

## **Continuing in the Faith: *Holding Fast***

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Sitting and contemplating on a reading of the Scripture,  
One stood at the altar and read from Paul's words,

***“You, who were once alienated and hostile in mind...”***

Yes, that was me.  
Alienated from God separated from Him  
Hostile toward His redemption,  
Hostile toward His Son  
Hostile toward His expressed love.

***“...he has now reconciled in his body of flesh, by his death...”***

Jesus has made all the difference in the world,  
He has reconciled me with God and brought us together  
He has made one who was hostile and transformed him into friend.  
Because of his sacrificial death, I am able to be  
A new creature, a new friend of God.

***“...in order to preset you holy and blameless and above reproach...”***

Jesus introduced me to God for a purpose,  
There was a desire in his redemption beyond personal pleasure  
He bought me with the tremendous price of his blood  
So that I could imitate the character of God  
So that I could be holy (as God is holy)  
So that I could be blameless (without guilt and condemnation)  
So that I could be above reproach (free from chastisement).

***“...if indeed, you continue in the faith...”***

The crux of the issue as I sat thinking.  
The reader said, “...If I hold fast to the faith...”  
Hold fast... Continue...  
My responsibility in response to Christ's redemption.  
I must abide in the faith, hold firm in the confession

Whispered in my ear were the recurring words,  
“Hold fast...Hold fast...Hold fast!”  
How do I maintain my grip when life becomes hard?  
How do I hang on to my faith when circumstances are so bleak?  
How do I keep true when sin rears its ugly temptation?  
What does it mean for me to hold fast...to continue in the faith?  
What is that which I should cling to for dear life?  
Since Jesus has done so much, what should I embrace with my whole heart?

Job said that he would hold fast to his righteousness (Job 27:6).

Righteousness...Is there righteousness in me to cling to?

There is the righteousness of a right relationship  
Set between me and God.

Not because of me but because of grace.

There is righteousness desire springing up in my heart  
Because now there dwells the Spirit of God.

There is righteousness because there is pure standing  
Free from guilt, shame, sin and condemnation  
Freed by the power, blood and Spirit of Christ.

Cling to Righteousness...

His gift to me...

My commitment to Him...

Our relationship together.

The Psalmist affirms that God would deliver him

Because he held fast to God in love (Psalm 91:14)

The Psalmist loved God...because he was first loved by God.

He clung to his love for God...in response to what God had done.

And because he clung in faith and love,

God promised to deliver him

From the trials of life

From the enemies of faith

From the doubts in the heart

From the fears of the future

From the guilt of the past

From the pain of the present.

He would be delivered because he clung to God

And God would protect him in the days ahead.

Clinging to God and love of God...

These cannot be separated.

Cling to Love...  
His love for me.  
My love in return.  
Our love shared together.

Hosea calls us to hold fast to love and justice,  
Only with the help of our God (Hosea 12:6)  
Without justice we lose our grip on God's character  
We lose our faithfulness to his holiness.  
Clinging to love, combined with justice  
Means experiencing the transformed life  
Removing sin from our commitments and relationships  
Ridding our human encounters of inequities and prejudices.  
Clinging to God means embracing His redemption  
But also means holding on to His transformation  
I must cling to God's love for me as I am,  
But I must also hold to God's desire to transform me  
Into what He longs for me to be.  
Love and justice is elusive, unless  
God is involved in every aspect of my journey.  
I cannot hold fast without assistance.  
He aids me and strengthens my grip.  
Cling to Justice...  
God's power unleashed in me  
My yielding to the Spirit's control  
Our working cooperatively in love and justice.

Paul affirms that we experience salvation as  
We hold fast to the word which he preached (1 Cor 15:2).  
He also encouraged his reader to hold fast  
To the word of life (Phil 2:16).  
The word of life...the source of genuine life  
Found on the lips of Jesus  
Recorded in the pages of Scripture  
Proclaimed by the Apostle  
Preached weekly in the pulpit  
Hold fast to the word...for in it is the true life of the believer.  
Hold fast to the proclaimed word...for there is life for the lost.  
Hold fast to the living word...for in it is the power of transformation.  
The Word...knowing, understanding, applying, living

Cling to the Word...

His instruction for holding and living  
My surrender to obeying and following  
Our conversation in dynamic interplay.

Twice the writer of Hebrews tells us to "Hold fast to our confession."

First in response to the great fact of having a High Priest (Jesus)

Second in response to the incredible faithfulness of God (Heb 4:14; 10:23)

Jesus saved us by being the priest and the sacrificial lamb

God is faithful to those who hold to him

To redeem, save and sanctify

The heart of our confession is "Jesus is Lord"

We confess with our mouths,

We believe in our hearts

That God raised him from the dead

And salvation is received upon the confession

And our grip must never waver from

Our initial conviction about Jesus and His work.

I must continually remind myself

The extent of Christ's redemption

The fullness of Christ's identity

The power of Christ's sacrifice

The depth of Christ's love

In in the reminding of all that He has done

Cling to the Confession...

God's faithful redemption

My willing embrace of His truth

Our joining in intimate communion.

Thinking, reflecting, hearing,

There is something else that stands behind it all.

It is the invitation from God himself

His call to cling,

Not to an impersonal force

Not to a set of rules and regulations

Not to a religious commitment

His call to cling,

Only to Himself.

*“...loving the Lord your God, obeying His voice and holding fast to Him for He is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers... (Deuteronomy 30:20, ESV)*

Cling to God the Father  
Hold on to Someone, not something  
Hold fast to HIM!

God did not redeem me for me to follow rules;  
God did not redeem me for me to give myself over to religious activity;  
God did not redeem me so that I could be moralistic and judgmental;  
God did not redeem me so that I could be a model of perfection;  
God did not redeem me through Christ so that I could be Christian.  
He redeemed me, by His love  
So that I could be His and He could be mine.  
He redeems so that I can be in relationship with Him  
And cling to Him and only to him.  
Celebrate what is present in the holding fast –  
In the loving of God...in the obeying the voice...in holding Him dear...  
There is my life;  
The totality of my days purpose and meaning is found  
I will dwell in the place of promise and hope and joy  
Because God is the source of it all  
Cling to God...  
    The divine being personally available to me  
    My responding to God’s offer of promise and redemption  
    Our walking together through the length of my days.

Holding fast...To what do I cling?  
I will cling to righteousness...  
    His and not my own, our relationship together.  
I will cling to Him in love...  
    Mine in response to His, trusting His provision and protection.  
I will cling to Him in justice...  
    Knowing His help in transforming my life and my relationships.  
I will cling to His word...  
    Embracing His voice and being empowered by His speaking.  
I will cling to the confession...  
    His deity and redemption, relying only, only on Him.  
I will cling to HIM!  
    He is my life, my joy, my meaning, my purpose, my everything.

Holding fast...I cling to Him!

All of my days

With all of my heart

In all of my strength

Engaging all of my will

Surrendering all of my mind

All of my time

I cling to HIM!