

Dr. David A. deSilva, Hebrews, Session 9, Hebrews 10:19-39: Persevere unto Salvation

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All right. Let's jump into Hebrews 10.19-39. Sounds good. It's all about holding on to faith when things get rough, you know, when life throws those curveballs.

We've got some great analysis to dig into, really getting into what this text meant way back when. Yeah. And of course, the big question: what does it all mean for us, you know, right now? Right.

Not just like, oh, that's nice what the text says, but like, okay, how can this actually help me stay strong in what I believe in, especially when things get tough, you know what I mean? Absolutely. It's interesting, you know, the author of Hebrews, he doesn't just like lay down the law. He actually paints this really vivid picture of what the Christian life should look like, you know.

He uses all this powerful imagery, and you can really feel the emotion in it. It does feel different. Like when you read it, it's not like reading a list of rules or something.

Right. One of the first things that always gets me is that idea of access, granted. It's like, we've been given this VIP pass to the most exclusive event ever, right? You get to walk right into the holy places, but it's more than just a cool image.

Oh, absolutely. It's like totally revolutionary. Think about it.

You're one of those early Christians, you know, you're coming from this system where only a select few, like the priests and stuff, get anywhere near God. Yeah. It's all shrouded in ritual, all these sacrifices, and then boom, Jesus comes along.

The curtain's torn. Wow. And suddenly, there's this direct path to God, like getting a personal invitation to hang out with royalty, which was unheard of back then.

It's like you can just waltz right into the Oval Office, no appointment needed. Exactly. Straight to the top.

That's got to give you some serious confidence, right? Yeah. But wouldn't that totally change how you live your life if you're not worried about what people are going to do to you because you've got this direct connection to God? Right. I mean, would that make you more willing to like step out and take risks for what you believe in? You know, that is a really good point, and I think the author of Hebrews is definitely hinting at that.

He's saying, look, this access, this relationship you have with God, this should be the foundation of everything. Yeah. It should change how you see the world, how you act, everything.

So okay, we've got this amazing access, but then the author tells us to draw near. What does that even mean? Yeah. Like, what does that look like in real life? Is it just about praying a lot and reading your Bible? You know, it's funny you say that because the author actually contrasts drawing near with, get this, shrinking back from the community.

Interesting. It's like he's saying, don't try to go it alone. You need each other.

Oh, I see. Like fellowship is crucial. You've got to support each other, build each other up, especially when the going gets tough.

Yeah, that makes total sense, especially for those early Christians. I mean, they were facing real persecution, sticking together. That would have been crucial for survival, both physically and spiritually.

But what about today? I mean, most of us aren't getting thrown to the lions for what we believe. So how does this whole draw near thing apply to us? It's still super relevant even today. Think about it.

How important are your relationships in helping you stay true to, you know, your values, whatever those are? I mean, would you be as strong in your convictions if you felt totally alone? I think the author of Hebrews would say, nope, you need each other, maybe now more than ever. It's like that strength in numbers thing. You know, you're more likely to stay the course if you've got people around you who get it, who share your beliefs and can like prop you up when you're feeling wobbly.

Exactly. The community becomes this source of strength, of encouragement, accountability. And then he goes into this really interesting detail about considering one another.

But it's not just like thinking about people in passing, is it? No, not at all. The original Greek word there suggests something way deeper. Right, right.

The word is *ketanoumen*, and it implies this deep observation, like really seeing the needs of other people. Yeah. Moving beyond just a surface awareness to a place of empathy, really understanding where they're coming from.

It's not just noticing that someone's looking down. But it's actually asking them, hey, how are you doing? What's going on? And really listening to their struggles. Yeah.

Seeing the whole person. It's not just seeing what's on the outside, but like looking into their heart, understanding their struggles, and then responding with genuine compassion. Exactly.

That's powerful. And according to the author, this seeing should lead to an outburst of love and good works. Wow.

Pretty vivid image, right? It's not just about feeling bad for someone. It's about taking action, showing love and care for each other in tangible ways. Like genuine empathy can't just stay passive.

It's got to move you to do something. That's like this beautiful cycle. Right.

Deep understanding leads to action, which then strengthens those bonds of community. Exactly. And that's what makes this passage so powerful, I think.

