

The Christian's Advent Resolution Let Us Draw Near.

Text: Heb 10:19-25

Suggested Hymns:

498, 304, 423, 284, 109

1) In full assurance of faith

2) In steadfast confession of our hope

3) In mutual encouragement to love and good works

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Hebrews 10:19-25, ¹⁹ *Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus,* ²⁰ *by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh,* ²¹ *and having a High Priest over the house of God,* ²² *let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled 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 one another in order to stir up love and good works,* ²⁵ *not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

“The Day is approaching.” We are looking forward to the blessed Christmas Festival. Advent is upon us, and soon we shall again hasten to Bethlehem to adore our Saviour and King, whose coming in the flesh was the pledge of our redemption. Our redemption is now accomplished, and therefore we have the annual feast of Jesus Nativity. Remember that Advent is a time of preparation.

From His heavenly throne Jesus Christ will return to earth; not in lowliness but in glory. ***“We see the Day approaching,”*** which is the day of the revelation of His glory. The entire New Testament age is an Advent season and we look for His second coming in the clouds of heaven. Will we be accounted worthy to

stand before Him in the day of His glory? Let us always be ready for His coming.

A new year of grace has dawned on us, and in order that it may help serve the purpose of bringing us closer to Jesus at whose right hand we desire to stand in that great Day, let us make *the Advent resolve to draw near to Him*, thus heeding the exhortation of our text. Let Us Draw Near! May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. Let Us Draw Near In Full Assurance Of Faith

Our text begins, *Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest*. This means that we have, therefore, boldness to enter into the Holiest, the gracious and glorious presence of God. Religion is worthless if it does not give sinful men an approach to God. The Gospel alone enables man to enter into communion with God *“by the blood of Jesus.”*

This is a reference to Old Testament worship. *“The Holiest”* was the sanctuary in the Temple that contained the Ark of the Covenant and the mercy-seat with the overshadowing cherubim. To enter was to appear in the presence of God. It was the special privilege of the high priest, and even he must not enter without sacrificial blood in his hands. So *“By the blood of Jesus”* we may enter into *“the Holiest”* with cheerful courage and in full assurance.

The blood of Jesus is a *“new and living way.”* The Old Testament never saw such a sacrifice as that on Calvary; hence it is “new.” It is a *“living way”* because it is the fulfilment of the typical sacrifices; and especially because it is in contrast to the dead way of man’s own works and righteousness, man-made religions, and human philosophy. The blood of Jesus alone avails *“to purge the conscience from dead works,”* as we read in Heb. 9:14, and to impart righteousness and life.

This new and living way Jesus *“consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh”* As the veil had to be passed through in order to enter the Holiest Place, so the weak, human, suffering flesh of Christ’s humanity [which veiled His Godhead] had to be passed through by Him in entering the heavenly holiest place for us.

By His active and passive obedience Christ has prepared free and unrestricted access to God for us. Not only is Jesus our Mediator, who has opened the way into the Holiest by His blood, but He is also our Forerunner, who, passing through the veil, has gone before and consecrated, and inaugurated, the way in which we should confidently follow Him.

In the sanctuary of heaven ***“we have a High Priest*** (lit. a Great Priest) ***over the house of God.***” The sanctuary, the Holiest, to which we Christians have access, is not empty, as was the Holiest of the Jewish Temple after the Babylonian Captivity, but we have Jesus there as our Great Priest. Exalted above every kind of priesthood, our Great Priest is the only one qualified to make atonement for sin on earth and intercession for us in heaven.

Jesus pleads His work for us, His holy obedience, His sinless life, His suffering, agony, pain, and death. Should not this give us confidence to draw near? Do we hesitate to approach a person when we know that because of the pleas of another he is well-disposed toward us? Could any pleas be more effective than those of our Great Priest?

So let us draw near, ***“having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”*** By faith in Christ’s blood we have the forgiveness of sin and are justified before God, so that neither fear nor shame need keep us from coming to God.

“Sprinkled” and ***“pure water”*** point to the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. Baptism is a “pure” water, because of God’s Word, in and with the water, it cleanses the soul. We read in Acts 22:16, ¹⁶ ***‘And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.’***

Moreover, just as the water is an external means that touches our body, so the body which is united with the soul apprehends Baptism as it is able to grasp it, hence, the entire man is clean in God’s sight, and may come into His presence.¹ Baptism effects what the ceremonial washings of the Old Testament typified.

Therefore, ***“let us draw near in full assurance of faith,”*** without doubting, without hesitation, without embarrassment, and without fear. The ***“true heart”***

in which this faith should dwell denotes sincerity and uprightness, the opposite of pretence and formalism.

We have drawn near in the past, so let us resolve, as we look into the new year, to enter into still closer communion with Jesus by more diligent, faithful use of His Word and the Sacraments, and by greater urgency and fervency in prayer. Let us conform our lives more closely to His will. Let us draw near to receive the fullness of blessings which are always flowing from Christ, to become partakers of them in greater measure than in the past, that we may finally attain to the fullness of blessings that will crown us in heaven.

