

# Hold Fast, Hold Fast, Hold Fast

It is good for us, beloved, to know what this text meant for those to whom it was first written. The book of Hebrews was written to Jewish Christians. They believed He was the Messiah, the promised Savior Who had fulfilled the Old Testament Scriptures. But they were now tempted to abandon their faith in Christ, and to return to the Old Testament. The cause of this was persecution. “Why do you believe in Jesus Christ? Why do you follow Him? Why do you turn your backs on the temple and now worship God in a new way, the way prescribed by the man Jesus? Don’t you see that He was a failure, as was evident from the fact that His life ended in disaster? Don’t you realize that you are deluded and foolish to follow Christ?” And thus they were tempted to abandon faith in Jesus Christ.

“**Hold fast the profession of your faith!**” Because they were tempted to forsake Christ they had to be told: “Do not let go of what you believe and of what you have confessed concerning Him. Do not crumble because of persecution. Stand firmly in the faith that you **have confessed** concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. And do that without wavering, without swerving one little bit to the right or to the left. Hold fast the profession of your faith!”

Today, most of us have done that publicly in the church – some recently, some many, many years ago. We **confess** that God’s Son, who came into our flesh, who suffered and died on the cross, and Who is now risen and exalted to God’s right hand, is our Lord and our Savior.

On account of that **confession**, we are the objects of the hatred of the devil. There is rejoicing in heaven when one makes that **confession**, but not among Satan and his evil hosts. We can therefore expect ridicule and reproach they faced. “Hold fast to your confession! Never let anyone or anything lead you to waver from what you have confessed, and continue to confess, concerning the Lord Jesus Christ!”

- I. **To What We Must Hold Fast**
- II. **What It Means To Hold Fast**
- III. **How We Hold Fast**

## I. TO WHAT WE MUST HOLD FAST

The child of God is one who makes confession of his faith. The confession that he makes is a **public confession**. It is the kind of confession that the apostle Paul speaks of when he writes to Timothy in I Timothy 6:12 saying, “Thou hast professed a **good profession** before many witnesses.” It is a **public profession of faith**.

It is public, first, when it is made before the consistory. There one speaks publicly to others concerning what he believes. One stands before the congregation, and one lets the whole congregation know and hear of his confession.

But that public profession of faith is something that also continues in the life of the child of God. You continue confessing Christ. You continue confessing Him before your fellow saints, and before the world. You let others know what you believe. You let others hear your constant confession.

Our Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 10 speaks of the fact that those **who confess** Him before men He **will confess** before His Father Who is in heaven. But notice those two words that Christ uses: “**before men.**” Christ is saying, “You must let others hear your confession! You may not be ashamed of what you believe. You may not keep what you believe to yourself. **You must speak of it to others!**” or **its not faith but fear.**

That is also what Romans 10 teaches. It speaks of the fact that we are to confess “with our mouth.” We have to say something as the people of God. We have to say something concerning what we believe. And we have to do that, as I Timothy 6 points out, “before many witnesses.” We must confess. We have the solemn calling and obligation as the people of God to make a **public confession** of our faith.

Your **confession** of faith is not simply letting others know **that** you believe. Confession of faith means you also let others know **what you believe.**

By this statement we are taught that faith includes knowledge. Someone who is ignorant of the Word of God and of the truth cannot confess faith properly. One must know what he believes.

Thus, when someone makes a **confession of faith** he is saying this: “I know certain things! I know the Scriptures. I know that the Bible is the Word of God. I know that God gave the Bible to His church and to His people.

That is exactly why when someone makes public confession of faith that person comes to the consistory and the consistory questions him concerning his knowledge of the truth. But one doesn't know everything – he continues to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ (II Peter 3:18).

For as Christ said, it is the truth that sets us free. It is the truth that saves. It is the truth that gives comfort to the child of God. The lie cannot and will not do that. We need the truth. The Church has to be obligated uncompromisingly to that truth or it cease to be the church; Revelation

So, the child of God who makes a confession says this first of all: “I know what I believe.” He has the knowledge of faith.

