

## EXPOSITION OF HEBREWS

### Message #12

### Hebrews 6:9-20

There are believers in Jesus Christ who believe on Jesus Christ and then go back into the world and live a life of a pig. They are saved, they are justified, but they do not live like and look like a fruit-bearing believer. These are true believers who will go to heaven, but they will not be highly honored in heaven. This text here is aimed at people just like that. Some believers were thinking about or had already drifted away from their focus on Jesus Christ. This book of Hebrews is designed to get the believer's focus back where it needs to be and that is on Jesus Christ.

**The previous section offered a very serious warning to believers, but this section offers some amazing encouragement and possibility for getting back on track.** We may notice that there is a change of pronoun in these verses. In **Hebrews 6:4-7** the pronoun is “those” and “them,” but in **Hebrews 6:9-20** it is changed to the pronoun “you.” The writer wants to personalize this text. There are those who will live a worthless life, but this is not what God wants for you.

As we come to **verse 9**, it is very clear that God expects “better things” of His people than a worthless life of thorns and thistles (**verse 8**). God wanted His people to finish as award winners. It is very apparent that these believers had drifted away from a proper lifestyle and proper focus that would let them finish that way, and now it was time to get them moving in the right direction. The point of this section is this:

**EVEN THOUGH YOU MAY HAVE FALLEN AS A BELIEVER AND HAVEN'T BEEN LIVING THE WAY YOU SHOULD, GOD WANTS TO MOTIVATE HIS PEOPLE TO GET BACK ON TRACK AND GO ON FOR HIM, FOR A GREAT INHERITANCE IS STILL POSSIBLE.**

We all still have time to make adjustments. We all still have time to change. We all still have time to refocus. We all still have time to forget the things behind and press on for the prize of the high calling in Jesus Christ. That is exactly what this text is designed to do.

There are a series of key motivators in this context that are designed to cause us to pursue a life of an abundant inheritance.

**MOTIVATOR #1** – The motivating admonition to better things. **6:9**

The writer had just given them a very serious warning; you can fall and not be able to repent. However, when he writes this part of the text, it is obvious he did not think they had reached that point yet.

Now the conjunction “but” (δε) which begins **verse 9** is a strong contrasting conjunction. It is designed to present an alternative sharp contrast to the way things have been to this point. The obvious target of the admonition is the “beloved” which means these are believers.

To this point these believers had, for the most part, been a bunch of spiritual invalids who were not maturing in their faith and were nonproductive. Their lives were a mess. They had gone backwards in their spirituality instead of forwards.

The writer says to these struggling believers, you need to know that “we” are convinced of better things concerning you. We are convinced that better things can accompany your salvation other than the worthless direction you have been moving so far. He did not want these believers entering heaven by the “skin of their teeth.”

In Hebrews, the idea of salvation is not only salvation from hell, which salvation comes by faith and not any works, but it includes the life of a saved person that will end up participating as a fellow-partner with Jesus Christ when He reigns on this earth. **The inheritance we may potentially lose is not heaven; it is the right and privilege to reign with Jesus Christ.**

The writer was convinced of better things for those saved than just a life of thorns and thistles. He wanted these people learning and developing and living in such a way that they could bear fruit.

God says to His people, I expect better things of you than a life of willful sin and rebellion. I expect better things of you than falling away from Me. In fact, the Apostle says at the end of **verse 9** that we need to speak to you this way, because this is what you need to hear.

All of us have known of those who believed on Jesus Christ and then seemed to be on fire for God for a while and then fizzled. What they need to hear is this right here.

**MOTIVATOR #2** – The motivating reality of a non- forgetting God. **6:10**

I want you to notice that **verse 10** begins with a conjunction “for.” That conjunction explains why God believed they could go on to better things, because at one time they had a good track record. Apparently, at one time these believers had worked for God, they loved God, and they ministered for God.

That noun “work” (εργος) is one that means that there was a time when these believers had taken their church work as serious as they did their employment (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, pp. 178-179). The noun “love” (αγαπης) is one that means at one time these believers made mental choices to do the best, God-honoring thing because of God’s name. The participle “having ministered” (διακονεω) and the noun “minister” (διακονια) means that in previous days these believers took their service for God as serious as a deacon.

God says, “I remember all of the work and service and I will not forget it.” God wants His people to know that He will not ever forget the faithful work of His people and the love that they have shown to others because of His name. God does not forget about the ministry and those who minister to others. However, as the very next verse says, He wants them finishing with full assurance until the end.

What the writer is trying to do is to get these believers back on track. If they will get back on track in the work of the Lord, they can once again put themselves on the path of an award winner.

