

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

Brian Frost

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Disciple

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5

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Family Member

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Hebrews 10:19-25



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... Well, good morning, Providence family. And for those of you who are guests, we're glad you're here. If you have in your hand a Bible, if you want to turn with me to Hebrews 10. If you don't have one, there's lots of Bibles in the chairs near you. And if you don't have one at home, we'd love for you to take that home as a gift so that you can read God's word on your own. In the amazing book called the Hebrews, it speaks of the power and supremacy of Jesus Christ over all things. And therefore, what it does repeatedly is it urges people who have seen the worth of Christ and who love Christ to hold fast the confession of their hope. And then he continues throughout this book to highlight the provision that he gives to help us to do just that. And it happens to be that he connects us with a family. A family of faith.

And so before we read it, I want to pray for us, okay? Father in heaven, we thank you for your grace in our life today. We ask that you would pour out your Spirit upon us and upon this room. That you would make your words compelling to our heart. I ask that you would identify the weakness, the unbelief, the obstacles, the fear that would stand against complete acceptance and appreciation and obedience to what you have said. We thank you for the family, and I pray for the family. That you would comfort those who are grieving. That you would give strength to those who are weak. For those who are caring for people who are sick, would you sustain them?

And I pray, Father, that as we consider what it means to follow you as a disciple, that you would place in the hearts of your people within this family a stronger and deeper affection for one another. For those who feel like they're on the outskirts, who feel unknown, who feel vulnerable and exposed, I pray that you would use this time and this passage to contribute to the place that we would all move towards. And that is being deeply committed in meaningful ways to your people. And so we thank you for your kindness to us that leads us to change. We ask, God, now that you would speak through weakness. And we pray this in Christ's name. Amen.

The single most important moments in the history of the world and the history of your life happened when God Almighty sent his son Christ to the earth, gave him the name Jesus, that means savior. And then Jesus lived without any sin and then went to a cross where he paid for yours and for mine. As he promised, on the third day, he rose from the dead, inviting all to believe in him. And all who would, he would forgive them of all of their sin and give them the gift of eternal life. When Jesus rose from the dead, he looked at his disciples and he said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations."

We've been looking as a church family for the last several weeks of what does the church do? How are we supposed to make disciples? And what we clearly understand is this, is that before one can make disciples, we have to be a disciple. And before we can be a disciple, we have to know what one is. And so we've been looking through the New Testament, identifying different identities of a disciple given from God himself. It says, this is what you're looking for. This is what a disciple is. And it's interesting is that undergirding each of the identities is the mark of authenticity, and that's love.

The first identity that we looked at was a worshiper. Someone that looks at Jesus and loves Jesus, loves God, with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength enough to want to follow him in a personal relationship. And then we looked at the next identity, which is a learner. And a learner is somebody who not only loves God, is a worshiper, but who loves the words of God, who loves the words of Christ, and wants to learn from him. And then last week, we looked at the next identity, which is servant. And that's where his disciples would have a love for all people who were created in the image of God and the image of Christ. Enough that we would take our strength and use it to benefit other people.

And today, we move a step closer and we look through the fourth identity, and it's called a family member. And what this is, is his disciples have a particular love, a general love for all people enough to serve them, but a particular love for his people, for his family, that he calls the church. If you're brand new at studying the Bible, you find in the New Testament, it begins with four books. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. And those books tell us what I've sought to describe in these moments. That he came, he lived, he lived without sin, he died, he was buried, he rose again.

And then what happens is there's a next book and it's called Acts. Sometimes Acts of the Apostles. And it's simply a book that details what the disciples did as a result of Jesus telling them, "Now go make disciples." And what you find is this commitment throughout the whole time, over 40 different times, we find the word disciples throughout. And what's interesting is that as you look through Acts at what they did is you find within the early Christians, these early disciples, this longing within the heart to be with God's people. And when we're separated from God's people, there's a longing to be back with God's people.

