

Convinced of Better Things, Called to Better Things

Hebrews 6:9-12

Reading: John 10:22-30

Bethany Baptist Church

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...pray...

One of the greatest *blessings* of the Christian life, in *this* life. is *assurance*.

What I mean by *assurance* that you *know for sure* that your *sins* are forgiven & you are *God's child* & you are *going to heaven* when you die.

And you know it *now*.

Can you *really* be *certain* of that!?!

Is there *proof*!?!

Let's answer that by reading Hebrews 5:11-6:12 (our focus on 6:9-12, the final subsection of this important 3-part text).

To be *honest*, our text doesn't start out with much *comfort*! In fact, it *begins* one *warning* and then *escalates* to another!

First, a *word* to church goers who *claim* to be Christians but never seem to *grow*.

Then, a *withering warning* to those who have been *hanging* around the church & *listening* to the gospel & *evaluating* the message...but **never** coming to Christ.

The point is **not** to *run them off*...it's to *urge them in*. To *trust in Jesus*.

But these *dire warnings* can have *fall-out*.

There were *true Christians* in the church who were *rattled* by *threats* like: *fallen away* & *impossible to renew* & *closed to being cursed* & *ends up being burned*!

Beloved, if you've had a bad day...you might wonder it that's you!

The Holy Spirit knows that! *God is mindful that we are but dust*.

A word of comfort and exhortation if you are nervous about your salvation.

- 1. Comfort and encouragement for God's beloved (vv.9-10).**
- 2. Exhortation and hope for everyone else (vv.11-12).**

? Has Hebrews' stern warning made you nervous about your salvation? You aren't alone! So the next word is a word of comfort & encouragement for God's beloved:

1. There is always some potential *fallout* when you read or preach the Bible's *stern warnings*: they may make even the faithful *tremble*!
 - a. After an admonition to the congregation's *dull & immature* Christians,
 - b. And one of the **NT's** strongest warnings to *fence-sitters* & potential *deserters*...
 - c. ...our writer knows that there are some sincere Christians in the pews who are *also* rattled by his blast!

2. If *that* would be *you*, then you can't help but *welcome* the immediate change in *tone & vocabulary* as we come to **v.9 (read)**!
 - a. Actually, the last expression in **v.9** is a good place to start: ***though*** *we are speaking in this way*. It *wraps up* the warnings by recognizing that now it's time for some *reassuring contrast*.
 - i. My *warnings* were *spoken* for them...but I **wasn't** *speaking* to you, *beloved*!

 - b. And *that's* who he is addressing *now* – the *beloved*! *His* beloved & *God's* beloved. This is the *only* place our writer uses "*beloved*" in his letter, but it appears elsewhere in the **NT**, and is a common term of endearment for *Christians*!

- c. And Hebrews is *very clear* of what is *true* of those who are *truly Christians*: **better things & salvation things**.
- i. ? *Better than what things ... !?! Better than all the grim issues that betray the spiritually immature & the procrastinator*:
1. Just glance back w/ me over our recent text:
 2. **5:11-14**: *dull spiritual hearing, arrested development, need for review, baby food, infantile understanding...*
 3. **6:1-8 (lost)**: *perpetually content w/ insufficient ABCs of OT, hearing & witnessing the power of the Holy Spirit thru the Gospel yet never committing to Christ, therefore judging & rejecting & condemning Christ by their refusal to follow to Him, growing spiritually harder, bearing a harvest of thorns & thistles (Fall & Curse!), therefore living under the constant threat of God's judgment!*
 4. But that's *not you, beloved...* for you, it's so much **better**:
- ii. *Your life is a life of salvation things!*
1. **Ch.5**: *Your hearing is sharp! You have truth to share. Because you thrive on solid spiritual food. And thus you learned to discern good & evil – you are saved & mature.*
 2. **Ch.6**: *You've pressed on to Christian maturity through faith & repentance in Jesus' promises, and so the Holy Spirit's showers of blessing have yielded a gospel harvest, & you live under God's blessing (7)!*
- iii. Our writer is *convinced!* → His *grammar* (“convinced”) is a *perfect & passive verb*. These *saints'* faithful lives have *convinced Him* over the *long haul* that they are *save, being sanctified*, & on the *narrow way* to the *Celestial City*.

