**Hebrews 5:11 – 6:20 Full Commitment to Christ**

**September 28-29, 2016**

*Hebrews does not teach about two kinds of Christianity – one for immature Christians and another for mature ones. Rather, the writer under inspiration from the Spirit delineates the differences between the unsaved Jew in Judaism and the redeemed Jew in Christianity. The writer speaks to the unbeliever first, warning them of the grave dangers of rejecting Gods revelation and grace. The warning in this passage is directed to the same group of unbelieving Jews who knew much about the gospel but who had not embraced it personally. Some probably had made a shallow profession of faith without believing in Christ full. They are told of the danger of not entering into the blessing of the New Covenant, apart from which they cannot have eternal life. They are so close, yet so far away from true salvation. Next the text address genuine believers (6:9-20) reminding them of the certainties of Gods promises. The divine assurance is that who come to him through his son will be saved. God has never reneged on one of his promises and he never will. He cannot possibly be unfaithful. How freeing to know that we can trust God because he has no capacity for deception or failure in his name.*

How do you have real assurance of your salvation? *Do* you have assurance?

What does it mean that some of the recipients of the epistle were dull of hearing (v.11)? Have there been times where you were dull (or hard) of hearing (Spiritually- from a friend, mentor, something God was speaking to you).

 *(The reader’s spiritual lethargy and slow response to gospel teaching prevented additional teaching at this time. This is a reminder that failure to appropriate the truth of the gospel produces stagnation in spiritual advancement and the inability to understand or assimilate additional teaching. Such a situation also exists among the gentiles who have received revelatory truth (natural or general revelation) from God in the creation. Rejection of that revelation results in a process of hardening. The Hebrews had not only received the same general revelation but they also received special revelation consisting of the OT scriptures, the Messiah himself, and the teaching of the apostles. Until the Hebrews obeyed the revelation they had received and obtained eternal salvation, additional teaching about the messiah’s Melchizedekan priesthood would be of no profit to them.)*

How does Hebrews contrast spiritually immature Jews with mature followers of Christ? (v12-14) What does this mean to depend on milk vs solid food? Which are you feeding on?

 *(Every believer is to be a teacher (Deut. 6:7). If these Hebrews had really obeyed the gospel of Christ they would have been passing that message on to others. The Jews were instructed in the law and prided themselves because they taught the law, but had not really understood or appropriated its truths to themselves.*

 *“Oracles” – (v12 ESV) these are contained in the OT scripture which has laid out the foundation for the gospel and had been committed into the care of the Hebrews. The ABCs of the law tutored the Hebrews in order to lead them to faith in the Messiah, which they had also heard in the NT gospel.*

 *“Milk” – knowledge without obedience does not advance a person. By rejecting saving faith, the Hebrews were regressing in their understanding concerning the messiah. They had long enough been exposed to the gospel to be teaching it to others, but were babies, too infantile and unskilled to comprehend, let alone teach, the truth of God.*

 *“Of full age” – same Greek root is translated “perfection,” a synonym for salvation referring to the completion which comes when one becomes a believer in Christ rather than referring to a Christian who has become mature. Jesus is invited unbelieving Jews to the salvation perfection, which came only though following him in faith. Paul wrote that those who had come to Christ by faith were thereby mature and able to receive the wisdom of God. He described believers as mature when he referred to those whose righteousness was in Christ as opposed to those who had confidence in the flesh.*

 *“Exercised” – the deeper, more “solid” truths about the priesthood of the Lord Jesus could only be given to those who knew him as savior. The one who has come to Christ for spiritual completion is then trained by the word to discern truth from error and holy behavior from unholy.)*

Describe the elementary teachings the Jews experience- why are these elementary and what does it mean to taken forward to maturity?

