

The Foundation That Leads To Growth

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[0 : 00] Hebrews 6 is where we are in the book of Hebrews. That's where we left off a couple weeks ago. I am going to give a full-on note of disclosure.

I have labored long and hard over the text we're going over this morning. It's beat me up. I'll be honest with you. It's not one of those we can just open up and read it and look at it and have both complete understanding of what it's saying and complete acceptance of what it's saying. To be honest, you have these passages in Scripture that you come across. The book of Hebrews I knew contained these types of passages.

When I felt God was leading us to get into this study and into this book, I was very nervous and scared because I don't like to be uncertain.

[1 : 03] Right? And you probably don't like me to feel uncertain. But I'm being honest with you and I'm being up front with you telling you we're kind of going through this section a little bit together.

And yeah, so I'm going to share with you where I've settled on this matter. And it's not to say that next year when you come ask me about this section of Scripture that I'll say the same thing. That's just kind of where I'm at. And I just want to be full, honest with you. And we ought to be. We need to realize that theology and our understanding of Scripture, as we are growing in Christ, as we're growing in maturity, and as we're constantly exposed to the truth of the Word of God, and we allow the Holy Spirit to work in our lives, it'll continue to adjust and change.

We don't have it all figured out. There are people here who have been saved longer than I've been alive. And I imagine they would say the same thing 35-plus years later after being saved and coming to Christ that they are still trying to figure things out.

There are still things that they are adjusting in their understanding. So there's my note of disclosure and honesty with you, and I hope it's more encouraging than discouraging at this point.

[2 : 26] So as we come back to the book of Hebrews, and picking up in chapter 6, I'd like to remind you of the topic of the sermon from a couple weeks ago. The last few verses of chapter 5, the author of the book called out his readers for being unable to understand the doctrine of Christ being of the Melchizedekian priesthood.

He called them out like, hey, you guys, you can't get this. You're not going to get this. And his reasoning was not because the doctrine is of secondary importance. And so it didn't really matter if they understood it or not.

He's not saying, you know what, guys, it doesn't matter if you understand it. You don't get it. It's fine. We're going to move on. He didn't say that it was too heady for them to comprehend without a Bible dictionary and some commentaries.

He's not saying you're intellectually unable to understand it. But his accusation against them was that they have become dull of hearing. That they've become dull of hearing.

Remember what I said about that. I said that their excisers were broken. Now they've lost interest in the things of Christ. There's no genuine care or concern.

[3 : 38] There's no growth. In fact, they need someone to teach them the basics of the faith again. And the argument could even be made that these individuals he was talking about who had become dull of hearing were not even saved.

The first time they heard the gospel was exciting. It was fresh. It was new. Now they know the truth of God's saving grace in Jesus Christ. They've seen it change the lives of many of their friends and family members.

Yet they turn around and they walk away from it. They decide it's not for them. Or they don't like what biblical Christianity is. So they adopt a form of Christianity based on what they think is better and more logical.

They think it's more consistent with the character of God and a more acceptable explanation to our society when they impose their thoughts, when they impose their outside. We call this eisegesis when we're imposing our thoughts and our structure on the text that does not naturally flow from the text of Scripture.

And rather than appeasing God, these people become an offense to God. I was brought to Matthew 7, 21-23. Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

[4 : 57] On that day many will say to me, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and cast out demons in your name and do many mighty works in your name?

And then will I declare to them, I never knew you. Depart from me, you workers of lawlessness. Passages of Scripture that reveal to us people who seem well-intentioned and well-meaning, but because they've approached it with their own bent in thought and process, rather than taking clearly what the will of God is and what the word of God reveals, they are an offense to God and thus are not appeasing to him.

So you come here in Hebrews 6, and the writer of Hebrews, he's penning words of concern to friends, maybe family, people that he knows who claim to know Christ but were retreating spiritually and falling into what he considers a deadly routine, a very dangerous place to be.

So let's pick up, we're going to just read through a couple verses at a time and kind of break it down. So Hebrews 6 verse 1, Therefore, let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

And this we will do if God permits. So what the author is saying here, he's saying basically the foundation is set, build on it.

[6 : 46] The foundation is set, build on it. He says, you know, he's already made the point that some of his readers are too immature. I found an interesting fact. He's made a point that some of his readers are too immature to understand the meat of Scripture, to take in the meat of what the Word of God is saying, and to understand the deeper doctrines.

