

## LOGICAL OUTCOMES

Hebrews 10:19-39

5/19/96

What we believe, that is, what we truly believe, determines the way we act. If, for example, you believe, with high probability, you will die if you fly in an airplane - you probably won't fly in an airplane.

If you believe you can ONLY get a good job with a formal education, you will probably get a formal education.

That's not only true in the more mundane issues of life but it is also true in matters of faith and religion:

If you don't believe any god exists you probably won't become part of a church.

If you believe God is somehow pleased by some of the religious or service oriented things you do, like attending church, singing in the choir, teaching a child to read, then you will likely do those things.

What we believe determines what we do.

What do you believe? And what decisions has that led to?

Why did you choose the career path you chose?

Why have you chosen to relate to certain people, as friends?

Why do you invest your money the way you do - buying the things you buy, saving the money you save?

Why do you spend your discretionary time the way you do - the hobbies or recreation in which you engage?

What do you believe about life and death and God and people and history and the future that causes you to spend yourself and your assets the way you do?

What do you believe and what does it lead you to do?

Please look with me at Hebrews10:19-25

In chapters 1 through the first half of 10 the author has been teaching. He has been setting forth the information he wants them to know and believe.

What he does beginning at 10:19 is to apply that information. There is a shift in the book at 10:19 from teaching to application.

If you will look at these verses you will notice that twice the author says "SINCE" - V19 "Since we have confidence..." and in V21 "Since we have a great priest..."

Twice he refers to what he has already taught .

And then he gives three applications:

V22 "let us"

V23 "let us"

V24-25 "let us"

V24-25 "let us"

Let me read the entire text: READ 10:19-25

The logic of the passage goes like this: Since you believe these things to be true then certainly you will respond in these ways.

What are the two things the author says are true?

1. Vv 19-20 We have access into the very presence of a Holy God because of the sacrificial death (the body and blood) of Jesus .

Now the author has already written about that subject at length in chapter 9:11 through 10:18 (And Don Payne preached on the issue last week)

But what is the second thing the author says is true?

2. V21 - Jesus is the great priest of God's people.

Remember the author has already written on this subject at length as well in chapters 7-9. (I preached on this theme three and four weeks ago).

These two themes dominate the book of Hebrews: Jesus as the all-sufficient sacrifice and Jesus as the perfect mediator.

Based on those two things being true the author says we must respond:

V22 Let us draw near to God

V23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess

Vv24-25 Let us consider how to spur one another on to love and good deeds.

Since the author, in verses 19-21, summarizes the two major points of his letter, I would like to do the same.

I want to remind you of the Basic Theology which this book teaches. I'd like you to look at the passages with me:

Heb 3:7ff God teaches here that He is holy-  
so holy he can have nothing to do with sin or those who do the sin.

The Bible also teaches that no one is righteous, not even one (Rom3)  
Everyone is a sinner and all sinners sin.

Look at Heb 10:28ff. The Bible teaches that the soul that sins will die. And that the wages of sin is death.

READ 10:28-31

Every human being stands separated from a holy God and headed for eternal destruction.

Two things are required for us to once again have a positive relationship with God:

We NEED a SACRIFICE to atone, to make amends, for our sins - something has to be done about our sin.

And we NEED a MEDIATOR, a priest, to connect us to God.

Most religions of the world have some kind of sacrifice or offering they

make to atone for sin AND they have some kind of priesthood that acts as mediator between the god or gods needing to be appeased and the human beings needing forgiveness.

The questions are whether the sacrifices and offerings are sufficient to truly atone for the sins and whether the priests or religious leaders are truly capable of bringing God and humans together.

We need a sufficient sacrifice and a capable mediator.

First of all we need a sacrifice to atone for our sins:

Look at Heb 9:22 -God said, "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins".

And so during the Old Covenant (during the time of the Old Testament) a system of sacrifices was established to shed the blood of animals to cover the sins of the people.

But from the beginning it was known that those sacrifices were insufficient or as the Bible says, in Heb 10:4, it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to actually take away sins - those animal sacrifices were largely symbolic of a sacrifice that would come later - a sacrifice that would be sufficient.

Those animal sacrifices were insufficient because there needed to be a human sacrifice - a human sacrificed for humans.

Look at Heb 2:14-15 Since the children of God have flesh and blood, Christ too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy the Devil who holds the power of death..."

But NOT just any human would do, for all humans are sinful and in need of sacrifice for themselves.

Heb 9:26 But now Christ has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Heb 10:5-7 "Therefore when Christ came into the world, he said, Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased -

then I said, "Here I am - it is written about me in the O.T. I have come to do your will O God."

Those verses say that "Christ appeared", and "Christ came into the world" indicating his existence before he came here- he is the eternal God the Son who became a human being.

God, himself, in the person of the Son, became the perfect and sufficient sacrifice to atone for our sins.

