

"Our Great High Priest"

Part 13

Hebrews 4:14-8:5

Introduction: Tonight we are again coming back to our study in Hebrews. As we do we are aging coming back to the most controversial passages in the entire Bible.

Notice Hebrews 6:1-8

In this passage we have a warning to those who received this letter. The warning is given to those who were thinking about going back into Judaism because of the persecution they were facing as followers of Jesus Christ. This section we are looking at contains an exhortation to the readers, the warning for the readers and all of this is followed by an illustration for the readers. The writer will then go on to encourage the readers.

This section is full of spiritual Truth for our lives some of which we have already gathered and there is yet more to gather which we will see tonight. I need to briefly touch upon some of what we have talked about in these verses in order to prepare our minds for where we are going tonight.

In Hebrews 6:1-2 the writer gives the exhortation to move on to spiritual maturity. He then calls upon the readers to build upon the principles of the doctrine of Jesus Christ. He then goes on and names the doctrines which are the foundational doctrines. He is simply telling his readers that the foundation has been laid and so now it is time to build upon the foundation. Let us remember that these people had been saved for quite some time.

Notice Hebrews 5:12

We have already considered this verse but I need to remind you that these people were saved long enough that they should have been teachers by this time. It was expected of them to learn the Bible and then share it with others whom they had contact with. But it was their divided allegiance that was hindering them. The writer is ultimately calling on these Hebrew believers to be FULLY committed as disciples of Jesus Christ. They were wavering in their stand which meant they were double minded and according to James this made them unstable in ALL their ways.

James 1:8

⁸ *A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.*

As the writer continues he then brings them face to face with the danger they could face if they returned back to Judaism if they did not press on in their faith.

I. The Danger of Going Back to the Old Sacrificial System.

Part 2

Notice Hebrews 6:4-6

Now last week we looked at these verses and we first of all considered who it was that the writer was addressing in this section. He describes them as people:

1. **Who were once enlightened.**
2. **Who had tasted of the heavenly gift.**
3. **Who were partakers of the Holy Ghost.**
4. **Who had tasted of the Word of God and the powers of the world to come.**

I do not want to take the time to get back into these terms because last week we looked at these in some detail. In our study last week we considered how these terms are a description of TRUE believers.

Therefore we can understand that the warning here is directed at Hebrew believers who were standing at a cross roads. They were trying to decide if it would be better to follow Christ in the face of the persecution or if it would be better to step back into Judaism in order to escape the persecution.

The warning that is found here pertains to those who would compromise to avoid persecution.

The writer tells them it would be impossible to renew them again unto repentance if they were to fall away. The idea here is that if they stayed the course there would be great SPIRITUAL blessings for them but if they were to turn away from following Jesus they may never have another opportunity. If God closed the door after they turned away no amount of repentance could change the situation. They would forever live with the consequences of their decision. They would not lose their salvation but they may never again have the opportunity to attain the blessings that awaited them at the time this letter was written.

Last week I gave you some examples which would have been very familiar to the Hebrews who received this letter. One example would be Israel at Kadesh Barnea when they refused to enter into the land of Canaan because of their lack of faith in God. They rejected the opportunity and when they did God closed the door. The generation who refused to trust God would never enter the land so they lost out on blessings that were far greater than they could imagine. Esau was another example who sold his birth right and later desired to get it back but it was too late.

Hebrews 12:16-17

¹⁶ *Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.*

¹⁷ *For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.*

Then there was the example of Moses who struck the Rock out of anger and forfeited his right to enter the land of Canaan.

Let me show you another example that comes to my mind. It would be David and the consequences of his sin with Bathsheba. In 2 Samuel 12 David is confronted by Nathan and Nathan presents a situation to David about a man who had no compassion on another man.

2 Samuel 12:7-8

⁷ *And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul;*

⁸ *And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things.*

The phrase at the end of verse tells us a sad story. It is one of LOST POTENTIAL. God said He WOULD (past tense) have given David more but not now.

This is the very idea in Hebrews 6. There was before these Hebrew believers great potential as they would press ahead to serve God but if they chose to turn away and if God closed the door the POTENTIAL would forever be lost.

Application: The application here for our lives is also a serious warning. God places opportunities before us to represent Him here on this earth. To step into some of those opportunities takes great faith and sacrifice. But at the same time there comes with the sacrifices we make great SPIRITUAL blessings. The warning for today is that the window

of opportunity will not always be there. If we chose to take the "easy" path in life instead of walking by faith and living a life of sacrifice we may miss great blessings and if along the way we decide to repent and go back it may be impossible. You see if someone continues to say, "NO" to the opportunity God has given, then God may close the door and even place the believer "on the shelf" for his or her remaining days on this earth. In that situation they would be just like Israel at Kadesh Barnea, they would miss the opportunity to enter into God's rest.

