

Hebrews 2025 | Draw Near to God. Draw Near to Each Other.

Chris Lawrence
Hebrews 10:19-25

Today we are continuing on in the book of Hebrews and we're going to be covering Hebrews chapter 10, verses 19 through 25. You know, we're at the end of the year and it's time to reflect. One of the things that the Lord has blessed me with is key people in my life at the turning points of my life. If I look back, I'm from a small town called Vienna, Illinois. I came to Christ at a very early age but then when eighth grade year hit, I graduated the eighth grade and there was this time between the eighth grade and going off to high school. That was a choosing time for me. What path am I going to pick? How am I going to live my life? There were a few guys that were older than me by about three or four years and I was hanging out with them that summer between eighth and ninth grade year.

There was on guy in particular that was named Luke. Luke was my next door neighbor growing up. I knew Luke really, really well but at the beginning of that summer something happened. Luke became a Christian and I saw something within him. All of a sudden, after he came to Christ, he started drawing near to God but not just drawing near to God. I saw him take steps of faith where he was holding onto the promises of God. During that summer, Luke not only came to Christ but a few friends came to Christ as well that were his age and they let me tag along with them. I started noticing something. How they talked and how they acted was different. They were actually stirring one another up to live for Christ.

Now fast forward and four years later I graduated Vienna High School and it's my first weekend at Murray State University. One of those friends of Luke's that came to Christ was a guy named Tim Bundren and on my very first Saturday at Murray State, Tim invited me to Hardin Baptist Church. Again, I was at another turning point in my life. I could have gone down two different paths but by getting connected to this church and having deep relationships within this church I started seeing something. I saw

people drawing near to God, holding onto the promises of God, and stirring one another up to love and good deeds. I can't thank God enough for the people he has put in my life to keep me on that path.

Now, why do I say all of that? Because where we are in the book of Hebrews is similar. They are at a turning point. So much has been said about who Christ is and what he has done for them but this church has, is, and will be going through very difficult times. Their turning point is this- are they going to go back to their old ways or are they going to continue to trust in Christ? What the author of Hebrews is basically saying is that you need to draw near to God and you need to continue to draw near to each other so that you will continue to draw near to God and that is the title of the sermon this morning: "Draw Near to God. Draw Near to Each Other."

As we pick up in verse 19 this morning there are some key words that I want you to notice this morning. First is the word "since." S-I-N-C-E. That word is going to be used twice and it's going to be a foundation for what is said next. There are also three "let us" statements. L-E-T-U-S. Those "let us" statements are going to be the application, the exhortation this morning based on everything that has been said in the book of Hebrews.

Scripture:

Hebrews 10:19-25 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, 20 by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 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. 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 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.

For us to really understand what it means to draw near to God we have to ask some questions. Point number one- draw near to God. Here are the questions. The first is the classic Ricky Cunningham question- what is the

therefore there for? Then after that we want to know this- who can draw near to God? What are we drawing near to? Then lastly, how can we draw near to God?

First question- what is the therefore there for? Now usually when we're talking about this it's the previous verses but I don't think it's just the previous verses here. I'm saying it's going all the way back to Hebrews chapter 1, verse 1. Basically everything that has been said, the author is now trying to make this point. Now therefore, what do we want you to do? Draw near to God.

Next question- who can draw near to God? It says this, "Therefore, brothers..." It could also say brothers and sisters. It's saying all Christians. If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, the good news for you this morning is that you can draw near to God.

Next question- what are we drawing near to? "Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places..." The words, "draw near" are used several times in the book of Hebrews. If you look in Hebrews chapter 4 it talks about drawing near to the throne of grace. In Hebrews chapter 7 the writer says you can draw near to God. In Hebrews chapter 11 it says that as you draw near to God in faith you actually receive rewards. Here and later on in Hebrews chapter 11 we will learn there is a heavenly city that is awaiting us. We are able to draw near to God. We are able to draw near to the throne of grace. We are able to draw near to himself. We are able to draw near to a place where we receive rewards in a heavenly, angelic city that we cannot possibly imagine how great it is. That is what we're drawing near to.

