

Hold fast (Hebrews)

Part 1

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[00:00:01] I wonder if I could crave your indulgence and read from the Mr. J.N. Darby's new translation, because I think he gives the sense. Remember Ezra, didn't he, when he was reading, and he gave the sense. So in Hebrews, first of all, chapter 3.

Hebrews chapter 3, verse 6. Hebrews chapter 3, verse 6.

But Christ, a son over his house, whose house are we, if indeed we hold fast the boldness and the boast of hope, firm to the end. Down in verse 14. For we are become companions of the Christ, if indeed we hold the beginning of the assurance firm to the end. And in chapter 4, verse 14.

[00:01:08] Having therefore a great high priest, who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast the confession. And finally, in chapter 10.

Chapter 10. And verse 23. Hebrews 10, verse 23. Let us hold fast the confession of the hope unwavering, for he is faithful, who has promised. And let us consider one another for provoking to love and good works. And we shall be faithful to the Lord, and to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Hebrews is a very blessed epistle. Of course, all scripture is. And one thing about Hebrews is there are several fours in Hebrews, isn't there?

[00:02:07] There's others, of course. There's lots of other things. There's several fours. One of the most precious fours is the Lord at the right hand. He's gone there, isn't he? The one at the right hand, in value of who he is, because of the work he has done in Calvary's cause, and in the work he is doing, and because he's the object set before us at the right hand. And of course, we have four times the living God. The times we have several greats in Hebrews, but there are four greats of the Lord Jesus, the great Savior. And then in chapter 7, consider how great this man was. And this man is. He's great, but nobody greater. And then don't believe he's the great priest, great priest. Hebrews chapter 13, the great shepherd, the great shepherd. What a wonderful Savior is Jesus. And here we have another of the many several fours in Hebrews. And it's this [00:03:01] thought of them holding fast, holding fast. These things that we've got to hold fast.

And it came before me when we're reading in this fourth chapter this afternoon, concentrating particularly on the fourth chapter, verses 1 to 11. But surrounding them, this point of holding fast, very necessary. Hold fast. Now, of course, as a young believers, we might get a bit worried and say, oh, surely we don't have to hold fast. God's looking after us. Well, you know, a thing that's helped me is my own personal experience. At the age of six, I moved in my family to a village called Port Seton.

And there was a harbor there. You know, just rather like the harbor there. Some say it's a better harbor. I'm not going to argue [00:04:01] whether it's a better harbor or not. But as that boy of six, I used to like to get down there on the stormy days when the waves were going high, very high. And I used to like to walk along the breakwater. But on the stormy days, I didn't walk alone. No, I walked with my father. I wasn't allowed to go alone. I walked with my father. And I used to like to get to the edge and see these waves and things, you know. And he used to say to me, if you let go my hand, you'll go over.

But there was no way I could let go his hand. Six-year-old boy in the hands, in the hand of my father, there was no way I could let go that hand. He says, if you let go my hand, you'll go over. And that's what it is in Hebrew, you see. There's ifs. There's lots of warnings. But the true believer will never fail. No, you get home, full sail. There's no question that you, the father, will [00:05:04] ever let you go, nor the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus says, I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish. No man can pluck them out of my father's hand. My father, who is greater than all, has given me them. And no man can pluck them out of my hand. My father, who has given me, is greater than all. Now, a lot of people think it's one hand on top of the other. It isn't. It's two hands together. We are held in the double clasp of divine love, the father and the son. What a blessed assurance. Jesus is mine. Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine. So there's no question that you'll be ever swept away. No, no question at all. But you see, our hearts are weak and faint, aren't we? And we might just sink down into the ways of this world and things, and not get into the enjoyment of them. And you see, that's what has happened to these dear Hebrew saints. They'd come out. They'd heard Peter preaching that glorious [00:06:02] message at Pentecost, the first Pentecost in Acts chapter 2. And he preaches again, doesn't he, in chapter 3 and chapter 4 and the message he preached. And then Paul takes it up and preaches this glorious soul-saving gospel. And loads of Jews were gathered in. Loads came in, came in. But then, you see, things were getting a bit difficult for them. They had been, they were getting persecuted, and they were wandering, and their hands were hanging down, as it says in chapter 12. And a lot, of course, had got gathered in for the sake of the loaves and the fishes. There was a mixed multitude. Remember, when the children of Israel came out of Egypt, there was a mixed multitude. There was a mixed multitude. And you know, even when there's movements of God down throughout the church's history, there's been a mixed multitude gathered in, mixed multitude gathered in. Many, many instances of that. One of the most famous was [00:07:02] Calvin's Geneva, wasn't it? There was no doubt true born-again souls there, Calvin included. Many were gathered in. But, of course, there was others went in there just because it was a cleaned-up place, and there was holiness and righteousness and generosity, of course. Yes, much generosity, and they gathered in in that way. So, a mixed multitude gets in. So, obviously, that's what had happened to these dear Hebrew saints. There was a mixed multitude got in, and they weren't born again. And, of course, when the test came, they wanted to give up. And the apostles warning the true believers, you'll never be lost, but don't give up. Don't just settle down to the level of the world. Keep pressing on. And that's why, you see, he gives them four times exhortations to hold fast, hold fast, to hold on. And the first one being in chapter 3, [00:08:07] and verse 6. And he'd spoken, of course, of the Lord Jesus Christ, the apostle and high priest of our confession, what we confess. The apostle, chapter 1, the apostle is one who is sent, isn't he? Fancy word, Greek word for sending. And the apostle is one who is sent, the one who has come out, chapter 1. He's a great apostle. He's come out, come out. And then the high priest is the one who has gone in, gone in. And the result and value of his work, chapter 2, the high priest goes in. So he's the apostle and high priest of our confession, Jesus. Notice the apostle Paul, I take it the apostle Paul wrote this epistle. In Hebrews, he usually, very seldom, if ever, qualifies the name of Jesus with Lord or Christ. Jesus is the name. And it's at the name of Jesus [00:09:09] that every knee is going to bow. Name of Jesus, every knee is going to bow. So for the writer

