

Four Ways to Live a Sanctified Life Hebrews 10:10-25

Our passage today is really kind of two passages that are connected together with a word that is a pivot point in the broader picture. That word is “therefore” at the beginning of verse 19. Everything prior to that first word in 19 is a buildup and then everything from 19 on are the implications of what's been said prior to that. So what's done in the first section is an exposition by the author of why the Israelites no longer have to mess with the sacrificial system

Verse 10 is fitting a heading for this first section. It says, “By this we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once and for all” And, that’s what that whole first section is about.

The author explains we're sanctified. What he means by that is we are made holy. We can stand before God without sin upon us, and we can do that because of the sacrifice made by Christ, and then what he does for the next half a dozen plus verses is explain how the priest’s sacrifices needed to be done again and again and again.

BUT, Christ holy, imperfect sacrifice is covered and replaces all of that. He's essentially explaining to them both that they are sanctified and why it's something they can stand in confidence of now. And, they don't have to worry about it. This is their story of sanctification. This is our story of sanctification. Or to use a word that comes up in the passage.

They are both sanctified and perfected. It's the redemption story. I was reminded of one of my favorite redemption stories when we went to Italy last week. Everyone always wants to know when you visit some place like Rome, or Venice, or Florence. What was your favorite thing?

I love Venice. I love ambling into all of these amazing Cathedrals and exploring narrow mysterious alleys. I love the plethora of paintings and sculptures on what feels like every corner, but if I had to pic just one work of art. It hands down for me would be the sculpture of David by Michelangelo.

I don't know if you're familiar with that statute at all. It is arguably the most famous statue in Italy. Possibly the most famous statue in the world. It is inspiring. I had seen a million pictures of it, but a picture again can't replace the scale and the magnitude when you stand before something epic like the statue of David by Michelangelo.

The scale is breathtaking. David stands 14 feet tall, so it's colossal and it's carved from a single block of marble that is nearly 12,000 pounds. When it was revealed originally they were going to place it on the roof of a cathedral. They decided that 12,000 pounds, six tons of statute, 14 feet tall, maybe a little big to get up on the roof of the cathedral. They had to select a new location. They settled initially upon putting it in the city square, which was a half mile from where he crafted it. Moving the David took 40 men four days to move it that half mile. Crated and setting it on logs, inching it along day by day by day to get it there.

It's just beautiful. To me, it's perfection. If you haven't seen it. David stands in what's called a classic contrapositive pose. It's where he has all his weight on one on one leg, which gives a graceful curve to his body. Think sorority girl, friend pose without the hand on the hip. Instead his sling is over his shoulder and he is staring defiantly, or is one a one art historian said “he looks with exceptional

confidence in concentration” or in the more explicit words. My wife, she said, look at that face. “He's ticked!” She's not rushing forward to be an art historian just yet, but I would love reading her commentary.

Michelangelo stood against the norm of tradition. Michelangelo carved David as if it was before the battle ready and daring. It took my breath away. Where's the story of redemption in this amazing, this beautiful statute, as I said, arguably one of the most perfect and famous sculptures in the world?

I had studied this work as an art history major, but what I didn't know is that 37 years prior to Michelangelo, somebody tried to start this statue with this very same piece of marble. A council was drawn together, an artist commissioned and they gave him this massive piece of marble from the Tuscan hills. The artist was asked to carve the David and he labored for about 10 years just roughing out some of the legs and knocking out a hole between where the legs would be and then we don't really know what happened. It's kind of a mystery, but after 10 years of piddling with this massive piece of stone the artists gave up and the best we can hypothesize is that his patron died at that time. Well the stone sat idle for a couple more years and then another artist was commissioned...not Michelangelo...yet.

A man named Antonio Rosalina. He labored for a time but eventually came back and said, “it can't be done. There's too many imperfections within the stone. The stone is too big and there are too many imperfections.” He gave up and the stone, sat exposed in a courtyard, which was the workshop of a church for 25 more years. It sat, ignored, rejected by artists, and then they commissioned Michelangelo.

