

Confidence In The Salvation Of Others

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Date: 29 May 2022

Preacher: Pastor Ken

[0 : 00] I think it goes without saying that we have no little church today. But I do have a few slips for notes if you want to take them.

They're not particularly extensive by way of notes. Anyway, I'll always have a little stack up here each week if you want to do that. Some people do.

And there's a little word find on the back too. So to keep you from falling asleep, maybe you do the word find associated to... Yeah, thank you.

My father-in-law is quick to get up, right? So a couple weeks ago, we encountered a very tough section in the book of Hebrews. It was tough not necessarily trying to understand what was being communicated, but it was tough because of the implications that were made clear to us.

Namely, that people who have tasted the gospel and seen that the Lord is good, but have turned away, no longer have any hope for repentance. And some of you have approached me about that section in Hebrews, and we've had some difficult conversations.

[1 : 14] Many of us know people who at one time were on fire for the gospel, but are now far from the Christian faith. And it seems as though Hebrews 6 verses 1 through 8 is speaking directly about them.

And it's easy to get discouraged with passages like this in the Bible, especially when we know what it means for certain friends and loved ones. And it's understandable because we care deeply.

We are deeply concerned about these individuals in our lives. We're concerned about their eternal destiny. What's it mean for them?

And we should care and be concerned. But I'd like to challenge you to consider what Charles Spurgeon says on the matter related to this section. He says, Christian, if you should fall away, you could never be renewed unto repentance.

Thank your Lord then that he keeps you. We can spend our time worrying about our loved ones, our friends, or even ourselves, and we know what that gets us.

[2 : 22] Matthew 5, verse 27, Jesus says, And which of you, by being anxious, can add a single hour to a span of life? The answer, of course, is no one can.

So we can be thankful to God that we're not the keepers of our own salvation, but he is. He's the one who softens and hardens hearts. He's the one who saves and sanctifies us.

So in moving on from Hebrews 6, verses 1 through 8, we come to a section in the letter where the author expresses their confidence in the salvation of others.

Picking up Hebrews 6, I'd like to read verses 9 through 12, which is the section we'll be covering today. The author writes, Though we speak in this way, talking about those who have tasted and seen and turned, though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things, things that belong to salvation.

For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do. And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

[3 : 54] Thank you, Lord, for your word. Pray that you guide us in understanding. Amen. So we're getting into a section of Hebrews 6 here that's a little different than what he just talked about in verses 1 through 8.

Verse 1 through 8, it was a concern, it was a warning to those who know the gospel, have tasted it, understand it, and have maybe almost borderline believed it or have believed it but superficially and now have turned away.

Now he's going on in verse 9 to talk about the confidence they have in the believers who are reading this letter. that we are confident, it says in verse 9, we feel sure of better things. So they're confident of things pertaining to salvation. They're confident of things pertaining to salvation. So you go from the stern warning for those who've tasted the goodness of the gospel and turned away.

Because if they turn away from the cross of Christ, there remains no hope for them because the cross is their only hope. Now he's turning his attention to those who are believing the gospel and seeking to live accordingly.

[5 : 14] And of these folks, there's confidence that there will be better things. That is, there will be no turning away. There will be no doubting or denying the faith.

And what they're going to produce are things that belong to salvation. These are, as John the Baptist would say in Matthew 3, 8, fruit in keeping with repentance.

Think about when the Pharisees come out to John when he's baptizing out in the Jordan and he says, you brood of vipers, who warned you to flee the wrath which is to come? And he tells them, bear fruit in keeping with repentance.

The bottom line is this, repentance without change is no repentance at all. I'm going to say that again for those who are taking notes.

Repentance without change is no repentance at all. See, repentance is a change of mind and actions where we cease our approval of wickedness and justification of bad behavior.

[6 : 21] It's the reordering of our lives from focusing on ourselves to directing our focus toward the Lord. It does not mean that we only repent once to start the Christian life and then just go on our merry way.

That's an area that is commonly referred to as easy believism. Well, just say, Jesus, I believe in you and that's enough. It doesn't matter how you live your life. That's not true at all. Because the New Testament, Jesus himself has made clear that those who are following him, those who are saved, are going to have a life that is transformed for his glory.

In fact, there are a couple passages of Scripture that I'm going to put up here in a second that show that we make daily decisions to offer ourselves to God and to confess when we have sinned.

Romans chapter 12, verses 1 and 2, Apostle Paul writes, I appeal to you, therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

[7 : 44] Anybody who is in Christ is called to present themselves to God as a living sacrifice because it is their spiritual worship to God to give their lives to him, for us to give our lives to him.

And it's a daily endeavor. It's not something that just happens once and then like magically you put on the roller coaster that just pushes you along. No, no.

See, we have within us what's called a sin nature. We are by nature sinners. We are by nature those who are deserving the wrath of God.

But when we come to Christ and we trust in him for salvation, we are now a new creation, but that new creation now needs to grow up.

And that's what, remember at the end of chapter 5 in Hebrews, that's what the author is getting at. He's saying, look, you should be teachers by now. You should be eating meat by now, but rather you're still on the milk.