BUT we NOT ONLY need a sufficient sacrifice WE ALSO NEED A CAPABLE MEDIATOR-PRIEST - someone to represent us to a holy God.

We have no right to come to a Holy God.

Even if we are forgiven we have nothing to commend us to God.

He is the Creator, we are the creatures.

Heb 5:1 says, every high priest is selected from among men and is appointed to represent them in matters related to God to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.

But Heb 7:23 says generation after generation of those priests died.

And even while they lived Heb 7:27, they were offering sacrifices not only for the sins of the people but for their own sins as well.

They were as inadequate at truly being a mediator as any other person.

These priests were in ways, just symbolic of a priest who would come and who would be adequate.

So in contrast, it says in Hebrews 7:24, Christ brought a permanent priesthood because Jesus lives forever.

And not only does he live forever, but in Heb 7:26, he is not sinful.

This high priest is "holy, blameless, pure and set apart from sinners."

And according to V27, when he offers a sacrifice he is able to offer it only for others because he is perfect - "He does not need to offer sacrifices day after day for his own sins."

And so as the PERFECT SACRIFICE and the PERFECT MEDIATOR-PRIEST, Jesus is able to bring us back into relationship with God.

The PERFECT SACRIFICE atones for our sins -  
It removes the guilt and turns God's wrath away from us.

The PERFECT MEDIATOR brings us right into the presence of God -  
Now God looks on us with favor instead of anger.  
We stand before a holy God in the name of the perfect Son of God - his righteousness is imputed, credited to us.

Look at Heb 10:10 ...we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ...

And Heb 9:14 - "The blood of Christ who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanses our consciences from acts that lead to death so that we may serve the living God."

Or as God predicted it in the O.T. and repeated in Heb 8:10 - This is the covenant I will make with them, after that time declares the Lord, I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God and they will be my people...and, V 12, I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

And how does this cleansing, this forgiveness, this new relationship with God based on Christ's death and Priesthood, become ours?

By Faith/Trust - by believing God will do what he says he will do.

Speaking of the contrast between those who believe and those who don't we read in Heb 4:2 "For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did, but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith. But we who have believed enter that rest..." - we receive the promised forgiveness and new relationship with God.

It is by Grace through Faith that we are saved from the wrath of God and

saved to a new life lived in God's favor.

Now that is what this Pastor/Author summarizes in Heb 10:19-21.

SINCE we have confidence to enter into the very presence of God through Jesus AND SINCE we have such a great priest HOW WILL WE RESPOND? Vv22-25

1. V 22 "LET US draw near to God"

What you believe about God and what you believe about how to relate to God determines how you respond.

What do you believe about God?

Do you believe what VV 19-21 teach or

Do you just believe God is love and therefore will overlook any faults of ours. So we should live as best we can and when we die God will take care of it.

Millions in American churches act as if this is what they believe. They give God a few moments on Sunday morning by attending a church service if nothing more important like rest, vacation, weekend outings, athletics, guests, or whatever doesn't interfere.

Apparently they believe God is JUST love - so it doesn't really matter what we do.

Is that you?

OR Do you believe God is powerful and picky?

If that is what you believe then we must be quite careful about what we do so we don't make him angry.

"Let us" make certain we are in church as often as possible, "let us" always be doing something for religion or for other people so that God will be pleased with us.

I remember a woman I worked with who sincerely believed she must go to church every day and that she must give some money to the church each week and she believed it was her obligation to God to do some good deed each week - she cleaned an elderly woman's house for free each week.

She believed her God required those things of her and so she complied. Is that you?

Or do you believe God is mean, and therefore the best thing is to have nothing to do with him.

A woman recently told me of her husband's reaction to their two year old son's death by accident - he would have nothing to do with God after that tragic event. Is that you?

Or do you believe God is an enigma, rather unknowable to us, and therefore you acknowledge that he exists, but you just live and let live.

Or do you believe God is kind but not all -powerful.

High School students were recently interviewed on Public Radio after listening to the video-taped testimony of a Frenchman who barely survived the Nazi Holocaust.

When one of the students heard first-hand what that experience was like for individuals she said it made her re-think her belief about God. Her conclusion was that God is not all-powerful - for in her thinking, God obviously couldn't stop that atrocity.

She was asked what that would mean to her faith and she said she didn't know - but she'd have to rethink it.

Is that you?

OR Do you believe, as in Hebrews, that an all-powerful God in his mercy has reached down to us sinners in the person of his Son to provide the sacrifice necessary to atone for our sins - to forgive us and bring us into a relationship with Himself - a relationship of love and acceptance?

And do you therefore long to draw near to God -

Do you delight at being in his presence?

Look at V22 - Using O.T. temple language this Pastor/author reminds us

that we have had our hearts cleansed by the blood of Jesus and we have been brought into the family of God as symbolized by baptism.