Michelangelo came along and despite being rejected by other people, despite the stone being perceived as having too many imperfections, despite claims by peers that it couldn't be done, that it was unstable, he brought forth David out of that block of stone and created a piece of history. To me, it's such a beautiful story of redemption because the stone was passed over, it was seen as too flawed, to imperfect, and it isn't that God just Isn't that how God works with us?

We're just loaded with imperfections and they come through us every day in every way. People around us see those things and we get rejected. We get pushed aside. We get ignored. We get criticized.

And really truth be told, let's admit it...we're not worthy to stand before God. Yet this passage tells us this morning that in Christ we are perfected. That though we are unworthy, though we have too many imperfections. Though we're too big, too clunky, though we shouldn't work at all. God as a master artist perfects us and he redeems us.

What this passage says is he doesn't just make us whole. He makes us perfect before him. That's the point of the whole first section. Well about the second part.

The, second section is all about how we are to live into that sanctified life. The author lifts up four implications of being perfected in Christ. The second section is the “therefore...” of our sanctification.

My goodness, if we have been made holy, ought we not to live differently? That's the point of the authors next section. He lifts up for us 4 recommendations of how we are to live.

Let me interject here a quick bible study tip. Whenever reading scripture, look for patterns, such as, repeated phrases and they will often be sign posts for learning. In the book of Hebrews one such signposts are the words, "Let us..."

The author drops those words all throughout through Hebrews. Sometime when you read the book of Hebrews, pick up a pencil and every time you see the words, "let us" underline them and look at what comes next. There is a veritable laundry list of fantastic life instruction if you simple flag those words and read what follows on the heels of them.

These words "let us" come up time and time again because the author is trying to educate his audience as to how they should live a holy life, how they are live to of sanctified life. Let us.

There are three "let us" references in today's passage reveal four truths. They are...

IN 22 "let us draw near with a sincere hearts in full assurance of faith.

In 23, "let us hold fast the confession of our hope."

In 24, let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds.

I want to lift up very briefly four ways we should as we look at those various "let us" statements, we

The first let us, commends us to two tasks - Drawing near to God. And secondly doing so with sincere confidence. If we look at verse 19, it says, therefore brothers, since we have confidence, 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. And since we have a great high priest over the House of God, let us draw near.

We can draw near to God with confidence. Why? Because we are sanctified. We are made holy. If we had to come by before God with our sin, oh my goodness, God help us literally, because we wouldn't stand a chance if we had to answer for all the things we've done wrong in my life. Despite our best efforts. None of us lives a sin free life, and despite our best efforts, we will stand before God with all of those rags upon us and be pleading for forgiveness.

But what the author says this morning is when you now stand before God the eternal judge, you stand there, sin free. God has liberated you from sin so you can come and stand before the throne of the living God and you can do it in confidence and boldness because you're not guilty.

Have you ever stood before a judge. It can be scary. I had the privilege of getting to do that once. It was in traffic court in Little Rock. Tell story of my "hit and run".

Even though I hadn't fled from the scene of an accident within the spirit of the law, technically it was true. So, I would be lying if I didn't say I was bit nervous. I saw myself as not guilty, but would the judge? So, even in a best case scenario when you believe yourself to be innocent...it can be frightening to face judgement.

The author of Hebrews today is assuring us, You have nothing to fear for in Christ you are acceptable in the judges site. It's not that we haven't done anything wrong...but Christ's sacrifice so perfectly covers what we have done, it is as if we had done nothing. When we come before God in Christ Jesus we are sinless people. Praise be to God for that.

The drawing near portion of that verse I believe is also important on a daily basis. That if we draw near to the Lord and build our relationship with the Lord, we come with greater confidence because the judge is someone whom we have a relationship with.

When I went to court. There was a twist of circumstance that gave me much greater confidence that all would go well. When I walked into the room and looked up at the judge I said, "Oh my gosh. I know that guy." The guy on the bench was a presbyterian elder I had hung out with and played guitar late into the night once at Ferncliff Camp and Conference. I had no doubt that Vic would realize I wasn't lying and trying to get out of something. Because I knew him and he knew me.

Let's move on to the next "let us"... The author goes on to tell us,

"Let us hold fast with the confession of our hope, without wavering, for he who promised is faithful all through the scriptures. God is true to his promises."