It's not just about abstract theological concepts. It's about how those concepts actually play out in real-life relationships and actions. Yeah, totally.

But then things get a little intense, don't they? Because the author starts exploring what happens if we walk away from our faith. And the stakes, they sound pretty high. Yeah.

It's definitely a more serious tone shift. And you're right. The consequences he talks about, they're not a joke.

It's not just about missing out on some reward. It's about a fundamental lack of respect and gratitude towards God. And he uses this phrase that kind of sends shivers down my spine: intentional sin.

Ooh. Which basically means you're turning away from the truth. Right.

Even though you know better. Intentional sin. Wow.

That's heavy stuff. It's almost like saying, I know this is wrong, but I'm going to do it anyway. It's like defiance on a level that's kind of hard to grasp.

Right. And the author, he doesn't hold back on how seriously God takes this kind of rebellion. No, he doesn't.

He compares God's judgment to a zealous fire that just consumes anyone who rejects him. Not exactly a comforting image. No, it's not.

He even cites Deuteronomy, reminding folks that even breaking the old Mosaic law had some serious consequences. He's not messing around. The stakes are high.

He wants his audience to really understand the gravity of their choices. Yeah, for sure. But then it's like he senses that things are getting a bit heavy because he shifts to a more encouraging tone.

It's almost like he's saying, hey, I know things are tough, but remember all those victories. Remember how you stood strong even when you lost everything? He even compares their struggles to a great contest, which I think is interesting because it brings in that athletic imagery to inspire courage and that endurance. And he reminds them that they remained joyful.

Even while they were facing hardship, they knew they had better and lasting possessions waiting for them. And it's not just about their past resilience. This sets the stage for his call to boldness, not just in the relationship with God, but in how they actually live out their faith publicly.

So he's saying, live it out loud. Don't hide it, even when it might be dangerous or like totally unpopular. Exactly.

And this boldness or parrhesia in the original Greek is more than just confidence. I've heard that word before, but I'm not sure I fully get it. What does it really mean in this context? Well, it's really interesting because in ancient Greece, parrhesia was all about free speech, like the right to speak truth to power, even if it meant getting in trouble.

So the author is saying, live out your faith publicly. Don't be afraid to speak up for what you believe in, even if it's risky. And remember, these early Christians, their faith was often seen as subversive.

Oh, yeah. Even illegal. So it's like it's not just about believing something in your head.

It's about letting it affect how you live, how you act, everything. Right. And being willing to speak up for what you believe in, even if it might cost you something.

It takes a different kind of courage, right? Not just the courage to endure persecution, but the courage to actually stand up and be counted. Exactly. And that raises a really interesting question, don't you think? Like, what fuels that kind of courage? Yeah.

What makes someone risk everything for what they believe in? Yeah, that's a great question. I mean, you think about all those historical figures who stood up, you know, for what they believed in. Yeah.

Even when it felt like the whole world was against them. People like Martin Luther King, Jr. or Nelson Mandela. I mean, they faced incredible opposition.

They did. But they never backed down. Right.

Never wavered. It's like it has to come from this deep sense of purpose, as you believe in something so much that it's bigger than yourself, bigger than your fears. Yeah.

I think you're onto something there. And that's exactly what the author of Hebrews is getting at. He reminds his audience that the day is coming, the day of judgment, the day of reward.

And it creates this sense of urgency, this sense of purpose. Yeah. Like, don't get so caught up in the here and now.

Right. Keep your eyes on the prize. This life, it's not the end of the story.

And what you do now, it matters for eternity. It's like they have this unwavering hope for the future, a future that's so much brighter than anything they're experiencing in that moment. Exactly.

And to really drive this point home, he even quotes Habakkuk. Habakkuk, the prophet who, like, wrestled with God over all the injustice in the world. Didn't he also talk about how important it is to live by faith, even when, like, everything around you seems to be falling apart? Yes, he did.

And that connection is so powerful. It shows that these themes, perseverance and faithfulness, they're not limited to one time period or one culture. You know, they're just as relevant today as they were thousands of years ago.