3. Then he *drills down* a little into that *convincing assurance*. We have *assurance of salvation* based *first* on God's *character* & then on *our fruit*.
 - a. **Read v.10.** Your *assurance* is grounded in God. The Bible extolls God's glorious *character* & *works* from the first page to the last, but our text draws on these **two** attributes: His *justice* & *knowledge*.
 - i. *Justice* – God always does what is *right*! He is never *capricious* or *inconsistent* or *unjust*. He always fulfills His *promises*!
 - ii. And God *knows* everything about you. His understanding of you & your life is *omniscient* – "**all knowing**." Of course, He knows everything about the *unbeliever*, but also everything about His *beloved*... and His knowledge is expressed in *love*.
 - b. Which means, Christian, that God *hasn't forgotten* your *work* (*fruit*):
 - i. He hasn't forgotten your *horizontal fruit* (☺) – your ministry to the *saints* you live among.
 1. "*saints*" = all fellow Christians, the **NT** *one anothers* that you are sharing the pews w/ this morning.
 2. And again (11) the grammar assures us that the Christians' *horizontal fruit* **has been & still is** the mark of their lives. Christians have a *lifestyle* of *day by day* ministry...
 - a. This idea will soon be *illustrated* in **10:32-34 (read)**. When *persecution* came to this church, the *saints* *suffered* w/ one another & *cared* for one another. (...*pause*...)
 3. Beloved, read **v.10** carefully, if you are *ministering to the saints*, you are *ministering to God*!
 - a. Jesus said, "*The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.'*"

ii. But even *saints* can be hard to *love*, and some days of ministry seem awful *long*, where do you get the *fuel* for that?

1. Your fuel is your *love* for God. Your love for God's *name* (= *glory, holy reputation*). That *love* is the **vertical fruit** (10) God hasn't *forgotten*.

a. If you are *Christian*, you *love* God – the *God of the Bible!* Everything begins with that *love*.

i. Including your *daily, persevering ministry* to the *saints*.

b. Turn w/ me to 1 John 5:1-4.

i. John begins w/ a concise *definition* of the true Christian: he/she *believes that Jesus is God's Son*.

ii. He then offers (1.b) the compelling connection between *faith* & *love*. In fact, he makes ***faith in Christ*** & ***love for the Father & His Son*** are essentially synonymous!

1. There is no *faith* in God w/o *love* for God!

iii. Next are **two** evidences that your faith is real: *love of God's children* (1) & *willing obedience to God's commandments* (2,3).

iv. Finally (4), this great *promise*: the *victory* of the *overcomer's faith* in Christ!

v. *Beloved*, if this *you* – *love* of God, *love* of Christ, *love* of His people, *love* of His truth – you *will* overcome! *Hallelujah!*

c. ***Be convinced, beloved!***

- i. I speak with people who say, “***I think I’m saved***”; “***I hope I’m going to heaven.***”
- ii. The Bible promises that you can be *confident* right now you are *headed heaven* when you die!
 1. Hebrews says in our text – *we are **convinced** of better things & things that accompany **salvation!***
 2. Elsewhere, the Apostle John wrote – *these things I have written unto you that believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may **know that you have eternal life!***
 3. We read in Romans 10: *He who believes in Him will **not** be disappointed!*
- iii. If you have ***turned*** from your sins & unbelief, & ***trusted*** in Christ’s *death & resurrection* to pay for all your *sins*, & your life is ***bearing the fruit*** of the Holy Spirit’s presence in you, you can be ***confident*** that you are *saved*.

Yet Hebrews *stern warning* was penned for a *good reason*. Practically every congregation has people sitting in the pews that *hear* about Jesus & *know* a lot about Jesus, but haven't truly *come* to Jesus. So here is an echo of the *warning* & a hopeful *offer* for Gospel fence-sitters & procrastinators:
(Read vv.11-12).

