

North Summit Church  
**Hebrews 5:11-6:12**  
The Importance of Spiritual Maturity

**Announcements:**

- Mid-week Service and Chili cook-off
- Relational Evangelism Training | November 7-8 | Missionary John Hendee
- Jan Allen funeral November 1st - 10:30 service

**Introduction**

We're continuing our journey through **Hebrews: Encountering the Supremacy of Christ**.

- In Chapter 1, we saw Christ as God's final word—the radiance of God's glory.
- In Chapter 2, Jesus became our anchor and brother through the incarnation.
- In Chapter 3, we encountered the warning against hardening our hearts in unbelief like the wilderness generation.
- In Chapter 4, we are encouraged to enter God's rest through our great high priest Jesus Christ.
- **Today we come to the third warning passage in the book of Hebrews, and this one deals with the danger of spiritual immaturity.**
  - The writer stops mid-explanation about Christ as High Priest to say: "I have so much more to tell you, but I'm not sure you're ready to hear it."
- **The message: Spiritual maturity matters. The lack of it is dangerous.** It leaves you vulnerable to deception, drift, and falling away from the living God.

**The Rebuke | Hebrews 5:11-14**

Concerning him [Melchizedek] we have much to say, and it is difficult to explain, since you have become poor listeners. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the actual words of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unacquainted with the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to distinguish between good and evil.

**You Have Become Dull**

- "Poor listeners" means sluggish, lazy. They've *become* this way—this is regression, not incapacity.
- Like physical fitness, if you stop exercising spiritually, you don't maintain—you decline.

### You Ought to Be Teachers

- By this time, they should be able to help others grow.
- **The trajectory of healthy Christian life: move from consuming to contributing.**
- We should be moving past “what’s in it for me”, to “how can I help others grow”.
- The prerequisite for helping others is maturity...you can’t give what you don’t have.
- But these Jewish believers need to be re-taught the basics. They're going backwards.

### Milk vs. Solid Food

- **Milk** = elementary teachings, basics for new believers
- **Solid food** = meat of God's Word, which is growing in maturity—applying this reality to our lives. Obedience to Christ commands...the thing about maturity is
- **The danger:** Being "unacquainted with the word of righteousness"—no skill in applying God's Word. You can't discern truth from error. You're vulnerable to deception.
- **Maturity comes through practice:** Training, like an athlete. Doing it over and over. Exercising your spiritual senses. Constant practice distinguishing good from evil.

### The Call | Hebrews 6:1-3

**Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and about the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. And this we will do, if God permits.**

**"Leaving" doesn't mean abandoning**—it means building on the foundation.

The six elementary teachings are:

- **1. Repentance from dead works and faith toward God** — Basic gospel response - when we hear of dead works, he is talking about the things that don't

apply Christ's salvation to our lives: circumcision, temple sacrifices - but turning to Christ and the good works that he has prepared for us as His people through faith in Christ.

- **2. Instruction about washings and laying on of hands** — Baptism, receiving the Spirit
- **3. Resurrection and eternal judgment** — Eschatological realities
- These are essential foundations, but not the whole building.
- In essence he is saying that if your theology hasn't progressed beyond "I'm saved and going to heaven," you're spiritually malnourished.
- The next verses explain what might prevent progress: some may have hardened themselves beyond recovery.

### **The Warning | Hebrews 6:4-8**

**For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame. For ground that drinks the rain which often falls on it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God; but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned.**

- **Who Is Being Described?**

Look at the description:

- **"Once been enlightened"** — Received the light of the gospel
- **"Tasted the heavenly gift"** — Experienced God's grace and salvation
- **"Partakers of the Holy Spirit"** — Participated in the Spirit's life
- **"Tasted the good word of God"** — Encountered God through His Word
- **"Powers of the age to come"** — Experienced foretastes of the kingdom
- **This is not describing casual church attenders.** This describes someone who had genuine spiritual experiences, was part of the Christian community, and encountered Christ.
- **What Is this "Falling Away"?**
  - Different and more catastrophic than the "falling away" that is mentioned in Chapter 3.

- The Greek *has a significantly more detrimental tone to it*, meaning complete rejection of the truth—utterly abandoning the faith.
- **This is NOT struggling with sin.** It's not doubting during hard seasons. It's not failing to live up to ideals.
- **This is a complete rejection of Christ to their own detriment.** Turning back on the gospel. Treating Christ's sacrifice as worthless. More than just spiritual adultery that he talked about before this is spiritual suicide.
  - One commentator likened the progressive warning to the first in Chapter 3 being likened to walking out on your marriage.
  - Here the thrust of the language is more likened to jumping off a cliff to your death in order to get out of your marriage.

### Why "Impossible to Restore"?

- **Hebrews 6:6 - *Since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.***
- By completely rejecting Christ after knowing Him, they're essentially saying: "His death meant nothing. His sacrifice was worthless. He deserved to die." They're treating the cross with contempt, holding it up to public shame.
- **Important: The impossibility isn't about God's ability to forgive.** God can forgive any sin. The impossibility is about the heart condition of someone who has so hardened themselves against Christ that they've put themselves beyond the reach of repentance.
- **The Agricultural Illustration (vv. 7-8)**
  - Two types of land receive the same rain (God's Word, Spirit, grace, gifts):
    - **Productive land** — produces crops, bears fruit, receives blessing
    - **Unproductive land** — produces thorns and thistles, worthless, faces burning
- **The point:** The difference isn't in what's given (both receive rain), but in what's produced. Genuine faith produces fruit. False profession produces nothing of value—just thorns.

