

You've Been Warned Part 2

Impossible To Restore

Hebrews 5:11-6:6

Memory Verses: Hebrews 6:1

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

The Book of Hebrews is amazing in its revelation of Jesus as the Supreme High Priest over the New Covenant. In him we have everlasting salvation free from the chains of sin and condemnation. But Hebrews doesn't just offer us this good news alone. It also offers up at least 5 warning passages which we must stop and take some time to observe. These are the warning signs that keep us on the path of the New Covenant.

Last week we opened up the warning passages by looking at the three in chapters two, three, and four. The gist of the three passages is this; if we drift carelessly in our faith then eventually we will be stuck in a state of spiritual calousness. In other words, if we are not intentional to cling hard to Christ and his Gospel we will become ineffective for the Kingdom of Christ. We may be saved by faith, but we won't be successful for the faith. We can't drift lest we fall!

Our passage this morning offers another warning, but this one is a little different. This one stings a bit more. Just look at it in **Hebrews 5:11-6:6**. This passage is one of the most hotly debated passages in the New Testament. Some read it as a clear admission that one can certainly lose their salvation. Others struggle with it and simply choose to ignore it because it is uncomfortable. Both of these responses are dangerous.

If I were honest, the first time I confronted this passage head on, I was 21 years old and about to become a student pastor at my first church. I had finished college and was about to get married. I had heard my whole life that you couldn't lose your salvation even though there were some who believed you could. I thought those people were simply ignorant, but when I read this passage and reread it and read it again, it scared me. At first glance it really does seem like this passage is talking to people who are saved and warns them that they could lose it. I started to wonder... could I lose my salvation.

I think you may have been there a time or two as well. This passage causes many to worry, thinking that if they ever have a crisis of faith or succumb to sin for a time, that they may once again be in danger of condemnation and the fires of hell. They wonder, if I can lose my salvation, how can I ever be fully assured that I am saved? They are stuck in a constant loop of wondering, "Is my faith real or not?" And let me assure you that this is not all bad.

Now, don't get me wrong. I don't believe this passage is telling you you can lose your salvation. With a true understanding of this difficult passage one will discover that this passage doesn't contradict eternal security, rather it explains it. But, and don't miss this, this passage is definitely wanting you to seriously consider if your faith in Christ is real or not. It causes us to stop and ponder if we have really given our lives to Christ or if we are merely coasting on some emotional moment we had at youth camp years ago or when we walked an isle and got baptized. Let's be honest, **too many people are living with a memory of salvation but no fruit of salvation**. We can't stay there. This morning we need to take a hard look and realize this truth... **Stalling in your faith might be a sign you never had it.**

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first thing we need to see this morning is... **Complacency Should Be A Caution**. Let's look again in **Hebrews 5:11**. The author here isn't mincing his words. He calls his audience "dull of hearing." He is not simply implying that they are struggling to hear his words. He is using this language figuratively to imply that they have "become" spiritually unintelligent. They haven't become dull because the message of the Gospel is too deep, but because they have become too lazy. This isn't an intellectual problem... it's a spiritual problem. They have heard the Gospel and the truth that it contains and because of their spiritual apathy they have chosen to remain purposefully biblically illiterate. They said a prayer, got baptized, went to church for a while, felt "saved enough" and then just thought... "I'm good, I don't need to dive any deeper in my faith." They grew complacent.

Complacency isn't a phase. It's a red flag that what you thought you had... you don't really have. Look to the parable of the sower and the seed in **Matthew 13:3-4, 19**. **The seed that was sown was sown in your heart. The Gospel was at first accepted. But because of a lack of understanding... a willful misunderstanding, it was quickly snatched away.** Such a person, a person who think they have accepted Christ's salvation, who then lives a complacent and apathetic life with no practical evidence of their faith, are not believers. Complacency doesn't mean that you aren't a believer. We will all face times of spiritual apathy and complacency. But when we realize we are in those times... we must see it as a caution to stop being that way and change course. **To renew our vigor and passion for the things of God. Get this... Complacency isn't a plateau. It's the dangerous downward slope leading to the abyss.** Those who are genuinely saved will get off the slope as soon as possible.