Next question- how can we draw near to God? "Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places..." What does it mean to be confident? It means you're bold. Let's think through being confident in life. One of the things I see several times a year with college ministry is a young man who will come up to me and he will want to have lunch with me. They always ask me the same question- I like somebody, what do I do? He wants to ask a young lady on a date. Now, occasionally I have what we call insider information. Insider information is this- I have been tipped off that there is no way in the world that he has a shot. I know this

and I have to be careful because I still want to encourage him, help him, and help him take a step of faith. I will tell this young man, "Go for it, but you might be on a suicide mission." The young man, with confidence, approaches the young lady and asks her on a date. Why? To draw near to her. And she confidently says no. Think of another example. Maybe you've been on a job interview and maybe you've confidently walked into that job interview but your resume wasn't good enough.

See, here is the good news this morning on how we're drawing near to God. It's not based on what you look like and it's not based on what your resume says. It's based on what the next few words of this verse say, "Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places..." By what? "... by the blood of Jesus." No matter what you've done, no matter what is on your resume, no matter what is done to you, and no matter what you've been through in your life, if you're a follower of Jesus Christ the blood has been applied to you and you can confidently draw near to him.

Now, let's flesh this out and look at this a little more. "Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, 20 by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God." So we have the word "since" twice and both are describing how we draw near to God. We draw near to God by Jesus being the sacrifice. We draw near to God by Jesus being the high priest.

We've hit on this before, but we're going to hit on it again. Let's give context. In the Old Testament, the privilege that God's people had, the nation of Israel, had a house- God's house. They had a temple and it was awesome because they could draw near to that temple up to a point but then there was this place called the Holy of Holies and only the high priest would go in and he could only go in for a short period of time. Even when he went in there had to be a cloud around the mercy seat. Why? Because of their sin. Even though God wants relationship with them, they have sinned. They have messed up and because they have sinned and messed up there is a gap between that relationship so the high priest comes, representing and advocating for the people, to give a sacrifice, to put blood on the mercy seat. Why? So that their sins can be dealt with and they can

have relationship with God. It's a whole ordeal and process and it was taken very, very seriously. So God's people could get to the temple but they couldn't get to the Holy of Holies because of their sin and what Jesus has done by the blood, through his flesh, that curtain that represented the divide of the Holy of Holies has now been torn and because it's been torn we can enter in confidentially and have access to God.

Here are two illustrations to really think through this and to really draw this out and see how mind blowing this would be for the people of this church when they hear this statement.

Illustration number one, I have this friend who I grew up with all my life. We went to church together, went to grade school together, and we went to high school together. His name is Lance. Lance, from a very early age, was into politics. By the second or third grade he was watching the news. He goes off to law school and works on all these campaigns including presidential campaigns. If you turn on CNN, Fox News, or MSNBC, three or four nights of the week he is on one of those stations participating in those panels where the Republicans and Democrats are debating. He's one of those guys.

Now, not to be out done, his sister is now an FBI agent. I have lunch with Lance about once a year and it's like listening to a movie when he's talking. It's crazy! Lance was telling me this story. Ashley, his sister, before she was an FBI agent was in the secret service during the early 2000s when President Obama was in office. She is a secret service agent at the White House, calls Lance and says, "Lance, you can be in the White House with me and see President Obama get on Marine One." Lance is extremely conservative but Lance said, "Wrong party. Right opportunity." Meaning this- even though he's not part of the party of President Obama he's not going to turn down the chance to see the president, the most powerful person in the world. So he goes into the White House which is unbelievable itself but he goes into the White House, he's on the second floor and his sister, Ashley, is right there on the second floor with him with her secret service earpiece in and she gets the message that President Obama was coming.

Remember, there is a ceiling. Lance is on the second floor and President Obama is on the first floor. There is a divide. Then Ashley gets a message, she looks over at Lance and says, "Lance, the President of the United States is a few feet away from you right now." Then Lance said he could smell Marine One. He could see it all. Then, for a few moments, he was just a few feet away from the president with a ceiling dividing them. Then Ashley gets another message and says, "Lance, here he goes." Then the door opens up and President Obama and Michelle Obama make the walk to Marine One.

Here is the illustration and the point. God's people in the Old Testament could get to the house, not the White House, but God's house up to a point. There was a divide. There was a wall. If my friend, Lance, would have tried going through the divide to walk with President Obama it would not have been good. If God's people would have gone through the Holy of Holies it would not have been good. Jesus has torn down that divide. We now have access not just to the outer parts of the house but to the whole house of God.

Illustration number two. There was an NFL practice going on and this NFL team has a lot of media and security. There was a lot of stuff going on around the field and this 10 year-old boy was riding his bike all over the practice facility. All of a sudden he decides he's actually going to go on to the field and enter the practice facility. He's riding his bike, getting ready to go onto the field and the media and security team yells, "STOP! STOP!" The little boy yells, "HEY, DAD! LET ME IN!" Then, all of a sudden, the head coach of the NFL team looks and sees his son and says, "Come on in." Now, all of a sudden, the little 10 year-old boy has access to what? Everything.