And so early in the book, in Acts 2, this is what we read. It says that "Day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts." In other words, people looked at these people and they said, let me tell you what characterizes their days. And that is that almost on a daily basis, they're seeking to gather with if not the whole group of all the disciples, with some disciples in order to pay attention to Christ, in order to worship Christ, to pray to Christ. And not only that, when they're done doing that, they love to invite each other over to their homes in order to have a meal together. They like being together because they're family. Gladness marks their heart in being together.

And you see this continue to move forward. You move into chapter nine, several chapters, and a man named Paul, he comes to faith in Jesus Christ. And notice what it says in chapter nine. It says, "When he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples." This isn't just the 12. This is the family. He says, "Look, if I've come to faith in Christ and I have a family, I want to go to Jerusalem and meet them and be with them and worship with them and experience life with them."

You continue to look through, and he goes on all these journeys and all these mission trips. And he finally, near the end of Acts, or at least two thirds in, he gets the place to where he's compelled that he's supposed to go back to Jerusalem. And so he's on a boat, and this boat, it lands in this town called Tyre, which was a

seacoast town. And it's not like he knows everybody there. But notice what it says in chapter 21, verse four. "Having sought out the disciples, we stayed there for seven days."

Now, I realized that these little verses that I'm pulling out, they're tiny in the scope of everything that we have within the scriptures. But what you see is this, is that when Paul was going into cities, and when other disciples were going into places where they maybe didn't know anybody or they were going to be there for a while, they wanted to gather with the family of God. There was this commitment to say, "All right, where are they? Where are the Christians in this town? Let me spend a week with them. Let me enjoy relationships with them."

And this becomes one of these markers of a disciple, is that these disciples in the New Testament, they were identifiable. They were find-able because they were together. In other words, when someone would come to a city and they would say, "Gather the disciples," there was a network, there was a connectivity among the disciples. So it's not like, oh, there's some disciples who maybe live over in homes all by themselves, but they do the whole worship thing by themselves in isolation of everyone else. No. You come to a city, gather the disciples, and all of a sudden the disciples would gather. The Christians would come and they would gather together. They were find-able and identifiable. And the reason that they were together is because they knew that Jesus had died to create a family that they were a part of as part of his overall mission to restore his design.

So we need to talk just a moment before we read this about his design and what was lost when sin came into the world. You see, ever since Adam and Eve sinned against God, the first man and the first woman, they sinned against God. And all of a sudden, they felt this overwhelming sense of shame and insecurity. They felt compelled to hide in the bushes in order to hide their shame from God and from each other. And ever since that moment in time, humanity has had these dueling desires. A desire to be known because we're created in the image of a relational God, and a desire to hide in the bushes because we have shame in our heart. We don't want everyone to know everything because if they knew everything, we would be ashamed.

And as a result of that, in each one of our lives, we want to communicate, we want to relate to people, we want people to know us because we want to be known. And yet on the other side, we all master the art on our time on earth of getting non-answers, of keeping a safe distance, oftentimes through humor. We get a little too close, a little too intimate, when we're sharing in a small group. This is a little uncomfortable. Let me crack a joke so that we don't have to tolerate what feels like tremendous risky exposure. We all become absolute skilled managers of public perception. Dressing up the outside, the front of stage, even when behind the curtain, it's just a mess. And social media, ironically, has become the perfect drug. Giving the self-publicist within each one of us this adjustable canvas in which we can create this riveting and relational public image, in spite of the devastating loneliness that most of us carry.

What I want you to know is heaven is not going to be like this. And because of Jesus Christ, life on earth does not have to be like this either.

Hebrews 10:19 says, “Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that is open for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart and full assurance of faith. With our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”

To the author’s original readers, the thought of entering into the holy places of God was absolutely unimaginable. This rendering of the temple, this isn’t a picture, this is just a model. It has walls and doors, and they’re all there intentionally. If you happened to be in this time of Gentile, then you could be out here, but you couldn’t be in here. The Jews could be in here, but not in here. This central magnificent thing in the middle called the Holy Place could only be broached by the priests. They would go in and make sacrifice and atonement.

