

"Our Great High Priest"

Part 11

Hebrews 4:14-8:5

Introduction: Tonight as we come back to our study in the book of Hebrews we are approaching the most controversial passage in the entire Bible. This passage is found in Hebrews 6:1-8 and there are many different views on this very passage. This passage contains the 3rd warning which the writer gives to the Hebrew Christians. This warning really started in Hebrews 5:11-14. In these verses the writer pointed to the 4 consequences of their divided allegiance.

1. They had become dull of hearing.
2. Their spiritual growth had become stunted.
3. They were unfit for spiritual warfare.
4. They could not discern between right and wrong.

Now as the writer left those 4 consequences and he takes us into chapter 6 he will now point to the remedy of their problem and he will then point to the heart of the warning.

I. **The Remedy and Serious Warning**

Part 2

Notice Hebrews 6:1a

The word "therefore" points back to the consequences in Hebrews 5:11-14 and then he goes on to say that they need to leave the principles of the doctrines of Jesus Christ. Last week I told you that the writer here is calling them to move on in their spiritual walk.

Now in order to full grasp onto what the writer desires to communicate here we need to think like the Hebrews who received this letter would have thought. Now these believers had come to Jesus Christ and now because of the persecution they had basically stalled out. They were thinking about going back to the Old Covenant and so in all of this they were not moving forward.

Now when the writer calls them to leave the principles and move on to maturity, which is what the word perfection means, he most likely had in his mind the experiences of Israel

in the Old Testament. God had called Moses to lead them out of Egypt and they crossed over the Red Sea and after 2 years they came to Kadesh Barnea where they lacked the faith to enter into the land. Therefore that generation never reached the Promised Land nor did they ever receive all the blessing which God had for them. The reason was they would not walk by faith and therefore they become stalled in the wilderness for the next 38 years.

These people had also stalled and the writer was concerned that the very same thing would happen to these³⁴ Jewish believers therefore he is writing to call them out of their stalled state. The point is that God had great blessings waiting for these people but they would need to walk by faith. If they allowed the current trials to turn them back then they would be like the Israelites in the wilderness and they would never enter into the rest which God had for them. You see that rest is only available for those who are growing and those who walk by faith.

Application:

All of us need to be reminded that it is God's desire for each of us to grow in our faith. It is also His desire for us to walk by faith and that means to trust Him with whatever it is that we face in our lives.

Hebrews 11:6

⁶ But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

You see when we walk by faith and we trust God with our circumstances then there are blessing for us along the way. Too many believers never leave the state of spiritual infancy and so they remain spiritual babes all of their saved lives and they never experience the spiritual blessings of God. Now let us move on.

Notice Hebrews 6:1 again.

As the writer moves on in the verse he exhorts them to NOT lay again the foundation and then he will go on to tell them what it is that the foundation consists of. But before we get to the substance of the foundation I just want to consider the exhortation here.

The writer tells them NOT to lay again the foundation. This again makes it clear that it is God's desire for them to build upon the principles of the doctrines of Jesus Christ.

Illustration:

When a construction crew moves in and begins to build a building they only build 1 foundation. They do not build a foundation and then build another foundation upon the first. The foundation is laid and then the designed building is placed upon the foundation. You never see multiple foundations stacked one upon another.

So again it is God exhorting them to move on in the building process. Now let me just say that God is the Architect of our lives. He is the Master builder.

Philippians 1:6

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

We however, must present Him with the material to work with. That means we must live a life of separation and a life of faith. Now let us look at the principles of the doctrines of Christ that the writer is talking about.

Notice Hebrews 6:1-2

Here the writer lists 6 doctrines that are foundational doctrines and he groups them in pairs. So let us look closely at these 3 pairs of doctrines.

1. Repentance from dead works and of faith toward God

These 2 doctrines deal with salvation. These are the 2 that are required for salvation. The word "repentance" means "to change one's mind". When we came under the conviction of the Holy Spirit before we were saved we were headed in the wrong direction on the wrong path. We were on the broad path that was leading us directly toward the wrath and the judgment of God. We were on the path of sin and iniquity. But when we came under the conviction of the Spirit and God began to open our eyes as to where we were headed we then changed our mind about sin and the path we were on (that is repentance) and we then desires to change paths and directions.