Here's the point- because of what Jesus has done for us on the cross, because of Jesus advocating for us, we don't have access to the White House and we don't have access to the NFL practice facility, but we have access to the holy places. We have access to that heavenly city not because of what we've done but because of what He has done for us and we should not take that lightly. In Leviticus chapter 16, Aaron's sons died because they drew near to God in the wrong way. But because of the death of Jesus we no longer have to worry about dying when we approach

the Lord. That has been taken care of and we can come to Him. And because of that, what is the application? That leads us to the "let us." Let us do what? "Let us draw near." Draw near to God in what way? "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."

First, what does this verse mean? The priest, during this time period, during the Old Testament would have had this long process where they would literally have to take a bath to prepare to go into the Holy of Holies. Then when they would do that they would sprinkle blood on the mercy seat to represent the people here and this process was the only way for them to go into the Holy of Holies. What this verse is saying that this process is done. I was reading Leviticus chapter 14 last night and it talked about all the different steps that had to be done for a leper to be clean. Imagine a leper during this time period and hearing this verse. There is no more cleansing. You can just walk right in by the blood of Jesus Christ. The good news is if you're feeling like a leper this morning, if you're feeling like an outcast, the blood of Jesus can be applied to you and no matter what your situation is you can dwell and enter in and walk confidently and have a relationship with Jesus Christ.

The next question is this. If this is true, if we can really draw near not to the White House, not to the NFL facility, but to God himself in the holy places then why does not everybody do that? Why are we not all just trying to draw near to be with God all the time? I think this verse really talks about it. See, what are we clean from? What has happened? We've had a heart change and that heart change has led to our evil conscience being dealt with by the blood of Jesus.

I think about a group of guys that I've been meeting with. I love these guys and I've been sharing with them and talking with them about what it means to be a follower of Christ. We've walked through the gospel and they understand it. They're not doubting Jesus rising from the dead. It's Jesus being the master of their life, of really wanting to follow and live for him. One night I was having a conversation with the guys and asked, "Guys, what is holding you back?" I was talking to a room of 20 to 25 guys. I said, "Let's just play this out." I grabbed two chairs and say, "Here

is chair number one and here is chair number two. Chair number one is where you continue to live exactly how you live. It's all about you. Yes, you agree that Jesus rose from the dead but you're going to live for your sin and live for yourself. Chair number two is where you're going to surrender, repent, and make Jesus master of your life. He is the center. He is the Lord of your life. We've walked through all of this and we know there are challenges with both chairs. Practically speaking, if you stay in chair one what happens to your organization? It's probably going to be more chaotic because everybody is living for themselves." Now, I'm just asking the questions and they are the ones giving me the feedback.

Next I said, "How many of you want to get married?" They all raised their hands. I said, "What type of wife will you get? If you're going to be selfish then you're probably going to be looking in places that are not good and you're probably going to pick up another selfish wife so what is your marriage going to be like? Probably not good."

Next, "What type of job are you going to pick? You're probably going to pick a job that gives you the most money and it's all about you. What is that going to be like? Well, you're probably not going to be happy. You're just going to trying to make money and that's it."

Next, "Are you going to have kids?" They all say, "Yes." "Ok, what type of father will you be? You're probably going to be a father that is just concerned about your job and maybe interested in the kids when it benefits you. Is that going to be good? No, it's not going to be good."

Next, "What will retirement be like? You'll probably have some regrets. You'll try to figure out how to fill the void somehow possibly."

Next, "Ok, what happens when you die?" They all say, "We go to hell."

Next, we switch sides. I say, "Ok, that is chair number one. Chair number two you repent and come to Christ. What happens to this organization?" They say, "It gets better because we are being like Jesus and being selfless."

Next, "Okay you want to get married." They say, "Yes, and we'd probably go to church and be around different types of girls. We would probably find a better wife that would make our lives better."

Next, "Okay, what type of father will you be?" They say, "We would be fathers that actually love our children and be there for our children."

Next, "Okay, what type of job will you have?" They say, "We'll probably want a job that feels us with some type of purpose."

Next, "Okay, what will retirement be like?" They say, "Well retirement will be good because we're probably taking care of our family and we're going to have some great memories."