And inside the Holy Place, there was this huge curtain, and the curtain separated the very back, which was called the Most Holy Place, from the normal Holy Place. And one time a year, only the high priest was allowed to go through the curtain into the Most Holy Place. He did so typically terrified, as a sinner coming into the presence of Holy of Holies, where God had placed his glory on the earth, at least a portion of it. Even the Bible itself says, “Oh God, how the heavens, the highest heavens, cannot contain your glory. How much more this?” And yet God, in all of his mercy and grace, he wanted to be near us. And so he placed his glory, a portion of it, at least, in this place. And only one person could go one time a year.

My point is to say this. To these original readers, the thought that we could enter into the holy places with confidence was absolutely unimaginable. And yet everybody wished they could. Because deep within our heart is the longing to be near God. And so God, in his vast and generous love, he sent Christ to the earth. Gave him the name, Jesus, which means savior. And the Bible says that he went to a cross, and there he died for us.

Our text says that as his flesh was torn, all four gospels bear witness to the same thing, is that as his flesh was torn, the curtain within the temple was also torn from top to bottom. He gave up his life, and on the third day, he rose from the dead. And when he rose from the dead, he became our Great High Priest, giving us access to come into the house of God with him. Ushering us into the presence of God and giving us the ability to enter at any time, through Jesus Christ, into the holy places with confidence. This is the gift of the gospel, that you can have a relationship with God himself through Jesus Christ.

So let me argue from the lesser to the greater. Years ago, one of our family members was a pilot. He still is a pilot, but at the time, he was a skilled pilot. So much so that he was a pilot with the Thunderbirds. And so he did all kinds of shows with their group all over the place. And so there was a show in Baltimore. And so this is when I was engaged. This was Tabitha's cousin. I'm not even family. And yet because I was with family connected to him, I even got to sit with their family in this section of the crowd, VIP in front of the Thunderbird jets, where they're parked. And there was a chain link fence that went up that says, you're supposed to there and you can't go out there.

And Jeff, the pilot, he gets out of a car, and he walks over. And he looks at my brother-in-law and me and he says, "Hop the fence. We'll go up to the plane." And I thought, this is really cool. But I had a problem, and that was there was two military police with machine guns on either side of me. And so I looked over at the one and he said, "He said so." Climbing up that fence, right? I had no right being there, but the person who had the right to be there authorized my place in being there. Now, that's for an airplane. One day that airplane is going to be at some airfield somewhere just dying and rusting. What Jesus did is he gave us the ability to come into the presence of God almighty at our time of need. Which is why Hebrews 4 says, "Since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the son of God. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace."

And so notice in our text, verses 19 to 25, there's a sequence of since and let us. Some of you are like, "He normally has points." I don't have any points. And some of you are note takers, so this is really irritating because we've been at this for a while and you're like, "I got nothing. I got nothing yet." It's coming. Real quick. Okay? Notice what's happening here, though. Since, let us. Since we have confidence, since we have a great high priest, let us draw near, hold fast, and consider.

Now, this is the significance of this. You see, Christ's work enables these responses. And it is these responses in the lives of his disciples that bear witness to their understanding and appreciation of his completed work. And so for a disciple to say, "I believe this" and not to do this is to not appreciate this. Are you drawing near, holding fast, considering how to spur one another on? This is what a disciple does.

All right, you ready? Now your notes. Number one, disciples of Christ, they draw near to God together. Every one of us have probably at some point in time gone out, secured the means, purchased the perfect gift for a loved one. And so you could imagine the intensity of anticipation of knowing that they're going to enjoy it so much. And therefore, you can understand the measure of disappointment that must come to somebody who would secure a gift, if they secured that kind of amazing gift, that perfect gift, and the recipient chose not to open it. This is what verse 22 is all about. He says, "Since we have confidence to enter, let us enter. Let's draw near."