We love fires at the Sloane house. It may even be said that a couple of those in our household are pyromaniacs. They love playing with fire. Landon in particular. The other day we had some things to do around town

and we didn't want to leave anyone at home. But before we could get going, Landon had already started a fire. I'm talking like, 9am. We asked him why he just started a fire now that we have to leave. He said... it doesn't matter it will still be going when we get back. When we got back... it was out. Why? Because as everyone knows, fires that are left unattended go out! To keep a fire going in a firepit or a fireplace, one must be intentional to keep adding more wood and adjusting the fire so that it burns good and long. That's how spiritual life works. No one can walk away from the core of their faith and expect it to keep burning. Complacency doesn't work with fire and it doesn't work with Christianity. If your heart is no longer stirred by the Word, by prayer, by Christian fellowship, by church, that's not a sign to further take a break... it's a sign to dig in deeper. It's a sign to hit your knees and beg for God to reignite your fire. Otherwise you might be completely and utterly stalled... and **Stalling in your faith might be a sign you never had it.**

The second thing we need to see here is that... **Immaturity Isn't Innocent. It's Evidence.** Let's look again in **Hebrews 5:12-14**. **Not only does the author call his hearers spiritually lazy, he also calls them spiritually immature. You should've matured into teachers but you still have to be constantly reeducated. You should've grown to eat steak but your stomachs can still only handle milk. These aren't new converts, these are longtime church-going people who haven't grown. The people in Hebrews weren't failing because they were new. They were failing because they weren't growing. And here's the problem with the church in general. They tolerate it. We act like people who aren't tangibly growing in their faith are fine as long as they attend a service every now and then. As if that's the standard. We think... they might still be immature in their walk, but at least they are walking... isn't that cute. No, it's not cute. Spiritual immaturity over time isn't cute. It is condemning.**

A couple of years ago a video surfaced on social media about Baby Phil. Baby Phil, you can look it up, is a grown man, around 40 years old or older, who works a regular day job as a groundskeeper. But in the evening when he comes home he literally dresses up like a baby, wears a diaper, sleeps in a giant baby crib, eats baby food, and has his wife act like his mother. When asked why he wants to live this way, he says, it's just so much simpler being a baby. We say, that's ridiculous, and it is. But then we allow people who have been in church their whole lives, who say they've been Christians for decades, go on acting like they've only been saved for a few weeks. It should be embarrassing for them and the church.

At some point if you say you are a believer you should mature. You should move from hearing sermons about telling people about Christ to actually telling people about Christ. Yet when the last time you told

someone about Jesus? How many times have you heard the Gospel but still can't adequately explain it to someone else. You should be teachers by now. Everyone who has been in church for years, should be teachers by now. And yet, we aren't. And that's concerning. A stagnant immature faith could actually be evidence that you aren't what you think you are. It might be a sign that you've stalled... and **Stalling in your faith might be a sign you never had it.**

The third thing we need to see here this morning is that... **Perseverance Is Salvation's Proof.** Let's look again in **Hebrews 6:1-3**. The obvious point here is simple. Our salvation isn't validated by what we hear, but by what we do! Works are the evidence of faith. We've talked about this point so much that it seems that I would actually be defeating the purpose of this passage to continue talking about it. We have to move past the elementary things of our faith. We shouldn't have to keep repeating the basics. The author here lists six basic truths – repentance, faith, baptism, laying on of hands, resurrection, and judgment. All of these are good and necessary. But they are elementary. They are kindergarten Christianity. We need to level up. And how do we do that. By no longer just hearing but by doing as well. Look at **James 1:22**.

We talk about Perseverance a lot, and I get it.. we must persevere in our faith. But persevering in hearing is not really a thing. When you persevere you persevere in doing! In living out what you say you believe. For example. I've never attended an AA meeting, but I've seen a portrayal of them on television many times. You come in, you say Hi My name is so and so, and I'm an alcoholic. Then you share your story if you want... and then you sit there and hear the instructor teach about the 12 steps of recovery. But what if someone went to those meetings every single day for ten, twenty years, and every single time they came to the meeting they were straight up hammered. They were tore up from the floor up. After a while the instructor might ask them... why aren't you changing. Why aren't you trying the steps. They say it works if you work it... then how come you aren't working it. And the drunk just looks at him and says, "but I come and listen every day." Would you say that person is persevering in their recovery process or would you say that that person is fine to revel in their debauchery? Both can't be true at the same time. Neither can a persevering believer also be a pew warming sinner. The bottom line is this... we will do what we've been taught if God permits. And guess what he permits it every single day of your life. So go do it! **You don't need another sermon, you need to surrender!** Don't stall... because if you do... **Stalling in your faith might be a sign you never had it.**

Lastly we need to see that... **Falling Away Reveals A False Start.** Let's look again in **Hebrews 6:4-6**. Finally we get to the big warning. The

language is chilling. These people have tasted spiritual things. They have heard the Gospel, experienced the community of church, maybe even seen miracles. But they weren't really truly saved. Their falling away isn't losing salvation. It's proving they never had it to start with.