**MOTIVATOR #3** – The motivating reality of being diligent, not sluggish, so we may have a full assurance of the hope of a full inheritance. **6:11-12**

God does not want His people to become lazy and sluggish in regard to Him and His Word. When a believer is diligent, not sluggish, in his or her commitment to Jesus Christ and the work of God, there is a full assurance of hope that one will have until the end. When a believer imitates other faithful believers, there is a sense of confidence one has.

The Apostle Paul had that hope when he said, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness” (II Timothy 4:7-8). He also had the hope that the Lord would deliver him from every evil work (II Timothy 4:18). Paul knew he was a sinner, but because he kept his focus on Jesus Christ and the ministry, he finished with full assurance.

Here is what I understand this to mean. If a believer gets back on track in life and pursues a diligent Christian life, he will have full assurance of the hope of a great inheritance. However, if he does not do this, he will not have a full assurance of much of anything.

As I understand the Scriptures, a believer who has previously done good things for God can forfeit six things:

- 1) He can potentially forfeit a great verbal praise from Jesus Christ (I Cor. 4:5; I Peter 1:7).
- 2) He can potentially forfeit full confidence and assurance when one appears before Christ (Heb. 6:11; I John 2:28).
- 3) He can potentially forfeit great management responsibility during the Millennium (Rev. 2:26; Matt. 25:21, 23; Luke 19:12-19; Rev. 20:4a).
- 4) He can potentially forfeit experiencing full joy during the Millennium (Matt. 25:21, 23; Rev. 2:17).
- 5) He can potentially forfeit an abundant entrance into heaven and the Millennium (II Peter 1:11).
- 6) He can potentially forfeit the privilege of seeing and fellowshiping with Christ in the Millennium (Heb. 12:13-17).

**MOTIVATOR #4** – The motivating reality of what God did for Abraham. **6:13-15**

An illustration is given here concerning Abraham. It is a great illustration and it is an encouraging illustration.

God made a promise to Abraham that if he would leave the country and follow Him, He would bless him (Genesis 12:1-3). God said I will multiply you, bless you, and use you to influence others. So what God called Abraham to do was to follow Him all the way to His final blessings.

When God first called Abram, he was living in Haran and he was 75 years old (Gen. 12:4). He decided to obey God. Abraham was a man of steadfast faith, but there were moments in his life where things were shaky.

He had a couple of instances where he told lies and did not trust God; one when he was about 75 (Gen. 12:13), and the other when he was about 99, some 24 years later (20:2). In fact, some 11 years after he followed God, when he was 85-86 years old (16:16), he had an immoral relationship with a woman because he did not trust God (16:4). So Abraham was not a perfect man, but he was one who faced things, resolved things, and patiently stayed focused on God, and waited on God until God fulfilled His promises.

That is precisely the point of the illustration. We may have been believers for a long time and we know we aren't perfect. We need to face things, resolve things, and stay focused on God and patiently wait on Him to take us out of this world.

If we do that, then we too will obtain the promise. We will lay up an incredible inheritance and share in the reign of Jesus Christ.

### **MOTIVATOR #5 – The motivating reality of God's oath. 6:16-18**

There are three different "oaths" that show up in the book of Hebrews:

- 1) God swore an "oath" that O.T. Israel would not enter His Promised Land rest (3:11).
- 2) God swore an "oath" to Abraham and to us that He would bless him (6:13).
- 3) God swore an "oath" to Jesus Christ concerning His forever Priesthood (7:21).

The purpose of God bringing up this oath here is to show us that God is a God who cannot ever lie, and when He promises that He will eternally bless one who flees to Him as refuge and hope, He will never go back on His Word. God says that I am a God who cannot lie and I am a God who makes this promise that whoever purposes to follow My Word will have their full inheritance.

Just as **verse 6** presented the impossibility of repentance renewal for one who falls away from God, so **verse 18** presents the impossibility of failure for one who flees to God.

You may be as shaky as Abraham. Abraham sure had his share of setbacks in life, but if you will continually flee to God for refuge in those failures and setbacks, God guarantees you will finish a winner.

### **MOTIVATOR #6 – The motivating reality of our anchor. 6:19-20**

Every now and then, God's people get tossed around in their faith in the storms of life, just like a ship at sea, but we have an anchor that holds. It will hold all of the time. You can connect your wavering life to this anchor and it will hold you stable. The anchor is Jesus Christ.

Our hope, our surety, our steadfastness will never be found in ourselves, it will be found only in Jesus Christ. Our hope, that is sure and steadfast in giving us not only salvation but the possibility of sharing in an inheritance with Jesus Christ, is Jesus Christ our King/Priest. Jesus Christ will enter His Kingdom first and then He will bring us there. The reason why we as sinners have a chance to reign with Jesus Christ is because of Him.

"In Times Like These," we have an anchor and it is Jesus Christ. Cling to Him.