When we trusted Christ, I know for some of us, we think man, drawing near to God, I'm a sinner. I feel dirty. How do I just draw near? This is where the gospel is such a rich treasure. For those of you who have never trusted Christ and you think, I can't even imagine going and standing before a holy God when I feel such guilt and shame in my own life. But notice what he does when we trust his son, he takes our heart, our conscience, and our body, and he washes them totally clean. He takes our heart and sprinkles clean from an evil conscience. In other words, our heart is so marred by a conscience that is so filled with shame, and so he removes the guilt, shame, and sin from our conscience. And therefore, it frees our conscience, purifies our heart, but not only that, but even our very bodies that some of us have defiled in sin.

He says that the blood of Christ is so potent that it even cleanses our very body. And because of that cleansing, we can come with a true heart and full assurance. A true heart. Those are big words. It's supposed to be a tool that we evaluate. Why are you here today? A true heart is a sincere heart. It's a genuine heart.

Every single one... Well, many of us in the room, we know what it's like to be on a date with someone who doesn't want to be there. And if you've never had that experience, I want you to know Jesus has. It happens Sunday by Sunday all over the world. People coming and gathering out of obligation, drawing near in order to clean themselves up, drawing near in order to lift the head of the Pez machine of God in order to get a treat or a goodie by taking. But not for him. This is historical problem in Jeremiah 3:10, he says, "Judah did not return to me with her whole heart, but in pretense." She was pretending to be there to be with me.

A true heart that is fully assured of forgiveness draws near because of delight to be near him. Is your heart true this morning? Did you want to come today? Do you want to be here? If you're like, "No, I really don't. I don't want to be here right now," what's available to you is such a transformation of your entire life that your heart actually becomes so puzzled by the goodness of God that your heart must draw near out of pleasure and out of delight.

And you might say, "I thought this was about a family member. This doesn't sound a whole lot like together." You see, as people who have a predisposition to hide relationally from others, it's very natural for us to read the Bible through the lens of individualism. Some of us, it was instinctual. You didn't mean to interpret it wrong. But the instinct in your heart was when he says here, "Let us draw near," you take it as, well, the author of Hebrews wrote it, so he did it. Brian's telling us, so he did it. If I do it, then we will do it. That's not what this says, though. He says, "Let us draw near." It's a collective. We're doing this together. We are drawing near.

Now, because Jesus is our high priest, we can read the Bible and we can pray everyday by ourself without a priest or without a church. And we encourage you to do so. But we cannot forget that God has connected us. Christ has connected us as his disciples to one another. 1 Peter, he says that he takes each one of us that's like a dead stone, he breathed life into us, and then he connects us to other living stones in order to become a house of worship. In 1 Corinthians 12, he says that each one of us is like a member of the body. Some of us are the eye or the foot or the hand or the ears, and each one is absolutely important. And yet God has composed



the body in such a way so that many members form one body. Ephesians 2, he says that we're a household. We're a family.

In other words, what you find throughout the New Testament is that when people come to faith in Jesus Christ, we become like this picture. Horses that are hitched together. We are supposed to run. We are supposed to work. We are supposed to move. We are supposed to participate. And yet our speed affects other people. The apathy with which we sang earlier or passion in which we sang earlier, it affects the other horses that we're hitched to. The passion with which we serve and teach and love and play and sing and do, everything that we do, it affects everybody else. We're horses that are hitched together. And therefore, let's humble ourselves and help one another draw near.

One of the things you find in the New Testament which is so startling to us, in particular people who live in America where the overwhelming virtue is individualism, is that the Christian race isn't won by finishing first, it's won by helping others finish. Hebrews 12:1, we love to put on our coffee cups. "Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." And we think the us is me. Let us. We're hitched. You may not find it a compliment to say you're like a horse that's hitched to other horses, but that's what we are. And because that's true, notice what he says next. In verse 12, then he says, now if that's true, then therefore "Lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed."