2. Let Us Draw Near In Steadfast Confession Of Our Hope

Our text continues, *“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering.”*

We Christians hold a glorious hope. By Baptism we were begotten again to a lively hope. Listen to the wonderful words of hope in 1 Peter 1:3-4, *³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.*

And this hope is eternal as we read in 2 Corinthians 4:18, *we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.* And in Philippians 3:20 we read that *our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Faith foresees the day when the body, raised from the dead and glorified, shall be reunited with the soul, freed from all sin and its deplorable consequences. When our bodies are transformed into the image of God, we shall enter upon the fruition of our inheritance among those who are sanctified.

This hope we confess, and our confession should be held without wavering. We are always in danger of surrendering hope because the Devil and the world ridicule it. They try to make us ashamed of it, to silence our affirmation, confirmation and confession of it, and to wrest it from us by force.

There is danger, too, from within. Trials and afflictions may shake our trust in God and make us waver in our faith and the confession of our hope. The apostle has in mind especially the inward affliction when God hides His face and the light of hope grows dim. The Psalmist says in Psalm 88:14, *“LORD, why do You cast off my soul? Why do You hide Your face from me?”* Then think of Abraham, Job, David, and Daniel.

Our text encourages us to hold the confession of our hope unbending by assuring us that *He who promised is faithful*. God cannot deceive, or disappoint. If He has promised, He will also make good. Has God promised that which we hope for? Certainly. Is not the entire Gospel one grand promise of everlasting life? God who fulfilled His promises to the saints of the Old Covenant will fulfil also His promises to us.

A new year is before us. Let us draw near to our Lord in steadfast confession of our hope, courageously confess it, in the hour of trial, delve deeper into the meaning of His promises, more fully appreciate His faithfulness, and look more steadfastly on the things that are not seen. Then the year will mean spiritual progress for us, and will mark a drawing nearer to Him.

3. Let Us Draw Near

In Mutual Encouragement To Love And Good Works

The apostle has spoken of faith and hope. He now adds the third member of the triad: love. *And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works.*

Faith should be confessed before men and demonstrated by love and good works. Love to God is reflected in active love to man.

Christians should encourage, incite, and exhort, one another to love and good works. The flesh opposes and impedes the evidence and fruits of faith. For that reason Christians should be helpful to one another in promoting knowledge and understanding of God's will and the practice of knowledge. Christians are responsible for one another.

The salvation of my fellow-Christian must be of real concern to me. Where I find him deficient in knowledge, I should seek to instruct him; and where I find practice lagging behind his knowledge, I should exhort. It is not easy, but rather difficult and trying. Hence the breakdown of brotherly admonition in many

congregations and the consequent decline of Christian life and love and good works.

It is an alarming symptom when Christians begin to avoid the fellowship and association of their Christian brethren. The apostle writes in our text, “*Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is.*” The writer is thinking not only of the assemblies of Christians for public worship, but every kind of Christian gathering. The Christian who avoids social, and religious discussion with his fellow-Christians makes mutual exhortation difficult, yes, impossible, and endangers his spiritual welfare.

Public worship is important because it is fellowship where instruction, warning, admonition, and encouragement are imparted. Christians should exhort one another to faithfulness in attending church, admonish one another frankly with respect to failings, so that the reproof is not lightly shaken off, but causes a searching of the heart, repentance, and amendment.

Let us draw near in mutual encouragement to love and good works. The new year is a year of grace, but also a year of opportunity. Mindful of the relationship between faith and good works, we should ourselves abound in good works and remember our responsibility for our fellow-Christian who needs correction and encouragement.

For our own part, we should thankfully accept admonition that aims at our betterment. Thus we draw near to the Lord, and in drawing near we shall find incentive and inspiration to discharge more faithfully our mutual obligations.

The apostle reinforces his exhortation with a reference to the Lord’s return “*and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*” The thought of the Lord’s return should fill our hearts with solemn zeal and holy eagerness to achieve for the Lord, what in view of the shortness of time, can be achieved.

As we ponder the new year of grace, with its possibilities and opportunities, let us pray, using the words of the hymnist,²

O Father, draw me to my Saviour,
That He again may draw me unto Thee;
Thy Spirit guide my whole behaviour,
And rule both sense and reason thus in me
That, Lord, Thy peace from me may ne’er depart,

But wake sweet melodies within my heart.

O joy! my hope and trust are founded
On His sure Word and witness in the heart.
I know Thy mercies are unbounded,
And all good gifts Thou freely wilt impart;
Nay, more is lavished by Thy bounteous hand
That I can ask or seek or understand. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ *Trigl.*, 743, 46.

² Hymn 423, 2, 5