

Hebrews: Laying Hold of the Hope Part 2

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. . . Chapter 6, verse 1, he says, Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection.

[1 : 3 4] He said, you've learned the things about Christ. You've learned things that you may not have known were about Christ. But as a Jew, you learned certain things. You're pressing on toward maturity was the title we gave to that section.

And they're maturing in their growth as a Christian because as a Jew, they had learned about repentance. They'd learned about faith. They'd learned about resurrection from the dead.

They'd learned about eternal judgment. They'd learned all those things. He says, now Christ has come, and we can take those things and build upon them as we learn more and more about Christ.

And so he revealed the fact that the truth that we learn kind of comes in a progressive thing. We learn truth, and then we add to that truth and add to that truth and add to that truth.

He illustrated it this way. Patriarchs learned basic truths. And then Moses added the religious and legal system to it. And then the prophets added truths and things about faith that God wanted us to know and learn.

[2 : 4 1] So just like any learning curve, you learn, and then you learn, and then you learn, and you grow on the things that you have for a foundation. And so he's been teaching them, you have the foundation.

You learn things as a Jew. Now you take the things of Christ and you add to it. And if you don't, we talked about the fact that what happens if we stop learning?

What happens if we stop growing? Well, number two was there's a falling away into hopelessness. Falling away into hopelessness. And we looked at verses 4 through 8, and we looked at verses 4 through 6, and we talked about the fact that they're probably some of the most difficult and debated verses in the Bible because they seem to say that you can lose your salvation.

They seem to say that. But when you take in context of the whole book of Hebrews, and you take in context the entire Bible, we learned that no, that's not true. It's not that we're going to lose our salvation.

We talked about John chapter 10, verses 28 and 29, where he talks about we're in God's hands and Christ's hands, and we can't be plucked out of them. We looked at Romans 8, 33 to 39, where you can't, you know, nothing can separate you from the love of God.

[4 : 01] We looked at Ephesians 1, 13 and 14, and we looked at other verses. We talked about the fact that the Jews, remember, as they were leaving Egypt, they could have gone into the Promised Land after about a week, but they didn't make it because of unbelief.

And he's pointing out here, because of unbelief, people don't follow through. He said in verses 4 or 5, remember we talked about, you've tasted the things.

You've seen things happening. You've seen God at work. You've seen what's happening in your church. You see these things, but nothing, you haven't actually taken it in. It's a little taste, and oh yeah, this is kind of neat.

But you have not taken it in for yourself. We've observed Christ working in other people. We've observed what he's been doing in the church, but we've never taken it apart for ourselves.

And then we ended, before I got finished with that section, verses 7 and 8. Verse 7 and 8 of Hebrews 6.

[5 : 12] It says, He says, Look, there's two things that can happen.

The rain falls on the earth. And he's basically pointing out, you know, the rain falls over here, the earth takes the rain in, and we see flowers growing. We see herbs growing.

We see things that we can use. The rain falls over here, and briars, and brambles, and thorns, and all kinds of things, grow over here, which are taken away and burned.

He said, The same rain comes down, but how it's used by the earth makes a difference in what happens. The same gospel is coming to people all over the world.

The gospel is going out. What they do with it makes a whole lot of difference in their life. Do they take it in and let it nourish them and strengthen them and give them what they need for growth or do we take it and just kind of let it run off and, you know, form gullies and everything, but never really take it in.

[6 : 42] So he says, Look, how you use what you're hearing, what you do with it makes a difference. And if we use it in the right way, number three, we're going to follow Christ in faith.

We're going to follow Christ in faith. Look at verse 9. But beloved, we are persuaded better things of you and things which accompany salvation, though we thus speak.

For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which he have showed toward his name, and that ye have ministered to the saints and do minister.

And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end. Stop there.

He says, Look, despite the fact that some people might hear and just let it go, despite the fact that some people are going to just be sitting, listening to the word of God, watching what God is doing in other people's lives, and just let it go, he says, Look, I'm convinced of better things for you guys.

[7 : 53] You Hebrews, you're listening. You Hebrews, you're taking it in. You're making it a part of your life. He says, he believes these people are truly saved, because notice what he said in verse 9.

But, beloved. He calls them beloved. These are people who are part of the family. They've taken in the things about Christ and made it a part of their life.

He believes that they are truly saved, the people he is talking about. Then you look at verse 10 again, and he says, For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed toward his name, and that ye have ministered to the saints and do minister.

What evidence of salvation does he say they have? Labor of love. They have a labor of love that they are doing amongst the other people.

Hold your finger there. Go with me over to Ephesians chapter 2. Just a few books back. Ephesians chapter 2. Verses 8 and 9, very familiar verses.

[9 : 16] It says, For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. So salvation comes not by works, but by faith in God.

