

The Book of Hebrews

Part 16: Hope That's Alive (Heb. 6:11-18)

I. Religious Diligence Vs. Faith Diligence

We've gone from a strong warning about falling away in the beginning of Hebrews 6 to a beautiful affirmation about the people's *agapè* love. We were reminded how the readers of the letter were already believing the Gospel and experiencing its fruit. The writer simply wanted them to be diligent about continuing to focus on the message of grace.

**11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end
(Hebrews 6:11)**

The word for "diligence" shows up in 2 Peter 1, a significant chapter we discussed earlier in our study (Part 7). This helps clarify what kind of diligence is being encouraged...

**5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, 6 and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, 7 and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love.
(2 Peter 1:5-7)**

The message here is that faith is the source and the starting place of these other divine qualities, all of which build and crescendo to *agapè* love.

Our call is to apply *diligence*—intense focus—to our faith or trust in the gospel.

There is an important distinction here. The call is not to "diligently" work on being a more self-controlled, persevering, loving individual. That is the path of self-effort. Instead, the call is to be diligent about celebrating the work of Jesus. This is why Peter follows up with these words:

**9 For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins.
(2 Peter 1:9)**

Peter is giving the same warning as the entire book of Hebrews but in different words. He is reminding them that they have *already* been purified from sin (because of the work of our High Priest). So, to come back under condemnation and self-effort is to be blind to this truth—and that blindness will lead to a lack of love in your life!

II. Biblical Hope vs. Wishful Thinking

All of this brings us to the second part of Hebrews 6:11:

...we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end.

Biblical hope is different from worldly hope. Worldly hope is synonymous with the word “wish.” It’s about things you *wish* will happen. This shallow form of hope lacks the confidence and power of biblical hope. The hope declared in Scripture is rooted in something already here and alive. We are simply waiting for it to be fully revealed.

In his first letter, Peter calls this a living hope...

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead

(1 Peter 1:3)

Through our diligence to the faith, we will *realize* or experience the full assurance of this living hope.

Besides the book of Hebrews, the only place the terms “full assurance” and “hope” come together is in the book of Colossians where Paul talks about *hope of glory*...

The hope of glory is the present truth of Christ within (see Colossians 1:27 & 2:2).

This means the verse in Hebrews is telling that if we’re diligent about our faith we will realize the living hope of Christ in us.

In other words, our hope is something we can tap into now. This is not a “deferred hope” that leads to heartache and disappointment:

**12 Hope deferred makes the heart sick,
But desire fulfilled is a tree of life.**

(Proverbs 13:12)

“Wishes” are often hopes that get deferred and never happen, which leads to sickness of the heart—depression, bitterness, a lack of creativity, and numbness to the beauty of life.

How many of us have “wishes” that we hope and pray will happen, but we don’t see them happen and we’re not sure they will ever happen? A lot of these “hopes” can be good and godly things, but until we find the true Hope, our life is built on the sand of wishful thinking and disappointment is the result.

There is a hope better than any wish you can make that is not deferred into some vague possibility, but something you can begin to tap into today. This is the hope of glory. The revelation of Christ in you is the biblical hope we're discussing.

When our desire is for the life of Christ to flow into our experiences, all of life, even negative circumstances—even things going against your wishes—can become opportunities to see Christ revealed. Nothing can shake this because everything becomes an opportunity for Jesus's love and patience and joy to bubble up in your life.

3 But that's not all! Even in times of trouble we have a joyful confidence, knowing that our pressures will develop in us patient endurance. 4 And patient endurance will refine our character, and proven character leads us back to hope. 5 And this hope is not a disappointing fantasy, because we can now experience the endless love of God cascading into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who lives in us!

(Romans 5:3-5 TPT)

As discussed previously, there is a future promise of a bodily resurrection and heaven on earth which is a valid part of biblical hope. People absolutely need this aspect of hope.

However, when a person's desire is *only* to go to heaven and eat from a future "tree of life" and rest from the pain of this world, they can still experience heartsickness, but that is a deferred experience.

God wants us to tap into the fullness of biblical hope, which involves communing with the "tree of life" inside of us—our living hope of Christ. Then, every difficulty in life becomes an opportunity to eat more from that tree and experience the glory of patience, worship, and trust.

Walking in patient, persevering love with a heart of worship is one of the most satisfying things a person can desire. This is a desire you should expect to be fulfilled because you are a temple made for the Holy Spirit. This means you will experience the true meaning and pleasure of life as the Spirit of God's *agapè* love completely flows through you.

Therefore, here is a paraphrase of Hebrews 6:11:

We desire each of you to continue to diligently trust that you are righteous and pure, and that Christ's nature is in you. As you do this, you will have a deeper assurance of this truth, even until the end of your journey when you one day experience all of it.

III. Inheriting the Promise

All of this brings us to verse 12:

11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end 12 so that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

(Hebrews 6:11-12)

The word “sluggish” is the same term for “dull” when earlier we looked at how the writer was calling them “dull of hearing.” This is the term that comes from the word for an illegitimate child. The idea is that we cannot stop hearing and believing that we are beloved sons and daughters.