Thus, when the Bible says that the Lord Jesus Christ came into this world to save sinners, I say the rest of that verse as well, ‘of whom I am chief.’ But I also believe and am confident that the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to die for me! For me, a

sinner. He's my Lord. He's my savior. He has paid the price for my sin. And I'm certain of those things. I find in those truths therefore, all my comfort, all my peace, all my joy, and all my hope."

So that is what it means that one confesses faith in Christ in this church. It means that you know what the Bible teaches. It means that you know what the confessions teach. And you also have assurance concerning that, for you say, "The Lord Jesus Christ is my Savior, and the truth concerning Him is the source of eternal joy and happiness and peace in my soul!"

## **II. WHAT IT MEANS TO HOLD FAST**

The admonition of the text is, "Hold fast to that!" You are to hold fast to what you profess. You are to keep it in your possession. Be sure, as believers, to take a good hold of that truth of the Word of God, and never depart from it. Never change with regard to it. Do not let go of it. Do not even let go of part of it – not even a small part. Keep on believing until your dying day what today you believe and confess to be the truth of the Word of God!

That is what we must do, beloved – Hold fast!

Something is implied in that command which we could easily overlook. The fact that we are told here to hold fast to what we believe and confess means that these are things that we already possess.

I've been taught the Word of God. I've been taught what the confessions teach. I've been taught what this church believes and teaches. Through all those means God has brought me to understand that this is what is His Word, His truth. And God has given that to me. It is my possession as a gift from God. He says to me, "This is yours! This is your very own!"

What God has given is a precious gift. It is so, of course, because it comes from God. That should be enough. The fact that it comes from God should be enough to make us realize its value, so that we cling to it.

But it is also precious because the truth that God gives to us is saving truth. Every part of the Scripture is gospel. Every part of the Bible reveals to us the Lord Jesus Christ and His saving work. It is not true, as is sometimes said, that there are only parts of the Bible that are important, and, as regards the other parts of Scripture, that it doesn't matter if you believe them or do not believe them. It is not true, for example, that you can deny creation and still believe in the sovereign grace of God in Jesus Christ. You cannot. For every part of the Word of God is the truth, and it belongs together as a whole as the revelation to us of God as the God of our salvation in Christ. The truth is, as we mentioned earlier, the truth that sets us free. The truth saves. The truth comforts us concerning our miseries and sins. The truth comforts us concerning the troubles and

afflictions of life. The truth gives us hope of a blessed eternal life that is coming. The lie cannot comfort – it can only cause despair. The truth alone can give comfort.

To hold fast to this gift from God implies a number of things.

First of all, if you are going to hold fast to it that means you should never forget but you can forget what you believe. It ought not be true of us, beloved, that we are ignorant of the Word of God and ignorant of what the Bible teaches. It can sometimes be that way. We forget the things that we have been taught in our youth. We also forget because when we do not continue to read and study. Yes, it is difficult. But we have to work at it. Otherwise we are going to forget what we have learned. **To hold fast to the profession** of our faith means this: Continue to know and to remember what you have been taught!

**Holding fast** also means continuing to learn. When one makes confession of faith it does not mean that he now knows it all. You read through the Bible from year to year in your family devotions or your private devotions, but every time you do so you come across something concerning which you would say, “I’ve never read that before. I never realized the Scriptures said that.” Yes, there is always more to learn – lots, lots more to learn.

The **confessing believer** is therefore one who continues to study and learn. He does that also through attending Bible study where believers together can learn from the Scriptures. In that way one continues to grow in the knowledge of the things he or she **has confessed**.