Yet he insists on continuing to the meat. He insists on continuing to those doctrines. And why is that? If at the end of chapter 5 he's saying that, verse 12, He's saying you need milk.

That's where you are at spiritually. But now he's saying, let's leave the elementary doctrine of Christ. Why is he saying move from the milk now, the elementary doctrine of Christ, to something more?

You think about how Paul approaches it in 1 Corinthians 3. He pointed out the immaturity of the Corinthians and their lack of readiness to receive meat, and he proceeded to give them the milk. So why does the writer of Hebrews say, let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ rather than to revisit it and to establish it again? I believe it's because he determined that there was no good purpose served in going over those first principles again, those elementary doctrines, those things that he mentions there, the repentance from dead works, and faith towards God, instruction about washing, laying on hands, so on and so forth.

[8 : 31] All these are elementary foundational truths. Maybe, maybe that's all that their pastor was doing anyway, that he kept going over the elementary doctrines of Christ over and over and over again.

And so that's all they had. That's all they were getting, and they just weren't sure, they wanted to be sure, whatever it was. And that's okay at times, right? The gospel ought to be the core of the church and the worship service.

But when the gospel is the only thing presented by the preacher, there is no promotion of growth in doctrine, and that stunts the spiritual growth of the church body.

If all I did was come up here Sunday after Sunday and preach John 3.16 and talk to you about the gospel and the need to be saved and so on and so forth, and that's all I did, I would not be promoting your spiritual growth and encouraging you to dig deeper into the word of God.

I'd be doing a disservice to you, and I hope someday you would take my key. As I was thinking about this, you know, leaving the elementary doctrine of Christ and going on to maturity, I was thinking about eighth grade woodworking class.

[9 : 53] You all know my skills, right, as a carpenter. I've made it very, very clear. I am not a carpenter. Josh knows very well that I am not a carpenter, and I handle wood very well with

20-some splinters in my hands.

So eighth grade woodworking class, we had to pick a project that we wanted to do. And, you know, the teacher gave us a wide variety and array of things.

I was not comfortable working with machinery. I didn't want to do this class. It was stupid. It was probably, I mean, I probably should have paid better attention, right? I didn't want to do it.

So I picked my project. I was going to make a football helmet clock. Not like a 3D clock, but it was just like, you know, flat outline of a football helmet, color it, and put the face on, and that was it.

That's all I wanted, all right? And something that I got really good at, so like, you know, we got the, you know, we got the design, out on the wood, and, you know, cut it, and all that stuff.

[10:55] And one of the stuff, you know, that I had to take was I had to sand it. I had to prepare it, you know, to be painted or stained, whatever I decided I wanted to do with it. So we had, you know, we had this woodworking class.

I think it was once, maybe twice a week. And I got really good at sanding. All I did for the longest time, for a bulk of that class, was sand that piece of wood.

I'm telling you. And I went from like, you know, I went from like the, you know, the heavier grain, you know, to the finer stuff. And this clock was smooth.

I'm telling you, you could ice skate on this thing. It was so good. But you know what it wasn't as we were approaching the end of class? Well, no, it was a helmet.

It was a very smooth helmet. It wasn't a cloth. Right? And so I think, I'm pretty sure I spent like three weeks of our classes, so like six class periods, sanding.

[11:55] And then I spent like the last three class periods doing everything else. You know, I had to, you know, I had to, you know, paint and, you know, finalize all the project and everything.

Right? I was rushing. So, but, and I wanted the helmet clock. I did. I just didn't want to do the work to get to it. I just wanted to keep sanding. Because I'm like, I don't want to learn something new and do this and do that.

You know, and as much as I wanted a football helmet clock, all the sanding in the world wasn't going to bring it to fruition. I had to move on to something else and something different. I had to expand my knowledge. And to my shame, the expansion wasn't very great.

And it wasn't needed to be very great to finish the project. You know, so I did. I moved on from sanding to painting to assembling and to the final touches before the, that piece of wood that was shaped like a football helmet became a clock.

And it did. I got to that point. And I had it in my mind what it was going to look like and it didn't look anything like what was in my mind. So when, when there are carpenters who can know what they want something to look like and they can make it look that way, I am in awe.

