

Hebrews: No Turning Back

Week 5

Main Scripture: Hebrews 8

Speaker: Christian Stubbs, Discipleship Pastor

Main Idea

Jesus is greater than everything that came before Him. Through His finished work, He established a new covenant built on better promises. Unlike human promises that can be broken, God's promises are guaranteed through Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 8 marks a turning point in the book. Everything leading up to this chapter establishes that Jesus is greater than the angels, greater than Moses, and greater than the priests of the Old Covenant. Now we see why that matters: Jesus has made a way for us to be forgiven, know God personally, and experience lasting transformation.

The Christian life is not about trying harder to earn God's approval. It is about trusting what Christ has accomplished, growing in a personal relationship with Him, and surrendering our lives to His lordship.

Getting Started

We make promises all the time. We promise to change habits, accomplish goals, or do things differently. But even with the best intentions, we often fail to follow through.

God's promises are different. What He promises, He guarantees.

Hebrews 8 describes the new covenant that God promised through the prophet Jeremiah. It is a covenant made possible through Jesus, our perfect High Priest, who offered Himself as the sacrifice for our sins.

Icebreaker: Have you ever made a New Year's resolution or personal commitment that didn't last very long? Why do you think it can be so difficult to follow through on our promises?

1. Trust in the finished work of Christ.

Read Hebrews 8:1–6

Hebrews 8 begins with an important statement: Jesus, our great High Priest, **sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven.**

Under the Old Covenant, priests continually offered sacrifices for the sins of the people. Their work was never finished because those sacrifices could not permanently remove sin.

Jesus is different. He offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice, once and for all. His sitting down signifies that the work of redemption is complete. The price has been paid.

Yet Jesus is not inactive. He continues to intercede for us as our advocate before the Father.

Think about the difference between trying to earn someone's approval and trusting someone who has already done everything necessary on your behalf. Our relationship with God is not based on how well we perform, but on what Jesus has accomplished.

Religion says, "Try harder." The Christian faith says, "Trust Jesus."

The Old Covenant revealed our sin and our inability to meet God's standard. The new covenant points us to the Savior who fulfilled what we could never accomplish ourselves.

Discuss:

1. Why is Jesus sitting down at the right hand of God such an important picture of His finished work?
2. How do we sometimes approach our relationship with God as though we still need to earn His approval?
3. What is the difference between trusting Christ and simply trying harder to be a better person?
4. How does knowing that Jesus continues to intercede for us encourage you when you struggle or fail?
5. Is there an area of your life where you need to stop relying on your own efforts and trust more fully in Christ?

2. Know God through personal relationship.

Read Hebrews 8:8–11; Jeremiah 31:31–34

The new covenant is more than a new set of religious expectations. It offers something deeply personal: the opportunity to know God and be transformed by Him.

Through Jeremiah, God promised:

"I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people." (Hebrews 8:10)

Under the Old Covenant, God's law revealed His expectations, but the people repeatedly failed to remain faithful. The new covenant brings something greater. Through the Holy Spirit, God works within us, transforming our hearts and desires.

This relationship is not built simply on outward behavior or religious activity. God invites us to know Him personally.

Read Matthew 6:33.

Jesus calls us to seek first God's kingdom and His righteousness. Instead of approaching the Christian life as a checklist of rules, we are invited into a growing relationship with Him.

Sometimes we prefer rules because they seem easier to manage. We want to know what we must do, what we should avoid, and how to meet expectations.

But God wants something deeper than behavior modification.

He wants to change us from the inside out.

Knowing God personally means continually seeking Him, spending time in His Word, responding to His Spirit, and allowing Him to shape who we are becoming.

Spiritual growth is a lifelong process. God loves us as we are, but He does not intend for us to remain unchanged.

Discuss:

1. What is the difference between following religious rules and growing in a personal relationship with God?
2. Why do you think it is sometimes easier to focus on outward behavior than inward transformation?
3. How does God's promise to write His law on our hearts change the way we understand obedience?
4. What does it look like to seek God first in the everyday decisions of life?
5. Where have you seen God change your attitudes, desires, or priorities as your relationship with Him has grown?

3. Find forgiveness in total surrender.

Read Hebrews 8:12

One of the greatest promises of the new covenant is found in Hebrews 8:12:

"For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

Through Jesus, God offers forgiveness, a clean slate, and a new beginning.

But receiving that forgiveness requires surrender.

We often think of surrender as defeat. In a battle, surrender means laying down weapons. In boxing, a trainer might throw in the towel to acknowledge that the fight is over.

Yet surrendering to Jesus is not giving up on life. It is giving up control of our lives to the One who knows what is best for us.

We acknowledge that we cannot save ourselves. We confess our sin, repent, and place our faith in Christ.

Surrender also means recognizing Jesus not only as Savior but as Lord. We submit our desires, decisions, and direction to Him.

That surrender is not simply a one-time moment. It is an ongoing posture of yielding our lives to God's will.

One important indication of surrender is our willingness to ask for forgiveness. When we acknowledge our sin rather than excuse or justify it, we recognize God's authority over our lives.

The new covenant reminds us that restoration does not come through trying harder or becoming good enough. It comes through faith, repentance, and forgiveness in Christ.

Discuss:

1. Why do we often associate surrender with weakness or failure?
2. How is surrendering to Christ different from giving up?
3. What is the difference between acknowledging Jesus as Savior and submitting to Him as Lord?
4. Why can admitting our sin and asking for forgiveness be difficult?

5. Is there an area of your life where you are still trying to maintain control rather than surrendering to God?

Living It Out

Hebrews 8 reminds us that Jesus has provided something far greater than anything we could accomplish on our own.

His sacrifice is complete. His promise is guaranteed. His desire is for us to know Him personally and experience the forgiveness and transformation that only He can provide.

As you consider your relationship with Christ this week, reflect on these questions:

Am I trusting in the finished work of Christ, or am I still trying to earn God's approval?

Am I growing in a personal relationship with God, or am I simply going through religious routines?

Have I fully surrendered my life to Jesus, or are there areas where I am still holding on to control?

Choose one area where you need to respond to God this week. That may mean trusting Him with a difficult circumstance, making intentional time to seek Him through Scripture and prayer, or confessing and surrendering something you have been holding back.

The message of Hebrews remains clear: **Jesus is greater. There is no turning back.**

Memory Verse

Hebrews 8:12 (NIV)

"For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for the greater promise You have given us through Jesus Christ. Thank You that His sacrifice is complete and that we do not have to earn our salvation through our own efforts.

Help us trust fully in the finished work of Christ. Draw us into a deeper, more personal relationship with You, and continue transforming our hearts and lives through Your Spirit.

Show us the areas where we are still holding on to control. Give us the humility to confess our sins, receive Your forgiveness, and surrender ourselves completely to Your will.

Help us remain faithful, continue growing, and never turn back from the life You have called us to live.

In Jesus' name, Amen.