of Hebrews, Jesus was sufficient. And so he goes down there and now he speaks in verse 6 of Christ, who is Jesus, is Jesus. The Christ, the anointed one, is going to take up the reins of government and minister everything for God, the Father's pleasure, Christ. And he says, a son over his house, God's house, son over God's house. Whose house are we? That's us, dear beloved saints of God.

When we are gathered in our sins forgiven, we are at peace with God, mature in certain hope for heaven. We are justified, sanctified, office kindred, reconciled. But wonderful thing is we form, every blood-bought saint forms as a member of that [00:10:07] church of Christ, which is his body, the fullness of him that fills all in all. And that church is also the house of God. The apostle Paul wrote, didn't he, in 1 Timothy chapter 3, he says, he'd written these things that you might just know how to behave yourself in the house of God, not bricks and mortar. No, when I used to ride on the Capamonne bus, not very often I used to do the underground more than the Capamonne bus, but I was still in the house of God wherever I was. 27 bus, anything, you're in the house of God because it's where he is, where God is, and there you are. And you're never out of it, you're never out of it in the house of God. And it's composed of all the saints who own those saviour, but the living stone, view the vast building, see it rise, the work how great, the plan how wise. And so we are his house, whose house are we. [00:11:06] And then the apostle gives them this warning not to lapse away from it, to lose the benefit of the good, the enjoyment of it, the walking in the light of it. He says, if indeed we hold fast the boldness, now that boldness is not bravado, it's not bravado, it's the confidence, the ability to come in to the presence of God. It's that we are enabled, we are both capacitated, we've got the faculty to do it, because the spirit of God is indwelling us, and we are enabled, we're capacitated, and we have the liberty, the freedom to approach the presence of God. So we have that, and don't let us give it up. Don't let us ever get into the state that we grovel and never think we can come to God, to the Son, to the Father. No, we have that blessed privilege, and the rejoicing, [00:12:01] or the boast, the absolute totality of hope, hope. And that hope, dear friend, is going through into eternity. The apostle Paul writes to the Colossian saints of that hope, which is laid up for you. We're in heaven, not on earth, no, our hope is in heaven. It's laid up for us there. And he said to in Titus, isn't it, that blessed hope, and then he mentions the glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. But the blessed hope, dear friend, is the start of it, when we'll be caught up into the air, to meet the Lord in the air, and we're going to be ever with the Lord in that blessed place, and we can rejoice and hope of the glory of God even now. So we have that rejoicing in it, haven't we? And we hold it firm to the end, to the end. Now, when is the end, dear saints of God? We're looking on to, we're expecting it might be tonight, perhaps tonight, as the hymn writer says, I can hear his footsteps on the threshold of the door. Yes, isn't it? He's so near, so dear, so [00:13:03] precious. Are we looking for him? As the writer of the poem said, as fond as I am of his work in the field, I would lay down the sword, I would lay down the shield, the sword and its scabbard, the weapons of warfare, I'd lay on the shelf, the sword and its scabbard, to be, where? With himself, with himself. Dear saint of God, that is the bright, burning hope, to be with the Lord, to be with himself. And so it's to the end, and the end is not very far away. We are looking for him at any time. Down further in the chapter, in verse 14, it says, we are become companions, fellows of the Christ, the Christ, the one who is, they were looking for, had formerly been looking for as the Messiah, they had found him now, but more than the Messiah, he blessed and wonderful as that is, you know, we've not to belittle it. The fact, you know, don't, don't in a way, yes, belittle it, it's a [00:14:08] very precious thing that God is going to take up his people again. And, you know, I was reading, I got an excerpt sent me from Time magazine in America, in July, and I learned the divine there, born again Christian, have been having, but he says, oh, it says, it's a theology of despair, a theology of blackness, that about, about Israel being restored.