[8 : 47] You still need that. And as we spiritually grow up, we go from the milk, which are the basic foundations and principles, and then we start eating the meat and chewing on it.

And that's the thing about, you know, a good steak, you just like to savor, savor the flavor. By the way, a good steak, I made some amazing steaks yesterday morning. They were awesome.

We did steak and eggs for breakfast. And while I thought they were good, my children might not, but I was proud of myself. That fire did not consume them.

There was a fire on that grill that I was really concerned about. But I got the steaks out in time and they were just rightly done. By the way, there should not be an uncontrollable fire in your grill.

That's a whole other issue. Anyway, but the fact is this, you know, you get the meat, you chew on it, and you get the nutrition from that and you start growing up in the faith. And that's what Romans 12 is about.

[9 : 46] Each day, you know, there's that, there's the flesh fighting against you. And, you know, you've got to fight against it. And it wants you to go back to your old ways.

It wants you to go back to what you're comfortable with. And you need to say, uh-uh, I'm for God now. I'm going to be transformed in my mind and in my life. Then 1 John 1, verses 8 and 9, another very important passage.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

See, these daily choices, the choice to give yourself to God as a living sacrifice and the choice to confess your sins to Him, they flow from and confirm the initial act of repentance.

And that initial act is when we realized our desperate state. We realized we were sinners. We realized that we were going to stand in judgment before God. And we know if that happened, it was not going to be good for us.

[10 : 55] See, we realized our desperate state. We admitted our need for forgiveness and we came to Jesus in a childlike manner of faith, believing that He alone can grant our forgiveness.

So that's where it starts, but then it's a daily exercise to grow spiritually. Thus, those who repent and follow Christ will have evidence of that in their lives.

And that's what this next section touches on in verses 10 through 12. So there's the confidence of service for God's name.

The point here, I want to read this again, verse 10 through 12. For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for His name in serving the saints as you still do.

And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

[12 : 03] See, the point here is that deeds of kindness done to the people of God are reckoned by God as done to Himself and will surely receive the reward from Him.

And I'm getting that statement about these verses from Matthew 25. So hold your finger here, Hebrews 6. Turn back to Matthew 25 real quick. Verses 35 through 40.

Matthew 25. And I'm actually going to start in verse 31. When the Son of Man comes in His glory and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne.

Before Him will be gathered all the nations and He will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And He will place the sheep on His right but the goats on the left.

Then the King will say to those on His right, Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food.

[13 : 17] I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I was naked and you clothed me. I was sick and you visited me. I was in prison and you came to me.

Then the righteous will answer Him saying, Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you or naked and clothe you?

And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you? And the King will answer them, Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.

Jesus makes it very clear that we are to love one another and to be kind and hospitable to one another. because in as much as we've done it to the least of our brethren, we've done it to Him.

God takes it personal. The life that we live and the testimony that we have. And that's what genuine love and concern looks like.

[14 : 35] That we are hospitable. That we are concerned. That we are helping provide needs. Now we are not, you know, I'm not saying we need to take up all these different types of social programs and we are the answer in all these areas.

No, no. That's a wrong view of this. We're talking individually. Each of us as God puts the opportunity in our lives to have this testimony and to have this love for others, we ought to take it. because as we do for others, as the opportunity is provided, it's as if we're doing to Jesus Himself. It's what His followers are called to do.

And God knows who are really His and who are faithful. He'll not forget His own or their work for Him. Going back to Hebrews 6. Our names are securely in His book of life.

Our salvation will not be lost and our rewards will not be forgotten. It says there in verse 10, For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work.

[15:44] You will give an account and you will be rewarded accordingly. The statement made by an individual says many Christians today as throughout history experience times of doubt and even anguish at the supposed prospect of losing their salvation.

When they read or hear a message of judgment, they're shaken and insecure. They do not know what it is to rest in the finished work of Christ and their positional standing in Him before God.

When we are in Christ, we are saved and secured without question. John 10, 29 and following, Jesus says, or 27 and following, Jesus talks about His sheep know His voice.

They follow Him and they're secure in His hands and they're secure in the Father's hands. No one can snatch His sheep out of those hands. A Christian is not saved because of good works that they do.

Rather, the good works are an evidence of their salvation. And God knows when our service is truly for His glory by whether or not it's done out of love for His name.

[16:59] And here in Hebrews, He was saying, you do good things for your brothers for the name of God. Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 1 verses 3 and 4, Remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

For we know, brothers loved by God, that He has chosen you. So Paul's saying there in Thessalonica, their work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in Jesus is what gives Him assurance of their salvation.

These faithful believers to whom the Hebrews that the Hebrews is primarily addressed to loved the name of the Lord. This was positive proof that their faith was a real thing.

They were doing good things in the name of the Lord for His name's sake, for His glory. They were ministering to each other because they loved their Lord. the phrase one another is derived from the Greek word *alalone*, which means one another or each other mutually, reciprocally.

When you hear the Greek word *alalone*, you know it's a bad thing to be *alalone*. That's why you need one another. That's how I help people remember that in Greek class.

