

Hebrews 10:19-22

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We are empowered to live the new resurrected life of Christ through entering God's presence. Christ is our priest, and He makes our hearts clean and pure by faith.

Now that the Pauline Author has thoroughly argued and proven that Jesus is the superior priest and sacrifice, and that the New Covenant He has established is superior to the old, the epistle to the Hebrews turns to how we can apply this knowledge.

Because of Christ's work, we can approach God in a way that was never before thought possible: *We have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh* (v 19–20). In the Old Testament, the priests interceded for the people's sins, going to God at particular times in the Tabernacle and the Temple. And only the high priest could go into the most holy place. But now, Christ, *through His flesh and by the blood of Jesus* (through His death and resurrection as a man), *inaugurated* this *new and living way*, where we can confidently ask for forgiveness from God directly.

Each believer can, by faith, go with *confidence to enter the holy place* in heaven and receive cleansing for our consciences. As the *great priest over the house of God* (v 21), Jesus restored our relationship with God, and there's no more need to rely on religious practice. Our relationship with God is direct and is unique and personal for every believer. We can and should *draw near* (v 22) to the *house of God*, so that we can gain a clean conscience, and walk in faith. We can persevere in our lives here on earth, even through suffering and hardship.

Back in Chapter 2, the Pauline Author warns that we can drift away from our faith (Hebrews 2:1) and can neglect the saving power of our new resurrection lives (Hebrews 2:3). Here in chapter 10, the Pauline Author is painting an incredible, supernatural picture, telling his Hebrew readers how to avoid drifting away. The Pauline Author points out that they have God and Christ directly in their lives, empowering them not to drift away or neglect their new identity as believers.

Sin no longer weighs us down, for we are cleansed by Christ's blood. In light of this cleansing, we can live *with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith* (v 22), having confidence in what Christ has done with his death for us.

However, we still sin. It is true we no longer bear the guilt or weight of sin before God, because Jesus's sacrifice was the perfect atonement for sin. But in our daily struggles with sin, there is need for cleansing. Not so we can be pure in the sight of God, but so we can be free of sin and walk in the way God has prepared for us. And when we do sin, we can approach God directly and *have our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water* (v 22). This restores our fellowship with God and cleanses our consciences.

If we do not live by faith, and sin willfully, we put ourselves under the negative consequences of sin. In the following verses, the Pauline Author reminds his readers of these consequences, whether experienced on this earth or on the day of judgement. By sinning willfully, our

conscience is dirtied. No religious practices will fix that. We can also experience a loss of reward.

In verse 25, the Pauline Author notes that the day of the Lord is approaching, the day when Christ will return for His church and will establish His kingdom. When Jesus returns, He will judge believers based on their faithfulness (1 Corinthians 3:10–15; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:10). He will reward His good and faithful servants, but believers who abandon the faith and sin willfully won't receive rewards. This is a stern warning.

But we are completely enabled to live free of sin's power and guilt by drawing near to Jesus, in whom we are made clean. He is the better sacrifice and better priest; He is our hope. Because the day of judgement approaches, we want to live in hope, not in sin.

Biblical Text

¹⁹ Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, ²¹ and since *we have* a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.