To become spiritually sluggish is not about being lazy and procrastinating your life way away. Someone lazy and procrastinating on doing the right things is often living in the fear of disappointing God and others. They do not know they are a beloved child who is accepted apart from what they do.

Spiritual sluggishness is about distance and guilt numbing your heart to God’s abiding love and presence in your life. When you feel like a failure or that you don’t measure up, you are being “sluggish.”

Instead, the writer tells us to embrace faith and patience. As we do this, we will “inherit the promises.”

In the same vein as biblical hope, the “promises” are not *only* about a future blessing in heaven. The promise of God is the experience of his glorious presence—i.e. the hope of glory. It is the promise of the Holy Spirit in your life, the comforting and gracious activity of God in your heart.

One day this glorious presence will fully radiate from a glorified body. That is a wonderful future promise we are called to cling to. But again, we’re invited to tap into this today. This brings us back to the words in 2 Peter and how he opens his letter:

4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

(2 Peter 1:4)

What we are called to “inherit” is the divine nature flowing through the temple of our bodies.

We inherit this by walking in patient faith. The *patience* part of this is vital and needs extra attention. We do not always *feel* the glory of God in us or around us. Often, we experience contradictions to this promise of God’s presence (and of our righteousness) and this tempts us to think that our living hope is deferred—not present.

Thankfully, the writer is going to point us to the life of Abraham who teach us more of what it means to walk this pathway into inheriting the greatest gift in all eternity and the ultimate meaning and pleasure of life...

13 For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, 14 saying, "I will surely bless you and I will surely multiply you." 15 And so, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise. 16 For men swear by one greater than themselves, and with them an oath given as confirmation is an end of every dispute. 17 In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, 18 so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us.
(Hebrews 6:13-18)

The writer brings up Abraham and his journey of trusting and eventually fully experiencing a certain promise from God.

In his case, the promise was about the supernatural birth of a child. Something would come out of him—"fruit" from his inner being—that was physically impossible for him to do on his own. This corresponds to the hope and promise of Christ in us. We have a promise that the life of Christ, the fruit of the Spirit of Christ—his love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control—will fully blossom in our lives.

When Paul writes about this "fruit" of the Spirit in Galatians, he also brings up Abraham in the chapter beforehand. Specifically, he connects Abraham's supernatural child named Isaac to the promise of the Holy Spirit (see Galatians 4:21-5:23).

- **Note:** *The name "Isaac" means laughter. It corresponds to the joy of the Spirit promised to flow out of our lives.*

In Abraham's case, he heard the promise from God, but did not experience it right away.

In the same way, there are days when we do not feel the Holy Spirit's love and power flowing through our lives. Sometimes it seems like the exact opposite traits are rearing their heads. In this case, we exercise patience and diligently *trust* in what God's says nonetheless.

We do not judge ourselves by how well we are doing. Though *agapè* love is the absolute goal of life and the proof of true faith, it's not something we can produce on our own.

Abraham learned to simply wait on the Father's word and trust there was a divine seed within him—*"and so, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise."*

In our case, the life of Christ is a hope-filled seed inside of us, invisible to the naked eye, that we are called to cling to.

Thank God, our faith is not based on feelings. It's based on the absolute promise God has made to us in the Gospel. In Abraham's case, God made a double-promise to him (the promise and the

oath) that supernatural life would come out of him. This promise was not a reward for any good thing he did. All Abraham had to do was say AMEN! *He simply agreed with God.*

There are further connections between Abraham's promise and the Gospel. God promised Abraham that he would bless and multiply him.

This promise was foreshadowing the Father's promise to his Son Jesus, that he would multiply his image across the earth. God has promised Jesus that the earth will be filled with people who look just like him! This is a promise from God the Father to God the Son (see Galatians 3:16). So, we can rest in this because it's not based on our performance!

Our destiny is to walk in perfect love and righteousness. We *will* share in the full glory of Christ because we are vessels for the divine nature. This is God's promise to Jesus and it's the ultimate hope we are to take hold of.

There is nothing greater than this hope. There is nothing you can wish for that is greater than the love and joy of Jesus residing in our lives.

But again, we do not *make this happen*. We trust God's Word over us. We are diligent to stay true to what he says and continue listening to the voice that calls us righteous and clean. This is echoed earlier in Galatians right before Paul brings up the story of Abraham to encourage the Galatian believers to stay diligent to the faith themselves:

**5 So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?
(Galatians 3:5)**

We are called to continue "hearing with faith" the good news. This means even on bad days, even when our faith feels weak and our love is small, we can take refuge in this "hope set before us" which is the glory of Christ within, and the promise that it will fully come out of our lives.

Follow-up Encounter:

Celebrate communion with a fresh reminder that no matter how you are doing or feeling, the truth is true—Christ is in you! Christ is your present reality and your future destiny. Christ is within you like a seed that is indestructible and will grow no matter what. Doubts and fears and attacks are only watering the seed to make it grow faster!

Find your rest in this truth as you partake of the communion elements. Let your eating and drinking be an act of saying "yes" to God just as Abraham said yes to the Father in "hope against hope" as he faced an impossible situation (Romans 4:18).