We have access right into the very presence of almighty God.

Or as he said it in Heb 4:16 "let us then approach God with confidence that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

This phrase "draw near to God in 10:22 is an O.T. reference to coming to God to worship Him.

Do you believe that God, through Christ Jesus, has provided a sufficient sacrifice for your sins and has provided a perfect mediator to bring you into God's presence?

Then do you draw near to God?

Is it your custom to come to him privately and to come to him with the rest of the church family in worship?

If we believe the gospel at all - then we understand what an awesome privilege it is to come into God's presence, to be loved by Him, to be able to call Him Father, to pray to him, to worship Him, to join with other believers in his presence.

We have access to God!

2. Not only are we invited into the presence of God but also, in V23, we are urged to "hold unswervingly to the hope we profess for He who promised is faithful."

What do you truly believe about the future?

Do you believe, as in Heb 10:37, Jesus is literally coming again?

Do you believe, as in Gal 6, that in due time we will be rewarded for doing good if we don't grow weary?

Do you believe, as in Rom 6, that living righteously leads to eternal life?

Do you believe, as in Heb 10:32, that perseverance, even in hardship, will be rewarded?

Do you believe, as in 2Cor 9, that investing in the Kingdom of God

yields benefits far superior to the merely temporal and material?

And why do you believe those things even when sometimes it seems that God is silent and inactive?

Because you have so much evidence from the past that God is faithful to do what he has promised in his timing - not necessarily ours.

Chapter 11 is a listing of just such evidence.

How is your faith being tested these days?

Are you tempted to wonder if God cares, if God even hears you, if he is even there?

"Hold unswervingly to the hope you profess, for he who promised is faithful."

V22 "let us" draw near to God in faith.

V23 "let us" hold on to the hope we profess

3. And now VV24-25 "LET US consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds"

Do you believe that God, through Christ, has brought us into the Family of God?

Do you believe that we are part of a New Covenant relationship with God and each other?

Do you believe that Christianity is not only about faith (v 22) and hope (v23) but also about love (vv24-25)?

Do you believe as the Apostle John wrote it, "Whoever loves God must also love his brother"?

And "Whoever does not love does not know God"?

If you do, if we do, then we will give thoughtful consideration to how we may spur one another on to love and good deeds.

The New English Bible translates it this way, "We ought to see how each of us may best arouse others to love and active goodness"

But the author doesn't just leave the subject there - he gets even more specific: V25 "LET US not give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing but let us encourage one another - and all the more as you see the Day of Christ's return approaching."

Spurring one another on, actively seeking ways to stimulate one another to love and good deeds will never happen if we aren't together in ways that allow for that.

This "meeting together" NIV - or "assembling together" (NASB) "should be understood simply as the regular gathering together of Christian believers for worship and exhortation in a particular place. That is what we do here on Sunday mornings.

The practice at first took place daily (Acts 2:46) but subsequently weekly, on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; I Cor 16:2)

Philip Hughes wrote, "Unconcern for the well-being of the body of Christ, of which we are members, is symptomatic of self-concern and egocentricity. Selfishness and divisiveness go hand in hand; for self-love breeds the spirit of isolationism.

He who does not love his fellow Christians fervently from the heart (I Pt 1:22) feels no compelling need to associate himself with them.

Indeed, if that is you, the genuineness of your Christian profession is suspect, for those who are one in Christ cannot help loving one another. (From P.E. Hughes -p 415)

Why do you come to worship services?

Notice v24 Let us "spur" one another on to love and good deeds.

Notice 25b Let us "encourage" one another.

The emphasis is on what I may do for the others.

What is the essence of Christianity - Loving God and others.  
What is Worship? An expression of love for God and others.

"Love" can only be expressed in community. Love cannot be private.  
The head of the church, Jesus, doesn't function without the body and you are part of the body of Christ.

Many today see religion as so private an issue that they can come to the cross and get something and then leave, to carry on alone until the day Jesus comes.

There are too many who treat Christianity like a commodity to be possessed rather than a relationship with God AND each other to be nourished - but that is not Christianity.

What do you believe?  
The way we live reveals what we truly believe.

Some of us need to change our beliefs or change our responses.

Come into the presence of God, asking his forgiveness, seeking his grace to enable you to draw near to him, to hold unswervingly to the hope you profess, and to meet together with God's people to encourage them and stimulate them to love and good deeds.

I'd like you to pick up a hymnal and find page 718 - an affirmation of faith. p 718.

I'd like us to read this together and as we do, I want each of us to not only affirm that we believe this but I want us to consider how our lives reflect these beliefs.

READ 718 "A Contemporary Affirmation of Faith"

PRAYER HALL

Prayer for those leaving for Mexico in a few days - Pastor Dale