



Something Better For Us

A Survey of Hebrews, Lesson #3

5:1 – 6:20

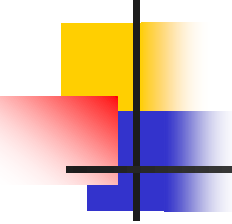
Jim Hoffman



Truths that Transform

- Hear today, and believe today.
- God is a God of mercy, but He is not a God of games.
- Just hearing of, knowing about, or having friends that are going to heaven does not mean that you are going.
- If I approach the throne when my faith is strong, then I really need to run there when my faith is weak.

Hebrews 5:1-4



For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. 2 He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness. 3 Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer sacrifices for sins. 4 And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was. NKJV

- The next (5) chapters really form the heart of the letter and focus on Jesus as the better high priest.
- If you believed that you needed a priest to mediate between you and God, then you would have to conclude that he had a very important role.
- In Judaism, 'who' the high priest was at the time was a big deal; he was thought to be your access way to God.

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- The Levitical priesthood was ordained by God through Moses.
- The priests of the Levitical system were to offer gifts and sacrifices on behalf of the people.
- They were to be sympathetic to the sinners and indeed could be since they too were beset with sin. (not so with Jesus)

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- The high priest was also to be compassionate with those who were ignorantly living a life of sin.
- The office of priest required this man to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.
- Furthermore, the Levitical priests were appointed. First Aaron and his sons and after that only those of the tribe of Levi.



Hebrews 5:1-4

The Levitical Priesthood

- In chapter (10) we will see quite emphatically that the old priesthood, though ordained by God, was ineffective.
- Sins (plural) were covered, and judgment was stayed, but those sacrifices did nothing to deal with triumphing over the sin nature.
- All of that blood, all of that death, were merely vivid illustrations of what God would one day do to deal with sin.

Hebrews 5:5-6

So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it was He who said to Him "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You." As He also says in another place: "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek"; NKJV

- Just as the Levitical priests were appointed by God, so too was Jesus.
- Two O.T. Messianic quotes are used to point to God's selection of Jesus to a different kind of priesthood.
- He wasn't appointed to a 'new' priesthood, but to one that was older than the Levitical priesthood.

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- The older order of Melchizedek goes way back before there was a tribe of Levi, and before the time of Moses to the day of Abraham. (Gen 14)
- We will see 'Mel' again in chapter (7), but for now just be aware that the priesthood did not begin with the giving of the law.
- The older order also never really ceased in that it is an eternal order, not temporary like the priests of the tribe of Levi.

Hebrews 5:7-8

7 who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, 8 though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.

- In the garden of Gethsemane we know that Jesus went through a number of very rough hours as he contemplated the cross.
- He cried and He sweat blood that night and the Father heard His petitions, but did not answer them because Jesus withdrew the request by saying 'not my will, but thine be done'.

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- We also see here more evidence that the humanity of Jesus (save for sin) was as normal as our's in that He had to grow and develop.
- Did Jesus have to learn to count? To speak? To cook? To hammer a nail? (yes)
- Though He was God he took on the form of a servant and His humanity had to learn, grow, and develop. (Philippians 2:5-11)

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- Verse #8 points us to a big lesson, this is like graduate work, perhaps even a higher.
- He learned obedience, and He learned it through suffering. He learned to trust God when He had options.
- Here is the test for us When we have options do we choose God's way or do we only trust Him when we have to?

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- How we answer 'when do we trust Him' perhaps says as much about our faith than anything else.
- Jesus had options, He could have called thousands of angels, but He chose to please the Father above pleasing Himself.
- And consider the Father's love for us in that He too had options; redeem us, or sacrifice His Son. Let that sink in a little.

Hebrews 5:9-11

9 And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, 10 called by God as High Priest "according to the order of Melchizedek," 11 of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. NKJV

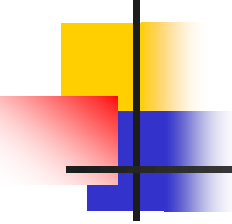
- He became the Author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him We will deal with the 'Can you lose it or not?' in a few minutes, but for now look at what is quite clear.
- Even if you think you can lose it, you must admit that for those who obey Him it's quite secure.
- Bear in mind that we are not saved by our obedience, (that would be works) but our obedience simply proves that we believe.

