, and speaks to us of our approach to God (v22), "Let us approach God confidently". Looking at these ideas in reverse order, he says first of all that we are to approach God with our bodies were washed with pure water. He's referring to our baptisms, that time when our bodies were washed with water. At your baptism, the reverend put water on you, it sealed the fact that in the heavenly sanctuary, your hearts were being sprinkled clean with the blood of Jesus. The third point that he mentions here. This is a reference to the fact that the old covenant was made and maintained by the sprinkling of animal blood on the people just like that. But the new covenant was made and maintained by the sprinkling of Jesus' blood upon our hearts. And we, accepting that fact, may approach God with confidence, in full assurance we're told here. And the best part? We can approach God with true hearts and cleansed consciences. The writer does not say that we're supposed to wait until our hearts are true and our consciences are clean before we can offer God. No, we are to approach God as we are knowing that God, by the perfect sacrifice of His son, has cleansed your conscience and given you a heart that is true.

Does this describe you this morning? Do you have a true heart and a clean conscience? Or are you focused on what you did wrong yesterday, or the person you hurt years ago, or the person that hurt you? What is on offer this morning from this text is a clear

conscience. But there is nothing you can do on your own to obtain it, because Jesus has already done it all for you!

All you need is faith to receive it.

So that is the upward pointing part. The next part looks downward, to a solid foundation where we're told to "hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering." That confession is based on the fact that "the one who promised is faithful." Again, it's not us, but it's the one who has promised, the one who is faithful. Promise is a really big word in the Epistle of Hebrews; look it up when you get home. The promises which are referred to are about the new covenant in Jesus' blood, as stated in chapter 8, quoting the great 31st chapter of Jeremiah:

I will put my laws in their minds,
and write them on their hearts,
and I will be their God,
and they shall be my people.
And they shall not teach one another
or say to each other, "Know the Lord",
for they shall all know me,
from the least of them to the greatest.
For I will be merciful towards their iniquities,
and I will remember their sins no more.'

We have these really great promises made rock solid not because we are good and faithful, for we are neither good nor faithful, really. We have them because the one who has promised them is faithful. And that is all that we need.

In just a moment we will have a candidate for deacon standing before us and making promises, based on confessions of personal faith. Those confessions of faith are not original today; they refer back to his original profession of faith which he made in the presence of witnesses many years ago. If you are a member of this church, you too have made a profession of faith. That profession hopefully was not to a set of doctrinal statements but was a profession of saving faith in the person of the Son of God. The call of this text is to hold fast to that confession, without wavering, because Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. The faith that you professed when you were a teenager (for example) is the faith you need on your deathbed and is the faith you need today, because the object of our faith, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, does not change.

Let me ask you, are you wavering in your faith? Do you wonder if you will be able to maintain your original profession of faith until the day you die? Return again to the promises that God has made to you when you confessed faith in Him:

“I know you and you know me.”

“I am your God; you are my people.”

“I will write my law on you heart.”

“I am merciful toward your iniquities.”

“I will remember your sins no more.”

But of course Christians do waver. So, when you see someone wavering, help them along. Give them a hand. Point them again to the promises of the One who is faithful.

So that is the upward and the downward. Third and finally, we have the outward. We are called here to “love and to good deeds,” obviously not two separate things, but good deeds that are done in love. The NT is clear: if we have faith, it will be shown in love and good deeds. Faith without deeds is dead. Good deeds done without love are nothing.

This is the only place in the Bible where we are given permission to “provoke” one another. So enjoy it. That word provoke is always used elsewhere in the Bible used negatively; it means just that, to push, incite, to spur one another on as with a horse. But before you put your spurs on this morning, let me just say that a better sense of the meaning of this verse comes by a slight moving of the words “one another”.

The verse in our Pew Bibles reads like this;

“Let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds.”

But if we change it just a little bit, we’ll get the real sense of the meaning from the Greek, which is,

“Let us consider one another, how to provoke to love and good deeds.”

You get the change. Before we provoke, we consider one another. In other words, give due consideration to that other person before you decide to provoke them. We must take care not to hurt one another in your spurring. We must consider the best way to motivate one another to doing loving good deeds.

But you get the point. Sometimes we lack love and sometimes we lack action. Sometimes we need to be reminded, gently or not so gently, that loving action is needed on our part in the house of God.

So there is the lettuce: upward, downward and outward. That is a pretty good charge for our Deacons, and it is a very good charge for all of us who constitute the house of God.

And the wonderful message of the gospel is that God has put that three-fold thrust together for us in the cross of His Son looking upward, looking downward, looking outward..

So, how according to this text are we to practically live out this three-fold thrust? The writer ends with two very good reminders: don't neglect to meet together, and encourage one another. Looking at these in reverse order, we all need encouragement. I know I need encouragement some days more than others, and I know you need encouragement some days more than others. Looking around this room; there is definitely someone here today that needs your encouragement. Needs for someone to encourage them either in their upwards, downward or outward faith practice. Some of you are better encouragers than others. Some of you are really good encouragers, but we can all do it in some fashion, can't we? The writer says here that this encouragement should be expanding more and more until the day of the Lord Jesus' return, that glorious day. But like a snowball rolling down a hill, it should just keep building up because more and more encouragement is needed.

But how can we encourage one another if we don't see one another? All of the confidence that the writer speaks of in this passage is meant to bring us together, physically together, not to give us a reason or an excuse to neglect the other members of the house. It is true as it is said that "Half of life is just showing up." Do you know how much of an encouragement it is that you showed up today or that you show up on any Sunday morning? Do not ever think that your presence here is not needed! Do you know how much more encouragement you can offer by being here than by not being here? And, so when you come, you come not for yourself, but you come not for your own edification, and you come not for your own feeding, but you come willing and ready to encourage someone else in the upward, downward or outward practices of their faith. You can do it because there's somebody who needs you to do so.

So, deacons, I encourage you to work your work as deacons with this passage in mind. In your service to this church, go first and always to prayer, in prayer to the holy place of God, relying on the work of our Great High Priest, asking for God's strength to help you and to help the person you are serving. Go back again to the solid foundation of the faith profession that you made, and to your calling as a deacon, which is based not on human qualification but on our faithful Lord in the grace that he provides. And then always be diligent in good deeds done in love.

And for the rest of us, let's remember who we are. We are bricks, built together, brick by brick into God's house. "The builder of all things is God," and he builds us into His house, a house where His Spirit is pleased not just to dwell, but to fill.

To God be the glory, always.