But, if you are saved, what happens? Look at verse 10. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

He says, you're not saved by good works. You're saved by grace of Jesus Christ and the faith you have in that. But once you are saved, there will be good works that will follow.

So, the writer of Hebrews is saying, your labor of love, the things that you're doing, are a demonstration of the fact that you have accepted Christ and asked him into your life.

It's an example of salvation. Look at verse, go with me to Colossians. Just a couple books back over. Colossians chapter 1.

[10 : 18] And I want you to see what Paul is writing to the Colossians. And, I want you to look at what Paul says and how can you use that to encourage people who are in conflict or afflicted around you, people who are going through struggles around you.

Look at verse, Colossians 1, look at verse 24. Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church.

Okay, so the church, Paul's going through things and he says it's being a help to the church. How? Look at verse 27. To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this ministry among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you the hope of glory.

He says you're going through things, you're facing things, you're able to go through those things and handle those things because Christ in you the hope of glory. And the Gentiles are watching and they're seeing and they're understanding that the things you're going through you're able to handle them because Christ in you the hope of glory.

He says, look, you're a testimony. Your labors of love, the things, the way that you handle things that are taking place in your life, you're showing people Christ in you the hope of glory.

[11 : 49] You know, we have to be so careful how we handle things that come into our life. How do we handle those things that, you know, bring pain, bring affliction, bring whatever?

He says, do you handle them in a way that shows that Jesus is living in you? because Jesus has faced everything we face. He's handled everything we handle. He knows how to do it.

Are they seeing Jesus in you is what he's asking. He challenges them to be just as diligent in watching how they do things.

Christ is risen. Christ is going to return. I have hope in Christ. therefore, I can handle the things that come into my life because I have Jesus in me.

We are faithful to being obedient, to fulfilling the things that God has for us, Jesus has for us. He says, look, people are going to see, people are going to know.

[12 : 52] They maintain this obedience based on love, love for God. And it was a testimony to others.

Look back in Hebrews chapter 6. Back in Hebrews chapter 6, look at verse 12. Verse 12 says, that ye be not swathful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

You don't have to answer these questions, but just think about them. Who are you an example to of loving service? others? How has observing others encouraged you to join them?

Who is looking at you as an example of loving labor? See, we need to keep our focus on Christ, live like he did, live the way he wants us to, showing others what it means to be a faithful follower of Jesus Christ.

God's God's love. He says, don't be swathful. Don't be, he said, look at the examples that you have. He's going to come up to chapter 11 of Hebrews, that Hall of Fame chapter, and he's going to give all kinds of examples of people who followed Christ, followed God, followed through with their commitments to him, to their living the life the way God wanted them to.

[14 : 26] He says, who are you following, and who are you being an example to? I'm going to show you a whole bunch of people who did. Make your life like them. Be looking at them for an example to live your life.

Remember the people in Canaan? Well, they didn't get to Canaan. On their way to Canaan, they doubted God. Well, even when they got to Canaan. Remember, the spies went in, and they came back out?

Caleb and Joshua said, let's go. The rest of them said, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. Let's not be in such a hurry here. Those guys are big. Have you seen those guys? Yeah, we were there.

We saw them. They're huge. We're like grasshoppers. Joshua and Caleb were like, the bigger they are, the harder they fall. You know, whatever.

God's through this. Let's go do it. Too often, we let circumstances and things hinder what God wants us to do. The thing we need to do, number four, is remember God's promises.

[15 : 34] Remember God's promises. Look at verse 13. Remembering God's promises, it says, for when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, saying, surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.

And so after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. He says, look, let me give you an example of that faith. Abraham. Abraham trusted God.

Abraham believed God. Abraham was faithful in doing what God had asked him to do. When you think about Abraham, and you think about Abraham's faith, what's the first thing you think about?

The sacrifice of Isaac. You know, it's funny. That was not the first one I thought of. Most people do. Most people think of that one, and we're going to talk actually about that one, but the first one I thought of?

That's the first one I thought of. He hasn't had any contact with God up to this point, and all of a sudden he has contact with God, and God says, okay, Abraham, I want you to leave your home, and he's going to send you here.

[16 : 48] And Abraham said, okay. I'm like, really? You know, by the time he gets to Isaac's sacrifice, he's seen God do things over and over and over and over again.

But that first one where he says, Abraham, go, he hadn't. But, like Fred, and most people, the sacrifice of Isaac. The fact that he would try to sacrifice his son because God told him to.

And you think about God told him way back at that first part. He was going to have, he was going to become a nation, more than the stars in the sky and the sands of the sea. You're going to be a nation.

Right. Right. Yeah, some couple that old.

Matter of fact, from the time that he was told, you're going to be a nation, it was 25 years before Isaac was born. And it wound up being the birth of two nations because he messed up the first time.

[17 : 59] That's why we have two nations. And then the importance of understanding how sin affects things because that two nation thing is what we're still facing today.

