

Soul-Refreshing Encouragement

Hebrews 6:9

Nutshell: Paul offers his first direct encouragement of the letter.

Prov 25:25, “Cold waters to a weary soul: *so* a good report from a distant land.” This is true in an unusual way when the good report is about *us!*

I. Context: Warning against falling away after having interacted very deeply with the blessings of salvation.

II. Text

Heb 6:9 But concerning you, loved ones, we have been convinced of better *things*- in particular, *things* having *to do with* salvation, though we are indeed speaking this way.

Literal Standard Version with modifications

The next four outline items, III. - VI., are based on the 4 uses of Scripture listed in 2 Tim 3:16 AND the 3 depictions of preaching in 2 Tim 4:2.

III. Teaching

- A. Paul wrote an inspired book to a Jewish audience; 2 Pet 3:15-16; 1 Pet 1:1; 2 Pet 3:1. Hebrews is the only possibility.
 - 1. The “us” of Heb 2:3 only puts the author outside the original 12
 - 2. Peter speaks of the Apostles in the 3rd person as well, 1 Pet 1:12
- B. Outline of Hebrews to this point:

The Preeminence of the Son

Authority: God has at last spoken In **Son** (*Prophet*), ← follow this font

His express image, 1:1-3a

Theme: **The SON** purified us from sin (Priest), then sat in authority (**King**), **1:3b**

I. Supreme over the angels, Inheritor by ordeal, 1:4-14
Therefore hear Him, 2:1-4

II. Supreme as man, 2:5-9

Psalm 8- Since man must inherit, 2:5-8a

but man failed, 2:8b, **Christ** became man, 2:9a

Theme reprise: crowned with glory and honor (**King**), **2:9b**
to taste the death of “each one” of His own (**Priest**), **2:9c**

to bond with them and help them, 2:10-18

freeing them from bondage to Satan and fear, 2:14-15

Therefore, think hard on **Jesus**, 3:1

III. A better stewardship than Moses, 3:1-6

Therefore hear Him, unhardening our hearts, (*Ἰ**ῥ**ο**φ**η**τ**ῆ**ς*)

Ps 95- for Moses' folk didn't inherit God's **rest**, 3:7-19

IV. A better **Rest** than Joshua, 4:1-11

♦ Therefore, fear (4:1a), lest we also miss **God's rest**

Ps 95- David invited his generation into that same **rest** of

Creation, a type of Salvation, 4:1b-8

Christ's Salvation has become the final *Sabbatismos*, 4:9-

10, which we must EXERT ourselves to enter, 4:11

For the Word penetrates, exposing us before God, 4:12-13

Theme reprise: Having the highest high priest (**P**riest), the **S**on of God (**K**ing),

Let us hold to our confession of Him (*Ἰ**ῥ**ο**φ**η**τ**ῆ**ς*), **4:14**

especially since He felt all our temptations +, 4:15

Kid-speak: Jesus is a PPK. What do those stand for?

Prophet, Priest, and King.

→ V. A better **priesthood** than Aaron, **4:14 - 10:18**

VI. Exhortations based on Christ's supremacies, 10:19-13:21

VII. Concluding remarks, 13:22-25

C. "**Let us approach**" (Προσερχώμεθα) in **4:16** and **10:22** tells us that Jesus' priesthood is so we will approach God.

Prayerlessness, then, dismisses Jesus' priesthood.

D. 5:1-10, OT priests from Aaron; Christ from *Ἰ**ῥ**ο**φ**η**τ**ῆ**ς*

1. 5:11-14, The Hebrews were too babyish to learn of *Ἰ**ῥ**ο**φ**η**τ**ῆ**ς*

2. 6:1-2, They needed the FUNDAMENTALS again: repentance + faith toward God; Washings (esp. baptism) + laying on of hands (for the Spirit's gifts and power); the resurrection of the dead + eternal judgment,

E. *or*, 6:4-6, risk being beyond repentance, having fallen away after real *contact with* (short of *connection with*) God's light, grace, and truth.

1. Why is "renewed repentance" "impossible" for them? It would effectively re-crucify the Son. Unthinkable to the Father.

2. An illustration: 6:7-8, Farmland that only yields thorns

is cursed, like those who've tasted God's grace and spat it out.

Kid-speak: We're like farmland, and God is like a farmer. What do you think God is trying to grow in our soul? Love.