So it's not just about toughing it out, you know, enduring tough times. It's about finding that strength, that courage to really live out what you believe in, even when the world feels, like, chaotic and uncertain. Exactly.

And all of this leads up to this really powerful choice the author presents to the reader: to shrink back in fear or to stand strong in faith. It's like coming to a fork in the road, two paths going in totally different directions. Yeah, exactly.

And the author uses this literary device. It's called antithesis, where he contrasts two opposing ideas. So in this case, it's shrinking back versus drawing near.

Fear versus faith, destruction versus life. He's not messing around. He wants them to get the weight of that decision.

It's not just about believing something in your head, right? It's about letting that belief shape everything, your actions, your choices, your whole way of being in the world. Exactly. And that's what makes this passage so powerful.

It's timeless. It's a call to action to live out your faith with courage and conviction, knowing that your choices have eternal consequences. A call to choose the path of faith and to never look back.

It's a lot to take in, but it's also so inspiring. It's like the author's giving us this pep talk, right? Like for our souls, urging us to like really dig deep and find that strength to keep going, even when things get rough. And it's a pep talk that's grounded in the reality of what it means to be a Christian.

He's not saying it's going to be all sunshine and roses. He acknowledges the struggles, the doubts, the temptation to just give up. Yeah.

But he also points to the resources that we have to help us. Yeah. Like remember that direct access to God we were talking about and the power of the Holy Spirit working in us.

Yeah. And of course, the support of other believers. It's like he's saying, look, I know this isn't easy, but you're not alone.

Right. You've got everything you need to get through this as long as you don't give up. I love that.

It's like he's combining this really challenging message with this incredible sense of hope. He's not letting us off the hook, but he's also saying, hey, you're not alone in this. Exactly.

And that's what makes it so powerful. Even thousands of years later, it speaks to what it means to be human. Yeah.

Our desire for purpose, for meaning, for something bigger than ourselves. And it's amazing to think these words were originally written to a group of people who were facing, like, real persecution, maybe even death, just for what they believed in. And yet you can feel this incredible sense of hope and confidence.

It's like their faith was this unstoppable force, like nothing could put it out. That's such a beautiful way to put it. It really speaks to the power of faith to transform us.

It's not just about believing something. It's about letting that belief change you from the inside out to give you the strength and courage to face anything. OK, so we've talked about the challenges, the warnings, those calls to action.

But how do we actually apply all of this to our everyday lives? What's like the big takeaway? What should we be walking away with? Well, if you zoom out a little, I think what the author of Hebrews is really saying is move beyond a passive faith, you know, where you just intellectually agree, or you're just in it for the warm fuzzies. Right, right. He's calling us to a faith that's active, that's engaged, that actually changes us.

So it's not just about believing. It's about doing, about putting that belief into action. Exactly.

Remember that idea of Kata Newman we talked about earlier? Yeah. That deep, deep seeing of other people's needs. Yeah.

That's a great place to start. How can you put that into practice this week? What are some opportunities you have to really see the people around you? Not just superficial interactions, but really connecting on a deeper level. So it's about being intentional, right? Actively looking for ways to live out your faith.

Exactly. And what about that call to boldness? What's one small act of courage or kindness that you could do this week? You know, something that reflects the kind of boldness those early Christians had. Yeah.

It doesn't have to be something huge or dramatic. Maybe it's standing up for someone who's being mistreated. Yeah.

Sharing your faith with a friend. Or just choosing to live with integrity. Even when it's like the unpopular thing to do.

It's those everyday choices, those little things that when you add them up, they create a life of purpose. You know, a life that reflects the power of faith. And remember, you're not alone in this.

You're part of this community, you know, this group of people who are all trying to figure out how to live out their faith in a world that's, well, complicated. Lean on each other. Encourage each other.

And never forget that we have this incredible privilege to walk with the God who loves us no matter what. Wow. It's been quite a deep dive.

Hebrews chapter 10. It's definitely a challenging passage, but it's also incredibly encouraging. It is.

It reminds us that we're not just called to believe, but to persevere. To live out our faith with courage. And, you know, above all, with perseverance.

And to do it together. Well, that wraps up our deep dive into Hebrews 10.19-39. We hope this has given you, like, some things to chew on, some inspiration for your own journey. Until next time, keep diving deep and keep those conversations going.