[13:03] I'm like, how in the world do you do that? Because, I've tried and, I've built bookshelves that actually stayed up. Now they weren't great, but they stayed up and held books and they're still up to this day.

You know, so I praise God that I can do those things, you know, roughly. And, and I am starting to, in my older age, force myself to learn new things. And to gain more knowledge and to become more useful than just sanding.

And the irony is, I've had a dresser in the garage for almost a year now that needs to be sanded and painted. And I'm really good at sanding, but I'm also really good at procrastinating.

So, you know, it is what it is. No, that was not my wife. That was, Abba's wife was sanding their dresser.

I'm sorry. Mine is like, the one that I've got to do is like a little, like, toddler dresser. They had like this big, like, six drawer, like, Victorian, like, it was amazing.

[14:12] Looks really good, by the way. I'm, I almost pulled our little dresser out and started sanding it. I can't, and I didn't. So, anyway. But just thinking about that illustration, you know, just thinking about that, that life experience is what came to me as I was thinking about this.

You know, as much as I sanded, it didn't become what I wanted it to be. I had to move on and continue to do other things. And that same, that same, that's true for the life of the believer.

You know, the gospel is the foundation to their life. It's the foundation to our life. But we'll never obtain a life defined by spiritual maturity until that, until we've built on that foundation.

And that's what, that's what the writer's getting at here. You need to lead the elementary doctrine of Christ. You've laid that foundation. It's there. Now build on it. Spurgeon, in his notes on this section

in Hebrews, he says, the way he puts it, he says, let us go from the school to the university. Let us have done with our first spelling books and advance into the higher classics of the kingdom. Children are to learn their letters in order that they may go on to higher branches of education. And believers are to know the elements of the faith, whether then to advance to the higher attainments and endeavor to understand the deeper mysteries.

[15 : 34] The six issues mentioned by the writer, the repentance from dead works, faith toward God, instruction about washing, laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. These are considered the elementary foundational truths.

And there are things that Pharisaic Jews would have been familiar with. Remember, this book is titled Hebrews because it's written to, Hebrews, it's written to Jews who were once faithful Jews in Judaism who have now considered or have gone over to following Christ.

And so they would have been very familiar with these teachings because it's Old Testament teaching as well. The difference is that Jesus would have given a fresher, fuller significance to these teachings.

They would have understood it to a certain level and degree, but now in Christ, you get a deeper, richer meaning. And, you know, the desire for this writer to move on to maturity, to move on to harder doctrines is very important because the Hebrews were exposed to a danger that could, that were not experienced by converts from, like, say, a pagan religion and culture, which would have been common in their area.

Now, if a convert from paganism gave up Christianity and reverted to paganism, there's a clean break between the faith which is renounced and the paganism which he's returned to.

[17 : 05] It's a completely different system. But it's possible for the recipients of this letter to gradually give into pressure from various opponents, their Jewish family and friends, people in the synagogue, to give up more and more the features of the faith and practice that were distinctive to Christianity and yet to feel like they had not abandoned the basic principles.

So even though they may be, you know, there's the danger to slide back into Judaism and slide back into their old ways, they wouldn't really recognize it so readily because of how common those ways are.

You know, Judaism is the foundation, right? Those teachings in the Old Testament that they had, Jews had for hundreds of years are foundational to the New Testament truth as well and what we understand in the New Testament.

How many times is the Old Testament referenced in the New Testament? Many times, especially in Hebrews because he's writing to Jewish folk. So, you know, there was that concern.

So for the writer to go on insisting on these things, on these basic principles was foolish. It's not going to help them. They understand it and they get it in a greater context of Jesus and, you know, the fuller significance.

[18 : 23] So it's better to press on to those teachings which belonged to spiritual maturity in the hope that the maturity would come with those teachings. He said, you're not getting it, you're not ready to understand Christ as a priest according to the order of Melchizedek, but you need to hear it.

And perhaps through being exposed to it, you'll start to grow. And that happens from time to time, right? I have the opportunity to stand up here and maybe share something new with you and something that maybe you've got to really think about.

I hope I'm doing that. If not, please let me know. I want to be sure I come next week with a good challenge. You know, but that's the thing. Like, if we are not hearing things, not necessarily things that are, you know, newfound thoughts and like, oh, I never thought of it that way before type of things, like no one ever in the history of Christianity ever thought of this, but like things that maybe you've not thought about because you've not been exposed to them.