You see, I don't think some of us realize the fallacies that go around, the fallacies that go around, perpetrated not by men who don't know, who shouldn't know what they're talking about, but to say that that was a fallacy and things like that. No, this is the revealed word of God, Israel will be restored to their land in a soon coming day. We are looking [00:15:08] for Christ to come, and that's one aspect of it. They will be restored. He's the Christ.

But then beyond that, of course, this Christ is the son of God, and he's the bridegroom of the bride. The bride's going to be caught up to be forever with the Lord, with the Lord. As I well remember, you know, I was just saying at the interval, things I heard in 1947, I can remember better than I heard in 2002. And I'd well remember Mr. McBroom saying, you know, there he told us, didn't he, that there he said about the church being the kernel, the kernel, and then Israel rounding out, and circles winding out. But it always struck me there and then that the church [00:16:02] was the kernel. And dear young believers, get into these things now, get into it. Another brother used to say, you get what you're going for. Get a hold of these things, and the younger you are, the more easily you'll take them, take them in. So there we are, the blessed opening up, and then it says, we are become companions of the Christ. He says, if indeed we hold the beginning of the assurance firm to the end, we've got a beginning of this, and it goes on, and it brightens, and it gets strengthened in our hearts more and more. An assurance, blessed assurance, holding it firm to the end. The assurance that comes, that we've been, we've got the savior, we've been saved, and we are here to serve him. And all that wonderful, blessed truth, our sins are forgiven, and that assurance that we're going to be with him and like him in our coming day. And so it's not just the beginning, it goes on and on, it deepens, [00:17:05] it gets fuller and fuller. As one has said, another has said, the prospects opening to the Christian's view are brighter as the days go by. I've often said it, haven't you, as you climb a hill and a mountain, you get higher and higher, you see great and wonderful vistas opening up, don't you? You climb, say, Ben Lomond, and then you see Ben Nevis. Isn't it wonderful? You won't see it if you're down on the ground beside Loch Lomond. You've got to get up onto Ben Lomond, and then you can see Ben Nevis. You see Loch Catrine, and all these wonderful vistas opening up, and the prospects opening to the Christian view are brighter as the days go by, holding that assurance, holding the beginning of the assurance. And as we begin, it goes on and on in strength. You see, there's growth in the Christian pathway. Dear brother, Mr. Walker, now with the Lord, he used to remind us down in Hounslow about spiritual dwarves, spiritual dwarves. Oh, [00:18:04] don't let us be like that. Let us be growing and developing in the things of God, dear saint of God, holding the beginning and going on and on in these things, the assurance, firm to the end, a firmness in the way it's hold. Other translations speak about holding tenaciously, tenaciously, not letting it go. And then we had these blessed considerations this afternoon in chapter 4, verses 1 to 11. And after that comes out this truth, the apostle Paul, now it's not very evident, but he moves away from his parenthesis, his parenthesis onto his main message. And verse 12, and he speaks about the word of God being quick and powerful. Then he comes down to verse 14 about, therefore, a great high priest, a great high priest who has passed through the heavens. Who is this? Jesus, Jesus, the son of God, this blessed one that Paul confessed, the Christ, [00:19:07] the son of the living God, son of the living God, Jesus, the son of God. And he's passed through the heavens. And it would bring, the apostle has obviously in mind on the day, we'll come to it later, the day of atonement, when the high priest went in with the various animals, some for himself, but that's not typical of the Lord Jesus Christ, he didn't eat anything, but he went in with animals, sacrifices for the people. And he goes in through the entrance and then through the holy place, into the holy of holies, and the blood is put on the mercy seat. And so you see, when it says here, he's passed through the heavens, it's just a picture of the way the Lord Jesus Christ has gone through. He's gone within the veil for us, that place is one. In him we stand, a heavenly band, how precious it is. He's gone within the veil, gone, he's passed through, and