[18:30] *Alalone* occurs a hundred times in the New Testament. And approximately 59 of those occurrences are specific commands teaching us how and how not to relate to one another.

Here are some examples. I won't give you all the verses. I'll have to print it out for you or something. So here's some positive commands. Love one another. Be devoted to one another.

Honor one another above yourselves. Live in harmony with one another. Build up one another. Be like-minded towards one another. Accept one another. Admonish one another. Greet one another. Care for one another. Serve one another. Bear one another's burdens. Forgive one another. Be patient with one another. Speak the truth in love. Be kind and compassionate to one another. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Submit to one another. Consider others better than yourselves. Look to the interests of one another.

[19:31] Excuse me. Bear with one another. Teach one another. Comfort one another. Encourage one another. Exhort one another. Stir up or provoke or stimulate one another to love and good works.

I'm getting to that. That's Hebrews 10.24. We'll get there. Show hospitality to one another. Employ the gifts that God has given for the benefit of one another. Clothe yourselves with humility towards one another.

Pray for one another. Confess your faults to one another. There's a lot of one anothering that needs to be taking place in the body of Christ.

And how do we know that a church is steeped in the word of God? How do we know that they're truly following Jesus? Because you can see the one another's playing out in the relationships that take place.

There are people who are in churches who are at war with one another. But I don't see that in Scripture that that's okay. They have grudges with one another.

[20:37] But I don't see that in Scripture where it says it's okay. In fact, here are some of the negative commands. How not to treat one another. Do not lie to one another. Stop passing judgment on one another.

If you keep on biting and devouring each other, you'll be destroyed by each other. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. Do not slander one another.

Don't grumble against each other. God has made it very clear what His expectations are for His people and His church. And we do all this because we're, in a real sense, members of one another. We're members of the body of Christ. I'd like to share with you this illustration. I'm going to butcher the pronunciation of names, but that's quite all right.

So in 1979, Vladimir Vojev, you know the old Russian name there. It's B-O-J-E-V. I don't know how to pronounce that. Anyway, so Vladimir, tough, hard-drinking Russian unbeliever, barged into a Baptist service in Russia and blustered, I'm going to destroy you all.

[21 : 48] You're just religious fanatics. Well, that'd probably put us all on edge here, right? Well, me anyway. To his surprise, a beautiful young lady suggested that the believers gather around him and pray for him.

Vladimir said, the next thing I knew, I was the center of a prayer circle. I'd never before known such love. The church invited him back and Vladimir returned to meet with them daily for two months and he received Christ, married that young lady, and became a pastor of a church.

Vladimir said, their love won me to Christ and I was converted. To transformed lives convince others that our Christianity is genuine. Transformed lives attract others to Jesus.

I'll say that again. Transformed lives convince others that our Christianity is genuine. And transformed lives attract others to Jesus.

If you're going to say that you're a Christian and you're going to go out these doors and away from these walls and away from this congregation and you're going to go live like the devil, do me one favor.

[23 : 07] don't tell people you're a Christian because I don't believe it and neither will they. Our lives are to be transformed for the glory of God and that's a work only he can do by the way.

Only he can transform our lives because he's the only one who can save us and indwell us and guide us. So the question is can it be said of us that others are confident of our salvation?

When they think about us or see us do they think they'll see things pertaining to salvation? Our salvation is it's rooted in Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross but from those roots ought to grow a life of love and consideration of others pointing them to Jesus as the only source of hope for them. This morning in Sunday school I really didn't know what I was going to say and I ended up saying a whole lot more and didn't give much opportunity for discussion but this past week I've been thinking a lot about two things.

I've been thinking about the shootings in Uvalde, Texas as many if not all of you have as well. But I've also been thinking about what the 350 page report concerning the Southern Baptist Convention revealed about their mistreatment of victims of sexual abuse and the way they covered it up for over 700 abusers in their convention alone.

[24 : 49] It's an absolutely horrible thing. Both events are absolutely horrible and really point to and show the depravity of man the fact that man loves darkness rather than light and he wants to prevent at any way possible to prevent his sin from coming to the light and being exposed.

But the reality is that the only hope for any of them is the gospel of Jesus. The only hope for the pastors and the leadership who were abusers and the only hope for the victims, the only hope for the survivors of the shooting, the only hope for anybody is the gospel of Jesus.

And we are his workmanship created for good works which he prepared beforehand that we would walk in them. Are we walking in them?

Father God, I thank you for your word. I thank you that you make it understandable. I thank you, Lord, that you present us opportunities.

I thank you, Lord, that you give us your word which is true, which shines its light and darkness and exposes these evil deeds for what they are, pure evil, not connected to the good, holy, mighty God that we serve and know.

[26 : 16] And I pray, Lord, that as we go about our time in this country, as we go about our time in this community, our interactions, our engagements, our opportunities that you give us, help us to freely share the hope and truth of the gospel message.

May it permeate, may it be part of our conversation unashamedly. Lord, may we live in such a way that people would without question know that we are Christians committed to you.

And Lord, thank you again for this country, the lives that were given to allow us to have those freedoms. In Jesus' name, Amen.
Amen.