

## THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

FEBRUARY 23RD, 2025 // HEBREWS

### GOING BEYOND (HEBREWS 6:1-3) "THEREFORE..."

The author spoke directly to his readers' immaturity at the end of Ch. 5 and will usher them into deeper understanding in Ch. 6.

- There was nothing to gain by treating the audience as immature. He acknowledged the problem and got busy with a solution. Anyone can point out problems, but **we are called to walk people towards solutions.**

### LEAVING THE RUDIMENTARY TEACHING

The author encourages his readers to **"leave the elementary teaching about Christ and go on to maturity."** The basic teaching about Christ is wonderful and necessary as the foundation we build upon.

- To grasp the basics but never build upon them is like a builder who constructs a foundation but never completes the structure on top of it.

### FINDING COMMON GROUND

The author's intentions were not to give a list of "basics" as many have viewed this. The practices listed here look more indicative of Jewish orthodoxy than of Christianity.

- The audience was comprised of Jewish Believers, so the author is establishing these existing Jewish beliefs as **the foundation he will build Christian truth upon.**

### THE TEMPTATION

With the similarities between Judaism and Christianity, **the Hebrews thought they could slip back into the common, comfortable place of Judaism and avoid persecution.**

- They could not have it both ways because **to go back is ultimately a denial of Jesus.** This is the temptation to say, "I can still be religious, but I don't have to be so fanatical about Jesus."

### REPENTANCE AND FAITH

The Hebrews were familiar with works and rituals of asking for forgiveness, but those were considered "dead works" because **they omitted faith in God's provision through Christ.**

- We ask God to forgive us of our sins and take the steps necessary to change course (Matthew 5:29). **A true Believer does not remain in sin and disobedience to God** (1 John 3:9).

### RITUAL WASHINGS AND LAYING ON OF HANDS

The Hebrews were practicing the ceremonial washings while **avoiding publicly confessing Christ through baptism.**

- To not draw attention to themselves, they also **avoided 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.**

### RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD AND ETERNAL JUDGMENT

There is a foundational belief that we will be resurrected from the dead (Revelation 20) and will face eternal judgment for our response to the gospel. We are expected to build upon that knowledge.

- We are to **live in a way that reflects the reality that our lives and those around us are at stake.** If we make the choice to mature and move past the basics, **we must rely on God for growth.**

### FALLING AWAY (HEBREWS 6:4-8)

#### CAN WE LOSE OUR SALVATION OR NOT?

Vs. 4-6 say it is impossible for those who had a "new light" shine on them, tasted the gift of salvation, fellowshiped with the Holy Spirit, and experienced the goodness of God's word and supernatural power to be renewed to repentance if they fall away. This is some of the most debated Scripture. **The debate centers around whether this is actually salvation or something short of salvation.**

#### HUMAN PERSPECTIVE VS. HEAVENLY (1 SAMUEL 16:7)

On one side, we see in Scripture that it is possible for someone to experience great spiritual components, exhibit spiritual works, and do overtly religious things without actually being saved (Matthew 7:21-23).

- From our perspective, it seems they had the appearance of salvation, yet from God's, it is impossible for us to say with any certainty.

#### ETERNAL REWARD VS. ETERNAL SALVATION

Another side believes this penalty deals only with eternal rewards and not eternal salvation. It emphasizes that the text says repentance is impossible, not salvation.

- This can be dangerous. It tells Christians with low commitment and growth that all that's in jeopardy are some rewards, but you can make it to heaven "by the skin of your teeth."

#### CONTEXT, CONTEXT, CONTEXT!

This passage is best understood considering what the author had just communicated. To choose to go back to Judaism is to choose to reject Christ and His sacrifice—to return to dead works of animal sacrifices, which is an egregious act toward Christ.

- Salvation is found in a relationship with Christ, and the idea is "If you turn your back on Christ, don't expect to find salvation anywhere else."

#### HARD TRUTHS ARE STILL TRUE

The author uses an analogy in verses 7-8 to wrap up the point. The sun rises on the just and unjust, and the rain falls on both (Matthew 5:45). God gives what is needed to grow and produce fruit, but **it is up to the soil to respond.** Some will produce vegetation while those who produce useless thorns and thistles will be thrown into a fire.

### BEING DILIGENT (HEBREWS 6:9-12)

#### "EVEN THOUGH WE ARE SPEAKING THIS WAY..."

The author admits to being harsh with his readers, but he doesn't apologize for it. He knew these things needed to be said to keep them from walking away from Christ.

- To truly love someone means being **willing to be uncomfortable and have hard conversations about things that may draw us away from following Christ** (Philippians 2:3).

### FIRST A WARNING, THEN ENCOURAGEMENT

Often, when we fall into discouragement, we start to believe the lie that God has forgotten about us and abandoned us.

- The author reminds the readers that God sees that they are caring and loving toward others, and he urges them to **be as faithful to Christ as they have been with their brothers and sisters.**

### STAYING DILIGENT

The author takes the role of a coach and encourages the readers to press on and remain diligent so they do not become lazy.

- We cannot let discouragement make us lazy or careless because **if we are not diligent and lose the desire to press on, we will inevitably lose the desire to go on, and we will eventually stray.**

### BE IMITATORS OF THE SPIRITUALLY MATURE

Instead, we are to be imitators of those who inherit the promises through faith and perseverance.

- We look to David, who in times of discouragement received encouragement in the Lord (1 Samuel 30:6), and to Abraham for examples for pressing on until the end. **We, too, will inherit** (not earn) **the promises of God through faith and patience.**

### LIVING WITH INTENTIONALITY

- Do we desire the growth which only God can give? If yes, we must avoid half-hearted commitment to God.
- Are we looking to the examples of spiritual maturity in the Bible and surrounding ourselves with mature Christians or are we neglecting the Word and wise counsel?
- Are we intentional in our relationship with Christ?
- Are we intentional in our relationships with others?
- Are we living with intentionality? Are we stewarding our time well? Are we carving out time to invest in our relationship with Jesus and with others?