Next, "Then what happens when you die?" They say, "We got to heaven."

I just asked, "What is holding you back? You know the gospel. You know the difference in chair one and chair two. Why do you not want Christ?" One guy raised his hand and said this. "It's just easier to stay in our sin. It's easier to stay right here. It's easier to hide. It's easier to dwell right here." I said, "But he's died for you! Do you understand what you're saying? He's cleaned you up. You don't have to clean your act up. You just follow him." Another guy who did not know how profound he was said, "Chris, listening to all of this, we need a heart change."

We need a heart change. That's why the world does not come to Christ. It's because we have hearts that are filled with sin and we need a heart change. The good news for those who are in Christ this morning is this- when we came to Christ our hearts were changed. Christ did purify our hearts. We don't have to have an evil conscience. We don't have to hide. All of that sin has been dealt with at the cross. Now we can walk with full assurance and faith being washed, not outwardly, but inwardly because of what Christ has done. But here is the lie, the lie is this- when we fall back into sin, when we struggle, we go back to chair one. We start believing lies that we can't or don't want to draw near to God. I believe this can be the hardest part of your day- opening up the Bible. There are some days you just don't feel like it and you just don't want to open up the book. There are just some days where you are really, really busy and you don't

want to open it up. There are some days where you fall, you sin, you feel condemned, and you don't want to open it up. The point here is this- the enemy, his forces, and the world would rather you do anything except draw near to God. Sometimes I tell college students that he'd rather you clean your dorm room instead of drawing near to God.

So we know these two realities. One, we have this awesome privilege that we can do what? Draw near to him! Be with him and experience his glory. Yet, at the same time, there is a battle going on which leads us into the second "let us" statement in verse 23, "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful." We need to hold on. Piper says we HUG onto the promises of God, continuing to believe them.

Here we are with this amazing privilege to draw near to him but life is still hard. There are still temptations. There are still challenges. There are still issues that go on that we have to deal with. This Christmas Eve I had a couple different phone calls. One phone call was from a young man who had a family situation. There was no answer. There was nothing I could say to take away the pain for the situation. It was a horrible situation. I had another phone call with someone who is now following Jesus Christ and she's receiving backlash from her family. This is happening on Christmas Eve! There was nothing I could say to help take away the pain that those two people were feeling in that moment. Again, this was happening on Christmas Eve, the day before Christmas. We're supposed to be getting gifts, laughing, and eating but those situations were reminders of what Christmas is all about. In the midst of suffering and in the midst of questions that we don't have answers to we have hope. A baby was born a little over 2,000 years ago and died on a cross for our sins. He shed his blood and no matter what this world throws at us, the good news is we can do what? Hold on, continue to confess him, and draw near to him.

Now, with all of that being said about drawing near to God, that leads me to point number two. What can we do? We can draw near to each other. That leads us to the third "let us statement in verse 24, "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works." Let's think through this. "Let us consider..." What does the word "consider" mean? If I invite somebody to church and they say, "I'll consider it," what are they

saying? They're saying they're thinking about it. They're pondering. This verse is saying let us *think* to do what? Let us consider to stir one another to love and good deeds. So what does that mean? What does it mean to stir?

So I have a confession to make. I am guilty of something and I'm guilty of this. I am a pot stirrer. What does it mean to be a pot stirrer? It means that I say something or do something and it gets a response. So let's say I am with a group of young men and I say, "Tell me something. Who is better, Michael Jordan or LeBron James?" If I'm with the right group of guys what happens? Voices start to rise, emotions start to come out, and people have been what? Stirred up!

Stirring up could be something negative but in this case stirring up means what? It's positive! It means when you are drawing near to God and holding onto the confession of the hope you have in Christ it leads to you wanting to draw near to people and stir them up. Why? Because you want to stir them up and fire them up so that it leads to love and good deeds that they continue to draw near to God. What does this mean? It means you're thinking about, you're pondering on how to stir up the people in all the key relationships that you have. You may wonder, how do you stir them up? Well let's read the next phrase in the next verse. Verse 25 says this, "not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some..." So some people would say that is referring to church. That is right. I hope that when you come here and you hear Kory, Ricky, Chase, or myself that you're stirred up, that you want to draw near to God, and that you want to hold onto the promises of God but yet at the same time, it's not just that you're listening to the sermons. This is in each other. This means that because of the access we have to God, because of God changing our hearts and lives, we're pondering and thinking about each and every single relationship in our life. That means that whether your children are 3, 13, or 33, you're considering, you're thinking about how to stir them up towards love and good deeds. That means that in your marriage you're not just thinking about what button to push with your spouse to get him or her fired up at you. No, it means that you're thinking, you're considering how to stir them up to love and good deeds. It means you do that same thing with the people you're working with and the people in this congregation. You could be here right now or you could be listening online

but there is just something special about being here in person, being here together and not just hearing the sermon but being together and being stirred up and stirring up one another.

