

Bold, True, and Steadfast.

Text: Heb 10:19-25

1) Let us be Bold

Suggested Hymns:

2) Let us be True

382, 229, 327, 300, 340

3) Let us be Steadfast

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,

One of the names of Jesus is Faithful and True.¹ He was faithful unto death. His robe was dipped in blood.² He trod the wine-press of the wrath of God alone. He kept the faith and gained the victory. His is the march of triumph.³

He also wants us, His friends and followers, to keep the faith and share His victory. In the text before us we have a series of friendly admonitions for Christian men and women, preceded by a most reassuring summary of the Gospel⁴ and followed by one of the most startling of warnings in all the Bible.⁵

Now, there is a vast difference between the courage and loyalty of the parade-ground and that of the battle-field. It is one thing to march in the sunshine, in immaculate uniforms, to the strains of marching music and the praise

of the crowd. But it is quite another thing to be faithful on the firing-line, in crumbling, rain-soaked trenches, with garments dipped in blood.

It is one thing to confess Christ before men on the happy day of confirmation, but it is quite another thing to confess Him staunchly in the face of His enemies, and serve Him faithfully in spite of the ridicule of the world and all the fiery darts of Satan.

If we want to win in the battle of life and succeed in a God-pleasing way, we must rise and climb by the ladder of grace.⁶ If we want to conquer the wiles of the devil, the indifference of the flesh, and the encroaching thorns mentioned in today's Gospel,⁷ we must diligently use the means of grace. Faith comes by hearing, and victory comes by faith.⁸

The theme for today is Let us be Bold, True, and Steadfast. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. Let Us Be Bold

As Christians we ought to be bold. Our text begins, ¹⁹ *Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest.* The word "boldness" is used here in the sense of firm confidence, joyous assurance, without any fear or misgiving.

As brethren, as believing Christians, we are to cast out fear, we are to entertain no thoughts of cowering or shrinking, not even in the Holy Place, in the very presence of the living God.

It is no longer, "*Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord,*"⁹ but rather "*Abide with us.*"¹⁰ We read in Proverbs 28:1, ¹ *The wicked flee when no one pursues, But the righteous are bold as a lion.*

If we are ever timid, we dare not be timid in matters of faith, conviction, and conscience. The Bible tells us in Romans 8:31, *If God is for us, who can be against us?*

Let us look at some examples of true boldness. The three men who defied Nebuchadnezzar were bold. We read in Daniel 3:17-18, *our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king.* ¹⁸ *But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."*

John the Baptist, is another example of a person who was bold. He jeopardised his freedom and his life with his ringing challenge to Herod, ***“It is not lawful for you to have your brother’s wife.”***¹¹

The disciples on Pentecost Day were bold with their blunt accusation of Israel, as written in Acts 2:36, ³⁶ ***“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”***

Luther was bold burning the papal bull. His battle-hymn: *“Though devils all the world should fill.”* His pledge *“If I am cited, I shall appear there and step into the mouth of behemoth, confess Christ, and leave the issue to Him.”* And finally, his stand at the parliament in the city of Worms, which shook the world and changed the course of history were all actions of boldness.

Let us consider the source of our boldness. In the Old Testament Church strangers were not permitted to enter the Temple beyond the large outer court of the Gentiles. The penalty was death. With but few exceptions, the women did not venture beyond their court, nor the men beyond the court of Israel.

Only the priests stood in the Holy Place, and no one but the high priest entered the Holiest, and that only once a year, no doubt with some trepidation of soul, and not without the sprinkling of the blood of atonement.¹²

How, then, dare we be so bold? Does our righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees? Certainly Not! By what right have we free entry into the Holiest of God?

Our text gives the answer. ***“By the blood of Jesus”*** that is, by virtue of the redeeming suffering of Jesus, by the power and infinite value of His supreme sacrifice. In that He willingly shed His innocent blood to atone for the sins of the world, your sins and mine, He became a new and living Way, the only Way, to the Father.¹³ Jesus is the only Mediator;¹⁴ the High Priest over the house of God forever.¹⁵

The tortured, bleeding sacrifice of His own flesh, laid on the altar of God, consecrated the way for us, tore the veil of the Temple in two,¹⁶ established the universal priesthood of believers,¹⁷ and perfected forever those who are sanctified,¹⁸ bringing us into such close relationship and communion with God

that we are to pray to directly Him, as we read in *Luther's Small Catechism* "with all boldness and confidence ask Him as dear children ask their dear father."¹⁹

Let us, therefore, be bold in prayer, asking great things and expecting great things of God. Let us be bold in testimony, not only on missionary frontiers, but on the firing-line at home and as we rub elbows with the world. Let us be bold in faith and Christian service, like peace-loving soldiers called in defence of country, church, and home.