Notice Hebrews 6:6

The writer also writes of the shame of not pressing on for Christ. For the Hebrew believers to refuse to trust God was like standing at the foot of the cross and despising His sacrifice. It would be like stating that there was no value in the sacrifice of Christ. It would place them in the shoes of those who mocked Jesus as He hung on the cross. To not press onward would bring great shame to the Savior. He gave His life so that they could live above the storms of life. To go back to the old life would bring shame to Christ for it would be stating that His sacrifice was not that significant.

Application:

We also need to know that when we shrink back from the trials and the tests of this life we too bring shame to our Lord. He died on the cross not only to free us from the penalty of sin but He also saved us and brought us into the family of God so that we could be the representatives of God to the people around us.

2 Corinthians 5:20a

²⁰ *Now then we are ambassadors for Christ...*

To pull back in the face of opposition brings shame to our Lord.

Notice Hebrews 6:7-8

Here in these 2 verses the writer gives his readers an illustration to help them to understand the Truth he has just presented.

In this illustration there is a contrast and we need to understand what the contrast is between.

Notice Hebrews 6:7-8 again.

The contrast is between two different types of soil. They both receive the blessings from God in the form of the rain. They both drink in the rain but they do not both produce the same results. One brings forth herbs and the other brings forth thorns. The good fruit is saved and consumed but the thorns and the briers are gathered and burned.

Now here is the picture which the writer desires for his readers to see. Every believer receives blessings from God and it is God's will that each of His children bear fruit.

John 15:1-8

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

² *Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.*

³ *Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.*

⁴ *Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.*

⁵ *I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*

⁶ *If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*

⁷ *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*

⁸ *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.*

Now getting back to the Hebrew believers we can understand that they were all recipients of God's blessings but if they were to turn back to the old life they would then bear little fruit if any and would be like the SOIL that brought forth the thorns and the briers.

Therefore the opportunity which stood before them to press forward for Christ in the face of the persecution was an opportunity to bear fruit that would glorify God. To allow this opportunity to get away could cause them to be set aside as unfruitful believers. The bottom line was they could find themselves disqualified for service.

Now let us get back to the SOIL that is contrasted in this illustration. The problem with the SOIL is that it is not receiving the rain/blessing because it is too hard and for that reason the fruit will not grow but the thorns and briers will. Now I want you to grasp what I am about to say. The SOIL here in this illustration represents the heart of the believer. Let me show you Jesus' explanation of the Parable of the Sower.

Matthew 13:18-23

¹⁸ *Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.*

¹⁹ *When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.*

²⁰ *But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;*

²¹ *Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.*

²² *He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.*

²³ *But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.*

In this Parable the soil represents the heart. When the soil is soft and fertile it produces fruit but when it is hard it brings forth thorns and brier. Now there is one more point to be seen here that we can carry back to Hebrews. It is the WORD of GOD cast into the heart that brings the fruit.

Notice Hebrews 6:7-8 again.

The hard soil here represents a hard hearted believer. They will receive the monetary blessings from God but they will not allow the Word of God to have the proper place within their hearts. For that reason there is no spiritual fruit but only that which is sharp and bitter.

Application:

This is exactly what happens to believers who harden their hearts toward God and His Word. They will accept all the monetary blessings which God gives to them but they do not want to allow His Word in their hearts. So they become bitter and critical. They are abrasive and sharp. But the frightening thing is if they remain this way and refuse to allow the Word of God to control their lives they can be set upon the shelf. When that happens repentance may not reverse the situation for God may have closed the door. They are still saved but they are set aside because they refused to press forward and allow the Word of God have the proper place in their hearts.

The contrast is the soft soil. The soft soil is the heart that receives the Word of God and brings forth fruit. This person is used by God to bring honor and glory to Jesus Christ.

Conclusion:

We who know Jesus Christ have all been given spiritual gifts with which we are to exercise in order to build up the body of Christ. The opportunity to serve God with our gifts is an opportunity far greater than any other we will ever be given. It is an opportunity to serve the Creator of this universe. The window that is open to us to serve is so short compared to eternity. We have but a few years to serve.

Those years can be shortened if we refuse to move on to spiritual maturity. If we attempt to live with a divided allegiance God may shut the window of opportunity and set us on the shelf. That would be a truly sad life to live here on this earth. I am sure that when we one day stand before the Lord everyone will wish they had done more.