I think back to the Hardin Marriage Conference that we had this last fall and this point really hit home for me. Brandi and I were really busy. We had a lot going on but we went. Do you know what? The talks were outstanding! Korey and Katie were amazing! I felt so encouraged. But, if I'm being honest, someone could have recorded those talks and Brandi and I could have listened. Do you know what made it even better though? It's not just hearing the talks. We drew near to each other and we had good conversation. Do you know what made it even better? We had breakfast, lunch, and supper with people from this church. We were fellowshipping together and guess what? We left that conference stirred up!

The thought here is that week in and week out you're not coming here just to hear the sermon. Yes, you should come here to hear the sermon but you're also coming here whether it be in Sunday School, Precept, a D Group, or men's group and you're coming to meet with God in such a way where you're stirring one another up to love and good deeds and not neglecting it. I think that is what happens with people who have fallen in their faith and they've fallen hard. That is where it starts! I've had so many conversations with folks where I've wondered what happened and how they got to that point. Do you know what happened? They stopped meeting with people that were stirring them up. They stopped meeting with God and then all of a sudden they find themselves in a very hard and difficult situation.

Now, what this passage is saying is not that we just continue to stir it up but that we encourage one another constantly. Why? The verse says, "all the more as you see the Day drawing near." As we enter into 2026 there are going to be some days that are hard and we're going to need encouragement and to be stirred up. The friends and family that we love most are also going to have some days. Do you know what? They're going to need to be stirred up. They're going to need to be encouraged. This church is going to go through it. The verses that follow this section tell us that they're going to go through extreme persecution. Do you know what they need? When that day hits they need to be stirred up but there

is another day and that day is coming when Jesus comes back. As we continue to draw near to Him hug, hold onto the promises of God, and stir one another. It's going to be worth it.

This stage means a lot to me and I'll tell you why. A little over 15 years ago on a beautiful October day I walked down and my wife who was my girlfriend at the time walked down. I was down here, got down on one knee, and proposed. Then I had to wait. The good news is she said yes. What does that mean? I can now draw near to who? Her! For how long? For the rest of our lives. When? Well that was October but my wedding date was February 5th. I had to wait for the day. That day comes and it was unbelievable. Again, I was standing right here, Brandi was right beside me, and Brother Ricky was here between us. That day was so worth it. It was an out of body experience to see my bride come down the aisle but if I can be honest from October until February as I was waiting for the day there were some days. There were some cold December and January days. I just wanted to draw near to my wife! I just wanted to day to be here but there were some days. What was such an encouragement and blessing to me was during those days where I continued to draw near to God and hold onto the promises because the wait was going to be worth it, I had some Godly people in my life that were stirring me up to get me ready for the day. When the day finally came it was so worth it. Now it's been almost 15 years and each day gets better and better and better.

I got married when I was 31 years old. Do you know how many times I was asked when I would get married? The day finally came. It was so good and it just gets better and better and better. Now what's the point? So many days are going to come not only in 2026 but in the days, weeks, months, and years to come that in the midst of this amazing privilege that we can draw near to God that are going to be hard whether it be finances, health, family, or unexpected horrible event. Maybe you take a step of faith and receive backlash because of your faith. Whatever it might be, those days will come but when those long, hard, difficult days come, do you know what you need to do? Draw near to God. Do you know what you need to do? Continue on to the confessions of hope that you have in Jesus Christ. You need to be continue to be stirred up by the body of Christ and encourage one another as the day draws near.

You're at a turning point and if you're not now you will be. That turning point is going to test you and you can go one direction and slowly drift away from what Christ has done for you or you can be at a turning point and no matter what you've done or what is done to you, the good news is you can draw near to Him and not just draw near to him. You've received access to everything in his kingdom. You continue to hold onto those promises and we believe those promises to be true and based on that truth, based on that reality, that means in 2026 there should be a commitment in this church to do what? Stir one another up. Live for him in such a way that we continue to live out love and good deeds encouraging one another as we see the day drawing near.

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