1. Here at the end of our text, the audience *broadens*.
 - a. As he addresses “*each one of you*” (11) – he now has in mind the *spiritually immature* & esp. the *unsaved* we've been reading about.
 - b. He points them to the *same diligence* (11) & the *faith & perseverance* (12) of God's *beloved*, who surround them on the Lord's Day. That's what he wants to see in *everyone*.
2. He offers a *simple* but *urgent* plan to *rescue the perishing*.
 - a. First, notice that our author's tone **is urgent**. He speaks of his own *desire*.
 - i. There is the idea of “*diligence*,” which speaks of **getting w/ it!**
 - ii. And another warning about *sluggishness* (= *dullness*).
 1. He used the same term in **5:11** to point out the *dull spiritual hearing* of the *spiritually immature*.
 2. Now he's warning you against a *sluggish spiritual response*.
 - a. **3:7** – **Today** if you hear His voice do not harden your heart!
 - b. **2 Cor 6:2** (Paul) – **Now** is the acceptable time, **now** is the day of salvation!

b. His *urgent tone* adds weight to his *simple plan: imitation*. *Imitate* the lives of God's *beloved* seen in **vv.9&10**.

- i. He urges them to “*demonstrate the same diligence.*” I.e., *diligence* (10) in *loving* God & God's *glory* & God's *people*.
- ii. **Not sluggish** about **your** life but instead *eagerly imitating their* lives. What is **true** of the *true Christian*? Our text highlights **two** things to *imitate: faith & long suffering*.

1. **Faith**. Not “*faith in faith.*” Not even just *faith* in the idea of a God (cf 6:1).

- a. One of my fav biblical definitions of faith is found right here in *Hebrews*. **Heb 11:1** – Now **faith** is *the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not see*. The *unseen object* of saving faith is Jesus!

- b. God's only *condition* for your *salvation* is *faith* in Jesus Christ, even though you haven't yet *seen* Him:

- i. Jesus is God's *only begotten Son*.
- ii. He **died on the cross, in your place, for your sins**.
- iii. He was **raised** from the grave on the **3rd** day. (As promised!)
- iv. Jesus Christ is now *the way, the truth, the life, no one comes to the Father except by Him*.
- v. And Jesus is *alive*, right now, *at the right hand of the Majesty on high*, and He will return to *rescue, & conquer, & judge*.
- vi. **That's** the *gospel* – **that's** the plan God demands that you put your *entire trust* in.

2. And to your *faith* add ***long-suffering***. My **NASB** says *patience* (12) but better translations would be *endurance* or, even better, *long-suffering*. The defn is *self-evident*!
 - a. *Long suffering* is a big deal in this letter to the Hebrews. *Times were tough...*
 - b. One commentator points out that *long-suffering* is an important virtue for *believers* that face the threat of *persecution....*
 - c. Like these **1st** century Christians. And for many **21st** century Christians.

3. And to everyone who *believes & endures*, God offers this: *full assurance*, and *inheriting the promises*.
 - a. **V.11** - The NT desires *full assurance of hope until the end*, because you *believe until the end*, because God *sustains you & keeps you from stumbling... until the end*.
 - i. This *assurance* is possible **now** because you *trust yourself to Jesus, now*.
 - b. **V.12** – Those who believe & endure ***inherit the promises***.
 - i. Who *inherits* a father's *estate*? His *children!* ...
 - ii. When you place your *faith* in God's Son, you are *born again & adopted* as God's child.
 1. **Eph 1:5** – *In love [God] predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will.*

2. And so we read *also* in **Rom 8:16 & 17** – *The Spirit Himself testifies with our Spirit that we are **children** of God, and if **children**, **heirs** also, **heirs** of God and **fellow heirs** with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.*

4. Friend, have you been *watching* all the true believers around you, every Sunday? *Weighing* in your heart & mind whether *today* the day for you to *turn* to Christ?
 - a. This is *urgent*! **Now** is the time!
 - b. *Imitate their faith in Christ!* Imitate their *long suffering* in their faith!
 - c. Then, *imitate their serving!* That's how you know that faith is *real*. Good works **won't** save you, but *saving* faith produces *good* works.
 - d. Enter the Father's *house* by Jesus Christ. Receive the Father's *inheritance*.
 - e. You can *be confident* that He **won't** *turn you away!*

...pray...