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- In verse #11 the author of the letter takes a shot at the reader when he writes 'you have become dull of hearing'.
- The author knew his readers well enough that a number of them had trouble listening with an open mind.
- And again, consider how open you would be to something new when you are already convinced that what you have is from God.
- The biggest difference that I could point to is that if what you hold as truth does not change your life and give you peace, then you should at least be open to something new.

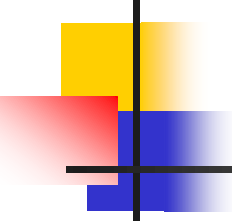
Hebrews 5:12-14



For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

- In this section it would seem clear that the message is to those who had already believed because he has spiritual expectations of them.
- You should be more mature than you are. You should be out of kindergarten by now. Get with the program!
- Those who do not grow in their faith do not adorn the gospel of Christ. (Titus 2:10)

Hebrews 5:12-14



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- The author continues to take them to task for their refusal to make the truth of God a priority.
- It might be comfortable to stay in the basics of the gospel, but it is not necessarily profitable.
- I love to hear the basics because they still bless me, but I also know that there is so much more that God wants to do in me that I must press on.

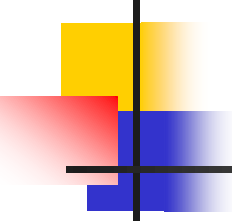
Hebrews 6:1-3

Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3

And this we will do if God permits.

- We now enter what is arguably the most debated section of the New Testament and one that has caused whole groups of believers to part company. (that will not happen here)
- The long debate over whether you can lose your salvation or not always seems to end up here simply because it is one passage that most pointedly indicates that it can be lost.

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- The official position of Christian Life Assembly is that you can lose your salvation, but not easily.
- You can lose it by deliberately turning away from Christ, not by committing some certain sin or by committing some certain number of sins. There is simply no remedy for unbelief.
- This much is certain, if this argument has not been settled in 2,000 years then it's probably one that has strong evidence on both sides so we should be careful to be less than dogmatic.

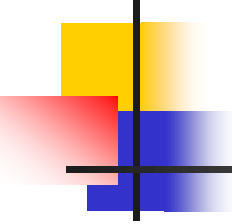
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- Two possible scenarios for this section are:
 - 1, This is a strong warnings to Christians that if you deliberately turn away from Christ that you will lose your salvation, or
 - 2, This is a strong warning to Christians that if you do not go on to maturity in Christ that you effectively discredit Christ by your life.

Hebrews 6:1-3



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And this we will do if God permits.

- Just as the writer called out the Hebrews in chapter 5 for being disinterested and 'dull' of hearing he continues here in the same vein.
- He is saying that if you want to go on to maturity that we need to have new priorities in our relationship with God.
- It can no longer be 'good enough' to just be saved, but we must go on so that God can fully use us.

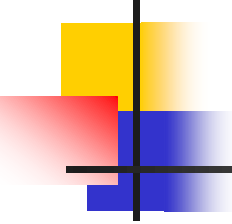
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And this we will do if God permits.

- There are few things in life more pathetic than a Christian who has never moved on with so great a salvation.
- If we are not growing in Christ then how do we ever expect to be used more fully by Him?
- I would love to have some of my years back to put to better use, but life doesn't work that way. 'Today if you will hear'. Today is all we really have that we can count on so press on now.

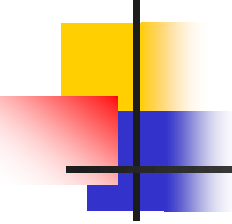
Hebrews 6:4-6



4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.

- As I said earlier, this is a strong warning to Christians whether it's 'Be careful, you can lose it' or it's 'Press on, or Christ is discredited by your testimony'.
- It's serious, it's somber, and so strongly worded that we must pay heed and know that we are being warned.
- The point is that if you know God then you have a responsibility to develop a relationship with Him.
- In fact, if you have no desire to know Him more, then what is it that you can point to as proof that you ever believed at all?

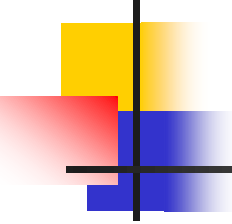
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- This much is certain, if we fall into the category of;
 - Being enlightened
 - Tasting the heavenly gift
 - Partaking of the Holy Spirit
 - Tasting the good word of God and His power
- Then we had better do something with our spiritual lives.
- If we move on in Christ, we need not worry whether we can lose our salvation or not because He is the Author of eternal salvation to them who obey.

