

Hebrews 10:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering;
(for he is faithful that promised;)

Analysis

Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) The second exhortation (after "draw near" in verse 22) commands steadfast confession of faith. "Let us hold fast" (katechōmen, κατέχωμεν) means to hold down, hold firmly, retain possession. The present subjunctive indicates continuous action—keep on holding fast, never letting go. This is not passive belief but active grip, determined retention despite opposition or doubt.

"The profession of our faith" (tēn homologian tēs elpidos, τὴν ὁμολογίαν τῆς ἐλπίδος—literally "the confession of our hope") refers to the public declaration of Christian faith. Homologia means confession, agreement, acknowledgment. This is not private, internal belief but public, verbal confession (Romans 10:9-10). In a context of persecution, public confession risked social ostracism, economic hardship, and physical violence. The temptation to deny or minimize Christian identity was real and powerful.

"Without wavering" (aklinē, ἀκλινη) means unwavering, not bending or inclining. The word pictures a ship holding course despite storms or a soldier maintaining formation despite enemy pressure. Christian confession must be steadfast, not fluctuating with circumstances, social pressure, or internal doubt. This firmness isn't based on our strength but on God's faithfulness.

The parenthetical statement "(for he is faithful that promised)" (pistos gar ho

εὐαγγελισμένους, πιστὸς γὰρ ὁ ἐπαγγειλάμενος) provides the foundation for unwavering confession. Our confidence rests not on our faithfulness but on God's. He who promised is faithful—absolutely trustworthy, utterly reliable, incapable of breaking His word (Numbers 23:19, 2 Timothy 2:13). Our perseverance is grounded in His faithfulness. If God is faithful to His promises, we can safely stake everything on His word without fear that He will fail or change.

Historical Context

The original recipients of Hebrews faced increasing persecution from both Jewish and Roman authorities. Confessing Christ meant potential exclusion from the synagogue (John 9:22), loss of property (Hebrews 10:34), and possibly death (Hebrews 10:32-34). The temptation to recant, hide faith, or return to Judaism to escape suffering was immense. This exhortation addresses that pressure directly: hold fast your confession regardless of cost.

Throughout church history, seasons of persecution have tested believers' willingness to hold fast their confession. The early church martyrs, medieval Waldensians and Lollards, Reformation-era Protestants, modern persecuted churches in communist and Islamic countries—all faced the choice: confess Christ and suffer, or deny Him and find relief. Those who held fast often cited this verse as their anchor.

The confession of faith became formalized in the early church creeds (Apostles' Creed, Nicene Creed) and later Protestant confessions (Augsburg, Westminster, etc.). These documents provided standard statements of faith that believers could publicly affirm, clearly distinguishing orthodox Christianity from heresy. To "hold fast the profession" meant adhering to these core truths despite pressure to compromise or accommodate false teaching. The Reformation battles over justification by faith alone involved holding fast the confession against both Roman Catholic additions and Anabaptist reductions.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. In what circumstances are you most tempted to hide, minimize, or compromise your Christian confession?
2. How does meditating on God's faithfulness to His promises strengthen your resolve to remain faithful in your confession?
3. What does it mean practically to hold fast your confession "without wavering" in a culture increasingly hostile to Christian truth claims?

Interlinear Text

κατέχωμεν	τὴν	ὁμολογίαν	τῆς	ἐλπίδος	ἀκλινῇ
Let us hold fast	G3588	the profession	G3588	of our faith	without wavering
G2722		G3671		G1680	G186
πιστὸς	γὰρ	ὁ	ἐπαγγειλάμενος		
he is faithful	(for	G3588	that promised		
G4103	G1063		G1861		

Additional Cross-References

1 Thessalonians 5:24 (Faith): Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

1 Corinthians 1:9 (Faith): God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Hebrews 6:18 (Parallel theme): That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:

2 Thessalonians 3:3 (Faith): But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.

Hebrews 3:6 (Parallel theme): But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

1 Corinthians 10:13 (Faith): There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

Titus 1:2 (Covenant): In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;

Revelation 3:11 (Parallel theme): Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

Hebrews 4:14 (Parallel theme): Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

Hebrews 11:11 (Faith): Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.