Essentially the author is urging us to trust in God because we know that God is faithful. Time and time again through the scriptures we see God making promises and fulfilling them, no matter how absurd they may seem.

God comes to Abraham with an absurd promise. "Abrahams, you're going to be the father of many nations" Yeah right Lord. The promise laughable to Abraham's wife who is waaaaaay past child bearing years. That's crazy talk. It's a laughable promise, but God comes through and is faithful.

When God takes a little rag tag tribe of people, Israel who are nothing more than a small nomadic tribe, God promises, "I'm going to make you a nation to bless all nations. "It's an absurd promise, but through Christ Jesus eventually birthed from that line he takes Israel and it becomes the source of blessing for all nations where his promise that every knee shall bow. Every tongue shall confess. Comes true.

We can trust in that promise so we can have hope. We know that God has promised something far better than everything. We see an experience here. We know that we have heaven promised to us and we can trust in that promise because the author of Hebrews reminds us, he who promised is faithful.

Which brings us now to our last "let us." In 24, **let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds.**

The bottom line of those last verses, is that God wants us to be in community. You know, faith has become in our culture in some ways a personal thing, a private thing, but God never intended it to be a private, solitary thing. He birthed us. He brought us forward to be in community, to be the body of Christ, to be members with one another.

Last night I had the privilege of attending the 200 anniversary of my home church. The church family that raised and nurtured me. It was a moving and profound experience. Over a 100 of us gathered for

dinner and about a half a dozen previous pastors of the church were there. My mentor, Bob McGruther, an exemplary pastor was there. I had not seen him in years. When I saw him, I just grabbed him and gave him a great big hug and said, "I love you Bob. I just need to tell you I love you." Because that man is the reason I am in ministry.

He did what the rest of this verse urges us to do, to stir one another to good deeds."

Some translations stir one another. Some say stimulate. The verb is a very strange verb. You can literally almost say, I am to irritate you to good deeds. You know, like we are to Pester one another to love and do the right thing. We have a holy calling to do that. Now that saying, so those are the four things that I, you know, the implications of being sanctified. We can draw near and competence. We can, we can have hope and we are to live in community, not neglect being with one another and not only not neglected, but to stir one another in our faith and to encourage one another and update.

Bob had stirred me years ago, and he did so again, with words he had frequently said to me. When I went to say goodbye to him, Bob said, "John, preach the gospel. Preach it straight and simple. Preach it from the heart." I will Bob.

Who stirs you? Who are you stirring?

I want to close this by going back to Michaelangelo and I said there was a beautiful redemption story that we're [inaudible] story to me is even more deeper than what I described of the fact that it was passed over and rejected and you know Michael Angelo grab, grab the whole of that.

Michaelangelo is quoted as having said, every block of stone has a statue inside of it and it's the task of the sculptor to discover every block of stone has a statue inside of. It's the task of the sculpture sculptor to discover in. Isn't that exactly what God does with us? We are just. When we come into this world, we are just completely encase incentive. It is block that is bound around us and we are trapped inside of that. Inside of that, what I didn't tell you about Michael Angelo laboring on it. Then he spent almost three years. He did it completely in secrecy and it was out in an open courtyard. He hung up things around. It's no one could see what he was doing and we're told that he labored oftentimes with little sleep, very seldom eating. Sometimes he would just fall asleep and his close with his boots on out in the rain next to the statue and would wake up and begin again and wake up in the beginning and he labored that way, a great personal sacrifice trying to give birth to David, trapped inside of that, and again, isn't that what God has at great personal sacrifice?

God looks and sees us trapped in sin and sacrifices with his blood, with his toil in the broken body of Jesus Christ to redeem us, to break free from that and let us stand in perfection, and here's the beauty of it. Me, once that are done, we're not lifeless. Statues are waiting. We are living beings. We are living stones built into a holy household and we ought to be free from that and want to dance in the joy of being free from that. And that's what this passage is all about. It's doing that dance and that dance is a dance of confidence, a dance of hope, a dance of a community, and a dance of stirring one another.