Let us be bold in death, saying in the words of the hymnist, "*Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness. ... Bold shall I stand in Thy great day.*"²⁰

2. Let Us Be True

Our text continues, "*Let us draw near with a true heart.*" In every prayer, in every form of worship, in every approach to God, in every service of love, it is of vital importance that we come in singleness of heart, with earnestness of purpose, on the plain, straight road of sincerity and truth, in Jesus' name.

Peter acted like a hypocrite at Antioch and had to be corrected by Paul. *Peter would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision.*¹³ *And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.*²¹

The Herodians were not true for they went along with the plot of the Pharisees trying to entangle Jesus in His talk.²² The scribes and Pharisees are another example of not being true as we read in Matthew 15:8-9,⁸ "*These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.*⁹ *And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.*'

St. Paul exposed the Jewish false prophets and hypocrites and accused them of blasphemy.²³ In God's presence even *the night shines as the day*,²⁴ and any attempt at mimicry, idle show, hypocrisy, is worse than vain.

The word "true" here means sterling, unfeigned, and real. Nicodemus went to Jesus with a true heart, an honest seeker of the truth. He was timid at first,²⁵ but later bold. We read in John 7:50-51,⁵⁰ *Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus*

by night, being one of them) said to them, ⁵¹ “Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?”

And in John 19:39–40, ³⁹ *And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds.* ⁴⁰ *Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury.*

Let us pray for a clean heart and a right spirit.²⁶ We read in Psalm 24:3–4, *who may stand in His holy place? ⁴ He who has clean hands and a pure heart.* An honest and good heart brings forth fruit with patience.²⁷

In full assurance of faith. We cannot be true to our profession as Christians if we live in doubt. Even a weak faith should grow stronger.²⁸ We read in Matthew 9:21, ²¹ *For she said to herself, “If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well.”*

Judas drew near with treason in his heart, having lost his faith. Peter spoke in a spirit of a brave and proud person,²⁹ which soon utterly failed him.³⁰ It is of the utmost importance that we frequently examine ourselves.³¹ It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace.³²

Job was true. He said “*I know*” six times. The most familiar one being Job 19:25, ²⁵ *For I know that my Redeemer lives.*

Paul was true. He said “*I am persuaded.*” *I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*³³

Athanasius was true. He said, “*If the world goes against truth, then Athanasius goes against the world.*” Our forefathers were true leaving their homeland and coming to Australia to maintain their faith in Jesus Christ rather than compromising it.

Our text continues, *Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.* The reference is to the Old Testament forms and symbols of cleansing, by which the entire person was purified from ear to toe,³⁴ lest they die.³⁵ Priests and people alike had to be thus cleansed, typifying our state of grace in the New Testament.³⁶

As we approach the Lord in solemn worship and in our daily lives, let us be true to our Christian calling. In our new estate, as baptised and believing Christians, neither the pangs of a bad conscience nor the worst that the vile accuser may say can dismay us.

Purged from all uncleanness, we are *a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.*³⁷

The Chinese believe they can cheat their gods. In time of epidemic or plague, they put the word “cholera” on their huts and garments to make the gods believe they were already afflicted.

The ancient Romans offered white oxen to their idols. When pure white animals were scarce, they chalked over the spots on imperfect specimens.

We read in Galatians 6:7, *7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.*³⁸

3. Let Us Be Steadfast

Our text continues, *“Let us hold fast the confession of our faith.”* This means that we must be constant and unwavering. Our steadfastness must be personal and our confession unwavering because God is faithful.³⁹ His promises do not fail.

Pilots flying above the clouds see the rainbow in a complete circle, with the shadow of their plane always in the centre. With the unfailing sunshine of God’s promises to flood our lives and illumine the way and with Christ always the centre of our hopes, the crowning circle of eternal glory shall not fail. We read in 1 Peter 1:8–9, *Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.*

The word used in the text is “hope.” Hope is the anchor of the soul. Many anxious and troubled hearts, now without God and without hope in the world, are secretly, if not openly, looking to us Christians for some measure of light and guidance and certainty in an uncertain world.

Scripture says, *Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.*⁴⁰ ... *Always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you,*

*with meekness and fear.*⁴¹ ... *Contend earnestly for the faith.*⁴² ... *By sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.*⁴³

Our text continues. ²⁴ *And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works.* Cold aloofness and unnecessary isolation are not among the Christian virtues. We must not join Cain in his idle excuse, “*Am I my brother’s keeper?*”⁴⁴

Our lives are interwoven with the lives of others. The love of God and loving concern for our neighbour is the highest law.

If the gentle rays of the sun can travel through 92 million miles of absolute zero and burst into life-giving warmth and action the moment they strike the resistance of the earth, shall not the God-given love of Christians be able to penetrate the armour of the timid and the indifferent?