F. *In 6:9, Paul expresses confidence that genuine salvation had occurred among them.*

Outline: Hebrews 6:9

- I. A Comparison to Galatians
 - A. To Christians, but an alarm.
 - B. Lord, where should we be alarmed?
- II. We are Beloved
 - A. "Beloved" in other Alarm Epistles.
 - B. Are we enthralled to be beloved?
- III. Paul's Confidence in Them
 - A. Despite the stern warnings.
 1. A comparison to 1 Corinthians.
 2. A contrast to Revelation 2-3.
 - B. Hebrews is in the preaching order of 2 Tim 4:2.
- G. Hebrews 6:9, "But concerning you, loved ones"
 1. This is not the first time Paul has indicated that this letter was *addressed to real Christians*
 - a. But this was true of all the epistles, Paul's and the rest
 - b. Yet this did not keep the authors from noting grave, possibly *fatal* spiritual dangers their audiences faced
 - c. Meaning that there were non-Christians there too
 - d. E.g., Gal 1:6-10. Note the alarm; 3:1; 4:11; 5:3-4. No "saints" or such in the opening, Gal 1:2 (compare every other epistle of Paul from Romans to 2 Thess)
 - i. Yet Paul still says "we," Gal 2:15, since there were elect who would receive his words
 - ii. The warnings of the epistle would either *confirm* the elect or *rescue* them from sliding
 2. Gal 4:14-16 is very similar to Heb 6:9-12.
 - a. There Paul calls them "my children," Gal 4:19
 - b. He writes the letter to the whole assembly but knows that ultimately it will only 'come home' to the elect

3. Heb 3:1, Paul calls this audience “holy brothers”
 - a. But the same verse tells them to “think hard” about Jesus
 - b. 5:11-12 shows that they had *not* thought hard enough about Jesus. They were “listless in the ears.”
 - c. They were spiritual infants, needing baby lessons again:
 - d. putting them on a spiritual precipice, which Paul has just expressed in 6:1-8
 4. NOW Paul returns to a word of comfort, beyond simply addressing them in terms of God’s children
 - a. This is the first unqualified word of comfort in the book!
 - b. Effectively no different than the other alarm epistles: 2 Peter, 3 Jn, Jude, Galatians, Colossians. They are essentially *addressed to God’s people to set them apart* from any fakes in their midst.
 - c. But which epistle doesn’t contain some note of alarm?
- H. “Loved ones,” a plural adjective, *agapeittoi*,
1. Which is part of Paul’s initial address to the Romans, 1:7
 2. But it is used *frequently* throughout the NT (61x), beginning with the Father’s address to the Son, Matt 3:17
 - a. Peter addresses his audience with it 4x in his alarm epistle, 2 Peter, *differentiating* them
 - b. John uses it that way 3x in his alarm epistle of 3 Jn
 - c. Jude uses it 2x in his alarm epistle
 3. 1 Jn 3:2 tells us who properly belongs to the word, “beloved, now we are the sons of God.”
 - a. 1 Pet 2:11 calls the pilgrims and strangers
 - b. “Beloved” is therefore a dividing line word. Not everyone is beloved in this way: as a son of God, etc.
 - c. Though Paul would have certainly acted lovingly towards any of his audience
 - d. Yet his love for the beloved compelled him to be stern with those who threatened them, e.g., Gal 5:12
- I. “Beloved,” or “Loved ones”
1. God sees us as His beloved, Eph 5:1
 - a. Do *we* call Him *ours*? Song of Sol 2:16; 6:3.
 - b. Do we (at least on occasion) *address Him* in similar terms? [Prayer pointer]

Kid-speak: God calls us “beloved,” or “loved ones.” What does that mean? That He loves us!

- ★ 2. Do we call *ourselves* what God calls us, especially in prayer?
 - a. “God, I am Your beloved in Your beloved Son,” or “God, You call me Your beloved”
 - b. How could this not warm/ melt our hearts?
 - c. A heart warmed towards God is a PRIORITY in prayer
 - i. Mainly because *God Himself* is our first priority (*before* our needs, see Model Prayer)
 - ii. We may be in danger of addressing/ treating Him impersonally, or merely as a blessing dispenser

Kid-speak: God says He loves us. When you pray, do you tell Him that you love Him too?

- 3. Then, do we call or at least think of *one another* as beloved? Scriptural examples, 9 different folks:
 - a. 3 Jn 1:1, of Gaius; (“...that we might lovely be”)
 - b. Rom 16:5, 8, 9, 12; Eph 6:21; Col 1:7, 9, 14
- J. “But concerning you”
 - 1. Having explained the danger to those not mastering the fundamentals and “being carried on to full growth” (Heb 6:1-2), Paul now makes a contrast to his audience
 - 2. He has just contrasted blessed farmland to cursed (6:7-8), an illustration of the dreadful state described in 6:4-6
 - a. He is definitely changing his tone. (That is, we haven’t been misreading his severity to this point.)
 - b. Note, though- he does not say, “You are like the blessed farmland,” since he knows that their ultimate fate had yet to be decided- decided by their response to this letter
- K. “We have been convinced of better things”
 - 1. “We”
 - a. Paul usually wrote his letters to church *with others*, e.g., 1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 2:1; Gal 1:2; 1 Thess 1:1
 - b. Same here, but unnamed co-authors, probably for the same reason he doesn’t name himself
 - 2. “Convinced/ persuaded”
 - a. Paul and his team had a settled conviction about the Jewish churches (the Hebrews) in general
 - b. It was based on evidence, as we shall see
 - c. This conviction *was in spite of* the Hebrew churches’ shameful laziness and lack of maturity, Heb 5:11-12

Kid-speak: Paul told the Jews who had believed in Jesus that he really thought they were Christians. Did that probably help them and make them feel good?