In other words, when you're hitched together and suddenly you look over at a fellow disciple and they're limping, their faith is limping, they're full of anxiety, they're full of concern, we can say, "You know what? They're a burden anyway. Let's just speed up." And in doing so, we can put them completely out of joint instead of being healed. But the reason we wouldn't want to do that is because we're together, we're a family, and one of the ways that you win the Christian race is you help other people finish.

And so let me ask, what would you be willing to do if it helped others to draw near to God? Would you be willing to share your story? Would you be willing to invite someone? Would you be willing to call somebody who hasn't been here in a while? Would you be willing to give somebody a ride? What would you be willing to do to help the family draw near?

The second thing we learn is that each disciple of Christ holds fast their confession, and we do so together. We do so together. You see this in verse 23. But in Revelation 12, we learn something really important about our enemy, Satan. It says that there, it says that he is overcome, he is conquered, by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony. In other words, that this formidable foe can be overcome, and how Satan is overcoming in our life individually and collectively is by holding fast to our testimony in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Our faith is important. The faith of the people that you are hitched to is very, very important.



And so what does he tell us to? In light of that, he says, “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.” Our confession that he says to hold fast to is our testimony of faith in Jesus. And you say, well, how do I hold fast? It means hold on. Well, how do I hold on? And the answer is you hold on together. That on the other side of the road, there is somebody who wants to rip that rope, and that rope represents our testimony of faith. And so what the New Testament does is it gives us a provision, and that is pull together, to care about each other’s faith. I care about your faith. I hope you care about mine. It’s endurance, it’s vibrancy, it’s life.

In 1 Thessalonians, Paul, he gets ripped away because of persecution from a church. And he’s so concerned about their faith he says, “I want to be with you in order to know about your faith.” He keeps echoing faith. He goes, “But I can’t get to you now, so I’m going to send Timothy to learn about your faith.” And all of a sudden, Timothy comes back and he goes, “And because he’s returned and he’s given me such a wonderful testimony about your living, vibrant faith, now I can go to sleep at night.”

Do you care about my faith? Do you care about the faith of the people next to you, other family members? The vibrancy of that faith is critically important. And so Hebrews 3 says, “Exhort one another every day, as long as it is called today, that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.” Do you know what this means? When you see deceitfulness of sin, this is the promise of evil. This is the only thing I can imagine that sin and God have in common, and that is they both make promises to make us happy. And yet they’re conflicting promises. One says, “Hey, if you look at this, the joy and thrill of that sensuality will actually make you happier than a clear conscience.” And God says, “I promise you that the pure in heart shall see God. And therefore, therefore, the joy of a clear conscience is always going to outweigh 10 minutes before that computer screen.”

Now you have two promises and you have to decide which one am I going to believe? And because he knows that each one of us will stumble and believe the wrong thing more times than not, he puts us with other people who can encourage one another with the truth that counteracts the deceitfulness of sin by telling us the promises of God. Reminding us of the superior pleasures of walking with the Lord as opposed to walking in sin. And so let me encourage us to remind one another of God’s superior promises. When you gather together and you hear the little vestiges of deceit that someone’s believing and is beginning to jump into the fray and say, “Let me remind you of one of the better promises of God.” The only way to do that is to know one another, and the only way to know one another in a room this big is to get into smaller groups, and so I encourage you to do so. They’re called Life Groups here at Providence.

The third and last thing I want you to see about disciples of Christ is that they meet together regularly in order to encourage one another. I hope you can see how God is helping us fight our disposition to hide, to hide from him and from each other. He says in verse 24, “Let us consider,” let us think, mull over, contemplate, “how to stir up one another to love and good works.” In other words, this is what he’s saying. He’s saying, “You know what? That person, I wonder how they’re doing. I wonder what I could do today in order to encourage

them. I'm going to consider them." Or "You know what? I may see that person tomorrow. And when I see them tomorrow, I need to think today about what I'm going to say to them in order to inspire and provoke their faith."