You know, as we've been talking about this whole idea of boldness and prophecy, it's really got me thinking about how different that must have been for those early Christians, you know, compared to how we live out our faith today. I mean, back then, just saying you believed in Jesus. That could get you in some serious trouble.

Yeah, that's a great point. The context is so important. I mean, for them, *prohesia* wasn't just about telling your friend about Jesus.

It was a total act of defiance against the entire culture. Yeah. And a lot of times with some pretty heavy consequences.

So how do we translate that kind of boldness today? You know, most of us aren't facing prison or persecution for what we believe. So does *prohesia* look different now? That's a great question. And I think the answer is, well, it's kind of yes and no.

Yes, the ways people oppose us might be different, but that core idea is still the same. It's about living out what you believe, even when it's not popular, even when you might have to pay a price for it. So it's not so much about how big the challenge is, but more about that willingness to stand up for what you believe in, even in those little everyday things.

Exactly. It might not be as dramatic as facing a Roman court, but it could be speaking up when you see injustice at work or refusing to gossip or just living with integrity, even when it's tempting to, you know, cut corners. Those everyday acts of courage, they might not make the news.

But there's still *prohesia*. It's like that saying: courage isn't the absence of fear. It's doing the right thing, even when you're afraid.

Exactly. And I think that's where the author of Hebrews really gives us this amazing message of hope. You know, he reminds us that we're not alone in this.

We've got our community. We've got the Holy Spirit empowering us. And most importantly, we've got God's love.

Always. We have everything we need to stand strong, to persevere, and to live out our faith with courage and boldness. He even compares our struggles to a great contest.

Right. He uses that athletic imagery to encourage us to keep going. Never give up.

Focus on the prize. That's right. It makes you think about what those great contests are in your own life.

You know, what are those areas where you're really being challenged, where you need to dig deep and find the strength to keep going and to refuse to give up? Maybe it's a personal struggle you're going through or a relationship that's painful or just that everyday challenge of trying to live out your faith in a world that doesn't always get it. Yeah, it reminds us that this perseverance thing, it's not just about gritting your teeth and pushing through. It's about tapping into a deeper strength, relying on the support of our community and remembering those promises that God made to those who hang in there to the end.

You know, what's really interesting is that the author doesn't try to pretend that everything's easy. He acknowledges that following Jesus, well, it often comes with a cost. Yeah.

He talks about the persecution those early Christians faced, losing their homes, facing prison, even death. Right. But he also reminds them that their suffering has a purpose, that it can refine us, make us stronger, and that in the end it points to a hope that's so much bigger than any of the tough stuff we face now.

It's like he's saying, look, I'm not going to lie. It's going to be tough. You'll face challenges.

You have setbacks. And yeah, you might even feel like giving up sometimes, but don't lose sight of what really matters. There's something incredible waiting for you, a reward that makes all of it worth it.

And it all comes back to that incredible image of access granted, right, that we have direct access to God through Jesus. And it's not just about feeling good or escaping punishment. It's about being empowered to live a different kind of life.

To be bold and take risks for our faith, knowing that the King of the universe is right there with us. That's powerful. It's like having a direct line to the most powerful being in existence anytime, anywhere.

Talk about feeling supported, but it also makes you think about responsibility. Like, are we using that access to make a real difference? To be a force for good in the world, to show what we believe, not just say it. You got it.

It's about taking that boldness, that parrhesia, and letting it affect our words, our actions, how we treat other people. It's about showing God's love and grace to everyone we meet. It's a challenge for sure, but it's also really inspiring.

It makes you want to, I don't know, step up your game, really live a life that makes a difference. Exactly. And that's what I love about this passage.

It challenges us, encourages us, and ultimately points us to a hope that's so much bigger than anything we're going through right now. Well said. Well, folks, there you have it: deep dives into Hebrews 10.19-39, a passage that's tough, but also full of hope and encouragement.

We hope this has given you something to think about and inspired you on your own journey of faith. Remember, you're not alone in this. We're all in this great contest together, striving for that final prize, that better and lasting possession that awaits those who persevere.

Until next time, keep diving deep and keep those conversations going.