

Hebrews

Dr. Charles "Buddy" Parrish
June 28, 2023



Hebrews 6:1-12

Vss. 1-3

- No teacher anywhere has ever wanted to keep covering the same material over and over again. The idea is to go over the material thoroughly, make sure the students have got it and then move on like building a multi-layer or multi-story building, move on and build on top of what you just laid.
- So let us press on to maturity. Some translations say “perfection” instead of maturity, but maturity is closer to the meaning of the Greek word *teleios*. It’s not a complete understanding, but it is moving in that direction. Here specifically, it is the idea that one is taking what they intellectually understand and then have the capacity to know how to apply it to day to day life.
- So we are saved by grace through faith. This is stated twice in Ephesians 5 and 5:8 gets at the preachers point here: “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God”. It’s not of yourselves, it’s not by anything you did to earn it. Dead works and mindless rule following is never going to save you.
- But this is a sermon to the Hebrews, a congregation of Jewish Christians. Thousands of years of ritual tradition seems hard to give up, even when you *know* it was wrong. It seems the congregation had fallen back into the old Jewish practices and leaning more into them than into The Way of Christ.
- So the preacher is frustrated that he must again cover the topics of repentance, faith towards God, washings (baptism), laying on hands, the resurrection, and the judgement...but he will if God permits.

Vss. 4-8

- It's been said that just sitting in church doesn't make you a Christian any more than sitting in a garage makes you a car. The preacher here is concerned that this is the source of the problem in this congregation. "If I go to church, put something in the offering plate, sing the songs and listen to the sermon, that means I'm a Christian, right? It means I'm saved, right?" And of course, the answer is an emphatic NO.
- So, what to do with those who have come and heard the truth (have been enlightened) and have seen the power of the Holy Spirit and perhaps even experienced the Spirit in their own lives, and have been in Bible study so that the Truth has been made clear to them and STILL they fall away, turn their back on it all and walk away? The preacher says it is virtually impossible to "to renew them again to repentance".
- To be "enlightened" is to step into the Light of Christ. He is the Light of the World. In the Light you can see clearly. In the Light you can see what is true and what is not, what is good and what is evil. And yet...
- Such people have tasted the heavenly gift of God's grace, mercy, and forgiveness. And yet...
- Such people have read the Bible and been taught the truth of the scriptures and have experienced the Holy Spirit and the powers of the age to come. And yet...
- The answer is found in the very words of Christ Himself in John 3:19, "This is the judgement, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil."
- So people step into the Light, they come to church, hang out with Christians, hear the Word and see that it works and *KNOW* that it is real and true, and then realize they are being forced into making a choice – their old life or a new life with Christ; the wide path that most people take or the narrow path with Christ; The Way of Christ or their own way. They find they love the darkness more than Light. They lie to themselves and tell themselves, "I'm a good person and that is enough". They seek to save their

life only to find that they have lost it. Matthew 16:25, “For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it”.

Vss. 9-12

- But the preacher is a good teacher. Having been honest about his frustration with them and having scolded and brought them down, now he turns to build them back up and strengthen them.
- Here is the only place in the sermon where he refers to the congregation as “beloved”. It is as if he’s saying, “I am upset with you only because I love you so much!”. And this expression of love is not just a blanket statement, but he says his great desire that “*each one* of you” would exhibit the qualities of Christ so that they would “realize the full assurance of hope”. John 10:3 says the Good Shepherd, “calls his own sheep by name”. The preacher here is thinking of specific people, the people in the congregation he knows and has spent time with, people he wants to see with him in heaven and he is convinced of better days ahead for them and their journey to salvation.
- Yes, they have been “sluggish”, but God has not forgotten their good service. God is not going to kick them to the curb because they have gone through a dry spell. Everyone goes through times where you feel like God has you just sitting on a shelf, waiting. CS Lewis complained about those same periods in his own life. The key is not to be content to stay there, but to keep pushing, keep praying, keep preparing, so that when God takes you off the shelf to put you on mission for Him or when the battle is upon you, you are ready.
- The preacher tells them to be “imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises”. In other words, even Peter, Paul, John and the rest of their spiritual heroes have gone through spiritual doldrums and have overcome them with faith and patience. Neither is easy. It’s often hard to have faith when you don’t see anything happening. It’s always hard to have patience when you NEED to get moving and nothing is moving. But there is no substitute for Spirit inspired faith and Spirit powered patience.