Notice what he says. It's really amazing. He says, "Let us consider how to stir..." This word stir in other places in the New Testament means exasperate, irritate, spur. A spur. You put a spur in a horse, he doesn't like it very much. And you're like, well, is he saying that, "Hey, really, I'm going to contemplate today, how can I really irritate that guy today?" Is that what he's saying? Of course no. What he's saying is this, is at we're to exhort one another in such close proximity that the friction is both inevitable and redemptive. In other words, if you live the way that God designed and you are next to somebody, you rub hands like this long enough and it creates heat. It also takes off some of the rough edges.

It's hard to be irritated by people. But I want you to know if you connect yourself with a local church, you'll be irritated. I'll irritate you. You'll irritate me. And then we'll forgive each other because of the grace of God, and we'll continue to move forward until we get to heaven. That's the grace that God gives to us on the earth. And how are we supposed to do this? Verse 25. "Not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near."

Like many of you perhaps, I grew up in a church. And early on, this is not supposed to be an insult, it's just as a kid, this is what it felt like. The whole thing felt like a game. That doesn't mean it was insincere, it just felt like a game. God made the rules, like the big referee. Some people chose to take to the field and play and other people didn't. Among those who took the field, some people kept score and other people didn't. There were rookies and there were veterans and they were all-stars. And there were things that were confusing and frustrating and hurtful and joyful and all kinds of different experiences. Tons of casseroles. But the most confusing thing to me of all, and particularly when I was a kid, is how people left the playing field that they once tried to teach me to love.

I can only imagine that for some of you today, this all feels like a big game. And that's why I want to encourage you if it feels like that to read the New Testament. Just one honest, open read of the New Testament. For there, you're going to find that this is not a game, this is a relationship. It's a relationship with Christ, who removes our sin and shame so that we don't have to hide from him or others. We inherit a family. We get to live together until we get to heaven and beyond.

If you've never trusted Christ, I urge you to do so right now. Admit your sin. Believe in what he has made available. That he wants to bring you into his presence. Confess him as Lord of your life. And if you have trusted Christ, I urge you to identify any obstacles that you may have to community, and then aim to connect.

Some of us, pride is our obstacle. We simply say I don't need anybody. For others, it's selfishness. We simply say I don't want anybody. For some of us, it's personality. Some of us, we are here all day long and we go home and we feel utterly energized because we got to be around tons of people all day. And other people, absolutely exhausted. And some people, it's hurt. They say I've been burned before and I won't be burned again.

I know the church can be a mess, but I urge you to connect. And the reason is because the church is where God's people on the earth gather. You can do that in meaningful ways here at Providence. If you don't know where to start, I urge you to consider the Pathway. Meets this hour, so next week, you'd have to come earlier to service and then the Pathway at 11:00. Find a Life Group, find a place where you can serve, find people that you can invest in.

And that's where we get to the Lord's Supper. It's a beautiful thing that God has given us, the bread and the cup, in order to take. The beauty of the Lord's Supper is the fulfillment of the Passover, which was only taken with your family. And on the night when Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, he says, "I have eagerly wanted," eagerly wanted, "to take this Passover with you, to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." And the irony of that is because the Passover was always eaten with family, and yet Jesus had all 12 of these men away from their family. And the reason is because he was creating a new one, a new one that we are now a part of. You know Christ.

And so if you have not trusted Christ, I welcome you to do so right now, and then you can take of the elements. But if you are not quite ready to do that, I ask you to do just what the New Testament says, and that is to not take it. For to take the symbols of the blood and body of Christ in front of others is to affirm that you treasure the realities behind these symbols. He tells us to always take it only after we've considered our sin and confessed our sin. Most Sundays, we take a time of just silence where you can pray. This morning, what we want to do is we want to sing our prayer. From right there where you're seated, I encourage you, certainly confess your sin. But as we sing this song about the fact that Jesus paid it all, let it be your confession. Your confession of sin and your confession to believe that Jesus has removed your sin. So let's sing together.



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