If I'm not bringing that to the table and giving you an opportunity to eat some new meat and all you're doing is just drinking the old milk, you're not going to grow and you're not going to be challenged to grow. You notice in verse three, and this we will do if God permits.

It's the work of God in an individual to permit this maturing growth. The writer has an intent in going a certain direction but realizes that God must permit it to happen first.

[19 : 57] First Corinthians three, verse seven, Paul writes, so neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything but only God who gives the growth. You still need the planter and you still need the person watering, but it's up to God to grant the growth in the life of an individual.

So it's my job to be faithful with the word of God and to share it with you and to challenge you in it. And it's God's job to use his word in your life to grow you up into maturity.

But that opportunity is not available to you if we're not challenging ourselves or not being challenged. So why does the author say this?

Okay, we understand that God's the one who gives growth. Well, now you've got to read verses four through six. Verses four through six. For it is impossible.

Excuse me. For it is impossible in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift and have shared in the Holy Spirit and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come and then have fallen away to restore them again to repentance since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding them up to contempt.

[21 : 20] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. foundation is there, let's build on it, right? Here in verses 4 through 6, he's saying if the foundation is rejected, there can be no growth. There can be no growth if the foundation is rejected. As I was thinking through these verses, I was thinking, now, there are many pains that a spiritually mature believer experiences in their life. There are many trials, many hardships, and that, according to James 1, is why they are mature.

[22 : 27] Count it all joy, my brother, when you encounter various trials. Knowing that testing of your faith produces endurance and maturity. One of the most painful experiences is when a believer witnesses a person walk away from the faith.

I'm not talking about a backslidden Christian. You know, someone who's become spiritually lazy. Maybe they'll go to church, maybe they won't. Maybe they'll read their Bible, maybe they won't. Now, I'm talking about someone who has tasted and seen that the Lord is good. Who's experienced the convicting work of the Holy Spirit and responded to some degree, but has made the conscious decision to walk away from the truth of the Word.

There's no regret and no concern for spiritual matters. It is heartbreaking. heartbreaking. And I dare say that people here who've been Christians for a long period of time, I imagine you may have witnessed that and experienced that a time or two in your life.

I'm just assuming. So these people that he's writing to, they've fallen away is the term he uses. That literally means they've abandoned a former relationship or association.

[23 : 46] association. They are dissociating. It's the reversal of beginning to associate with something. You're beginning to not associate with something. They're forsaking.

They're turning away. F.F. Bruce in his commentaries says, the author is stating a practical truth that has verified itself repeatedly in the experience of the church. Those who have shared the covenant privileges of the people of God and then deliberately renounced them are the most difficult persons of all to reclaim for the faith.

Think about it in terms of a vaccination. You probably are sick and tired of hearing about vaccinations. But how does it work, right? A vaccination immunizes by giving a very mild case of the disease.

And a person who is exposed to the gospel can get just enough of it to immunize them against the real thing. The longer that they continue to resist it, whether graciously or violently, the more they become immune to it.

And they become more and more unresponsive and insensitive. I appreciate Margaret at Bible study, she brings the Amplified Bible.

[25 : 03] I appreciate the Amplified Bible because in it, like in the text, it's not necessarily a word-for-word translation, but it tries to take the intent and the meaning of original language and it amplifies it.

So typically, the verses are, you know, like it could say Jesus wept in our Bible and in the Amplified Bible, it'll explain that in like three sentences, right? because of just understanding the original text and such.

So I want to read to you Hebrews 6.6 in the Amplified. So I believe it really hits at the heart and crux of what was intended to be, I know that it hits at the heart of what's intended to be shared in the Greek there.

If then, or if they then deviate from the faith and turn away from their allegiance, it is impossible to bring them back to repentance for, because while, as long as they nail upon the cross the Son of God afresh as far as they are concerned and are holding Him up to contempt and shame and public disgrace.

It's that last section. These people who have turned away and have walked away, what they are doing is they are nailing Jesus on the cross again.

[26 : 25] It's, no, they're walking away, it's as if they're nailing Jesus to the cross themselves and they're openly mocking Him. Clearly, these people cannot grow spiritually because they have denied the very foundation on which this growth must happen.