That's why we have all the trouble in the Middle East. It's because of that two nation thing. But he has a child, Isaac, 25 years later. He has seen God work time and time and time again.

And now God says, okay, I want you to go sacrifice your son Isaac. Wait a minute. He's the only one I've got that's, you know, he's the son of promise. Ishmael is not.

Isaac is. And now you want me to kill him? You said I'm going to be a great nation. You said I'm going to be as money as the stars in the sky and the sands of the sea. And I think Abraham in the back of his mind said, God has promised.

God has always kept his promises. So I can take Isaac and if he winds up dying, I think in the back of Abraham's mind he was going, God will raise him from the dead because I'm going to have a nation as many as the stars in the sky and the sand of the sea.

[19 : 07] could have.

Yep. He knew that he had a promise about the nation thing. So he knew something, God had something in mind, something was going to happen. So, yep. So anyways, he points out Abraham as an example of faith.

We can trust God to keep his promises. We can trust God to do what he says he will do. You can have faith in God. So he's like, look, God stated a promise and how did God state that promise?

You know, when God promises something, or anybody promises something, usually they have something to back up the promise. Look at verse 15.

I think I read it already, but it said, and so after he had patiently endured, he had tamed the promise. Verse 16, for men verily swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife, wherein God willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, and confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who hath fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us.

[20 : 47] Okay, so what is he talking about there? He says, look, first of all, in verse 15, God showed, again, by Abraham and Isaac, what did he teach us about God's timing?

God's timing is not our timing. We want things to happen now, and it's gotten worse and worse, the older you have gotten, the worse it has gotten, hasn't it, because our world has changed.

What souls have in the morning, what are that song that you have been here on time? They may not be on time, when he's ready.

And that's what he did, when he was ready. As I was saying, you know, we, back when you were growing up, you know, you might be hungry, but supper wasn't going to be until such and such a time.

Now we have all kinds of snacks and things. Now we have McDonald's we can go to, or wherever, and you can get almost instantly. God says, it's not my timing, when my timing is right.

[22 : 04] When Jesus came, in the fullness of time, the Bible says, in Galatians. back then, you had to rely on ovens and burners, you didn't have microwaves, you didn't have all that stuff.

So the food took time to cook. And if you got bread, you probably made it. It takes time. Yep. And God says, I have timing.

I have a plan. Trust my plan and what I have. Hold your finger there, and Hebrews, go over to 1 Peter. 1 Peter chapter 5.

1 Peter chapter 5, familiar verses. Verses 6 and 7. 1 Peter 5, 6 and 7.

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you. He says, that he may exalt you, in due time.

[23 : 10] What does he mean by due time? Time that he plans. Time that he has. We have to make sure that we're trusting God and his timing of what things are going to take place.

And then, number five, grasping certain hope. I read 16, 17, 18. Let's read 19 and 20. It says, which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.

Whether the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. he says, we have a certain hope, sure and steadfast.

And you think about how do we know we have a sure and steadfast hope? When God made the promises to Abraham, when God makes promises to us, what does it say back there in verse 18?

That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation. Two immutable things.

[24 : 32] What are those two immutable things? You read through those verses and it doesn't really say particularly, but what are those two immutable things? The fact that God cannot lie, so it's based on the fact that God's name and God's character.

He swore by two immutable things, two things that cannot change, his name and his character. He says, I made a promise and I swore by these two things.

You know, usually when we do things, make promises, we swear by them. We go to court, they make you swear with your hand on the Bible and all those things. What's greater than God? Nothing.

So he swore by his name and his character that these things will happen and will take place. And he gives us things to look at there in the last part of the chapter.

I'm running out of time. The fact that he says we have an anchor. Anchor gives stability. Anchor doesn't allow things to float. Anchor doesn't allow things to move.

[25 : 43] We have an anchor, sure and steadfast, it says. God says, when I give a promise, you can count on it. It's going to happen. He talks about the fact that he's a priest.

He's a priest after the word Melchizedek. Priests only gave the message that God gave to them. He says, you have these promises. You have a sure, steadfast, anchored, God's name and character backed promises in the word of God.

We need to make sure that when we go to God's word and we read God's word, we come with that same attitude. attitude. We have God's promises.

We have a secure hope. There's nothing doubting what God says he will do. Okay? Let's have a word prayer.

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for this time together this morning, Lord. I pray that you would help us to leave here this morning having a closer walk with you. Lord, as we have the morning service, I pray we would learn some things about church and things about the doctrines we believe in church and things that we have to grasp and we have things that are sure and steadfast, things that will not change.

[27 : 04] And Lord, I just thank you that we have a God that we can trust, a God who will keep his word, a God who will make things happen in his timing.

Lord, may we trust you in everything that takes place in our life. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.