I have said this for quite some time and I will say it again. No man or woman can be saved until they come to hate their sin. Because when they come to hate their sin they will then turn to Jesus Christ for He is the One who offers forgiveness.

Someone who says they have come to Christ but still loves their sin and there has been no "turn around" or "change" in their life then it really makes me question their salvation.

2 Peter 3:9

⁹ *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

The faith toward God is the other requirement for salvation.

Ephesians 2:8-9

⁸ *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*

⁹ *Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

So the first 2 doctrines the writer mentions are salvation doctrines.

2. The doctrine of baptisms and of laying on of hands

The word "baptisms" here is not the same word we get our word baptism from. This word here refers to ceremonial washings of the Old Covenant. Let me show you what Vines says about this word:

"a washing, purification effected by means of water...of washing prescribed by the Mosaic law which seems to mean an exposition of the difference between the washings prescribed by the Mosaic law and Christian baptism"

Under the old sacrificial system there were many types of washing that had to be performed along with the sacrifices. So this could be a reference to those washings but it could also refer to the different baptisms which these believers would have been familiar with. There were 2 that would have been common to these Hebrew believers.

1. John the Baptist's baptism

John's baptism was not the same as we practice today. John's baptism was a public statement that identified the person as someone who was repentant of their sins.

Mark 1:4-5

⁴ *John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.*

⁵ *And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.*

Now let me show you that John's baptism was not the same as the Christian baptism.

Acts 18:24-25

²⁴ *And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.*

²⁵ *This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.*

2. The Christian baptism

The other baptism these Hebrews would have known was the believer's baptism as we practice today which is a public identification with Jesus Christ.

So let me get to the point of the writer of Hebrews. Baptism was something that was to be done right after they were saved and then they were to move on. So the problem was these believers were still hung up on the ceremonial washings and the baptisms and they should have already moved on in their spiritual growth.

The laying on of hands the writer refers to here could point to 2 different things. Keeping our thoughts with these believers and remembering they were Jewish then this could be a reference to the laying on of hands under the Old Covenant. Under the sacrificial system the Hebrews were required to lay their hands on certain sacrifices as a way to identify with the sacrifice as their substitute.

Leviticus 4:15

¹⁵ *And the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands upon the head of the bullock before the LORD: and the bullock shall be killed before the LORD.*

This is just one example but there are many others. There is another account in Acts that could have been spoken of also.

Acts 8:17-19

¹⁷ *Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.*

¹⁸ *And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,*

¹⁹ *Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.*

This could also have been something these people were stalled out on. They may have been looking for some supernatural "act" that would somehow empower them to overcome the persecution they were facing. They had all they needed to overcome what they faced they just needed to walk by faith.

3. **The doctrine of the resurrection from the dead and of eternal judgment.**

These Hebrews would have been very familiar with the doctrine of the resurrection. Let me show you some verses they would have known.

Job 19:25-26

²⁵ *For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:*

²⁶ *And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:*

Daniel 12:1-2a

And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

² *And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake,*

From these verses we can see that these Hebrews would have been familiar with the doctrine of the resurrection. They also would have been familiar with the doctrine of eternal judgment.

Daniel 2:1-2

And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

² *And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and **some to shame and everlasting contempt.***

Now let me get back to the point of the writer of Hebrews. These are all foundational doctrines. These are great to know but in order to grow in their spiritual walk they needed to build upon these. There was much more which God had for them.

Conclusion/application:

God expects the very same from us also. These basic doctrines are good to be reminded of but to stay in these doctrines will bring no spiritual growth. There are churches today that get salvation messages every time they gather. But within those churches there is no spiritual growth. The Pastor must study and grow in the Word so that he can lead the flock into the depths of God's Word. This is why we study verse by verse here because

December 29, 2015

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that is how we gather the deep things of God's Word. That is how we become equipped to face the storms and the struggles of live.

Now notice Hebrews 6:4-6

Don't miss next week's study for these are the verses which we will get into.