

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

BOOK OF HEBREWS

MOVING THROUGH (HEBREWS 6:1-3) BEING A CHRISTIAN IS BEING IN A RELATIONSHIP

After one is saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9), the believer is to grow in their intimacy and understanding of Jesus. In growing close to God, there are behaviors and actions we leave behind, and many we pick up and develop.

WE'RE TO MOVE ON FROM "ELEMENTARY" TEACHING

All biblical knowledge is important, but we're to learn more than just the basics

- The author lists several things that are to be learned and held onto as we learn more about God. The analogy of laying a foundation on top of an already established foundation shows that a lack of progression leads to "dead works"

WE MUST HAVE FAITH AND REPENTANCE

We need to not only ask God to forgive our sins but to take the steps to change our course. This follows our belief not only in Christ but His ability and willingness to restore us. A true believer doesn't remain in a life of sin and disobedience to God.

WE PUBLICALLY PROFESS CHRIST IN BAPTISM

"Ritual washings" were Jewish spiritual cleansing ceremonies, but Christians are instructed to publicly profess faith through baptism.

THE "LAYING ON OF HANDS"

This is referring to the seeking, receiving, and properly using the Gifts of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:8-10, Romans 12:6-8) for the edification of the church

KNOWLEDGE OF THE "RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD" AND "ETERNAL JUDGMENT"

We know that we will be resurrected from the dead (Revelation 20) and will be eternally judged for our response to the gospel, but we are not to stop at that knowledge

- If we know this, why don't we live in a way that reflects the fact that our (and many others) eternity is at stake?

THESE 6 THINGS ARE ELEMENTARY TEACHINGS

Believers are called to not only experience these things but to grow in understanding and obedience in them.

- If we believe these things but don't grow in them, we cannot expect help from Christ because we've willingly abandoned Him. Our lips are close, but our hearts are far away (Matthew 15:8)

FORTUNATELY, THE HOLY SPIRIT HELPS US

Maturing in our relationship with Jesus begins with our willingness to be committed, but **we must invoke and rely on the Spirit to help us learn and follow God's standards.** Remember, **maturity is a choice.**

DRINKING THE RAIN (HEBREWS 6:4-8) CAN WE LOSE OUR SALVATION OR NOT?

V4-5 are used as arguing tools for two camps of Believers – Arminians, and Calvinists, and in these debates, the main point often gets lost

- The question shouldn't be if we can "divorce" ourselves from God, but rather if we are continually striving to grow closer to Him

SOME SEE V4-5 AS A LOSS OF REWARDS IN HEAVEN

Many who don't believe Christians can lose salvation believe they can lose rewards in heaven. The problem with this interpretation is the warnings of 6:7-8 and 10:27

THERE'S A 3RD INTERPRETATION

Some believe the readers were not truly converted yet, but had "tasted the heavenly gift and became companions with the Holy Spirit" but have not fully committed to Christ. This would be considered "common grace," or the good things of God that fall on both the saved and lost.

MAYBE THE BEST INTERPRETATION OF THE HEBREWS

The author didn't know who amongst the recipients were genuine or not. So, he urged them to show their faith by refusing to do things contradictory to scripture.

- Was the one who strays from Christ ever saved? We don't know for sure, but we know **real faith is visible** through actions and obedience to God

SOME MAY APPEAR SAVED, BUT ARE NOT

There seems to be a difference between people that are temporarily infatuated with Christ, and those that truly love Him

- These readers claimed to have been enlightened, experienced supernatural gifts and had seen the power of God, but the author urged them to demonstrate their faith by their works (Matthew 7:22-23)

WE MUST EVALUATE OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

The Bible encourages even the weakest believer, but it also declares warnings to the one that carelessly presumes they are on God's side.

- We are called to be "doers of the Word" not just "hearers" (James 1:22). **We can look and sound like Christ-Followers, but we must have a relationship with Christ to be saved**

RE-CRUCIFYING JESUS? (V6)

This scripture is referring to those that have heard the truth of the gospel and even experienced the power of Christ but have willingly turned away

- Denying a relationship with Christ after acknowledging what Jesus has done for us is a hostile act against Him

AND THERE'S NO COMING BACK?

God will pardon any sin if one truly repents, but it is possible for people to reject the grace of God so long that they arrive at a place where repentance is impossible

- It is not impossible for God, but the person has hardened their heart so much that God has given them over to their true desires (Romans 1:28-32)

A SIMPLE ANALOGY TO WRAP UP THE POINT (V7-8)

God "rains on the just and the unjust" (Matthew 5:45), and it's up to the soil to respond. Some respond with healthy vegetation, others with useless thorns and weeds.

- Though unpopular, **we sometimes need reminding that useless weeds and thorns are thrown into a fire by the Gardener.**

ENDURANCE (HEBREWS 6:9-12) FROM WARNING TO ENCOURAGEMENT

Not only does the author call the recipients "dear friends," he says he is "confident" that many of them displayed lives committed to Jesus and that those that didn't would respond positively to his warnings

- "better things" was referring to the productive and content spiritual life that accompanies a true believer

WHAT HAD THEY DONE TO MAKE HIM CONFIDENT?

He mentions "work and love" they "showed for His name" in serving the saints

- They had **concern for others**, they **lived righteously**, they **loved people**, and they **ministered to other Christians**. They also had a **heart for justice** and **spreading the gospel**. **These things should be seen in all believers**

KEEP PUSHING FORWARD

After encouraging the recipients of the letter, the author now pushes them to continue moving closer to Christ. We are to "remain diligent" so there is no question of our salvation and "hope." At the time, the readers may have lacked confidence, but the author wants the Hebrews to have assurance in their faith

IMITATE THE SPIRITUALLY MATURE OF THE PAST (V12)

The author calls upon the readers to look at the example of the men and women in the OT and the current leaders of their day so they can imitate them and "inherit the promises through faith and perseverance"

- We need to **read the testimonies in the Bible and surround ourselves with mature Christians that will sharpen us**

IF WE ARE NOT DILIGENT, WE WILL STRAY

If we don't choose influences wisely and if we neglect the Word and godly counsel, we are destined to "become lazy" and start the process of hardening our hearts. **Christianity is not simply a religion, but a relationship, and relationships should always be growing**

LIFE MUST BE DONE ON PURPOSE

- **We must decide in our minds and hearts that we want to grow closer to Jesus**
- We must seek and accept truth and truly repent for our disobedience to God.
- We must be diligent with church involvement
- **We must seek the Gifts of the Spirit:** Wisdom, knowledge, faith, miracles, healing, prophecy, tongues, interpreting tongues, and discernment
- **We must steward our time wisely**
- Block out time for prayer, study, building relationships, teaching others, serving
- **We must surround ourselves with people that challenge, encourage, and sharpen us**
- **We must pour into our community:** families, friends, neighbors, people of other faiths, poor, rich, other believers, etc.