Falling away isn't the loss of salvation. It's the exposure of imitation.

Notice that this language is all hypothetical. If it were possible... if it were possible. The point is... its not possible. It's not possible to have the Holy Spirit in your heart, and be changed by the Gospel and to fall away. And if it were possible... you couldn't be restored.. because Christ died once. He isn't going to do it again. This is why any teaching that says you can lose your salvation is false. Pinpoint undisputable evidence. Because it strictly says that if you did, then there is no way of being restored. This means our God is not a God of second chances... It's one strike and you are out! But we know that that is not our God. We turn out back on him time and time and time again.. and he accepts us back everytime.

And this brings me to one of the starkest dangers of our current culture. Deconstructionism. Deconstructionism is a fad amongst evangelicals where they take a hyper critical look at Christianity as a whole and use liberal theology to tear apart their own faith. They look at evolution and say, well that means I've been living a lie and there must be no God so they abandon their faith. Or they look at homosexuality and say, certainly everyone should be able to love who they want to love so.. Christianity must be a sham and they walk away from their faith. And every single time they want you to know that they were true believers, but now through science and enlightenment they have to admit that they were sold a lie. The list of prominent Christians who have deconstructed recently include...Joshua Harris, the author of I Kissed Dating Goodbye, Kevin Max, one of the members of DC Talk, Marty Sampson, one of the worship leaders with Hillsong, Rhett and Link, one of the largest channels on Youtube, Michael Gungor, lead singer of the band Gungor, Derek Webb, lead singer of Caedmon's Call, and Dave Gass, pastor at the mega church Grace Family Fellowship.

And I know what might go through your mind. If their faith was as real as they said it was and if they were able to walk away from Christ and the church, then maybe Christ and the church aren't real. Maybe I could walk away. Maybe I should walk away? For those of you who may think this let me remind you of this verse. **1 John 2:19**. They went out from us because they were not of us. Let me make this plain to you. As long as there is a church there will be goats among the sheep. When a goat realizes they aren't a sheep and leave the pen, this doesn't mean they stopped being a sheep, it means they realized they never were one!

Falling away isn't the loss of salvation. It's the exposure of imitation.

Think of Judas. He walked with Jesus. Heard all of his sermons. Saw

every miracle. No one ever suspected that he wasn't one of them. And yet he was never truly transformed. He stalled. And...**Stalling in your faith might be a sign you never had it.** Jesus tells us this himself in **Matthew 7:21-23**. Not everyone who claims to be one of us is one of us. We shouldn't get all shaken when they realize they aren't one of us and leave. The bottom line is this... if you are truly saved, the Spirit will preserve you and empower you to persevere til the end. If you are playing games with God, this passage is your red light! If at the end of your life, you are still rejecting Jesus as your savior, you will not have another chance!

Application

The bottom line, its not a bad thing to evaluate your status with Christ and make sure you are a true believer. This passage is a wake up call, not for backsliders to be scared if they've lost their salvation, but for churchgoers to ask if they ever had it. If in asking if you ever had it and realize you didn't, then get saved. Today is the day of salvation. If in asking if you ever had it you realize you do... then reengage and persevere in your faith. Open your ears and your heart and let the Gospel in in a new and refreshing way. Stop being lazy in your faith and grab it faith by the horns and get to bucking. Stop being immature in your faith and step up. You aren't just a learner anymore, you are a teacher. Get to teaching and leading, and preaching! Don't just be hearers but be doers! Your faith demands action! Act on it! Live it to the fullest.

Conclusion

A couple of years ago there was a story about a man who jumped from a burning building to his death. The building was on fire, there was no way to escape, and he was told by someone else in the building that if he jumped out of the window, though he couldn't see it because of the smoke, the fire department had a giant net below that would catch him. The problem, the fire department never said that. The person who told him that had heard it from someone else who heard it from someone else who heard it from someone who was either making it up or heard it wrong. Regardless, **there was no net and the man died moments before fire fighters reached his door.** He could've been saved but he chose to put his faith in the wrong thing. He thought he was safe, but his confidence was misplaced. Don't let that be you. Examine your heart. Not fear, but faith. Don't settle for shallow religion or cultural hedonism. Put your faith in Christ, and let him save you! Christ won't let you jump out the wrong window. He won't let you stall! Because... **Stalling in your faith might be a sign you never had it.**