

Five things we must do — Hebrews 10:19-25
James Muldoon - Carey Baptist Church – 14 October 2007

Things have been quite complicated in Hebrews. **Hebrews 1:1 - 10:18** has largely been doctrine with a bit of application thrown in. As we come to this morning's passage, though, things start to get a bit easier. **Hebrews 10:19 - 13:25** is largely application with a bit of doctrine thrown in. And that makes it much easier to follow.

v19-21 summarise in just a few words what **Hebrews 4:14 - 10:18** has told us. They remind us of what our Saviour has done and is still doing for us. He sacrificed his life to bring us to God (**v19-20**). Now he is our high priest, representing us in glory (**v21**).

Because of all Jesus has done, there are certain things we must do...

i You and God

v22 tells us to draw near to God.

Two thousand years ago, Jesus Christ died. Why? So that we can draw near to God. There's nothing cheap about the privilege of being able to do that, is there? Ask Jesus how much it cost him to enable us to do it! And yet, perhaps because the privilege of being able to draw near to God in prayer comes to us as a free gift, how little we seem to value it! Do you give prayer the right of priority in your life? Do you need to renew your commitment to drawing near to God in prayer? Do you come to the Prayer Meeting?

v22 also tells us how to pray. You must draw near to God sincerely, with your heart truly meaning what you're praying. You must come in full assurance of faith, trusting that God will receive you, hear you and answer your prayers according to his will. And you must pray having your heart sprinkled to cleanse you from a guilty conscience and having your body washed with pure water; in purity, in other words.

ii You

v23 tells us to hold on to our hope.

That, of course, is the chief lesson of the letter. "Hold on!" says the writer to his readers. "Because of all Christ has done, you have a hope. You have a hope of eternal life. So hold on to that hope. Hold it tight. Hold it unswervingly. It won't let you down, because the Lord who promised is faithful." The same is true for Christians today.

Do you have this hope? You will, if you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Confess your sin to God. Believe in Jesus. Follow him all the days of your life. If you do that, you too will have the hope of eternal life. If you've never done so, turn to him today.

iii You and others

v24-25 tell us to be a blessing to one another.

From the earliest days of church history, it seems, professing believers have always been faced with the temptation to stop meeting with God's people. But the plain teaching of these two verses is that fellowship is not an option; it's a must. We are commanded not to give up meeting together.

It is usually a very bad sign if people choose to stay away from gatherings of the church. It usually shows a lack of love for the people of God. It usually demonstrates a lack of love for Christ. It usually presents a symptom of backsliding. Do you, then, make the most of the privilege of fellowship? Do you come to church as often as you can? Do you practise hospitality? Do you stay behind to talk after church?

Why is fellowship so important? **v24-25** tell us two reasons why it is vital.

Firstly, we need to spur one another on towards love and good deeds. Literally we're to provoke each other to love and good deeds. Christians go forward best together. We don't do very well on our own. We don't motivate ourselves to love and good deeds too successfully. We need the sharpening and provoking which we give each other to function best in the Christian life. We need to be stirred up.

There are many ways in which you can do this. Be a good example. Pray for others. Challenge others. See if you can think of other ways over lunch!

Secondly, we need each other's encouragement. We need each other's exhortation. Some of us in the church are lonely. Some of us have great fears about our loved ones. Some of us are being worn down by illness. Some of us have had life-changing experiences which are taking some getting used to. Some of us are almost crushed with pressures at work and elsewhere. Some of us are going through a time of relative ease and quiet. Whatever, we all need encouragement. We all need that arm around the shoulders. We all need fellowship.