3. This reminds us of Paul's response to the Corinthians
 - a. With the many problems in their midst, he still had a basic confidence that God had worked salvation among them
 - b. *Not* based on the idea that we're all just muddling along at various points in the journey; otherwise, he couldn't chide them so harshly for their immaturity, 1 Cor 3:1
 - c. But based on *evidence* (e.g. 1 Cor 1:5-7), just as in our passage
4. "Better things" than the accursed plant analogy and the impossibility of repentance
 - a. That is, their good *beginning* had promise of a good *continuation* and *ending*
 - b. Especially considering the difficulty of their test, 10:34

Kid-speak: When we obey God, does He look at that and say, "Good job!" Yes.

- L. A comparison with Jesus' approach to the 7 churches, Rev 2-3
 1. Jesus always starts with whatever they'd done well
 2. After that, He gives whatever correction was needed
 3. Why the difference in order from Hebrews?
 - a. Perhaps because Jesus was stepping in as a *last warning*
 - b. That is clearly the case in Rev 2:5, 16; 3:3
- M. "In particular, *things* having *to do with* salvation," or simply, "even the possessing of salvation"
 1. This is the exact "better things" Paul had in mind: *elements connected with salvation*
 2. His language does not *assume* their salvation, but he sees where true salvation fit their profile nicely
- N. "Though we are also speaking this way"
 1. Meaning that he had been speaking severely
 2. This phrase assures us that Paul is indeed injecting a decided *contrast* in tone from his severity
 3. Quite amazing, that he waited this long to give them a clear positive sign! (Besides "holy brothers" in 3:1)
 - a. It was because they needed the warning first
 - b. Isn't that usually the case?

4. Because he is about to *carry them into the meat of his argument*
 - a. Starting with Melchizedek and moving on to show the *temporary* and *preparatory* nature of Aaron's priesthood and the Old Covenant in general
 - b. He knows God must have His elect among them, so he gets them very humble and sober, then, before applying the scissors firmly to the Aaronic umbilical cord, he encourages them with signs of life
- O. This is also the nature of true preaching
 1. 2 Tim 4:2 defines it in 3 ways, to be carried out patiently, with thorough teaching:
 - a. Convince/ convict
 - b. Rebuke
 - c. Exhort/ encourage (*parakaleo*)

Kid-speak: A preacher has two jobs when he preaches: tell us where we've done and wrong and tell us that everything's going to be OK if we trust in God. Which one is he supposed to do first?

2. Paul has mainly *taught doctrine* to this point, focusing first on conviction and rebuke
 - a. Now he "calls" them "alongside" him with encouragement
 - b. The Holy Spirit is the *parakeitos*, the one called alongside
- P. On what basis does Paul offer this encouragement?
 1. A quick preview of next time, 6:10; they have worked and lovingly labored for God's name by serving His people, particularly those suffering as Christians, 10:32-34
 2. That is certainly a positive sign!
 - a. They associated themselves with the right community
 - b. As long as that continued, it would continue to be a positive sign
 3. Paul's warning, though, had drawn a 'line in the sand' in their midst
 - a. Some would not be able to relegate Old Covenant signs to their proper place
 - b. It would become a 1 Jn 2:19 situation (or reversed)

IV. How does this Teaching fit into the story of the Bible?

A. Creation: Man was able to rule his spirit.

- B. Fall: Man is now ruled by wrongful, selfish desires.
- C. Redemption: We are *enabled again* to rule our spirits by taking in the Word, its warnings and encouragements.
- D. Judgment: Those who *don't* take in the warnings will be judged.
- E. Consummation: Christ will come and complete our self-control, with our *every* thought *only* being good *continuously*.

V. For the Walking Wounded (1 Thess 5:14, “Uphold the strengthless”) Let the encouragements take you as far as you can stand it!

VI. Conviction (2 Tim 4:2, “Convince, rebuke”): **What have I done wrong? How have I lost righteousness?**
Do I *refuse* to be encouraged? Where’s my joy?

VII. Correction/ Realignment (2 Tim 4:2, “Exhort/encourage”):
How will I correct my error? How will I regain uprightness?
Lord, let me see where You likely commend me, but certainly how You love me.

VIII. Schooling in Righteousness: **How do I take this on the road?**
I commit to encouraging others.

Wrap-up: If you have a distinguishing spiritual ‘track record’, you should take comfort, be encouraged, and give thanks to God. A distinguishing record means a record that *distinguishes a Christian from a non-Christian*. For instance, non-Christians support worthy causes, but Christians stand behind other Christians who are persecuted for their faith, Heb 10:32-34. It’s not foolproof, as Heb 6:9-12 indicates, but it’s a valid basis for comfort and refreshment.

The book of **1 John** is a comprehensive ‘checklist’. What are the signs of a Christian? I examine myself, transform, and my “joy becomes full,” 1 Jn 1:4.

We don’t want more comfort than we’re due, but we certainly don’t want less!