### Understanding This Warning

- 1. The warning is real and must be taken seriously.** The author genuinely fears some might abandon Christ. There is nothing in the text that would suggest this is a hypothetical.
- 2. This describes a complete rejection, not struggling with sin.**
  - **Ongoing sin:** A believer who struggles, falls, grieves, and returns to Christ remains in relationship.

- **Apostasy:** Complete rejection of Christ as Lord. Turning to other religions. Living as if Christ is irrelevant.

**3. If this passage troubles you, that's a good sign.** It shows you care about your relationship with Christ. Those who abandon Christ typically don't worry about these warnings. Running TO Christ in failure in not running FROM Christ.

**4. Why immaturity creates vulnerability:**

- Immature believers are easier to deceive—they lack discernment
  - They have shallow roots—wither when trials come
  - They haven't developed resistance to weather the storms and trials of the Christian mission. Being salt and light means standing out in the world, and the world will inevitably push back
  - They're more likely to drift when culture shifts or friends leave
- **Maturity isn't optional—it's essential to our security in Christ.**

## **The Encouragement | Hebrews 6:9-12**

**But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation, though we are speaking in this way. For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints. And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.**

- **After the Warning, Encouragement**
  - Notice the term of affection: "**beloved.**" The author loves these believers.
  - He's not destroying their assurance—he's protecting it.
  - He's confident most have genuine faith and will persevere.
  - The warnings are there to encourage them to keep them vigilant.
- **Evidence of Genuine Salvation (v. 10)**
  - ***Hebrews 6:10 - For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints.***
- **What gives confidence?**
  - **Their work** — Active in the faith, not passive
  - **Their love for God's name** — Demonstrated by loving His people
  - **Their service to the saints** — Caring for, serving, supporting believers
  - **"Still ministering"** — Present, ongoing reality

- **This is evidence of genuine faith.** Not perfect faith, but real faith. Faith that produces fruit through the power of the Holy Spirit. And God sees it. God will not overlook it. God is not unjust. Rest in His finished work and let Him work through you.
- **The Call to Full Assurance (v. 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.”
  - The author wants them to pursue **full assurance** with the same **diligence** they've shown in serving.
- **Present-tense assurance based on present-tense relationship:**
  - "I am trusting Christ right now. I am in relationship with Him today. My failures don't undo this relationship because it's based on His work, not mine. I am secure as long as I remain in Him."
- **You can know you're saved because you're in relationship with Christ now,** not because you're trying to determine if a past decision was "real enough."
- **It isn't about us maintaining our Assurance through trying harder, it is resting in our Assurance found in the finished work of Christ alone that produces a renewed mind, passion and diligence, through faith (v. 12)**

***Hebrews 6:12 - So that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.***

1. **So that you will not be sluggish** — Same word as "dull" in 5:11. Faith and trust in Christ has real effects in our life. When we abide in Christ's love through faith and confidently trust in Him, He is faithful to produce good fruit in our lives.
  2. **Just like those who have walked this path of obedient faith before us we can follow in their footsteps and be encouraged that God will be faithful to us as well.** — Look at faithful believers who've gone before us. Learn from their example of faith and patience in the goodness of God found in Christ.
  3. **Through faith and patience**
    - **Faith** — continuing to trust, rely on, believe Christ's promises
    - **Patience** — enduring over the long haul, persevering through trials
- **The Christian life is a marathon, not a sprint.** It requires both faith and patience as we rest in the promises that are ours in Christ alone.

**Conclusion: A Call To Maturity**

- The author of Hebrews was writing to Jewish Christians who were tempted to turn back—to return to the Old Covenant, to the Law, to the sacrificial system.
  - But here's what he's trying to help them see: **that would be spiritual suicide.**
- You can't go back to the shadow once you've encountered the reality.
- Those things were always pointing forward to Him—and now that He's come, going back isn't safety, it's foolish.
  - It's abandoning the solid rock in order to build on sand.
  - It's leaving the substance to chase shadows.
- **In our current cultural moment we're surrounded by a culture on its own suicide mission.** And as Christian, we need to make sure that we are proclaiming and living lives of maturity to Christ, growing in obedience and filled with the fruit of the spirit, rather than joining in the chaos parade.
  - It's time to disconnect from the propaganda machine
  - The ideologies and false religions of the world only lead to death and chaos
- They've abandoned the Creator to worship the creature. They've exchanged truth for lies, tried to redefine reality itself, and the experiment is collapsing under the weight of its own contradictions.
  - The world is drowning in confusion, anxiety, and despair—hungry for something real, something solid, something true.
- **This is our moment as His Church.**
  - But the world doesn't need more spiritual infants who can barely articulate the gospel.
  - They need mature believers who know Christ deeply—**not just as the ticket to heaven, but as the exemplar of true humanity, the pattern for how to actually live.**
  - They need Christians who can discern truth from error, who won't be tossed by cultural winds, who are anchored so deeply in Christ that they can stand firm when everything else is shaking.
- **So the call is clear: press on to maturity.** Train your senses through practice to distinguish good from evil. Anchor yourself in the finished work of our great High Priest who has opened the way to God.
  - Follow His pattern of sacrificial, righteous living—even when it costs you.
  - And be ready, because when the lies run out and people come searching for truth, they need to find believers who actually know Christ, who can show them the way, who embody the reality that the world's been chasing in all the wrong places.

- **Christ is not just better than the shadows—He's the only solid ground there is.** Everything else is sinking sand. So stand firm. Grow up in the faith. And live boldly for the One who has secured your salvation and pioneered your path to glory.