 *(“Baptism” – there were many ceremonial cleansings or “washings” in the OT system which were outward signs of heart cleansing, the NT calls for inner washings that regenerate the soul.*

 *“Laying on of hands” – under the Old Covenant, the person who brought a sacrifice places his hands on it to symbolize his identification with it as a substitute sacrifice for sin, and/or a reference to priestly blessings (transference of guilt, transference of blessings, sign of setting apart for special office).*

 *“Resurrection” – the Pharisees believed in the resurrection from the dead but were still spiritually dead, Christianity from the beginning was a religion of immortality – it gave a man two worlds in which to live and it taught him that the best was yet to be and thereby made this world the training for eternity.*

 *“Enlightened” – received instruction in biblical truth, though intellectual perception is not the same and regeneration, passive voice referring to those were once enlightened by God – it was God who took the initiative to throw his light upon them – in the process of salvation, God always takes the initiative, Jesus as the “light of the world”.*

 *“Tasted” - consciously experiencing something, middle voice referring to people responding to the initiative of God exercised their choice to taste the heavenly gift – God offers us salvation but we must take the initiative to receive it, many Jews experienced blessings from heaven during Jesus’ earthly ministry – healing, deliverance from demons, food, or simply the gift of Jesus and the Holy Spirit.*

 *“Gift” – salvation is a gift and not anything to be earned by us.*

 *(“Elementary principles” – same as “oracles of God” referring to the basic OT teaching the prepared the way for Messiah – the beginning teaching about Christ. These OT “principles” include the six features listed in v. 1-2.*

Is Hebrews 6:1-8 a warning about losing one’s salvation or is it a warning to those Jews who had heard the gospel and seen its power but and never made a faith commitment to Christ? How do you know?

 *(“Leaving” – does not mean to despise or abandon the basic doctrines, they are the place to start, not stop. They are the gate of entrance on the road to salvation in Christ.*

 *“Fall away” – if he falls – what happens; this Greek term occurs only here in the NT. In the OT, it was used to translate terms for severe unfaithfulness and apostasy. The seriousness of this unfaithfulness is seen in the severe description of rejection within this verse: they re-crucify Christ and treat him with contempt. Those who sinned against Christ in such a way had no hope of restoration or forgiveness for they had rejected him with full knowledge and conscious experience. This is not referring to losing salvation.*

In 6:9 the author shifts to encouraging believers. What are the “better things” that “accompany salvation” that mark the difference between the “beloved” believers and the unbelievers of 5:11-6:8?

In 6:10 the author states *he will not forget your work* – Do you believe you stand with those people, that he will not forget *your* work? What is the work they speak of? What are the things they have been promised (v12)?

 *(“Beloved” – shows a change of audience and a change of message of warning to a message of encouragement. That the address is to believers is further confirmed by the expression of confidence that “better things” could be said of them (as compared to those who were being warned in the preceding verse). The “things that accompany salvation” are their works which verify their salvation. The very statement implies that the things described in 5:11-6:5 do not accompany salvation but are indicative of unbelief and apostasy.*

How does this passage encourage believers through the example of Abraham and the promises of God? What is the hope that it speaks of?

 *(“Abraham” – to encourage the Hebrews to reply upon faith as opposed to holding on to the Levitical system of worship, the writer cited the example of Abraham who as the great model of faith should be imitated.*

 *“Endured” – Abraham was an example of patience, he received the promise in the beginning of its fulfillment by the birth of Isaac but he did not live to see all the promises fulfilled.*

 *“Hope” – the theme of Hebrews, product of OT studies, for the fulfillment of God’s promise of salvation promise is the “anchor of the soul”, keeping the believer secure during times of trouble.)*

**Read Romans 8:35-39**

How does this passage fit with the scriptures we just read in Hebrews?

What does it mean to you to be a “conqueror” through Christ how does his love motivate you to live well?

**Read Galatians 3:23-24**

How does this passage add to your understanding of the “immature” or elementary nature of the Old Covenant?

**Reflection**

What evidences is there in your life that Christ dwells in you and that you possess eternal life?

This passage commends the believers’ service and love in ministering to the saint. What concrete acts of service and demonstrations of love do you sense God prompting you to engage in this week to someone in your faith community?

What specific promise of God do you need to cling to this week?

*References: Hebrews by John MacArthur*