And we find later in this book that it will not bode well for those who are close but choose to walk away. Hebrews 10, verse 29. How much severer punishment do you think you will deserve who has trampled underfoot the Son of God and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which He was sanctified and has insulted the Spirit of grace?

to be in this situation is a very dangerous road. Continuing on.

Hebrews 6, 7, and 8. For the land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated receives a blessing from God.

But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed and its end is to be burned. So if the first section is the foundation is laid, build on it.

[27 : 43] And if the second section of this, that I've put in here, in these sections here, that if the foundation is rejected, growth cannot happen. Verses 7 and 8 shows that we cannot know the foundation until the time is right.

And this is us as we look at other individuals. We cannot know what their foundation looks like until the right time and season comes.

Now the author is utilizing an agricultural illustration to drive home this point. All those who hear the gospel are like the earth. The rain falls, the gospel message is heard. The gospel seed is planted and there's nourishment and growth.

And some of the growth is beautiful and good and productive and it's what is, it is that which is planted, rooted, and nourished in God. But some of the growth is false and unproductive.

It's come from the same seed and it's been nourished by the same ground and the same water but it's become thorny, destructive, and worthless. Basically, it's rejected the life offered it and become good only for burning.

[28 : 50] John 15, verse 6. If anyone does not abide in me, he's thrown away like a branch and withers and the branches are gathered and thrown into the fire and burned.

In the parable of the sower in Matthew 13, there's no difference seen for a time between what sprouted on rocky ground and what sprouted on the good ground. It was only when a time of testing came that the difference became evident.

We won't know. I mean, ultimately, we don't fully know and understand the foundation that's laid for an individual. You know, if it's truly the foundation that is in Christ and is good soil or if it's a foundation that's on rocky ground and it sprouts up for a time but given the time of testing, it's revealed to be worthless and only worthy to be burned.

In this passage of Hebrews, it's evident that growth in the life of the believer cannot happen if they do not attempt to build on the foundation. We cannot just rest on the gospel message. We cannot just rest on the fact that Christ died for your sins and raised from the dead.

That is true. 100%. And it is a great message to hear and come back to and be reminded of. But we cannot just sit there. It is on that message that we must build our house, our spiritual home.

[30 : 23] It does no good to keep reporting the foundation over and over again. It would do no good to keep sanding it because it's not going to go anywhere. It's going to get smooth. It's going to feel cool and nice and awesome. But it's not going to have any substance to it.

It's not going to be what it ought to be. So we must move from milk to meat at some point. We cannot allow someone to struggle with the foundation or complete rejection of it stop us from moving on to the heavier matters of our faith.

It'd be foolish for me to assume that all of us are in the same place spiritually. I don't believe that and I know you don't believe that. We are all at different parts of the building process. Some of us, maybe the foundation is still yet to be laid. For some of us, the foundation has been laid and the first floor has been built and now you're working on the second. And for some of us, the house is looking really good and for some of us, it may be a little dilapidated because you've got to go back and shore up some things.

We must continue to move on to the heavier matters of the faith. We must continue to grow in these things. And if you're here today, you've tasted and seen that the Lord is good, but you're still in doubt and considering rejecting it completely, take the warning from this passage seriously.

[31 : 48] When you choose to move on away from Christ, it will be impossible to return. There's a lot of debate, you know, well, impossible, really? Well, yeah, we can talk about that another time if you want.

Let's pray. Father, I thank you for your challenging word. I thank you, Lord, that I realize I don't have it all figured out.

I'm still learning. But Lord, I can't help but feel that what we've struggled with and what we've talked about a lot this week, Lord, man, this is challenging.

Lord, if the foundation is laid, we must build on it. And if the foundation is rejected, we cannot expect to see growth in the life of that individual. Lord, we understand that we will not know or understand the foundation that is there until the proper time of testing for it to be revealed.

It may be that it's being revealed now. It may be that it's yet to be revealed. It may be, Lord, that we may not know until we're in eternity.

[33 : 02] But Father, I just pray that each and every one, each and every individual here would know and have made up in their mind to understand and believe and lay the foundation in Christ and to begin building on it.

And Lord, that takes time and effort and it's not easy. But Lord, help us through it, we pray. Bring us to a point of greater maturity in knowing you.

In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen. Amen.