he's there [00:20:03] now in his right, the right hand of the Father on high, and he's there, an object for us. And so with a blessed one who's gone right in, he's gone right in there. The exhortation is, let us hold fast the confession. And what have we confessed? Well of course, we began by confessing the Lord Jesus Christ, Romans 10 and 9, if thou should confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. We confess him as our Saviour, we confess him as the one who had redeemed us, we confess him as the one who had reconciled us, the one who had justified us, and who had sanctified us. We confess that he is the head of the body, we confess he's the son over the house. Wonderful confession, didn't we? The confession we made of the Lord Jesus Christ, he's the one who has redeemed us, we confess him as the one who is coming again, we confess him to the world around us, he's the only one, the answer to their every [00:21:04] need. Oh what a wonderful, great confession there is of the Lord Jesus Christ. Do we really confess him? Churches of hearts, are we confessing him? If we hold fast the confession, confessing the Lord Jesus Christ, who he is, and all the greatness of his person, to all sorts of companies of people, to confess him. Joy to confess his blessed name, and to the wearied heart proclaim, behold, the Lamb of God. So let us indeed, it says here, let us hold fast the confession.

And then moving on finally to chapter 10, the fourth one of these confessions.

Chapter 19, sorry, chapter 10 and verse 19, reminding us of the boldness that we have to [00:22:01] enter into the holies, into the holies, because you see the veil's done away, there's no longer a holy place, and a holy of holies, despite Mr. Darby's square brackets, there's only one place now. The veil's been done away, and the holy place, and the holy of holies is all one place, and we enter in by the blood of Jesus. Notice Jesus, and then he comes down, you see, in view of all that, he says in verse 23, let us hold fast again the confession. And what is it we're confessing? The hope, unwavering, no doubting, no wavering about it, it's a sure and certain hope, not like the hopes of this world, this world hopes it might win the bingo, or something like that, or any of these things. No, this is not a vain hope, this is a sure and certain hope. It was conveyed by this word, it's something that's definitely going to take place, [00:23:02] and that's what we have before us. The Lord Jesus Christ is definitely going to come for us, and take us to be with us, and there's an assurance here. He is faithful who has promised, promised that he's going to take us in my father's house, and many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, there you may be also. And he's going to honour that promise, no doubt about it, dear Saint of God. He's coming, Jesus is coming, he's coming again. He is faithful who has promised, and it says in verse 24, also another exhortation, let us consider one another. That searches us, doesn't it?

How much consideration do we give to one another? I ask my own heart, first and foremost, I'm not going to point the finger at you, I've got to start here, each one of us. [00:24:02] Do we consider one another? And then it says, for provoking, for provoking, oh yes, we can provoke.

What are we to do with provoking? It's provoking to love, provoking to love. Always reminded, you know, one thing again, I learned in, I think it was 1947 or 40, a dear old brethren saying, a young brother said, oh I don't like going to such and such a meeting, there's no love there. And the wise old brother says, oh why don't you take some? You see, it's infectious. That's the kind of infectious diseases we want, isn't it? But pity there wasn't more of that kind of infectious disease, you see, to provoke to love. And then, of course, the good works would follow. Just, again, it's precious in the previous verse 22 that we didn't read. You notice that it speaks about full assurance of faith there, [00:25:01] faith. And then verse 23 has the hope, and verse 24 has love. And remember in 1

Corinthians 13, we have faith, hope, and love, don't we? And there are several other cases throughout the New Testament where we have faith, hope, and love. And here we have them not in the one verse, but very close together. Sometimes they do occur in one verse together. For instance, in 1 Peter chapter 1, verse 21, the apostle there speaks about your faith and hope should be in God. And in the next chapter, he speaks about love one another out of a pure heart fervently. So there we have that faith, hope, and love. But in the middle this time, the fulcrum this time, love is usually the fulcrum. It is in 1 Corinthians. It's the fulcrum [00:26:04] which balances up chapter 12 and chapter 14, their love in chapter 13. And it says here that we've to hold fast the confession of the hope, unwavering. Let's confess that we've got a hope beyond the scene. We're looking for that which is going right through. As the cry used to be, what have you got that death cannot touch? We've got wealth untold in that blessed man. So let us find dear brethren that we're holding fast in these days as it's so needed and so necessary.