Christians need each other’s mutual support and strength. The breeze may blow out a candle, but it also fans a fire. A bundle of sticks separated from the fire easily go out.

Shall we who hope to rejoice together in heaven not be able to work together here on earth, to incite, and spur on, each other to love and good works? There is enthusiasm in numbers and power in enthusiasm. Zeal is contagious. We read in 2 Corinthians 9:2, *and your zeal has stirred up the majority.*

Let us look at some examples. The good Samaritan was zealous in his labour of love. He did not wait for a secret grip. He did not hurry to tell a policeman. He lent a hand and saved a life. Jesus says in Luke 10:37 “*Go and do likewise.*”

Our text continues, *Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together.* The Church is a divine institution. Christ built it.⁴⁵ Christ loved it and gave Himself for her.⁴⁶ All believers are a living part of it.⁴⁷

The local organisation and assembling of professing Christians about the pure Word and Sacraments is desirable and necessary. The congregation must call and support the ministers of the Gospel and exercise the Office of the Keys.⁴⁸

Much of the Church’s work can only be done by united effort, such as erecting houses of worship, maintaining Christian schools, educating pastors and teachers, and sending out missionaries. However, watching over doctrine, exhorting the lax, and admonishing those overtaken in a fault is the duty of all.

Consider the blessings that have come to us through our congregation. Let us heed the words of Psalm 22:22, ***In the midst of the assembly I will praise You.***⁴⁹

There are plenty of excuses, although rarely any good ones, for staying away from the Father's house and the fellowship of saints, like our text says, "***as is the manner of some.***"

Excuses analysed usually mean: "*I do not wish to go.*"⁵⁰ Despisers of any congregation, are usually separatists and isolationists, who always have that critical or injured feeling, harm themselves most of all.⁵¹

They close their eyes to the light. They block their ears to the truth. They deprive themselves of Holy Communion and of the opportunity to hear the whole counsel of God. And all the time they see the Day approaching, they are multiplying the "*signs of the times.*"

So, let us be constant. Let us be steadfast. We have pledged ourselves at our Confirmation. Ought we not keep the pledge? By the mercy and the power of God let us always be dependable, active, loyal members of the Church, willing to co-operate, and be faithful unto death.

In unity there is strength. Strength united is stronger. In common work and in worship there is inspiration and warmth. Sheep huddling together may defy the storm. The trees of the forest, standing together and supporting each other, may endure the storm.

The early Christians were steadfast, constant and unwavering. We read in Acts 2:42, ⁴² ***And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.***

The Church and its blessed ministry will remain to the very end. Let us close with the words of Revelation 3:11, ¹¹ ***Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.*** Amen.

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

¹ Revelation 19:11

² Revelation 19:13

³ Rev. 19:14-16

-
- ⁴ Hebrews 10:14, 17
⁵ Hebrews 10:26-29
⁶ 1 Corinthians 15:10
⁷ Luke 8:4-15
⁸ 1 John 5:4
⁹ Luke 5:8
¹⁰ Luke 24:29
¹¹ Mark 6:18
¹² Ex. 30:10; Heb. 9:7
¹³ John 14:6
¹⁴ 1 Tim. 2:5
¹⁵ Heb. 7:26-27, Heb 10:21
¹⁶ Matt. 27:51
¹⁷ 1 Pet. 2:9
¹⁸ Hebrews 10:14
¹⁹ *Luther's Small Catechism*, Introduction to the Lord's Prayer
²⁰ Hymn 327 vs 1, 2
²¹ See Galatians 2:11-13
²² Matt. 22:16
²³ Rom. 2:21-24
²⁴ Psa. 139:12
²⁵ John 3:2
²⁶ Psa. 51:10
²⁷ Luke 8:15
²⁸ Mark 9:24; Luke 17:5
²⁹ Mark 14:29
³⁰ Mark 14:68
³¹ 2 Cor. 13:5
³² Heb. 13:9
³³ Romans 8:38-39
³⁴ Lev. 8:23
³⁵ Exodus. 24:8; Exodus 30:21; Exodus 29:20
³⁶ Titus 3:5-7
³⁷ 2 Timothy 2:21
³⁸ Luther said, "*A man needs three conversions: first of the heart, then of the head, then, lastly, of the purse.*"
³⁹ 1 Cor. 10:13
⁴⁰ Colossians 4:6
⁴¹ 1 Peter 3:15
⁴² Jude 3
⁴³ Titus 1:9
⁴⁴ Gen. 4:9
⁴⁵ Matt. 16:18
⁴⁶ Eph. 5:25
⁴⁷ Eph. 2:19-22
⁴⁸ Matt. 18:15-17
⁴⁹ See also Heb. 2:12
⁵⁰ John 8:47
⁵¹ Prov. 18:1; Jude 19