Hebrews 6:4-6



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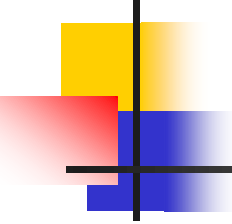
- I am very much aware that we did not settle the 'can you lose it or not' question, but that was intentional.
- I did try to be clear on the position of this church and to be honest if I were going to err on one side or the other it would be on the side of 'you can lose it'. It's usually a spiritually healthier position.
- However, you can make the issue totally moot for you by staying close to Jesus and continuing to obey Him. Then it will not matter whether one can or can't lose it; you won't.

Hebrews 6:7-8

7 For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God; 8 but if it bears thorns and briers, it is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned.

- These verses seem to echo something that Jesus said about fruit in Math 7:17-19, and again in John 15:2-4.
- If God is at work in us it will show up in our lives; any other kind of faith is just a mind game.
- If God has given us a new life and sent refreshing water (the Holy Spirit) upon us, then we have a responsibility to live for Him and like Him.
- There are consequences for trifling with the things of God.

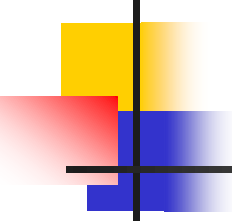
Hebrews 6:9-12



But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner. 10 For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. 11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises

- **The writer now tries to build up their confidence that they really are saved. There is a tendency on our part to fret over losing our salvation so he wanted to point out that they are on track.**
- **He tells them that it's obvious by their works that they have not turned away.**
- **It was clear to the writer that they were in a safe condition and had nothing to fear; they were doing the very things that do accompany salvation.**
- **For those in the audience who had not trusted Christ it provides a test for them; do your works speak of faith?**

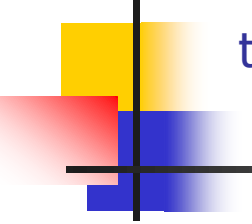
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- So what are the things that accompany salvation?
 - Ministry to others.
 - Labors of love, not just labors (works).
 - A zeal for God and His things.
 - Perseverance in the things of God.

Hebrews 6:9-12



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- Verse #12 in particular points us to a 'finish line' approach to life.
- A successful Christian life is one that understands that what we do now translates into eternal rewards and not necessarily temporal ones.
- This verse also speaks of the need to set good and godly examples for those that follow us.



Inheriting the Promises

Hebrews 6:13-20

- In Genesis 15 we are told how God made promises to Abraham. (Gen 15:1-21)
- It is impossible for God to lie so when He makes a promise it not only 'will' be kept, but it 'must' be kept.
- Part of God's promise to Abraham includes a messiah redeemer to come.



Inheriting the Promises

Hebrews 6:13-20

- Notice also where Jesus is; He has entered into the holy place beyond the veil as our great high priest.
- This would have even greater significance to the Jewish reader of the letter than it does to us.
- The very fact that He is our 'forerunner' is a promise in itself. He could only be our forerunner if we are to follow and He has made us a kingdom of priests who are able to enter into God's presence based upon our relationship with Christ.



Inheriting the Promises

Hebrews 6:13-20

- Not to be lost in all of this is the fact that Jesus was a better priest of a better priesthood.
- The Levitical priests entered behind the veil of the earthly tabernacle, whereas Jesus entered behind the veil of the heavenly tabernacle.
- The old covenant always pointed towards someone and something better.



Inheriting the Promises

Hebrews 6:13-20

- It is the hope that God will keep His word that we have to anchor our souls.
- An anchor stabilizes and keeps us in a safe place despite storms and waves.
- If life seems to bounce us around perhaps we need to get closer to the anchor as the shorter the rope, the greater the stability.



Truths that Transform

- **All of the blood and death in the O.T. sacrificial system were to point us to Christ.**
- **The humanity of Jesus had to develop and grow, surely we too need development.**
- **When we have options do we choose God's way or do we only trust Him when we have to?**
- **If we do not grow in Christ and adorn the gospel, then what good are we?**
- **If fretting over losing your salvation has you like a deer caught in headlights, stop it and move on with Christ. It's the best assurance you can have.**