And then thirdly, to hold fast means, as the text makes very explicit, “Don’t waver!” Don’t waver! – that has emphasis in the text. To waver means to lean. Someone who wavers is someone who leans this way and then that way. He does not have a good, solid, firm footing or foundation. He is someone who is carried about, as the Scriptures say in Ephesians 4, by every wind of doctrine. New ideas come along and he says, “Well, maybe that’s true. Maybe that’s better than what I have believed and confessed. Maybe I’ve been wrong all this time. Maybe the Word of God and the Confessions have been wrong all this time.” Someone who wavers is easily deceived. He goes with the flow. He is carried along by friends and their ideas. And the result is he changes. He does not stand fast. He drifts from the truth. Do not lean this way, and then that way, just because everyone else is going in those directions and you want to go along with the crowd. Do not swerve to the right hand or to the left. Hold fast, without wavering one iota from the truth of the Word of God.

That is the command of the text to all the people of God. Do you hear what Christ commands?

### III. HOW WE HOLD FAST

To do this is not easy. It never will be.

It is difficult first of all because there is apostasy in our day. Most people are changing. And they consider us to be old fashioned. We are, they say, behind the times. Therefore, they will criticize us and put pressure on us to join them. And we are tempted. For who wants to be among the few? Who wants to be among the few who are, for the most part, constantly criticized and ridiculed? It is much easier to say, "Yes, they are right. We better start doing what they are saying we ought to be doing. We better start believing what they believe, or at least agree that it doesn't matter what one believes." Because of such persecution, the admonition is a difficult one to heed.

But not only is it difficult, beloved, it is really impossible. We cannot do it. We cannot hold fast the profession of our faith – not on our own. We cannot because we are sinful, and we are tempted, and we give in.

That is why it is important to note this statement in the text: "He is faithful that promised." That is how we will do it. That is what makes it possible. We will heed Christ's command because "God is faithful Who has promised."

The text is telling us that God makes promises to His people. And when we speak of the promises of God, we must remember that the promises of God are sure. They are certain. There is no doubt about them. God does not make promises as we do. We make promises, but we often break them. Not God. He is faithful. And that is because He is the unchanging God. This is the truth concerning Him that is expressed in the name Jehovah. He is the I AM. He is the God Who is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He never changes His mind with regard to the promises He makes. He makes a promise, and even though we make ourselves unworthy of God keeping that promise, still He does. That we are unfaithful does not make a difference with God. He is faithful. When He makes a promise it will happen.

Consider some of the promises of God in Scripture

There's the promise God makes in Hebrews 13:5. "He has said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." What a blessed promise that is. Here we are in the midst of an evil world, tempted on every side, facing not only temptations, but many trials and a great variety of things that make it hard for us to stand firm in the faith that we have confessed. And what does God say? "My people, I'm with you. I will never leave you – never. And I will never forsake you. I will be there to uphold you. I will be there to give you the strength you need to remain steadfast in your confession. That's My promise. I will do that – I will." What a blessed promise.

Then there's the promise of God in Philippians 1:6. There God's promise is this: "I have begun a good work in you, and I will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." That's another blessed promise. **God says: "I have begun a work in you. You didn't begin it – I did. And having begun it, I'm going to continue that work. I'm not going to start it and then let you do the rest. But this is My work. I'm going to continue**

**that work. I'm going to continue it until the day of Christ, that is, until the day that Christ returns to take you as one of His children to be in glory.**" What a blessed promise. God is saying, "I will do it all. I will begin the work. I will continue it. And I will finish it. I will perfect and complete what I have begun." And when God promises that, God will do it. He will.

Therein lies the possibility of our **faithfulness to our confession** – that God is faithful. Believe in Him, therefore. Trust in Him. Seek Him and His help daily. Hold fast the profession of your faith and do so without wavering. Do that in the assurance of God's faithfulness. Remember His blessed promises: "I will never leave you nor forsake you. I will finish the work that I have begun. And when My work is done, I will bring you to dwell forever in heavenly glory with Me."

Amen.